

# **Metrosexuals in American Culture**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Práce se zabývá pozicí metrosexuálů v americké kultuře. Nejdříve uvádí historické souvislosti, které se týkají tohoto jevu. Podává vysvětlení o tom, kde, kdy a z jakého důvodu se tento termín objevil poprvé. Zabývá se vztahem metrosexuálů ke sportu či souvislostmi mezi termínem „homosexuál“ a „metrosexual“. Podstatná část se věnuje otázce metrosexuálů a černošská či hispánská populace v USA. Součástí práce jsou i rozhovory se čtyřmi mladými Američany, kteří se považují za metrosexuály. Pokouší se odpovědět na otázku, co je vedlo k tomu, že se stali metrosexuály a zjistit jejich názory na fenomén metrosexuálních mužů.

Klíčová slova:

Metrosexual, homosexualita, heterosexualita, americká společnost, černošská populace, hispánská populace, 20. století, 21. století, média, rozhovory.

## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis discusses the position of metrosexuals men in today's American culture. Firstly, it focuses on the historical background of this term. It explains where and when it appeared for the first time. Secondly, it focuses on its relationship to fashion, sport, homosexuals, and the relation of this phenomenon to the black and Hispanic people. The main part also contains the survey among young American men who consider themselves as being metrosexuals. It tries to find out their attitude to the metrosexuality and what has made them to become metrosexuals.

Keywords:

Metrosexual, homosexuality, heterosexuality, American society, African American population, Hispanic population, 20<sup>th</sup> century, 21<sup>st</sup> century, media, interviews.

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**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and certify that any secondary material used has been acknowledged in the text and listed in the bibliography.

May 12, 2009

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## **INTRODUCTION**

We are surrounded by many terms including the word “sexual,” such as “heterosexuals,” “bisexuals,” “homosexuals,” and “metrosexuals.” The truth is that people are aware of what it means to be a heterosexual, a homosexual or a bisexual, but I have found out that a lot of people do not know what it means to be a metrosexual. Some people think that if somebody is called a metrosexual it is a synonym of a gay. On the other hand, some others think that only heterosexuals can be metrosexuals. However, I am going to point out that both these opinions are not valid. It has also been discussed many times if the term metrosexual is an absolutely new phenomenon or not. Therefore, I am going to focus on this question, too.

The main concern of my thesis is to discuss the position of metrosexuals in American culture. I wanted to find out about their role in this culture, so I decided to look at it from many angles. My focus is on when the phenomenon of metrosexuals arose in the USA. Even though the term was invented by Mark Simpson who is British, it is the USA which is associated the most with this term. I remember watching a TV program on Czech TV where a Czech film director was interviewed about his stay in the USA. The interviewer also told him that he had heard he was a metrosexual. The director’s reaction was very positive and he explained that it was very common among American men. He also said that it was going to spread from the USA throughout the world. I did not pay attention to this back then but now, while writing this thesis, this recollection crossed my mind again. Related to this I am going to focus on the question why it is the USA which is considered a country where the first metrosexuals appeared. Whether it was really the USA with the most men who are metrosexuals and, of course what was their main reason that they become metrosexuals. Who played the most important role in spreading this phenomenon? I am going to look at the question of the ethnic background related to metrosexuality and what role plays in this phenomenon.

# **I. THEORY**

# 1 METROSEXUAL MEN

The term “metrosexual” cannot be considered unknown nowadays since most of the people associate David Beckham with it. Moreover, David Beckham is considered to be an icon of metrosexuality. However, not many people know where this phenomenon comes from and what exactly it means to be a metrosexual. One of its definitions is: “Metrosexual is a neologism of the 2000s generally applied to heterosexual men with a strong concern for their appearance, and/or whose lifestyles display attributes stereotypically attributed to gay men.”<sup>1</sup> One of the most important aspects of this definition is that it mentions heterosexual men. This is something most metrosexuals find important. The fact is that they have interests stereotypically attributed to homosexuals, such as shopping, going to the tanning saloon and spending a lot of money on luxury. However, they want to be separated from homosexuals and they never forget to mention that they are straight.

As it was already mentioned, the term “metrosexual” was invented by Mark Simpson, who is a British cultural critic. It is probably important to point out that he is a homosexual and a critic of the consumer society. In November 1994 he published an article in the *Independent* called “Here Come the Mirror Men” where he wrote:

“Metrosexual man, the single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that’s where all the best shops are), is perhaps the most promising consumer market of the decade. In the Eighties he was only to be found inside fashion magazines such as GQ, in television advertisements for Levis jeans or in gay bars. In the Nineties, he’s everywhere and he’s going shopping.”<sup>2</sup>

Why “metrosexual”? “The *metro-* (city) prefix indicates this man's purely urban lifestyle, while the *-sexual* suffix comes from “homosexual,” meaning that this man, although he is usually straight, embodies the heightened aesthetic sense often associated with certain types of gay men.”<sup>3</sup> Simpson came up with this term in order to criticize the consumer society. His intention was to express his disapproval of men who waste money on unimportant things, such as expensive clothes or cosmetic products. He sees these men as men whose lives are in the hands of fashion and cosmetic industry. At first he was talking about heterosexuals but later he improved it and did not mention the word “hetero” while talking about metrosexuals. So basically a metrosexual is any kind of man who likes the

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<sup>1</sup> “Metrosexuals,” Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metrosexual>.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Simpson, *It’s a Queer World: Deviant Adventures in Pop Culture*, (Birhampton: Haworth Press), 207.

<sup>3</sup> “Metrosexual” WORD SPY, <http://www.wordspy.com/words/metrosexual.asp>.

consumer type of life. He likes spending money, he lives in the city and, of course, he is rich.<sup>4</sup>

When Simpson came up with this term, he did not realize how widely this term was going to be used. The media started to use this term on a large scale along with fashion and cosmetic industry in their adverts. The result was that these three powers played an important role in spreading this term.

## 1.1 History of Metrosexuals

We could ask why the situation has changed. Why men were not interesting in shopping before. On the other hand, one could also wonder if it is a really new phenomenon. One of the answers could be that in the nineties many taboos, related for example to gays and lesbians, started to vanish. We can say that people moved forward so there was no reason why men should have not worn pink shirt in the nineties, which would probably be unacceptable ten years before. However, some people argue that historically there have always been such men who liked shopping and taking care of themselves more than other men. There just was not the term which would describe them as metrosexuals.

Historically, there are examples of men who were concerned with their appearance more than others at their time. The clothes and looks have always been for some men very important. It is obvious in a book *The Great Gatsby (1925)* written by Francis Scott Fitzgerald who quite often describes what kind of clothes the main male characters are wearing. These characters could be described as narcissistic and narcissism is quite often associated with metrosexuals. Another term close to the metrosexual is “dandy”. In fact, dandies share many aspects with metrosexual men.

A dandy was a man in the late 18th and the beginning of the 19th century for whom his physical appearance was very important. This term originated in England and France and one of the well-known dandies was, for example, Lord Byron.<sup>5</sup> A dandy would probably be called metrosexual nowadays. Besides paying a close attention to his looks, a dandy was also very careful about the language he used. He used only refined language and focused on his sophisticated leisure activities, such as going to the theatre or reading books. These men tried to imitate the aristocratic way of life and were very concerned with their clothes and

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<sup>4</sup> See Simpson, *It's a Queer World*, 208.

<sup>5</sup> See “Dandy” Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandy>.

hair. Thomas Carly defined a dandy man in this way: “A Dandy is a clothes-wearing man, a man whose trade office and existence consists in the wearing of clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse and person is heroically consecrated to this one object the wearing of clothes wisely and well, so that the others dress to live, he lives to dress.”<sup>6</sup>

Based on this description of a dandy it is obvious that even more than two hundreds years ago there were men who were almost obsessed with the way they looked. They wanted without doubt to be looked at.

As it was mentioned, there are many similarities between the dandy man and the metrosexual man - they both fit the description that they live to dress, they like to be gazed at by others or that both are concerned with their physical appearance. However, there is one main difference which they do not share. It is the role of sport. Dandy did not find sport attractive at all. Oscar Wilde claimed that “football is all very well a good game for rough girls, but not for delicate boys.”<sup>7</sup> This opinion about sport makes a dandy quite different from a metrosexual. While a dandy man claims that sport is something unsophisticated, for a metrosexual it is a part of being a metrosexual. A typical metrosexual should be well-built from sport.

