

When clothes create people. The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries and the marketing of the Danish clothing industry from 1955 to 1960

By Birgit Lyngbye Pedersen, Ph.D. student
Centre for Business History, Copenhagen Business School
Porcelaenshaven 18a, DK-2000 Frederiksberg, DK
E-mail: blp.lpf@cbs.dk

Abstract

This paper examines the Danish employer organisation Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries' (then Beklædningsindustriens Sammenslutning) strategic marketing effort in the last part of the 1950s, which had the purpose of creating and maintaining a market. From 1951 onwards the Danish clothing industry experienced strong competition when among other things, import restrictions fell away under the liberalization, and import thus increased considerably. The clothing industry landed on hard times.

Even though research interest in the Danish clothing business has increased in recent years, only few have examined how the trade has reacted strategically to challenges over the decades. The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries' marketing effort in the first round directed itself at manufacturers and retailers in order to influence the consumers and create an increased consumption. The journal *Clothes Create People (Klæder skaber Folk)* was the first initiative in 1955, and the year after an exhibition in Forum by the same name followed. In 1958 Dansk Herremoderåd (Danish men's fashion council) was established, and in 1959 it was the women's turn with the establishment of Dansk Damemoderåd (Danish women's fashion council).

This paper shows that in the last part of the 1950s the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries was able to adapt to a new reality through a network with other players where competitive parameters like fashion, design and branding were strategic answers to the challenges faced by the industry.

Introduction

"The Danish clothing industry has equipped itself to be able to satisfy the clothing needs of any woman. Now it is about selling the right clothes to the right women"¹, said the clothing industry and the tailor's trade's central organisation Federation of Danish Textile and

¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 47

Clothing Industries (then Beklædningsindustriens Sammenslutning)², who were behind the new journal *Clothes Create People (Klæder skaber Folk)* in 1955. When they opened a large exhibition in Forum in Copenhagen by the same name the year after, the newly appointed chair of the federation, manufacturer Frithiof Nexøe-Larsen, said at the opening that “they now dared to create a campaign in the shape of the exhibition, both to take back that part of the market, which had been lost in recent years, and also to stimulate the interest in buying Danish clothing recently shown by foreign buyers”³. For the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, the campaign was a conscious and commercial road to change in the attempt to create and keep a market. Their strategic effort was in the first instance putting on the big marketing campaign, *Clothes Create People*, which in the literal sense of the word was supposed to stimulate interest in fashion with the consumers and was to compete on fashion⁴, design⁵ and branding rather than price. It was particularly forward sighted manufacturers gathered in Foreningen af danske Fabrikanter af Herreklæder (the union of Danish manufacturers of men’s wear), one of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries unions, who were the first to try and push development in this direction. But both the manufacturers of clothes and retailers, like the consumers, first had to be convinced and in the middle of the 1950s the clothing industry faced a great challenge after having been in a serious competitive situation.

In this paper I will first briefly introduce theory. Then I will provide an overview of contextual national and international changes in the post-war period, which had influence on the development of the Danish clothing industry. Finally, I will carry out an empirical analysis of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries and their marketing effort illustrated through four examples; the journal *Clothes Create People*, the exhibition *Clothes*

² The organisation Beklædningsindustriens Sammenslutning (now: Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries) was a federation of unions, which consisted of Foreningen af danske Fabrikanter af Herreklæder, Fabrikantforeningen for Kjoler og Damekonfektion, Skjortefabrikant-Foreningen, Kittel- og Linnedfabrikantforeningen, Korsetfabrikant-Foreningen, Foreningen af danske Fabrikanter og Grossister i Pelsvarebranchen, Skrædderlauget i København and Provins-Skrædderlauget.

³ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1956, no. 21: 380

⁴ I define fashion as “Fashion is taken to mean clothing designed primarily for its expressive and decorative qualities of the market, related closely to the current short-term dictates of the market, rather than for work or ceremonial functions”, Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, Manchester and New York, 1995: 5

⁵ I define design as “The intentional use of cultural and material resources to create a worthwhile artifact”, Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 1990

Create People, Dansk Herremoderåd (Danish Men's fashion council) and then Dansk Damemoderåd (Danish women's fashion council). The source material is primarily based on the journal *Klæder skaber Folk* and the exhibition *Klæder skaber Folk*, but also on other trade journals such as the retailer's journal *Textil*.

Even though research into the Danish clothing industry today offers alternative angles on the traditional stylistic and evolution history angles, the research is most often not connected with social, political and financial changes, just as it to a high degree does not have a consumer perspective. This study is within the boundaries of the established research in business history, which examines how companies and organisations are part of the development in a consumer society.⁶ This is precisely the connection with the consumers, which makes the study of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries and their marketing effort interesting, when the federation became an important player in a network, which was established in step with a social upheaval and the development of a new consumer culture. From this perspective I primarily focus my examination in the American consumption culture researcher Grant McCracken's interpretation and identification of the concept *a fashion system*.⁷ McCracken sees a *fashion system* as a tool, where the transfer of meaning flows from the socially constituted world to consumption goods helped by both individual and collective "agents of transfer" and through marketing. It was the French literary researcher and semiologist Roland Barthes, who in 1967 introduced and promoted the concept *fashion system*.⁸ He saw language as a way of understanding and explaining fashion, and moved the focus so that fashion was not explained as clothes but as *a system*.

With McCracken a *fashion system* should not be understood as a *fashion cycle*, where new models constantly have to be created to maintain continued production and consumption, but more like Barthes, as a system. McCracken's theory connects with the consumers and thus also the market, which is connected with a general shift in market

⁶ One of the most sources of inspiration is Blaszczyk, Regina Lee, *Imagine Consumers. Design and Innovation from Wedgewood to Corning*, The John Hopkins University Press, 2000, Blaszczyk, Regina Lee: "Styling Synthetics: DuPont's Marketing of Fabrics in Postwar America", *Business History Review*, 2006, vol. 80:3: 485-528, Blaszczyk, Regina Lee: "The Importance of Being True Blue: The Du Pont Company and the Colour Revolution", *Cultures of Commerce. Representation and American Business Culture 1877 - 1970*, Palgrave, 2006: 27-50, Blaszczyk, Regina Lee, *Fashion Production*, xx, 2009

⁷ McCracken, Grant, *Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods*, *The Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 13, 1986: 71 - 84

⁸ Barthes, Roland, *The Fashion System*, Thousand Oak, 1983, French edition 1967

economy in the post-war period. The shift to the consumers and thus to the market brought a commercial marketing strategy with it and influenced the development of the clothing industry, just like other social and financial changes did.

