Creating and Negotiating Collective Fantasy and Play At Modern-Day Renaissance Festivals

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Consumer research has explored various experiential, symbolic, and emancipatory aspects of collective consumption, as well as ways that consumers enact collective fantasies. A key feature of these shared experiences is consumer involvement in a collective vision, but prior research doesn’t examine the heterogeneity of these collective experiences or their boundary conditions. We investigate the role of heterogeneous fantasy within a collective fantasy venue drawing on participant observation at Renaissance festivals and depth interviews with participants of these events. We find collective consumption experiences contain multiple interpretations that are compatible, competing, and/or oppositional for participants. The interplay of consumers’ heterogeneous imaginative interpretations is useful in understanding the movement in and out of these imaginative spaces. We illustrate the interplay of consumers’ heterogeneous imaginative resources in the co-creation of collective consumer experiences.

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NEGOTIATING WORK AND PLAY ON AND OFF THE SOCCER FIELD
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Linda L. Price, University of Arizona
Patricia Kennedy, University of Nebraska

Play may be paradox to play theorists but to good friends, “it’s a sure thing”. After Trevathan Since at least the 1930’s theorists have explored the ambiguity and paradox that surrounds play. Our study investigates how playful activity is nested within everyday life. Specifically, we examine the rhetoric and activity of work and play in the context of youth soccer teams using a combination of non-participant observation and depth interviews with parents and children. Emergent from the data is a paradoxical relationship between work and play as negotiated within teams and families in the context of children’s sport participation. Consumers experience the tensions inherent in play and work and navigate the boundaries of this paradox by consuming within the confines of positively viewed collectives.

FUN EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG CONSUMERS
Sayantani Mukherjee, University of California Irvine
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California Irvine

Consumer fun is central to playful, hedonic and experiential consumption. Yet the concept of fun is under-theorised in the consumer behavior literature. This research investigates consumer fun as it is grounded within the everyday consumption practices of young adults. Based on projective exercises and long interviews, preliminary findings suggest that consumer fun is a multifaceted experience that blends mixed emotions, imagination and a sense of control and is primarily embedded in a social context. Findings also suggest that consumers enact an optimal level of fun constructed via an interplay between an ethos of fun morality and individual self-control.