All in all, there are many aspects shared by dandies and metrosexuals especially the love for clothes and exposing themselves. However, the fact that one of the attributes of a metrosexual is being an athlete makes these two types of men be quite different.

Going even further back in the history, there is the term narcissism which is connected with the Greek mythology. There are many aspects that metrosexuals share with narcissists such as the obsession with their looks or the desire to be admired by others. However, there is a significant difference between the narcissist and the metrosexual. Metrosexual men are self-confident. They are extroverts and always think about themselves that they look great. Therefore, it is no harm for them, if somebody tells them that, for example, the clothes they wear are bad. Metrosexuals except the opinion but it is not a disaster for them. By the contrast, narcissist men are introvert and they need to hear that they are perfect and look good. Narcissists take any type of critique too seriously and they basically fall apart when they hear it.

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<sup>6</sup> “Dandy,” Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandy>.

<sup>7</sup> David Coad, *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality, and Sport*, (New York: State University of New York Press), 24.

It is obvious that the roots of metrosexuality go way back into the history. There has always been a sort of men who were more overwhelmed with their looks than the others.

## **1.2 Present-Day Metrosexuals**

One view of metrosexuals is that they are products of our present society. When Simpson came up with this term for the first time in 1994, he basically criticised the kind of society and culture where spending money and buying more and more products are the most important activities for people. He hated the idea of rich men living in metropolitan areas and spending money for the products that were advertised. According to Simpson, these advertisements were supporting men to live just consumer way of life.<sup>8</sup> However, all media started to use this term and a metrosexual became a symbol for a young rich successful man. Cosmetics companies started to focus more on men and later on it turned out to be really good payoff. Their turnovers have risen in 2000s and continue growing. Those of them which used to make products only for women, such as Nivea, Clarins, and Christian Dior, changed their marketing strategies and started distributing products for men.

The situation has remained the same until today. Nowadays there are even more commercials than ever been before which are advising men to buy numerous kinds of cosmetics products. Every fashion magazine offers new clothes and skin care products for men. The man who usually appears in advertisement or commercials is considered to be women's sex symbol so many men try to copy him.

According to Simpson, one side of these phenomena is that men are trying to look like the celebrities in commercials. They would like to have women's attention and think that if they dress well and use good, although expensive, face cream, they will be as successful as commercials say. Some men say that it is only fair if they pay attention to their appearance as women do. However, according to Simpson, it is not that much about fairness but it is more about how they feel when they see themselves in the mirror. Therefore, they are called "Mirror Men", which says a lot. They just like looking at themselves and want to be satisfied with what they see.<sup>9</sup>

It could be said that metrosexuals are content when they wear the latest trends and any time when there is something new on the market they run to buy it. That is exactly what is

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<sup>8</sup> See Simpson, *It's a Queer World*, 208.

<sup>9</sup> See Simpson, *It's a Queer World*, 208.

being criticized by Simpson, but the prognosis is that it is not going to change any time soon. It used to be only women's kind of sport – running all over the mall, looking for new trends – but it turns out that this kind of hobby is being shared nowadays by a lot of men, too. These men are strongly supported by thousands of advertisements and commercials around them. Therefore, spreading the phenomena of the metrosexual man is in the hands of the magazines and media.

### **1.2.1 The Power of Advertising**

The power of advertising plays probably one of the key roles in spreading metrosexuality. Many magazines which focus on men can be found on the market nowadays – for example *Esquire*, *Men's Vogue* or *GQ*. These magazines are full of articles dealing with what real men today should wear, along with many pieces of advice how men should take care of themselves. Consequently, at the end of such articles there are lists of products that they should use. The important thing about these magazines is that there is no mention if the magazine is for heterosexuals or for homosexuals since there is no reason to divide metrosexuals into two groups like that. Simpson says: “The heterosexual address of these magazines is a convention, there to reassure the readership and the advertisers that their unmanly passions are in fact manly. Nevertheless, the metrosexual man contradicts the basic premise of traditional heterosexuality that only women are looked at and only men do the looking. Metrosexual man might prefer women, he might prefer men, but when all is said and done nothing comes between him and his reflection.”<sup>10</sup> One of the magazines like this is *Attitude* or *GQ*. This is a magazine for men but it does not care whether the reader is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual. The important thing is that men who read it are interested in clothes shopping and similar activities which used to be exclusively associated with women. Magazines like *Attitude* try to persuade men that it is just a normal men's world to show the feminine side of them. Moreover, they try to convince them that it is what they have to do in order to be successful in their lives.

The best way how to persuade men to buy any kind of products is to hire famous men for advertising new products, because men like to associate themselves with male celebrities, especially with those who are admired by women. Although hiring celebrities

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<sup>10</sup> Simpson, *It's a Queer World*, 209.

such as David Beckham or Ben Affleck costs a fortune, it usually increases company's income and company gains the money back.

### **1.2.2 Metrosexuals and Celebrities**

As it was mentioned, the women's sex symbols such as famous actors or singers are being exposed in commercials in order to convince men to buy the products they advertise. The most popular among these celebrities is undoubtedly David Beckham; however he is not the only man who appears in commercials as a symbol for metrosexuals. Male celebrities who are chosen for commercials are the type of men who are heterosexual and represent manly men.

One of the typical examples could be an Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe. Although he has been considered by some people to be a homosexual, he is not. His explanation was that he was not homosexual he was just different from that kind of typical rough Australian men.<sup>11</sup> The fact he likes shopping and following new trends is not something that makes a man be a homosexual. Since Thorpe is a hero for many Australians, he has influenced many Australian men and also a lot of men all over the world in general.

Brad Pitt is another example of a famous metrosexual. He likes showing his perfect body and wearing fashionable clothes. Although sometimes he is seen unshaved, it is usually because of his work. Otherwise he follows new trends and is one of the American metrosexual celebrities.

As it was already mentioned, the most known famous person who is a metrosexual is David Beckham. Besides the fact that Beckham is a popular British football player, he is the person that people have on mind when they come across the metrosexuality topic. Beckham chooses his clothes very carefully. He follows new fashion trends. Moreover, he is the person who quite often comes up with something new, such as haircut or a diamond earring in his ear, what becomes a hit afterwards. He changes his haircut every month and he always has many followers who copy him. He is just what it means to be a metrosexual. He likes to be admired by women and he likes to be admired by men too.

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<sup>11</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 174.

## **2 GENDER ROLE AND METROSEXUALS IN AMERICAN CULTURE**

The situation with metrosexuals in America is similar to the situation all over the world. We cannot really date when some men in the USA started to be metrosexuals. As in other countries, there have always been men who were interested in their appearance. However, we can say that it may be a little harder for men in the USA to confess that they like shopping and other activities which are more often associated with women. The role of gender is stressed in the USA more than many people realise. The issue of metrosexuality is a cultural phenomenon to a large degree. According to some Americans, “the Americans have always been an extremely macho culture, and any deviation from machismo is traditionally looked at as weakness. Conversely, there has been a long tradition of androgynous men in Britain and Japan.”<sup>12</sup> American culture thus expects men to behave in a proper masculine way which means that the man does not go shopping for clothes twice a week, does not put a gel on his hair every morning or a cream against wrinkles on his face. He should not do any activities which are strongly associated with women. According to American sociologist John J. Macionis, many people think that men are concerned with getting rich while women concentrate on their appearance.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, a man who is concerned with his looks more than it is common in the USA can be viewed as somebody who does not represent a typical American man

### **2.1 Who is an American Metrosexual**

Nowadays, situation in the USA is that people have got used to the fact that some men just like clothes as women do and are not homosexuals. Moreover, it has become popular to be a metrosexual especially among young wealthy American men. According to EURO RSG agency, which is one of the largest advertising and marketing agencies in the world, the typical young American businessman can be described in this way: When thirty years old American Karru Martinson wakes up in the morning, he puts on face cream which costs 60 dollars. He puts on one of his hand-made shirt and luxury Bruno Magli shoes. He does not have any troubles with his hair because he uses three kinds of shampoo and three types of

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<sup>12</sup> John Parker “Metrosexual Trend On the Rise in America,” MINIPPON, <http://www.mynippon.com/MYNIPPON0707/story129.htm><http://www.mynippon.com/MYNIPPON0707/story129.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> John J. Macionis, *Sociology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 356.

different hair stuff: conditioner, gel and hair spray. He likes going to the bars and he likes shopping with his female friends. His male friends thought about him that he is different. However, Martinson, who works in a financial district in New York and lives at Manhattan, says that he is just the regular man.<sup>14</sup> It is not unusual to see men like that in New York nowadays. Especially many men who work in a financial district are like that. They follow new trends, buy designer clothes such as Armani, Gucci, Calvin Klein or Ralph Lauren and visit massage saloon or spa on regular basis. Based on *The Economist* which, is British weekly magazine, young American men spend 240,000,000,000 a year for beauty cosmetics products.