Contextual changes in the post-war period

In the beginning of the 1950s a series of contextual factors had brought the Danish clothing industry difficulties, which paved the way for the new reality that the Danish clothing industry had to relate to. The difficulties were due to rapidly rising prices, which the devaluation of the Danish kroner in 1949, and then the Korean War, which began in the summer of 1950, had brought with them. Then the import of textiles was freed in connection with the liberalization of import as part of the Marshall plan. The Danish market was flooded with foreign goods in fine qualities. The clothes that came over the Danish border were available at prices which hardly covered the costs of raw materials.⁹ In a few years import rose significantly, from 1951 to 1954 alone the import of dresses was thirty-doubled.¹⁰ Between 1950 and 1960 the collected imported of manufactured clothing rose from 18.3 mill. to 70 mill. DKK, but also the import of knitted and crocheted goods rose from 30.5 mill. to 55.6 mill. DKK. In the same period the industry was reduced from 367 to 281 companies. When the consumers preferred the foreign cheaper clothes in better qualities to the clothes produced in Denmark, the Danish clothing industry had lost huge market shares.

At the same time, post-war Denmark developed into a modern industrial country with the growth of the Danish welfare state, which unfolded after 1945.¹¹ Denmark went from being “a financially liberal Denmark still anchored in old traditions to a crisis and war time society to an affluent social democratic welfare society”.¹² The growth of the welfare state changed the entire society, and new lifestyles influenced living, consumption and family patterns, which again led to new consumer cultures. As the introduction of mass production simultaneously brought a larger selection of goods than earlier, the fight for the consumers

⁹ *Dansk Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1953, no. 11: 182 and *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1955, no. 11: 238

¹⁰ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1955, no. 11: 238

¹¹ Christiansen, Niels Finn and Klaus Petersen, *Socialdemokratiet og den danske velfærdsstat, 13 historier om den danske velfærdsstat*, Odense, Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2003: 137 - 148

¹² Hansen, Per H. *Da danske møbler blev moderne, Historien om dansk møbeldesigns storhed og fald*, Syddansk Universitetsforlag & Aschehoug, 2006: 24

was scaled up.¹³ In contrast to earlier, the clothing companies had to struggle for the attention of the consumers in competition with other goods like televisions, cars and fridges.

But the European fashion system was also changing and this influenced the future strategies of the clothing industry. The international market was gradually opening when Paris' former status as a fashion monopoly was slowly given competition by alternative cities. The international fashion system was changing and even though Paris remained influential, London, New York and then Milano were pinpointed on the world map as fashion cities.¹⁴ "Swinging London" was the first city to challenge Paris, and the breakthrough was built on a long accumulation of networks and the professionalization of designers who utilized the possibilities that arose after the Second World War. From being centralized in fashion houses and with tailors, the production of fashion clothes in the post-war period was transferred to new design innovative designers, as well as the already established clothing industry. This development also fed the Danish clothing industries' strategic changes and one of the most important offensive efforts in the middle of the 1950s came from the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries.

The journal *Klæder skaber Folk*

The journal *Klæder skaber Folk*¹⁵ was the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries' first conscious marketing effort. The purpose was to strengthen the industry through adverts and articles and influence retailers, manufacturers and not least the consumers. *Klæder skaber Folk* was published four times every year in editions of 4000 copies, and the first copy to hit the streets in 1955 was illustrated throughout and around 70 pages long with many adverts. The journal was sent free of charge to members of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, to retailers in the trade and to Danish representatives all over the world. Even though the journal did not reach many people it was read by other

¹³ During the 1950s a few books were published about the new large generations with large purchasing power, f.ex. Ejler Alkjær, *Ungdommen på det danske marked*, Einar Harcks Forlag, København, 1956, Per Kirstein, *De store årgange*, Socialpolitisk Forenings Tidsskrift, 1956, Helge Andersen og Arne Rasmussen, *Der er flere kunder på vej*, Weber & Sørensen's Reklamebureau, Aarhus, 1957

¹⁴ Merlo, Elisabetto and Francesca Polese, Turning Fashion into Business, *Business History Review*, 2006: 417, White, Nicola, *Reconstructing Italian Fashion: America and the Development of the Italian Fashion Industry*, Oxford and New York, Berg, 2000

¹⁵ In 1971 *Klæder skaber Folk* became part of the retailer's journal *Textil*

professionals such as journalists and buyers. The initiative was met with enthusiasm and supported by among others *Dansk Industri (Danish industry)*, who wrote that “Clothes create people” would without a doubt be such a success that editions would have to be increased soon”.¹⁶

To the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries a shared fashion prognosis was one of the most important areas of effort. It was to guide manufacturers, as well as retailers and consumers with the clear purpose of increasing consumption and decreasing company risks. Secondly, the federation wanted to present the companies as competent and competitive, and at the same time encourage the more conservative line of manufacturers to switch over production to the mass production of fashion clothes. The new tricky competitive situation demanded change and the federation saw the production of fashion as a competitive way forward. Through the retailers they directed the effort at the consumers, because fashion was not only for the wealthy, and everyone was to have the opportunity to buy clothes with greater fashion content. *Klæder skaber Folk* wrote that

*“The clothing industry is working harder than ever, everything is sacrificed for the goal of creating the right clothes, the clothes that can make the ordinary lady with her quite average household economy look quite as well-dressed and elegant as the very, very few who can afford to wear the expensive models”.*¹⁷

The consumers had to be advised on how to be well-dressed and the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries became the organisational centre of a network, which wanted to strengthen the reputation of Danish fashion and increase purchasing power.

Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries

Foreningen af danske Fabrikanter af Herreklæder (the union of Danish manufacturers of men’s wear) was established as early as 1892 and with the union supporting them, the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries was established in 1920. In the first round it was members of the clothing industry, such as tailor’s trade unions, who became members, and the purpose was to strengthen the Danish industry’s productivity, profitability, reputation and international competitiveness.

¹⁶ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1955, no. 13: 282

¹⁷ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 1: 39

But the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries had from the beginning “lived quite unknown to the citizens who would decide our fate”¹⁸. In the middle of the 1950s the organisation was yet to connect with the public and the authorities, and that became the starting shot for a far more offensive effort, a strategic shift and a professionalization. They extended their work to include “propaganda”, their own words for what included a journal, national and international propaganda, exhibitions, press materials, fashion council, film and talks. The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries had no experience with marketing. As an employer organisation, they had until 1955 been focused on questions, which were primarily about finances, operations and training. Even though it was not actually within their task area, they stepped up the marketing.

The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries was not the first organisation after the Second World War, which contributed to marketing the business. Jydsk Trikotagefabrikantforening had since 1947 marketed part of the knitted and crocheted goods industry in Jutland, first thorough *Jydsk Textil Messe*, later *Dansk Textil Messe*, in Herning. But it was only in 1955 when the clothing industry was pushed, that the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries took the initiative to create a similar campaign on behalf of the entire clothing industry with the knowledge that “it cannot be solved by the individual company when it stands alone – we have to stand together”¹⁹. The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries introduced a collaborative network, a *fashion system*, which would also include other organisations such as Dansk Textil Union²⁰, Dansk Skomoderåd²¹ and Textilfabrikantforeningen²². They all had the same commercial interest, strengthening the industry’s sales. It was about making “an effort not only to get the consumers to buy more clothes and be interested in fashionable clothes, but also for choosing – and combining – their clothes with *good taste* and in harmony with their personality”²³.

¹⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 1: 5

¹⁹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 4: 43 – 45.

²⁰ Dansk Textil Union was established in 1915 for the purpose of promoting, protecting and marketing the interests of Denmark’s textile trades interests and rights.

²¹ Dansk Skomoderåd from 1952 was an important source of inspiration for the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, as the footwear business had a long experience with marketing. As early as the 1930s they created an extraordinary marketing campaign for the sale of shoes through Dansk Skotøjsarbejderforbund with a large advertising campaign for footwear, which hung on all poster stands in Copenhagen and the provinces. See *Textil og skotøj i 100 år*, 1985: 93

²² Textilfabrikantforeningen was an employer’s union in the textile industry established in 1895.

²³ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1959, no. 21: 353

The effort is directed at the consumers' dress sense

In the first edition of *Klæder skaber Folk* from 1955, Danish women were “lovingly” taken in hand, because in the opinion of the federation their dress sense had gone downhill since the end of the war. Women had more difficulties steering clear of “dangerous rocks”, and they lacked both “self-critique and judgement”, as one journalist expressed it.²⁴ According to *Klæder skaber Folk* women were almost socially bound to dress with greater care as clothes were an important precondition for social acceptance. This argument was put forth from a scientific perspective in the same issue of *Klæder skaber Folk*. Professor in sociology at the University of Copenhagen, Kåre Svalastoga, convincingly wrote about how clothes helped create people. Taking its starting point in Svalastoga's research from the Sociological Department from 1954 the article had the purpose of conveying an understanding of the interplay between social layers and the role of the clothes, because “this is how it is symbolized in our time, even without laws, that the clothes to a certain degree carry the social position of the wearer”.²⁵ Svalastoga's research later led to a breakthrough with the book *Social rang og mobilitet* from 1959, and he formulated it thus,

*“Thus our clothes to a large degree come to stand as a standard for the clothes that are worn in our circle of acquaintances – and thus becomes – roughly speaking – an expression of this. – This is also how new fashions spread. The boldest one in the circle is the first to adapt the new style, and sooner or later the others will follow”.*²⁶

Clothes as a way of distinguishing yourself was already brought to life by the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen and the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel around the turn of the last century. They wrote of the upper-class, “the leisure class” and its spectacular expenditure and about “conspicuous consumption”, which was later known as

the “trickle-down”-theory.²⁷ Both considered clothes to be a representation of the social status of the owner, which moves from social class to social class. With Svalatoga's interview research and through *Klæder skaber Folk* the theories again found their way from a scientific point of view. Not only women were to dress better. As early as 1951 the retailer's journal

²⁴ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 1: 35

²⁵ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955 no. 1: 26

²⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955 no. 1: 26

²⁷ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* from 1899 and Georg Simmel, *Philosophie der Mode* in 1904. The “trickle down” theory is usually ascribed to Simmel but Veblen also uses it.

Textil established that “the gentlemen are more conservative than the ladies”.²⁸ Through *Klæder skaber Folk* those in the business wanted to make the men’s wear business work with the chair of Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, Frithiof Nexøe-Larsen. He stated that “The conservatism, which was previously typical of the men's ready-made clothing business, has disappeared in favour of a strongly shifting fashion feature, often from season to season, which is a headache for both retailers and manufacturer, when you have to predict when demand will set in.²⁹ Until then the companies had been focused on the production side, but with increased competition the focus had to shift to sales. It was the market that now gave the companies problem. But it was one thing addressing your attention at the consumers, another was that a new “large and financially strong consumer group is the young people, who are easily influenced and have very certain wishes as regards clothing, often dictated by what they have recently seen in films, magazines etc.”³⁰ In *Klæder skaber Folk* the journalist Lise Nørgaard remarked that the business should turn to and stake on the new generation of consumers, “Notice our teenagers. They are liberated and conscious, they know a lot about clothes, and they dress practically and at the same time with tasteful imagination.”³¹

The clothing industry was met by a new consumer culture in the post-war period, where it was to a higher degree than earlier was the tastes and wishes of the young people that the companies had to meet and adjust their production to. In connection with the exhibition in Forum the year after, *Textil* wrote that the industry to a high degree paid consideration to the consumers, “In today’s competition we are not afraid to say that any manufacturer or buyer who still does not take into consideration what the consumer wants is doomed”.³² But the new active consumer culture also gave the business rich opportunity for marketing itself and attaching certain significance to the fashion clothes, and making them the “right” taste for a group of new teenagers. *Klæder skaber Folk* quoted Berlingske Tidende in 1954, “Even the most particular girl can by now dress in ready-made clothing. The factories have seen the use of being fashionable. The things we want are in the shops”.³³ Who could

