Gay Men’s Consumption in Long-Term Relationships: Issues From an Exploratory Study

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[to cite]:

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates various aspects of consumption embedded within gay men’s long-term relationships. Despite the interest in ‘gay marketing’ and gay and lesbian consumption in the popular press and scholarly sources, the consumer research literature is silent on the issue of same-sex relationships. This study reports selected findings from an investigation that included long interviews of gay men, long interviews of gay couples, ‘netnography,’ and extended observation of one house purchase. Findings illustrate that major purchases are used to negotiate commitment to the relationship and serve as important symbols. Fairness is negotiated when everyday purchases are made, given the lack of legal and social recognition of same-sex relationships. Further research is necessary into the consumption within same-sex relationships including investigations of the ways that same-sex couples negotiate lack of legal protection and social recognition.

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