These new American men, as they are called, are heterosexuals but they are willing to spend more money on clothes and cosmetic products than their macho friends. According to the advertising agency EURO RSCG which did the survey about metrosexuals, men are starting to be more like women. However, it is not a new information for clothes and cosmetic industry because based on their profit from men's products, they have been aware of this situation for a while. According to the survey, almost 35 percent of American men have got a tendency to be metrosexuals. Therefore, it can be considered as a very surprising high number since America has always been considered as a sort of a macho culture where men are proud of their masculinity.<sup>15</sup>

## **2.2 The Roots of Metrosexuality in the USA**

Although it was a Briton Mark Simpson who first came up with the term metrosexual, it is the USA where we can find the ancestors of today's metrosexuals. "Bill Osgerby contributed a chapter to a study of masculinity and man's lifestyle magazines in attempt to correct the somewhat restricted focus of the 1990s British debate on male consumerism."<sup>16</sup> Bill Osgerby in his book *Playboys in Paradise* argues that type of a consumer male is not new. These men appeared in America hundred years earlier, and become recognised in 1930s. Osgerby provides historical American consumer models, which include the urban bachelor, the "Arrow Man", the Jazz Age Gatsby buck, and the gangster. All these types of men must be taken in account if we talk about metrosexuals. These men had lived the

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<sup>14</sup> See "Zrodil se nový typ muže: Metrosexuál" Revue idnes.cz.  
<http://revue.idnes.cz/sex.asp?r=sex&c=2003M209V03A>.

<sup>15</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 25.

consumer type of life in America long time before Simpson came up with the term metrosexual.<sup>17</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century there were men who were called dudes. The dude was a nickname for a man who is described by Osgerby as “a young man, upwardly mobile and debonair, who sauntered through the bustling city streets”<sup>18</sup>. At the beginning of the twentieth century there was an “Arrow Man”, who was wearing the type of shirt which had been only worn for sport before. This was also called the “Ivy League” style of dressing. After the the First World War the gangster image was quite popular. Men were wearing very expensive suits or tuxedos. “In the 1920s, Gatsby style playboys incarnated what Osgerby refers to as a new masculine style defined by a sense of youthful and narcissistic hedonism”<sup>19</sup>.

As we can see in this study made by Osgerby, there have always been men in the USA who have paid very close attention to what they wear and as it can be noticed, it has always been connected with money. It is obvious that all these styles could be afforded only by people who were wealthy. It also shows us how men’s looks and appearance is connected with their success. It has always been thought that good-looking and well-dressed men go side by side with the success. According to this, it could be claimed that even centuries ago people lived consumer type of life. The fact is that they fulfilled all aspects of metrosexuals such as hunger for new trends or the wish to be admired plus money, they have always been significant for the men who decided to live this kind of life which was considered to be the way of life for successful people.

### **2.3 American Women and Metrosexuals**

Talking about metrosexuals who are sometimes described as a not manly man or feminine men; it is interesting to look at what American women think about the men like that. There is much conversation related to this topic going on, which is posted on the Internet. It is very interesting to read it in order to find out what women think about metrosexuals and if they find them attractive. Their opinions vary a lot. Some of them say that they like men who are metrosexuals because they think it is good when men take care of themselves

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<sup>17</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 25.

while some of them are absolutely against it. One of the negative opinions is that “metrosexuals are pretty, but pretty is not a word for a man.”<sup>20</sup> They argue that men should be manly and not to own more cosmetics products than they do. They think that a man is attractive for them when he leaves the gym and is sweaty.

On the other hand, a lot of women appreciate men who are not ashamed to show their feminine side. One of the women said that she did not use to like metrosexuals but it happened that she married one and is absolutely happy. This woman makes a good point related to metrosexual. She said that it is not important whether he is a metrosexual or not - it is his personality what is the most important thing. Some women argue that it is only good when men realise that it is better to smell good than stink.<sup>21</sup>

There will probably always be women who prefer metrosexuals and men who take care of themselves a lot. On the contrary, a lot of women, as it was obvious from the forum, still prefer a typical manly man who does not put gel on his hair nor owns a collection of perfumes.

## **2.4 Homosexuals vs. Metrosexuals in America**

It has been said many times that being a metrosexual does not mean to be a homosexual. However, in a culture where the gender role plays an important part as it was mentioned, it could be hard to imagine that a man, who dresses like homosexuals or have the same kind of interests, such as shopping for clothes, going to the nail saloons or buying huge amount of cosmetics products, is just a straight man. The word straight man is used quite often in American English. Straight means not being homosexual or bisexual. If people say that he is straight it means that he is interested in women so that it is the way it should be. According to Simpson, if a man in the US is called a gay, “it is still the worst thing you can accuse a man of in the US.”<sup>22</sup> However, there have been many debates going on related to the term metrosexual. New York has always been a place with high number of homosexuals who were easily recognised walking in New York, at least that is what a lot

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<sup>20</sup> “Do women find metrosexual men attractive?”, “YELP, <http://www.yelp.com/topic/san-francisco-do-women-find-metrosexual-men-attractive>.

<sup>21</sup> See “Do women find metrosexual men attractive?” “YELP, <http://www.yelp.com/topic/san-francisco-do-women-find-metrosexual-men-attractive>.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Simpson “America - meet David Beckham,” MARK SIMPSON.com, <http://www.marksimpson.com/blog/2007/07/13/america-meet-david-beckham/>.

of people think. A man who was good-looking with perfect haircut and perfectly dressed was a homosexual.

However, it turned out that it is not always like that. Many men started to behave like homosexuals according to many people. They started to dress like them, going to the fashion shows for men's clothes and do other activities which were primarily associated with homosexuals. Nevertheless, people all of the sudden could not recognise if a man walking in Manhattan is a metrosexual or a homosexual. The good thing is that people got used to the fact that there are people like homosexuals or bisexuals living in America. They accept them and are friends with them. However, now there is a man who dresses similar to homosexual but he says that he is straight. Even women in the club cannot be sure if the good looking men are homosexuals or heterosexuals. The fact is that it is just a dogma that all homosexuals must be perfectly dressed and heterosexuals must be tough dirty men. It is the same with a metrosexual because there is no difference if a man is heterosexual or homosexual in terms related to clothes or fashion. In principle, they all just like activities which are usually associated with women. On the other hand, most of the metrosexual men are very good at sport because one part of being metrosexual is to have a good body. Since a muscular body is one of the aspects which are strongly associated with masculinity, there is no reason to say that a metrosexual man is a less of a man.

Nowadays it could be said that a metrosexual is a regular successful young New Yorker. Most of them have well-paid job and they go to the most famous restaurants and clubs in Manhattan. Metrosexuals can be seen in tanning saloons or nail saloons which used to be associated only with women or homosexuals. Based on Coad, "Metrosexuality can replaced the conventional categories of sexual orientation means that less attention is being paid to the traditional binary opposition separating males into two discrete categories, heterosexual or homosexual."<sup>23</sup> Basically, people should stop concerning whether somebody is a homosexual, a bisexual or a heterosexual because now there is a metrosexual man and it is not important if he is interested in men or women.

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<sup>23</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 107.

### 3 SPORT, FASHION, METROSEXUAL CONNECTION

When, talking about metrosexuals in America, it is necessary to mention American professional athletes. Sport plays very significant role in relation to metrosexualism. In fact, American pro-footballer Joe Namath, who played in National Football League during the 1960s and 1970s, is considered to be the first American metrosexual. He advertised shaving cream and pantyhose and according to Simpson, it was Namath who left the field open for the European metro-imports such as David Beckham.<sup>24</sup> Even though Beckham is considered to be an icon for metrosexuals, there are more athletes who are like him. One reason why there are many metrosexuals among professional athletes is that they earn a lot of money; therefore, they can afford buying expensive designer clothes and can dress according to the latest fashion trends. It is not unusual that some of the professional sportsmen come from the poor families but after signing a contract with the sports club they become rich. As a result of this, they start to buy expensive clothes, cars or jewellery in order to show people that they can afford it. Following new trends in fashion is part of it and these are the aspects connected with metrosexuals. As a result of this, many of them become metrosexuals even though it was not their intention; for example Mike Piazza or Denis Rodman are typical examples of American professional athletes who became metrosexuals after they started earning a lot of money.