²⁸ *Textil*, 1951, no. 17: 17

²⁹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 12

³⁰ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 12

³¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 4: 46

³² *Textil*, 1956, no. 43: 10

³³ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 1: 41

declare themselves free of not wanting to be part of a social circle and feel accepted! As Svalatoga wrote, “You should not overlook that the one who knows he is dressed “as he should be” feels comfortable in the knowledge that he is a solid member of his circle. With his style of dressing, he identifies himself with these others and thus gets the feeling of having them at his side”.³⁴ “What you need is a deep understanding of the times we are living in...”³⁵ wrote *Klæder skaber Folk*, who wanted to compete through fashion, design and increased marketing in an interplay with what was going on in the rest of the world, in other businesses and with the consumers. But *Klæder skaber Folk* also wanted to address the manufacturer because there was not yet a fashion industry as such, where the logic was about creating new and varied models in a seasonal context.

The switch-over from a stacked goods industry to the fashion trade

Klæder skaber Folk marketed the clothing industry as modern, competent and competitive. But the same time they tried to get the business to switch-over and produce clothes with greater fashion content, because “we can have no hope of competing with our stacked goods qualities”.³⁶ But the scepticism of the manufacturers was great, and many thought that the production of fashion clothes would have many risks and costs. They were familiar with the production of stacked goods and they knew that “to mass-producing goods and filling the shelves with them until they could be sold was quite risk free”.³⁷ But to the more farsighted manufacturers who were behind the initiative *Klæder skaber Folk*, it was no longer enough to sell stacked goods, because “old made to measure ready-made clothing is like stale bread – no one likes to eat it”.³⁸

In the first issue of *Klæder skaber Folk* a buyer responsible for dresses in Magasin Du Nord’s departments in Copenhagen, Odense and Aarhus, Mrs. Langballe, stated that “The manufacturers should take note that people have *more taste, than money*. That is what experience shows us every day in Magasin”.³⁹ According to Langballe part of the responsibility was with the manufacturers and the recipe for a factory success was the

³⁴ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955 no. 1: 27

³⁵ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: 14

³⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 4: 43 – 45.

³⁷ *Dansk Textil Årbog*, 1955: 25

³⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1957, no. 1: 49

³⁹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 54 – 55.

company's production of fashionable, simple, good quality, practical and tasteful clothes, "The manufacturers who refuse to face these facts will have to predict problems with sales".⁴⁰ According to Langballe and the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries the companies had to prioritize design work to ensure good taste and thus the success of the company, "In our times it is necessary for the industry to focus on the design aspect of production, in other words hiring creative specialists and designers for the creation of the collection."⁴¹

The first issue of *Klæder skaber Folk* was met with enthusiasm. But there was also critique among those who thought that the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries had been too unrestricted and without criticism in their glorification of their own products, - "self-praise stinks", as it read.⁴² But the journal was a reality and the effort was offensive and a sign of sprouting changes and increasing market, fashion and design focus in the clothing industry in the post-war period. The ambition to reach out to a larger audience was great and in the following years the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries communicated their initiatives through the journal. Their efforts resulted in an exhibition in Forum already the year after.

The Forum exhibition *Klæder skaber Folk* and the network

In October 1956 the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries opened the doors of an exhibition in Forum in Copenhagen, which was called *Klæder skaber Folk* like the journal. In the invitation it was already emphasized that only companies which thought and strived ahead were welcome, "We address ourselves at all modern and active companies within the clothing (and tailor's trade) and the footwear industry to support the great idea of giving our trade the right placement in the public eye".⁴³

The exhibition opened with 150 stands and was addressed at professionals and consumers. The ambition of the exhibition was the so-called dress sense of the Danes, because "The exhibition *Klæder skaber Folk* represents the great idea of showing the importance of costume in modern life and show how the very vital Danish clothing industry creates the well-

⁴⁰ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 54 – 55.

⁴¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 54 – 55.

⁴² *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1955, no. 2: 6

⁴³ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1955, no. 23: 430

dressed nation at a fair price for the individual consumer”.⁴⁴ There were a series of events during the exhibition, but the highlight was a distinguished visit from Pierre Balmain, one of the fashion kings of France, who visited Copenhagen. It naturally created great attention, not least in the newspapers, and Balmain’s visit helped accord recognition to Danish fashion. At the opening of the exhibition minister of trade Lis Groes spoke about the metaphorical message of *Klæder skaber Folk*, which she used to emphasize that the exhibition in the last end was also about employment, that *Klæder skaber Folk*. Groes also emphasized the importance of rising exports and said that “Danish quality, Danish ideas and Danish taste have won even difficult foreign markets”.⁴⁵ The gradual liberalization of trade flow between countries had led to increased competition from outside, but had also given the Danish clothing industry, which was traditionally oriented towards the home market, an obvious opportunity for export. The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries thus also addressed an international audience, where “marketing efforts have been made which lead you to presume that the exhibition will be a grand prelude to further intensification of foreign buyer interest.”⁴⁶

The exhibition created a lot of attention in the media and attracted consumers and marketed the entire industry in the same way as the journal had done in its first year. The ambition was the exhibition would create prestige for the business and create increased consumption, production and employment. It was both sensible and strategic to work together in a network to create a shared exhibition. And it was far more accessible for the many small companies, who most likely neither had the money or the knowledge to be efficient on the marketing front. The exhibition was arranged in collaboration with Dansk Textil Union, Textilfabrikantforeningen and Dansk Skomoderåd. The press dubbed the exhibition “The Danish fashion week” and the initiative for the exhibition became a precursor of the business organisation’s later success with holding fashion weeks. In Herning Jydsk Textilfabrikantsforening’s fair, *Dansk Textil Messe*, had been a regularly recurring event since 1947. But the Copenhageners were ambitious and “wanted to make the public, i.e. the hundred thousands of consumers interested in the perspective behind the fashion week

⁴⁴ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: xx and *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1956, no. 21: 380

⁴⁵ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1956, no. 21: 381

⁴⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1957, no. 1: 3: VIII

propaganda: Creating a Danish fashion concept and giving Danish clothing prestige”.⁴⁷ Seen in this light the cooperation with Dansk Skomoderåd concerning the planning of the clothing industry’s fashion week was favourable, and the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries also saw a great advantage in this collaboration.