One feature shared by all metrosexuals is their desire to be attractive, and along with it, they want to have well-built body which is a part of it. In order to have muscular body, men must exercise a lot, and that is why they view sport as a significant part of their life and the only way how to acquire a well-built body.

Another reason why there is a close relation between the sport and the metrosexuals is that these men are quite often used by fashion and cosmetic companies for advertising their products and clothes. It was mentioned that Namath appeared in advertisements in 1970s; however, it was not that typical for that period of time. There used to be only professional models who were doing this job and most of them were gays or were considered to be gays. The result of this was that no American men were interested in clothes or underwear which was advertised by homosexual men, since heterosexual American men do not want to be connected with homosexuals at any rate. Therefore, designers, in order to sell their

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<sup>24</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 171.

products, started to hire popular American professional athletes, because they are the heroes for many American men. Two designers who are the most popular for promoting their clothes by using professional athletes are Ralph Lauren and Armani. The magazine where athletes in role of model started to appear was the U.S version of *GQ* magazine. Although the British version of this magazine had David Beckham on its cover in 2000, the same magazine had been working with professional athletes much earlier.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.1 *GQ* Magazine

Magazine *GQ* had been considered as a magazine for homosexuals until 1983; however, Art Cooper became an editor of this magazine in 1983 and he decided to change it. His desire was to make this magazine interesting not only for homosexuals readers but he wanted to attract heterosexual readers too.<sup>26</sup> One of the first things he did was that he chose new male models for this magazine because he wanted models who can represent masculinity in men. Since athlete's body has always represented hyper-masculinity and heterosexuality, he decided to place pictures of the famous athletes on the cover of the magazine. Based on this he wanted to show the readers that wearing designer clothes and having perfect haircut does not make them homosexuals. In each issue readers could read an interview with one of the American sport stars and the target of these interviews was, apart from sport, to talk about fashion or clothes.

Presenting athletes in *GQ* was without doubt a good strategy because *GQ* started to be printed in higher numbers and became popular among American men who are heterosexuals but are also keen on clothes and like following new trends in fashion. Since athletes were usually wearing clothes made by Armani, Ralph Lauren or other famous designers, the popularity of these brands increased among American men. Besides promoting clothes on American athletes, *GQ* also came up with the idea to name the best dressed American athletes every year. It supported the idea that a man can look manly and like fashion along with it.

*GQ* magazine helped American men to realise that it is not a shame if they like fashion and taking care of themselves, even though these activities are associated with women. Ever since Cooper became the editor of *GQ*, this magazine has tried to support the idea that

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<sup>25</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 40.

<sup>26</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 40.

it is common to have some feminine side though a man is a heterosexual. It can be said that *GQ* magazine was the first magazine in the USA for metrosexual men.

### **3.2 Armani, Sport and Metrosexuals**

Armani is considered to be a god figure of the fashion industry. He is also called “a central piece in metrosexual puzzles”.<sup>27</sup> Giorgio Armani is considered to be a genius in men’s fashion industry. It would not be a lie to say that most of the metrosexuals wish to wear Armani clothes and in fact most of them do. The reason why it is necessary to mention Armani is that he helped to spread the type of metrosexual men throughout the whole America. American athletes, although unconsciously, helped to support the idea of metrosexuality by wearing his clothes.

The beginning is dated in 1980s when Lakers coach Pat Riley started wearing Armani’s suits in order to enhance his image. Armani’s “power suit” was considered as a status of luxury and wealth among Americans. Pat Riley was almost obsessed with the clothes made by Armani and he was considered by people to be a narcissist.<sup>28</sup>

Another athlete who is famous for his connection with Armani is Andre Agassi. Andre Agassi, a famous tennis player, appeared on the cover of *GQ* magazine in 1989 wearing Armani’s suit. Andre Agassi was admired by millions of women around the world, even though he wore earrings or put lipstick on during the tournament. In order to show his heterosexuality, there were pictures in the fashion magazines where he was together with his girlfriend. The point of doing it was to convince men that there is a place for men in the society who like spending money for clothes and are not homosexuals. Another famous tennis player who was advertising Armani’s clothes was for example Pete Sampras who was wearing Armani’s suit on his wedding.

Armani made a good decision when he engaged a baseball player Alex Rodriguez for advertising his clothes. Rodriguez’s parents come from Dominican Republic and it was one of the reasons why he chose him because he wanted to make his clothes popular also among the Hispanic people. Since Rodriguez is very important for Armani, he can walk to any Armani store and get his clothes for free. Rodriguez can be considered as one of the most famous American metrosexual. He said for a Canadian newspaper: “You can take my

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<sup>27</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 54.

cars and my house but do not mess with my clothes”<sup>29</sup> This is the perfect description of the attitude which is typical for the metrosexuals. Many times he said that it is not his wife but he who wants to go shopping for clothes.

### **3.3 Ralph Lauren, Sport and Metrosexuals**

The first American designer who came up with the idea that sport and fashion industry could cooperate is Ralph Lauren. Ralph Lauren is a famous American designer who first started to pay closer attention to the clothes which could be worn for leisure activities or exercise. He started to use professional athletes for his campaign which was, without doubt, a great decision. As a result of this the retail of these clothes increased and, for example, his polo shirts have become one of the best selling products in the fashion industry all over the USA and also in many countries all over the world. Men wear these shirts not only for tennis or golf but also for their leisure time activities. Moreover, Ralph Lauren is not afraid to make these shirts in different kinds of colours and surprisingly, for example, his pink polo shirt along with other pastel colours has become quite popular within men all over the world and primarily within metrosexuals.

Ralph Lauren started to focus on the sport clothes in 1990s and since then there have been many athletes who have been promoting his clothes. One of the famous athletes who have been cooperating with Ralph Lauren is an American baseball player Mike Piazza who appeared on the cover of *GQ* magazine in 1999 wearing Ralph Lauren’s clothes. Mike Piazza is also one of the best examples representing American metrosexuals because he likes fashion, is always perfectly dressed, and he also attends many events which are connected with fashion, such as fashion shows or opening new clothes stores. Due to his popularity among many American men, he is always welcomed at the events like these. Another famous American athlete who has modelled for Ralph Lauren is an American football player Tiky Barber. Barber modelled for Ralph Lauren together with his twin brother, who is also a professional football player, and their pictures were posted in the *GQ* magazine in October 2001. Although Tiky Barber is considered to be one of the fashion icons, he admits that it is his wife who helps him to choose the suitable and fashionable clothes. He admits that he likes wearing a perfect suit and he likes to be looked at.<sup>30</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 45.

fact that he likes being looked at and he confesses it is one of the most typical signs of metrosexuals. In principle, by admitting this, he called himself a metrosexual.

Ralph Lauren has discovered the right way how to make fashion popular among American men. “The fact that a football player’s built could be admired as suitable for high-class formalwear, rather than just athletic skill, demonstrates a change in how athletes are perceived.”<sup>31</sup> Since many American men love sport, choosing professional athletes to promote his clothes was an excellent move made by Ralph Lauren. When men saw their adored athletes wearing such clothes, they started to copy them. Wearing expensive clothes and trendy clothes like celebrities gives them a feeling of being able to be as successful as they are. Fashion industry gets a huge profit from this, and as a result they come up with more different kinds of men clothing every year.

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<sup>31</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 44.

## **4 ETHNICITY AND METROSEXUALS**

When talking about metrosexuals in America, it is important to mention the question of ethnicity related to this term. Due to the fact that 12,8 percent of Americans are African Americans and 15,1 percent is the Hispanic population, it is interesting how this phenomenon influenced these minorities. The truth is that almost every time when there is an article about metrosexuals in the newspaper, there is a picture of a white boy or a man. Although the definition does not say whether the metrosexual is white, Hispanic or black, it is usually the type of a David Beckham man who crosses people's minds. The fact that David Beckham is considered to be an icon for metrosexual men does not leave much space for picturing a Latino man as a typical metrosexual.

### **4.1 Hispanic Population and Metrosexuals**

Few years ago when somebody said "metrosexual" in the USA, almost nobody would think of a Hispanic man. One of the reasons could be that being a metrosexual also means to spend an amount of money, actually a lot of money for clothes and cosmetics products. However, Hispanic men are not usually that wealthy to be able to spend an abundance of money for luxurious things like that. It is not expected to see many Hispanic men living for example in Manhattan or any other expensive parts of the cities such as Los Angeles, where a huge concentration of metrosexuals can be seen. However, cosmetics companies would like to change this fact. Therefore, they started putting pictures of Hispanic men on their products in order to attract this population. They realised that the number of Hispanics living in the USA increases every year so it cannot be left out. It was a good choice again because the number of products bought by Hispanic men has risen up.

Another important thing was that Alex Rodriguez, who is admired by many Hispanics, became a model for Armani. Hispanic men love baseball and they love Rodriguez the most so seeing him on the covers of the fashion magazines made them realize that they could try to be more like him. Therefore, members of the Hispanic population started to care more about their look and to buy more designer clothes - if they can afford it, of course. It could be said that Rodriguez has a big impact on the attitude of Hispanic men towards the fashion in America.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 58.

The fashion industry did the same what the cosmetics industry did and started showing more Latino men in their fashion catalogues in order to attract more Hispanic men. Although this part of American population is being considered rather poor, many Hispanic men dream to become wealthy. If they make a lot of money, than they like people to see it so they go and do not hesitate to spend money for expensive clothes, because for them it is the sign of the success.

## **4.2 African American Population**

On the contrary, the situation is may be different with African American men. These men have always been different in their style of clothing and decorating themselves. They have always liked wearing different hairstyles and many gold necklaces, bracelets, rings, and earrings. They just love decorating their body but in this case it is the part of their culture rather than the desire to be metrosexual.

According to Coad, “African American athletes have a pre-existing cultural disposition to express style through a special attention given to hair, clothes, body accessories, and body modifications.”<sup>33</sup> All people can see how for example African American runners are dressed during the competition because they usually differ from other athletes. It is common to see them with a so-called crazy hairstyle, sunglasses or some flashy running shoes. The fact is that they have always been like that. Another example of this culture are for example hip-hop singers, who are wearing heavy and expensive gold necklaces or very expensive shoes. Moreover, we can also see African American celebrities wearing long expensive fur coats.

### **4.2.1 African American Style of Clothes**

The truth is that a lot of African Americans pay a close attention to what they wear. It is due to the fact that wearing expensive clothes and jewellery means for them moving to a higher status, therefore, it is a symbol of wealth for them. When they were slaves they had to wear different clothes from white people but after the slavery was abolished, many of them started to wear nice clothes, if they could afford it. It was a sign of freedom for them.

Later on in 1970s the pimp style started to be popular and basically is being worn by them even today. Pimp style referred to as the style of clothing which is associated with

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<sup>33</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 120.

black men who were pimps. The typical sign of this style are very expensive diamonds watches, gold and diamond jewellery and mink coats. The thing is that even though they have always been wearing a lot of jewellery and were paying very close attention to their appearance, they have not been considered to be homosexuals. Moreover, they were representing the symbol of hypermasculinity and hypersexuality.<sup>34</sup>

Many African American celebrities have adopted this kind of style. Huge numbers of black celebrities who are associated with this style are for example NBA basketball players or football players. Since there is a high number of African Americans playing NBA, it is the most popular sport among them. These basketball players quite often come from rather poor background, and becoming professional basketball players give them opportunity to move to the higher social status. The result of this is that they want to show it and want to be gazed at. Therefore, it is no problem for them to spend an abundance of money for a diamond Rolex watches or diamond jewellery.

A former NBA player describes in his autobiography, which was published in 2007, an NBA locker room in this way:

The pro locker room was the most flamboyant place I'd never been this side of swanky club full of martini-drinking gay men. .... The guys flaunted their perfect bodies. They bragged of their sexual exploits. They checked out each other's cocks. They primped in front of the mirror, applying cologne and hair gel by the bucketful. .... They tried each other's \$10,000 suits and shoes, admired each other's diamond studded rings and necklaces. .... As I surveyed the room, I couldn't help chuckling to myself: And I'm the gay one Hah!<sup>35</sup>

This is a typical aspect of the metrosexual men. Nevertheless, the interesting thing is that these African American basketball players are not usually associated with the term metrosexual, even though they wear expensive velvet suits or mink coats which are typical for pimps. The answer could be that metrosexuals are strongly associated with the white attractive wealthy men. Notwithstanding, the white metrosexuals sometimes copy African Americans, for example by wearing diamond earrings or tattoos on their bodies which are the aspects, without doubt, the aspects typical for African American men.

All in all, it is quite difficult to specify the position of African American men in terms of metrosexuality. Based on the description of the locker room in NBA, there is a strong sign of metrosexuality because all the aspects associated with metrosexuals are mentioned.

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<sup>34</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 125.

<sup>35</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 129.

Based on Coad, “metrosexuality can be instrumental in redistributing and recycling a racist ideology”<sup>36</sup> The fact is that while white men are exposed to be admired for being metrosexual, nobody does that in the same way with African American men. While a white man is being admired for having a diamond earring in his ear or a tattoo on his body, a black man with the same things is associated with a pimp, which is rather negative.

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<sup>36</sup> Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 141.

## **5 THE FUTURE OF THE METROSEXUAL MEN IN THE USA**

When Mark Simpson wrote for the first time in 1994 that metrosexuality is going to spread out nobody really believed that. However, as it was said, the huge number of men has adopted this style since then. Due to the fact that a lot of men feel comfortable with being a metrosexual, there is a big chance that metrosexuals will be there for a very long time. It is obvious that thanks to the marketing of the companies, which try as much as possible to increase their income from selling their products, metrosexuals are not going to disappear any time soon.

However, other opinions started to arise, and one of them is that metrosexuals are going to be replaced by ubersexuals. According to Marian Salzman, who is one of the people who helped popularize this style in America, there is going to be a shift from metrosexual men to a more manly man called ubersexuals. Salzman writes in *The Future of Men*, a book she co-authored with Ira Matathia and Ann O'Reilly, that a different type of men is going to appear. The kind of a man who is not as narcissistic as metrosexuals are and they are called ubersexuals.<sup>37</sup> On the contrary, an Australian sociologist and demographer Barbard Ralt claims that a new type of a man has arisen recently and this man is called neosexual. However, none of these people can say that these new types of men will become as popular as metrosexuals are; even though, according to them, ubersexuals or neosexuals must attract women more than metrosexuals.

### **5.1 The Ubersexuals**

Firstly, it is necessary to describe an ubersexual man. In a study which was written in 2003, the three trend spotters wrote that "one of the telltale signs of metrosexuals is their willingness to indulge themselves, whether by springing for a Prada suit or spending a couple of hours at a spa to get a massage and facial." In contrast, they claim that an ubersexual is less concerned with fashion and more inclined to develop his sense of style."<sup>38</sup> The fact is that, according to the people who came up with the ubersexual man it is a kind of a man who likes wearing nice clothes but he dresses more for himself. He does

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<sup>37</sup>See "Ubersexual: The New Masculine Ideal?," WebMD, <http://men.webmd.com/features/ubersexual-new-masculine-ideal>.

<sup>38</sup>"Ubersexual: The New Masculine Ideal?," WebMD, <http://men.webmd.com/features/ubersexual-new-masculine-ideal>.

not want to be admired by other people like metrosexuals; he just wants to feel good for himself.

If David Beckham is considered an icon for metrosexuals, than for ubersexuals it should be for example George Clooney, an American actor who is admired by women but he does not have female friends as a best friends. He has them for sex but for hanging out he prefers men. Ubersexual men are also more sensitive and are concerned with serious issues such as hunger in Africa or poverty in today's world. According to Salzman, there is going to be a shift in attitude of American men towards the lifestyle. Based on her, there is a big chance that ubersexuals will overcome metrosexuals. However, she also agreed that she cannot be a hundred percent positive about it and only the time can show if the ubersexuals men are going to outnumbered metrosexual men.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, it must be said that an ubersexuals as a new type of a man has failed so far.