Since the beginning of the 1950s a group of manufacturers of male clothing and men’s wear retailers had been trying to establish a Danish men’s fashion council. They were inspired by Dansk Skomoderåd, which had been established in 1952 by a federation of footwear manufacturers and retailers, who thought that shoes were more subjugated to fashion trends than comfort and health. With a fashion council the men’s and footwear manufacturer wanted to create increased consumption through rational production “with just the right goods, avoiding a mass of superfluous and less saleable goods”.⁴⁸ The footwear and clothing industry wanted to show that they in every respect “and in accordance with the requirements of today for price, taste and quality – and that these industries are furthermore capable of being creators of fashion, in so far as the intentions of the Danish clothing and footwear industry is capable of distinguishing themselves internationally”.⁴⁹ It was the first time that the entire Danish clothing industry exhibited together and was given the opportunity of showing that it “it follows foreign fashion, but is still adapted to Danish tastes and consumer habits”.⁵⁰

For the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries it was about marketing a particular Danish fashion without promoting trends from abroad. Through the network the organisations could attach particular significance to both the clothes and the business, and the Copenhagen part of the clothing business established an organizational basis for spreading and strengthening the activities of the network. It was the network in a *fashion system*, which stepped into power and in contrast to earlier created connections with the consumers. When the import of clothing rose in the early 1950s, the consumers preferred foreign goods over Danish, but the federation hoped to improve the reputation of the business and were confident,

⁴⁷ *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1955, no. 23: 430

⁴⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: 14

⁴⁹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1957, no. 1: 3: VII

⁵⁰ *Klæder skaber Folk*, xx

"Just five years ago even the smallest attempt at sneaking a bit of Danish ready-made clothing into the international wardrobe meant "murder in the closet (...)Simpler lines, tiptop manufacture and the very best qualities in the materials that play on any of the trends of fashion, are the factors which will get public opinion turned from that thing about murder in the closet to a larger turnover"⁵¹

The large exhibition in Forum had invited the consumers inside, but it was quickly decided that the fashion week in Copenhagen would be a semi-annual event for professionals only, who could then regulate and plan their production ahead of respectively the summer and winter season. Nexøe-Larsen, on behalf of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, was pleased with offensive effort,

"The many discussions that there has been in recent years regarding a collective propaganda for increased consumption of clothing, were at the Forum exhibition translated into action – a grand manifestation of a competitive and highly efficient industry, and – what is even more important in this context – before and during the exhibition there was more interest than ever in clothing in the Danish press. Few, maybe no exhibitions have had so much publicity. The effect of this public interest in the clothes is of significance to the entire business, also after the exhibition ends."⁵²

When the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries had established the quarterly journal *Klæder skaber Folk* and a regularly recurring Forum exhibition by the same name, it was relevant to finally create a men's fashion council. Both the journal and the exhibition had from the beginning been created by the wish of creating a men's fashion council where "One of the most prestigious tasks will be to teach the Danish men better clothing habits, - wearing the right clothes for the right occasion".⁵³

Dansk Herremoderåd

When the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries established Dansk Herremoderåd it was the result of the individual men's wear manufacturers efforts in Foreningen af danske Fabrikanter af Herreklæder. They thought that a Danish men's fashion council was a precondition for competing and among other things wished to compete with

⁵¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 3: XII – XIII

⁵² *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1957, no. 1: 40, VIII

⁵³ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 1: 17

two of the Nordic countries, who had already established a men's wear fashion council. Sweden had formed Svensk Herremoderåd, and in Norway they had established Norska Textilfabrikanter's Textilkontor, which then established Norsk Herremoderåd.⁵⁴

The manufacturers of men's wear had for several years spoken about how both the men's wear, the companies and not least the male consumers needed a lift, "Can we afford not to?"⁵⁵ *Textil* asked. When Dansk Skomoderåd saw the light of day in 1952, the manufacturers of men's wear were inspired to establish a similar men's fashion council, but the initiative only became a reality in January 1958, when Dansk Herremoderåd finally saw the light of day. Behind the initiative were around 20 manufacturers, but during the first year of the men's fashion council the number of members rose to 61 manufacturers. According to the articles, the purpose of the men's fashion council was to "create an interest in dressing better among the male part of the population, in order to create an increased consumption of clothes through a better sense of dress".⁵⁶ Another purpose of the council was helping manufacturers with buying and production ahead of the seasons and the retailers shopping plans. According to the head of Dansk Herremoderåd, Reimar Weise, the intention was not to make the Danish men wear a uniform, because,

*"What the fashion council needs to find out, is what might interest the mass-consumer in all jobs and ages, and for this purpose we will try to produce a fashion prognosis, first and foremost for the manufacturers, but also for the retailers and finally the consumers".*⁵⁷

The fashion council supplied the daily and weekly press with information and material, and they among other things they arranged fashion shows, films and television.⁵⁸ In the first year they produced a colour film *From slob to sheik* with the actor Preben Mahrt in the leading role, which was supposed to heighten interest in dressing better among men. The film was shown in 130 cinemas all over the country and in 40 cinemas in Copenhagen and environs alone. It was followed by adverts in the newspapers, and the purpose of men's fashion council was that the film would be seen by over 2 million people.

⁵⁴ *Textil*, 1958, no. 8: 5 and *Textil*, 1958, no. 10: 7.