## **5.2 The Neosexuals**

Another type of a man has arisen recently. This should be a man who has some aspects of a metrosexual - it means he should look good but he also should have more aspects of masculinity. According to the Australian demographer Barnard Salt, it is due to the fact that women has changed their minds and now they are looking for a man who is a combination of James Bond, Hugh Jackman, Jim Carrey and Zac Efron, which means that a man should be good-looking, have a younger look but also return to "his masculine roots."<sup>40</sup>

As it is obvious, according to Salt, men change their images because of women - they want to be attractive for them. However, similarly with ubersexuals it is hard to say if this term is going to be that widely used as the term metrosexual man. As it is obvious, ubersexuals and neosexuals share many similarities in term of appearance. As it was previously said, the attempt to spread the phenomenon of ubersexual men has failed so it is hard to forecast if the type of neosexual men will make any impact on men.

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<sup>39</sup> "Ubersexual: The New Masculine Ideal?," WebMD, <http://men.webmd.com/features/ubersexual-new-masculine-ideal>.

<sup>40</sup>"Neosexual is the new bloke," smh, <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/lifematters/neosexual-is-the-new-bloke-20090411-a3dv.html>.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## **6 RESEARCH**

From the theoretical part arose some questions which are very interesting, such as what makes a man become metrosexual and if he actually realises it. However, there are more questions which should be discussed, such as if a metrosexual man experiences the situation when people associate him with a homosexual. According to the research, money is closely connected with the term metrosexual because it costs a lot of money to be trendy all the time and be able to buy designer clothes, so the importance of money will be discussed too. As it was pointed out, many fashion designers hire famous men to advertise their clothes so the question will be if it has any impact on men when they see a famous American athlete wearing designer clothes. Moreover, the importance of sport is going to be discussed and along with it another topics, which were mentioned in the first part, such as ethnicity, ubersexuals or neosexuals, will be examined.

### **6.1 Methodology**

Four informants will be interviewed in order to provide the answers which are related to the topic. These four informants are young American men who are considered to be metrosexuals. The methods of snowball sampling will be used in order to obtain enough data which are necessary for the research. This method is used when not enough informants are available to the researcher so researcher asks the existing informant to obtain some other respondents. Qualitative research will be used because the in-depth understanding of this issue is important and also due to the fact that only four samples were available.

### **6.2 Respondents**

As it was previously mentioned, four informants will be interviewed. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some basic information about these respondents. The respondents are all early 20s, students or young professionals, well-to-do.

Patrick is 21 years old and is a student at Rutgers University in New Jersey. He does not work and is fully supported by his parents, who both work as executives in banks.

Tim is 23 years old, lives in New York in Upper East Side of Manhattan. He works as a stock broker in Wall Street.

David is 23 years old and works as a financial analyser in New York. He lives in Manhattan in New York.

Matt is a 21-year old student. He studies at the University of Notre Dame which is one of the top universities in the USA. He does not work during the school year, but he works during the summer in one of the companies which is owned by his family.

The research method which will be used is an interview with open questions. The informants will be asked an open question because it is the most suitable for this type of topic where longer answers are expected. The informants will be questioned over the Skype and their answers will be written down. This type of communicating will be used due to the fact that informants find it the most suitable for them.

### **6.3 Questions**

**Question 1:** Do you consider yourself as a metrosexual and why did you become a metrosexual?

**Question 2:** Has anybody ever told you that you dress or behave like a homosexual?

**Question 3:** How much money do you spend for clothes and going to hairdresser and saloon monthly?

**Question 4:** Does it have any impact on you when you see famous athletes wearing designer clothes and how important is sport in your life?

**Question 5:** Do you think that the term metrosexual is associated only with white men and do you know any African American or Hispanic men who are metrosexuals?

**Question 6:** Do you think that in a few years there won't be metrosexual men and they'll be replaced by ubersexuals or neosexuals?

## **7 INTERVIEW**

### **7.1 Patrick**

Patrick is 21 years old and is a student at Rutgers University in New Jersey. He does not work and is fully supported by his parents, who both work as executives in banks.

**Question 1: Do you consider yourself as a metrosexual and why did you become a metrosexual?**

I think that I am metrosexual - at least, I want to be. I think that it is normal to look clean and take care of myself and not just that I like to feel just perfect. I like David Beckham and actually it was him who made me do things in a different way. Until then I of course was wearing clean clothes and washed myself but it just happened that he became quite popular even in the USA and all my friends started to talk about him and for example dyed their hair or put an earring similar to his to their ears and so on. Since I also wanted to look more like him, I went shopping more often and I started to follow new trends in fashion. Then when I got to high school I met friends in our football team that were like me and we went shopping for designers clothes such as Armani exchange together. I just got used to it. I think that I must do my hair before I leave home and my hair must be perfect. I cannot imagine leaving house and not looking good - I think it would be so embarrassing.

**Question 2: Has anybody ever told you that you dress or behave like a homosexual?**

I do not think that it has ever happened to me. I see here in New Jersey and New York many men like me and it has never crossed my mind that I should be realising if they are straight or not. Wearing trendy clothes does not make anybody become homosexual. I think that today many people already know it.

**Question 3: How much money do you spend for clothes and going to hairdresser and saloon monthly?**

It is hard to say and it is not always the same amount of money which I spend. Sometimes I spend two thousand dollars on these things and sometimes more or less. It also depends on the fact how often I go shopping because anytime I go to the mall I always buy something. Once I am going to earn money I will spend probably even more. Even though my parents do not hesitate giving me money anytime I ask, I would feel strange to ask them for example for the money so I could buy a shirt which costs four hundred dollars.

**Question 4: Does it have any impact on you when you see famous athletes wearing designer clothes and how important is sport in your life?**

Sport plays important part of my life. I have played hockey for fifteen years and I go to the gym at least twice a week. I think it is important to look good. Almost all my friends do exercise as much as possible. If I see a popular person wearing something nice, and he knows how to wear it, then it sometimes makes me to buy it. Professional athletes usually wear designer clothes so it is one of the reasons why I buy it. They look good wearing it and I want to look good too.

**Question 5: Do you think that the term metrosexual is associated only with white men and do you know any African American or Hispanic men who are metrosexuals?**

I do not think that there are any obstacles for men from other ethnic groups to become a metrosexual. Actually I do not think that you can become a metrosexual - it is just the way of life you like. So if somebody who is Hispanic likes shopping and stuff like that then there is no reason why he could not be a metrosexual. For example Ricky Martin is Hispanic and he is also a typical exam of a metrosexual. I must admit that I have never thought about the fact if there are metrosexuals who are African American. I have friends who are black and in general they care of themselves a lot. However, some of them have a little bit different style of clothes from mine. They like wearing rap clothes which is, I think, typical for them. They wear jeans that are very low so even though they cost a lot it does not look good - at least, based on my opinion.

**Question 6: Do you think that in a few years there won't be metrosexual men and they'll be replaced by ubersexuals or neosexuals?**

I think that there always will be men who like clothes or shopping but I do not know if the term metrosexual will be connected with these men. However, I do not think that terms such as ubersexual or neosexual are going to be used as much as the term metrosexual. Honestly, I have never heard about men who are übersexuals or neosexuals.

## **7.2 Tim**

Tim is 23 years old, lives in New York in Upper East Side of Manhattan. He works as a stock broker in Wall Street.

**Question 1: Do you consider yourself as a metrosexual and why did you become a metrosexual?**

I was growing up with three sisters and they were into fashion so much. I did not care about the fashion at all when I was a child but than when I was 14 or 15 I started to hang out with my sisters and their friends more and they all liked fashion and looked good. I started to go

to stores such as Abercrombie and Fitch and I liked the look of the boys who were models for Abercrombie and Fitch. The girls liked them so I started to try to look like them. I wanted to have perfect hair, clothes, nails, I wanted to be tan even during the winter. I just think it is right and I like that.

**Question 2: Has anybody ever told you that you dress or behave like a homosexual?**

I do not have any experience with this but one of my friends went to the Kentucky like three years ago and told me that some people at the bar were looking at him and talking to him as he was homosexual. However, I think that it cannot happen to you here in New York where nobody cares what people wear.

**Question 3: How much money do you spend for clothes and going to hairdresser and saloon monthly?**

I spend a lot of money but I never regret it. I like buying designer clothes and wearing brand new trends. I feel like I spend more and more money every month. I cannot say how much exactly, but for example I bought shoes yesterday which cost me around five hundred dollars and I bought Armani polo shirt which cost me two hundred dollars. However, I do not consider it to be something strange. Due to the fact that I work for the company where almost all people dress like that it is quite normal for me.

**Question 4: Does it have any impact on you when you see famous athletes wearing designer clothes and how important is sport in your life?**

I like sport in general, it is good and relaxing. Sport also makes my body look good and then I feel more self-confident. I really like the style of David Beckham. He always wears perfect clothes and I have to admit that I try to copy his style sometimes. I like buying Ralph Lauren clothes a lot.

**Question 5: Do you think that the term metrosexual is associated only with white men and do you know any African American or Hispanic men who are metrosexuals?**

I have met a lot of metrosexuals who have different ethnic background. It is more about the media where only white men are being presented as a metrosexuals. Many actors from Hollywood have Hispanic background and are metrosexuals. I think that there are a lot of African American men who are metrosexuals too. Since I think that metrosexual is a man who likes shopping and looking good, there are many African American men like that. Moreover, I think that they pay more attention to their hair than other white metrosexual men do. The thing is that some of them like wearing different style of clothes which is not typical for a white metrosexual man. However, I think that to be metrosexual nobody must

wear the same type of fashion as everybody else. We like our clothes to be trendy, but there is always more than one new trend.

**Question 6: Do you think that in a few years there won't be metrosexual men and they'll be replaced by ubersexuals or neosexuals?**

There always have been men who were interested in fashion and I think it will be the same in the future. It is hard to say if men who are interested in fashion will be called metrosexuals or if they will be called differently.

### **7.3 David**

David is 23 years old and works as a financial analyst in New York. He lives in Manhattan in New York.

**Question 1: Do you consider yourself as a metrosexual and why did you become a metrosexual?**

When I entered high school I met a few boys that were good looking and all the time they had good looking girls around them. Of course I wanted to attract these girls who were always perfectly dressed and looked like the models. Therefore, I realised that I should try to be more attractive for them. I changed my clothes I started to shop at the designers stores. I changed my haircut and went to the salon at least once a month. I started to get up early so I could fix my hair and put cream on my face. Later on I started going to the saloon for massage, going to the dermatologist and going to the gym regularly. Even when I entered the college I met boys with similar lifestyle as me. However, it does not mean I am not friends with boys who are not metrosexuals. I think that it is the same like with girls - some of them do not care that much what they wear and so on while some of them like shopping and following new trends and it is important for them to have perfect make up. To be honest I like these kinds of girls and one of them is my girlfriend.

**Question 2: Has anybody ever told you that you dress or behave like a homosexual?**

I think that maybe fifteen years ago it could happen but not now. If I see my friends I think that a lot of them are like me. There is nothing wrong with the fact that I want to look good. Girls do that kind of stuff to be attractive and I do that so I could be attracted to them. I do not think that only girls and homosexuals should look good. There are many celebrities who are metrosexuals and only media keep giving out information that they are homosexuals. However, media have the reason for doing that and it is to sell the

information. As a matter of fact I know people who are homosexuals and not all of them like shopping for clothes.

**Question 3: How much money do you spend for clothes and going to hairdresser and saloon monthly?**

To be honest I have never thought about it. I do not want to sound it snobby but I do not think that I spend more money for clothes or cosmetics products than other members in my family. My parents are older than I and they spend maybe more money for this stuff than I do. Actually it was my parents who taught me to shop in stores like Ralph Lauren, Louis Vuiton, Armani, and Gucci. They have always been shopping there so I am used to it. I have many friends who consider it to be waste of money but I just love that kind of clothes. I also love the attention that I get from girls when I wear it. I think that when I wear something what I like it helps me to maintain self-confidence and it is what I found to be important.

**Question 4: Does it have any impact on you when you see famous athletes wearing designer clothes and how important is sport in your life?**

Sport is something that each man has to do in order to look good. Therefore, I go to the gym four times a week. I do not want to have big muscles - I just want to look healthy. I do not think that it affects me that much what some of the athletes wear. However, when I see some celebrities I sometimes say to myself that it is nice coat what he is wearing. However, I do not usually run to the store to buy it. Only I must confess that Armani is one of my favourite fashion designers and for example most of my suits are made by Armani.

**Question 5: Do you think that the term metrosexual is associated only with white men and do you know any African American or Hispanic men who are metrosexuals?**

David: Without doubt there are more people with Hispanic background, who are metrosexuals, than we think. I have a lot of friends from Puerto Rico which I met in college and basically all of them could be called metrosexuals. Actually I have copied their style many times. I think that they have a good sense for fashion. Honestly, I really think that it does not play any importance if a man is black or not in term of being a metrosexual. If I go shopping I see a lot of black men wearing designer clothes such as Gucci or Armani. On the other hand I also see a lot of black men who prefer hip hop style of clothes and wear a lot of jewellery. Their jewellery does not look good in my opinion but I also do not mind it. I just like different style of clothing. I also think that people should stop considering if metrosexuals are white men exclusively. This term arose somewhat in 1990s but it does not

mean that before people of any kinds of ethnicity living in the USA were not interested in fashion.

**Question 6: Do you think that in a few years there won't be metrosexual men and they'll be replaced by ubersexuals or neosexuals?**

Of course it will survive, the only question is if the term metrosexual will not be replaced with another term, but I hope that I will behave as I do now in the future too. I cannot imagine that one day I could not be interested in fashion.

## **7.4 Matt**

**Question 1: Do you consider yourself as a metrosexual and why did you become a metrosexual?**

I must admit that as a younger brother I have always admired my older brother who was always popular boy at school with the best looking girls around him. So I was trying to be like him. When I was 13 I started to dress like my older brother because I thought it is great. Any time I went to the mall with him I saw how girls were looking at him. Therefore, I thought that it is good way to attract them. The truth is that our mother is also one of those very good looking women and our father has always been a good looking man. He is always perfectly dressed. He always has got perfect haircut and so on. Even though he is almost fifty he goes to the gym, he follows the new trends. Moreover, he has got his own personal shopper and he thinks that it is part of the success to look good. I think that he could be considered as metrosexual when he was young but back then there was not such a term.

**Question 2: Has anybody ever told you that you dress or behave like a homosexual?**

I think that time when people were talking about homosexuals all the time has passed. Our society moved on and it is also the answer to that question. If I walk on the campus I am not the only one who likes clothes cosmetics products. Moreover a lot of us do that so we can be attractive for women.

**Question 3: How much money do you spend for clothes and going to hairdresser and saloon monthly?**

I think that I spend a lot of money for clothes but compared to my brother it is nothing. I think that my brother goes sometimes over the board when it comes to shopping. I love designer clothes but I do not have to buy it anytime I walk into the store. It is normal for me to buy shoes which cost around three hundred dollars, on the other hand if I like shoes

which cost for example a hundred dollars I buy them. I realise that even hundred dollars is a lot of money for some people, but I was lucky enough, to be born into the family which is considered to be wealthy. However, I still think that you can look great without wearing five hundred dollars shirt. On the other if one want to follow all these new fashion trends it costs quite a lot of money anyway.

**Question 4: Does it have any impact on you when you see famous athletes wearing designer clothes and how important is sport in your life?**

I play football in college. I love this sport. Related to this I like Ralph Lauren clothes a lot because it is kind of clothes I can wear for sport and also during the day, for example to school. The biggest benefit of RL clothes is that it is trendy and comfortable. I own some Armani clothes as well, but I do not go over the top as my brother does with his passion for Armani clothes.

**Question 5: Do you think that the term metrosexual is associated only with white men and do you know any African American or Hispanic men who are metrosexuals?**

I have gone to South America many times and I must admit that men over there know how to dress. It does not mean that all Latino men always dress perfectly but a lot of them do. However, it is the same with all men all over the world while some of them care about clothes, some of them do not. It does not matter where they are from or what their background is. A lot of people associate African American men with the clothes which is typical for black people. However, there are African American men who wear different style of clothes from that. I think people expect them wearing the type of rap style clothes because they see it on TV. Many rap singers are black and it is the reason why people associate them with the style of clothes that African American like wearing.

**Question 6: Do you think that in a few years there won't be metrosexual men and they'll be replaced by ubersexuals or neosexuals?**

I think that metrosexual man will not disappear. There is no reason for that. How it could happen anyway they cannot say to men stop buying clothes or cosmetics products. In 21<sup>st</sup> century it is something what shouldn't happen.

## **8 RESULTS**

This chapter offers a complex overview of the interview. It focuses on the differences between the theory related to the metrosexuals and the opinion of the American metrosexuals. All this is necessary to understand the position of the metrosexual in American culture.