⁵⁵ *Textil*, 1958, no. 8: 5

⁵⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 1:

⁵⁷ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 1: 26

⁵⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 1: 26

In the fall of 1959 Dansk Herremoderåd was really ready to conquer the Danish market. A propaganda committee had been established and they planned a large spring campaign the year after with ads in 80 papers. And the retailer's organisation Dansk Textil Union saw the clear commercial purpose and pointed out that "the sound of the ringing register is now a lively melody in our ears".⁵⁹ Dansk Textil Union saw an advantage to cooperating and contributing to marketing,

*"We have to get something out of our collective propaganda. It is the men's fashion council who should initiate national propaganda. We are the ones who have to create a favourable sales climate, but it has to be the business of the individual seller to reap the advantages of this climate, so that his shop will be selling the goods".*⁶⁰

The year before Dansk Textil Union had used their general meeting to convince the members that a strategic stake on sales and the market had to be carried out. First an advertising company spoke of how "you could use rational collective propaganda to influence consumer habits in a "well-dressed" direction and get the Danish family to renounce new gramophones and scooters for new and better wardrobes".⁶¹ The members could see for themselves when the new men's fashion council presented the fashion clothes. It was the men's fashion council's debut and afterwards *Klæder skaber Folk* established that "Danish readymade men's wear is today really of that certified class of quality, that we can not only be proud to export, but which will benefit retail by selling to our home consumers."⁶² The new fashion council used a favourable opportunity for manifesting that the council had been established to gather manufacturers and retailers around the shared interest – selling more clothes.

The Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries were not only backed up by Dansk Textil Union. The collaboration with Dansk Skomoderåd concerning the Forum exhibition had been more successful than hoped and the Danish clothing industry thought they would be able to reap the benefits of the work, which the shoe fashion council had already been doing since 1952. Nexøe-Larsen was confident

"Changing fashions are a reality not only for the goods, which the textile business works with, but also for the nature of the problems its practitioners and organisations are interested in. Today's fashion is called shared propaganda and at times fashion guidance, as, first of all, the

⁵⁹ *Textil*, 1959, no. 8: 5

⁶⁰ *Textil*, 1959, no. 8: 5

⁶¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 2: 39

⁶² *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 2: 39

*footwear industry and footwear retailers have shown the way with the establishment of Dansk Skomoderåd.”*⁶³

The same year the exhibition ran, *Klæder skaber Folk* published an article from a conversation with manufacturer and head of the footwear fashion council, Anker Kristensen. He spoke warmly about creating a shared fashion and design council where “The consumers would achieve even more tasteful, fashionable, correct and more affordable clothing”.⁶⁴ The year after the Forum exhibition there was an attempt to establish a collaboration between Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries and Dansk Skomoderåd when the members of the federation received the Nordic Footwear fashion council’s colour prognosis. They were the colours chosen by the Nordic council and which they thought would appeal to the consumers in the season to come.⁶⁵ In the Danish textile and clothing industry’s trade organisations Anker Kristensen saw an opportunity for establishing a shared fashion council,

*“I actually have a royal thought, which might seem utopian, and it is that here in Denmark there should be a shared fashion and design council for the entire clothing industry. In this council each business would share the main lines of their fashion plans in the future, both as regards cut, colour and materials etc., that way you could jointly work out one big fashion prognosis, which could be a guide for every single manufacturer”.*⁶⁶

A shared fashion council never came into existence, because when Dansk Herremoderåd was finally established, they preferred independence.

“Good clothes are a good thing”

The first time the men’s fashion council addressed the public with a large targeted campaign was with the slogan *Good clothes are a good thing* because “They wanted a simple sentence which would briefly and concisely convey the shared advertising message, which could cover both the elegant fashion and the more accessible “ready-made clothes””.⁶⁷ When the men’s fashion council sent out their first brochure, the fashion council’s director Reimar Wiese wrote in it that “Collective propaganda seems to be the “Sesame” that will open the doors of

⁶³ *Textil*, 1959, no. 1: 11

⁶⁴ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: 14

⁶⁵ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1957, no. 1: 40

⁶⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: 16 - 17

⁶⁷ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 3: 32

more stable times for Danish business life”.⁶⁸ The Danish men’s wear council followed up the campaign with a fashion prognosis, which sought to dictate and homogenize fashion, and which was sent “to the retailers to guide them in their shopping plans, and in the fall it will be the basis of propaganda directed at the consumers”.⁶⁹

When it came to the men, and it was up to Dansk Herremoderåd, there was a great task ahead of them. Danish men weren’t only conservative, but also badly and casually dressed. In *Klæder skaber Folk* it was expressed in this way,

*“The ordinary Danish male does not seem to be “clothes conscious” apart from what tradition and basic needs demand from him. He is spectacularly informal and casual in his dress and does not to a small degree lack the stylishness that characterizes our neighbours on the other side of the Sound. He is very modest and reticent when it comes to the subject of clothes and seems to rest quite harmoniously in his conviction that his everyday clothes are just fine, a conviction that is easy to acquire, as there are no norms for “dress-sense” in his circle of friends.”*⁷⁰

The campaign *Good clothes are a good thing* was supposed to convince the unsuspecting male consumer that a modern man necessarily had to consider taste and style and dress as far better qualities than it was the case, because “an entirely new wish to be well-dressed must be awoken and grow so strong that it can outcompete the other needs which have made their way to the foreground in recent years.”⁷¹ In the men’s fashion council the question about slogans had led to many discussions, and the choice of *Good clothes are a good thing* did not come out of the thin air. It was a clear reference to the furniture paradigm in the post-war period, which had been successful both in Denmark and abroad.⁷² Here, Danish companies had succeeded in starting a considerable export of particularly furniture and home textiles, and *Danish Design* or *Danish Modern* became a brand.⁷³ The slogan “good clothes” in the eyes of the fashion council reflected simple, practical, tasteful clothes of good quality, which could carry the *Danish Design* concept. To Dansk Herremoderåd, and Dansk Damemoderåd which was established the year after, the significance of *Danish Design* was used consciously as a sales promoting factor. In 1960 the women’s fashion council stated in *Textil*,

⁶⁸ *Textil*, 1958, no. 35: 5 - 7

⁶⁹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 3: 32.