According to the interview, in which informants talk about the fact that they are metrosexuals, it is obvious that they are not ashamed of this fact. Moreover, they are proud of it and accept it as the fact and the way of their lives. Two of the informants say that they started to take care of themselves in order to get girl's attention because they saw well dressed boy surrounded by many girls. Therefore, they realised that it could be the way how to become popular. As a result of this, it cannot be claimed that metrosexuals are metrosexuals because they are something in between heterosexual and homosexual. They behave like that because it is popular and want to be popular with girls or, as one of the informants says, it is the typical standard in their family. Basically they want to be admired and looked at.

Since some of the informants agreed that they became metrosexuals in order to be popular and part of it is to wear fashionable clothes, it is confirmed that fashion industry and especially their marketing have a huge impact on them. As one of the respondents says he admires David Beckham who as we have seen is considered to be one of the "products" of nowadays society. Beckham, as it was mentioned, is admired by men and women too and without a doubt it was the media and fashion industry which has had a huge impact on the people when they used Beckham in numbers of commercials. They represent him as a typical nowadays successful man and persuade other men to go and buy the clothes which he wears in order to be like him - a sex symbol for millions of women and a hero for men. As some informants agreed, it inspired them too.

The connection between homosexuality and metrosexuality is viewed by the informants as something which is not significant. According to them, people got used to the idea of men who take care of their appearance and are not homosexuals. As one of the informants say, the society has changed and people do not care if somebody is a heterosexual or a homosexual. According to this, they disagree with Simpson, who claims that American culture still view homosexuality as something wrong. However, it is also important to mention that all these informants come from New Jersey or New York area; the situation could be different in other states in the USA. As one informant says the

situation can be different in the states where people are more conservative - as he mentions for example Kentucky. Therefore, this fact must be taken in account. Moreover, the number of metrosexuals is probably higher in the metropolitan areas such as New York or in any other big cities in the USA while in the rural states the situation could be different.

Undoubtedly, money is closely connected with the fact of being metrosexual. Informants confess that they spent quite a lot of money for the clothes monthly. Since money is often connected with the success in America, it could be said that metrosexuals are successful young men. However, as two of the respondents are students fully supported by their parents, this description of metrosexual is not completely true because some of the metrosexuals can afford it thanks to the family situation. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that metrosexuals are exclusively successful men and that is why they can afford to buy expensive clothes. Since there are many metrosexuals, for example among students who do not have any income and have not accomplished anything yet, they can be hardly called as successful. Whereupon, success should not be thought as a part of being metrosexual, because men do not have to be successful in order to be metrosexual.

Success is definitely connected with famous American athletes, such as Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras or Pat Riley who are heroes for many American men and on that account it is also one of the reasons why many famous athletes are chosen by designers to promote their clothes in America. As some of the informants agreed, seeing athletes advertising clothes is sometimes a reason why they buy some pieces of clothes. Seeing professional athletes in advertisement help them to realise what they should buy, moreover when men see their well-build bodies, it makes many of them to attend the gym on regular basis. All the same, sport is popular all over the USA in general so for that reason it cannot be claimed that sport is connected only with metrosexuals. However, metrosexual man should have a nice muscular body so working out is one of the attributes of being a metrosexual. Basically all four of the informants agreed that sport is an important part of their life.

A lot of people associate African American men with the kind of clothes which is characteristic for rap singers because many famous rap or hip hop singers are black. However, there are many African American men in the USA who wear profoundly different style of clothes from that. The reason why people expect African Americans to wear rap clothes is that this is the way how media shape the image of the African American. Informant reaction to this issue is that they do not think that there is any ethnic issue related to being a metrosexual. Moreover, they agreed on the fact that many Hispanic

men are metrosexuals. They think that the media present mostly white American men as metrosexuals and it is the reason why it seems it seems that metrosexuals are only white men. On the other hand, in terms of African Americans their opinions vary. Firstly, each of the informants has a different explanation for the word metrosexual. One of them thinks that being a metrosexual means that men must take care of their appearance and to be trendy. However, some of them argue that although they know a lot of African American men who are metrosexuals, they do not consider wearing rap clothes and huge gold necklaces as the trend which is associated with metrosexuals. Notwithstanding, there is no reason for that, since a metrosexual should be a man who spends money for clothes and pays close attention to his looks; then African American men who spend a lot of money for their clothes and jewellery and take care of their appearance should fit into the description of metrosexual. All in all, if somebody claims that African Americans cannot be metrosexuals because they spend money for the type of clothes which is not typical for metrosexual then there is an ethnic issue related to this and it must be pointed out that Simpson did not say that metrosexuals must wear only special type of clothes to be metrosexuals. From this point of view it is obvious that the wealthy African Americans, who spend on their diamond jewellery and mink coats, maybe even more money than some white men, can be metrosexuals, even though they prefer different style of clothing.

According to this interview, only one respondent had an idea of what it means to be an ubersexual or a neosexual and all of them agreed on the fact that there is no reason why a metrosexual should disappear. These opinions are of course different from the opinions which have arisen lately, because according to some sociologist, neosexual men or ubersexual men should replace metrosexual men. Some sociologists think that the popularity of metrosexual men has fallen down and that is why a new type of men should replace them. It is understandable that the informants, who are metrosexuals, disagree with this opinion and do not expect that something like that will happen. The truth is that even though people from the marketing or the sociologists try to come up with a new type of men which should spread all over the world, it will probably not overshadow the term metrosexual. Since a neosexual man or an ubersexual man is a new phenomenon, nobody can really forecast if these terms will spread out, but as one of the informants said, there is no reason to keep inventing new types of men. Another fact is that people got used to the term metrosexual because it was something absolutely new and basically it blurred the differences between a homosexual and a heterosexual in terms of appearance. A

heterosexual man does not have to be worrying that if he puts a pink t-shirt on, people will think that he is a homosexual. However, there is no major reason to divide the male population into other groups called ubersexuals or neosexuals.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this bachelor thesis was to discuss metrosexual men in today's American culture. The important part was a survey where four American metrosexuals were interviewed in order to express their opinion about metrosexuals in the USA.

Firstly, in order to understand the term metrosexual it was necessary to examine the historical background and all historical connections which are related to metrosexual men. Even though this term is considered to be a new phenomenon because it appeared at the end of the twentieth century, there are many facts available to show that there have always been men who shared similar aspects with metrosexuals such as narcissists, dandies or men who were called dudes. The main similarity among these types of men is the fact that all of them like to be looked at and admired by the people.

Another important aspect which is connected with metrosexual men is that the media and fashion industry played very significant role in spreading this phenomenon. The most intriguing is the fact that Simpson came up with this term in order to criticize today's spoiled society, where the most popular hobby is to spend money on clothes and other products which bear some relation to the physical appearance; however, as it turned out, it was the fashion industry that made a huge profits thanks to adopting this term.

Even though the USA has always been a country where men are expected to look manly, many metrosexual men live there, especially in the big metropolitan areas such as New York or Los Angeles. Moreover, many wealthy men are metrosexuals because they can afford to buy expensive clothes or cosmetics products. Many famous American men are metrosexuals and this fact also helps to spread this phenomenon within other men in the USA. Since the USA is a country where professional athletes are celebrated many of these athletes are hired by clothing companies in order to increase their retail. Moreover, many sportsmen in the USA are metrosexuals, especially for the reasons that they like clothes and like being looked at, which are the typical aspects of metrosexuals.

The opinions vary in terms of the ethnical background and its relation to metrosexuals. Since the media usually represent white men as metrosexuals, it creates an impression that only these men can be metrosexuals; however, there are many metrosexual men among Hispanic or African American men in the USA. Nevertheless, one question which remains unresolved is whether African American men who share interests with metrosexual men can be called metrosexuals, even though they prefer for example different style of clothes than is expected from metrosexual men.

All in all, metrosexual men in American culture are mainly considered to be wealthy young men who are concerned with their appearance more than other men and do not hesitate to spend a lot of time, as well as money, in order to impress people. The image of a metrosexual is, without doubt, shaped by the media and fashion industry. The question of money is essential, because being able to afford a high-flown standard of life costs an abundance of money. However, there are also many critics of metrosexuals among American men and women, and it is also one of the reasons why new views about the future men have appeared. However, it remains to be seen if neosexual men or ubersexual men will ever gain as much popularity as metrosexuals.

Last thing that must be taken in account is that the topic of metrosexuality was discussed with metrosexual men, therefore the answers favor metrosexuals and their position in American culture. However, the results of the discussion would be different if the issue of metrosexuality was discussed with anti-metrosexuals or with American women.

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