⁷⁰ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 3: 32

⁷¹ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 35: 7

⁷² Per H. Hansen, *Da danske møbler blev moderne*, 2006

⁷³ Se Per H. Hansen, Networks, Narratives and New Markets: The Rise and Decline of Danish Modern Furniture Design, 1930 – 1970, *Business History Review*, august 2006: 449 – 484, Per H. Hansen, *Da danske møbler blev moderne*, 2006

*"In a period where competition will be further increased day by day, it is expected that this work will leave its traces, so that the Danish clothing industry also in a fashion sense will be able to serve the Danish public, as well as export Danish Design in this field also. A joyous development is going on."*⁷⁴

With the intervention of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, design became a still more important competitive parameter. Architect Esbjørn Hiorth had already early on in *Klæder skaber Folk* emphasized that the same significance had to be attached to the clothes as to modern Danish furniture and design in general. Hiorth recognized the fleetingness of fashion from a financial perspective, but still thought that it would strengthen an export campaign, "if we considered the Danish fashion clothes from the same angle as the rest of our design industry".⁷⁵ In *Klæder skaber Folk* the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries wrote that the "word *good clothes* have a more democratic content than the word well-dressed, which can more easily achieve social impact as a slogan. *Good clothes* mean quality and in this respect meet a very common consumer demand."⁷⁶

Dansk Herremoderåd accepted Hiort's arguments and used the slogan "Good clothes are a good thing" for their campaign, which was remarkably similar to architect Erik Herløw's popular book from 1949 "Good things for everyday use". Anker Tideman, head of Dansk Skomoderåd, was much more preoccupied by the consumers, and how fashion, taste and design would become competitive parameters in the future,

*"The great masses, who completely dominate the buyer's market, have gained access to a series of benefits thanks to the advances of the industry and the reduced prices of goods. These masses will now also demand fashion, taste and design from the clothes they buy, which as much as possible have to resemble what was previously only available to the few."*⁷⁷

The men's fashion council knew that they were competing with other consumer goods and that it was about picking the right slogan to support the consumers wish for "owning good things, furniture designed by architects, cars or super stereoscopic televisions" which made the men's fashion council hit "home hard that good clothes are also a good thing."⁷⁸ When the men's fashion council was a reality it did not take long before Dansk Damemoderåd followed

⁷⁴ *Textil*, 1960, no. 12: 172

⁷⁵ *Klæder skaber Folk*, xx

⁷⁶ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 3: 32

⁷⁷ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1956, no. 2: 14

⁷⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 3: 32

and the two councils took over the tasks that had been carried by the campaign *Klæder skaber Folk*.

Dansk Damemoderåd

Dansk Damemoderåd was established in May 1959 by 16 manufacturers under Danske Damekonfektionsfabrikanter Forening in collaboration with Danske Kjolefabrikanter, but already in the fall of the same year the council counted 36 companies. It was nearly exclusively Copenhagen-based manufacturers who supported the women's wear fashion council, except the head, manufacturer Tage Vanggaard, who had his dress factory in Aarhus.⁷⁹ In the late 1950s Vanggaard played a considerable role in the network, which marketed the business. His own company's growth and success helped position him in the network and at the same time he could carry out marketing campaigns, which supported his own company's competitive ability.

In Vanggaards job as head, he on behalf of the women's fashion council tried "to gather the fashion industry's various trades in a shared effort to improve the sales conditions of the business."⁸⁰ He was focused on the market and the conditions, which had created new ways of designing, producing, marketing and consuming. Dansk Damemoderåd made plans for semi-annual fashion weeks, which would show the retailers in Denmark and other European countries their collections. They were to draw "an image of how the Danish dress and clothing industry has adapted the international fashion to the taste and needs of the consumer".⁸¹ That is why the council entered into collaboration with ten other countries to harmonize colours, fabrics and fashion in order for great fashion fluctuations to be avoided. The women's fashion council in 1959 joined a shared European women's fashion committee, Comité International de Liaison des Industries du Vetement Féminin, in the awareness that in all aspects of life there was an internationalization of lifestyles and taste habits.

Dansk Damemoderåd had the same intentions as the men's wear fashion council, to be a link between manufacturers, retailers and consumers and increase marketing. The retailer's organisation Dansk Textil Union quoted Tage Vanggaard in the journal *Textil*

⁷⁹ Vanggaard's story, see Kristoffer Jensen and Louise K. Skyggebjerg, *En kjolefabriks kamp for overlevelse*, Erhvervshistorisk årbog, 2009

⁸⁰ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 4: 24

⁸¹ *Textil*, 1959, no. 13: 13

concerning the intentions of the council “Through shared propaganda the council intends to stimulate the ladies interest in the problems with dressing. The women’s fashion council does not want to create fashion; that is left to the individual createurs”.⁸² The women’s fashion council had a commercial attitude and wanted to make an offensive effort in collaboration with other organisations. Vanggaard told me that the council had several targets to increase consumption, namely that

*“making the fashion weeks into semi-annual fashion fairs that are also sales fairs, to strengthen the Danish fashion industry’s position on the home market, to increase strongly rising export and with time inform the manufacturers about coming fashion trends in order to prevent the danger of buying the wrong things in the individual companies”.*⁸³

The campaign “Bliv ny med moden” (Become new with fashion) was the women’s fashion council’s first marketing campaign, which also included a film. In this film certain meanings were attached to the fashion clothes, which were made the right taste for a group of new teenagers. Tage Vanggaard hardly put the happiness of women first, but he was convinced that clothes played a great role for the welfare of women, and that the business could increase their sales by promoting this phenomenon. That is why the slogan “become new with fashion” played on the women’s need to buy new things. Vanggaard was aware of fashion as a competitive factor put in the centre of increased sales

*“Quality is one thing he has to consider, but fashion is of even more importance. The consumers buy new dresses – not only for quality – but to a higher degree to look good, to renew themselves, to feel satisfied – yes, I even think you could say to be happy. There is nothing that can create happier women than new clothes”.*⁸⁴

Dansk Damemodeuge (Danish women’s fashion week)

Apart from the individual marketing campaigns, Dansk Damemodeuge became one of the most important efforts for Dansk Damemoderåd. In May 1958, the year before the council was formally established, Foreningen af Danske Kjolefabrikanter arranged the first Danish women’s fashion week, where 46 manufacturers showed their collection to buyers. At Dansk Textil Union’s delegate meeting in Copenhagen in April 1958 Tage Vanggaard spoke of making the fashion week a regularly returning event.

⁸² *Textil*, 1959, no. 15: 13

⁸³ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 4: 24

⁸⁴ *Textil*, 1959, no. 1: 13

But the fashion week was located in various locations with the individual manufacturers and not gathered in one place. Apart from this the manufacturers had hardly any experience with the production of fashion and said that “the fashion market has never been as kaleidoscopically colourful as it is today. It is hard to judge what will be fashionable tomorrow and what can be sold in the next season”.⁸⁵ This is why the first fashion week became a bit of a test cloth, with everyone trying it out. Some manufacturers thought that the result was depressing. But the attitude was still that it should be continued, in the same way as many places abroad. The first fashion week had been hastily arranged and several did not have their collection ready. But it was still valuable for the employees of the manufacturer to meet the buyers, because during these conversations the staff gathered many helpful tips of value to the next collection”.⁸⁶ For this reason alone fashion week was important, the manufacturers knew too little about the wishes of the consumers and the fashion week gave impulses that they could draw advantages from in the future. After all, everyone agreed that the fashion weeks should continue.

The fashion week was targeted at the clothing manufacturer’s direct customers, the buyers. But still the news of the fashion week found its way to the daily press, and because fashion had always been good material the journalists quickly found an occasion to comment the fashion week. The critique from Social-Demokraten was that the fashion week had not been in one place, but that the companies in Copenhagen individually and simultaneously had opened their premises in different places in town. It did not give that unified impression that the stage was set for.”⁸⁷

The second Danish fashion week was held in Copenhagen only six months later in November. Not quite as many companies supported the fashion week as the first time, but invitations were sent to around 1000 Danish retailers and 2500 textile merchants in Sweden and Norway, as well as to a series of department stores and buyer’s associations in Holland, Belgium, England and West Germany. The fashion week was a semi-annual event and the collections produced by the companies were shown to the retailers six months before the start of each season.

⁸⁵ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 44: 10

⁸⁶ *Textil*, 1958, no. 24: 9 - 10.

⁸⁷ *Textil*, 1958, no. 24: 10

The organizers of the third fashion week in 1959 were Danske Damekonfektionsfabrikanter Forening, Foreningen af Danske Kjolefabrikanter and the newly established women's fashion council. At the same time Dansk Textil Union arranged fashion shows in the large Danish cities along with Dansk Damemoderåd, where they showed the coming fashions. The Danish women's fashion week was here to stay and it coincided with several players opening their eyes to the importance of marketing the business in the run up to the affluent period in the 1960s.

The fair in Herning, *Dansk Textil Messe*, held fashion shows in trains as well as planes between England and Denmark in order to attract the audience and compete with the Danish women's fashion week in Copenhagen. Another organisation with the same purpose as the women's fashion council which saw the light of day in 1959, Mode-Ringen, was established by 11 manufacturers of dresses, furs and coats. Mode-Ringen worked intensively to increase exports to the EFTA countries after Denmark joined the EFTA area, where the consequence was a duty free market area. Apart from this Mode-Ringen, just like the women's fashion council, wanted to heighten the interest in Danish clothes on the home market. At the end of the 1950s Dansk Textil Union marketed the business with a *textile campaign* where shared advertising in all the magazines in the country, at propaganda meetings and other initiatives was supposed to compete with the so-called "durable consumer goods", which had taken their part of the income. The magazine *Klæder skaber Folk* wrote that the companies and organisations in the business had taken up the challenge and were prepared enough not only to survive, but as far as possible also to expand.⁸⁸

In 1960 the women's fashion council counted 42 companies, and for the first time since the marketing campaign *Klæder skaber Folk* was launched, the chairman of the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, Nexøe-Larsen, said that 1959 had been a stable year with high and continual production and a strongly increased exports. Tage Vanggaard optimistically said that branding, fashion and design were important competitive parameters,

"The fashion is more important than the quality, but the best thing is for these two things to complement each other, and this is what the dress manufacturers are working on. And something has happened in recent years; almost all retailers have started labelling their clothes with a small brand at the back of the neck, so that the customers can see the name of the manufacturer. Today's clothing has in other words become a branded good and as the customers

⁸⁸ *Klæder skaber Folk*, 1958, no. 4: 43 – 45.

*are the only thing of any real significance in a shop, you can be sure that the manufacturers will do everything to satisfy the demands of the consumers”.*⁸⁹

Conclusion

My analysis in this paper has been limited to a short span of years and the first offensive marketing initiative, which led to the Danish clothing industry shifting their focus from production to the market and to the trade’s switch-over to the mass-production of fashion clothes. First and foremost, it is a period in the history of the clothing business which has not been thoroughly researched before.

In the text I have concentrated on several contextual factors led to a difficult switch-over and transition situation for the business, which created to a conscious commercial strategy that implemented a heightened marketing effort. The first was the difficulty brought by liberalism when the Danish business was met by a rising import of cheaper clothes, which the consumers preferred to Danish clothes. The next thing was the new consumer culture, which the arrival welfare state in the post-war period generated, and where Denmark changed both politically, financially, socially and culturally. The clothing business’ transition to being a fashion trade went hand in hand with the still increasing wish of the consumers to be “modern”, and the business had to be ahead off and prepared to meet the demands and taste of the consumers. The third factor was the international fashion system which changed when Paris was no longer the only fashion city in the world.

The analysis shows that one single organisation, the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries, played a decisive role as an innovator in the development of the Danish clothing business. When the business was in a difficult situation and had to relate to a new reality they had a conscious and commercial strategy, where competitive parameters such as fashion, design and branding were a strategic answer to the problems faced by the business. At the same time the Federation of Danish Textile and Clothing Industries entered into a network with other organisations and together they carried out the marketing. Fashion, design and branding became part of a system along with marketing strategies, which were put to into use when competition grew stronger and products had to be placed in a market, both the home market and the export market.

⁸⁹ *Textil*, 1959, no. 1: 13

