



MAGIC CONSUMPTION: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCCER FANS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: To understand how consumers attribute magical meaning to products, coating them with magical powers.

Methodology / approach: Ten phenomenological interviews were conducted with soccer team supporters. Qualitative data were analyzed using the hermeneutic approach.

Originality / relevance: Belief in magic is everywhere in a diffuse state, however little is known about how consumers use magical products through consumption rituals.

Main results: As a result, the research explains how consumers attribute magical power to product-performance (1) rituals of product choice, (2) ritual coating of magical thinking, (3) ritual use of magic products.

Theoretical / methodological contributions: The work contributes to the studies on magical thinking, explaining how consumers imbue objects with magical powers, as well as the role of these objects in the life of consumers who instill magical-thinking in their consumption experiences.

Keywords: Consumer Culture, Magic, Magical Thinking, Consumption Ritual, Soccer.

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CONSUMO MÁGICO: UM ESTUDO NO CONTEXTO DE TORCEDORES DE FUTEBOL

RESUMO

Objetivo do estudo: entender como o consumidor atribui significado mágico ao produto, revestindo-o de poderes mágicos.

Metodologia/abordagem: foram realizadas 10 entrevistas fenomenológicas com torcedores de time de futebol. Os dados qualitativos foram analisados utilizando-se a abordagem hermenêutica.

Originalidade/relevância: a magia está em todo lugar em um estado difuso, entretanto pouco ainda se sabe sobre como os consumidores revestem os produtos de poderes mágicos por meio de rituais de consumo.

Principais resultados: como resultado, a pesquisa explica como o consumidor atribui poder mágico ao produto performando (1) ritual de escolha do produto, (2) ritual de revestimento do pensamento mágico, (3) ritual de uso do produto mágico.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas: o trabalho contribui para os estudos sobre pensamento mágico, explicando como os consumidores empreendem esforços para imbuir os objetos de poderes mágicos, assim como papel desses objetos na vida dos consumidores que revestem de magia as suas experiências de consumo.

Palavras-chave: Cultura de Consumo; Magia; Pensamento Mágico; Ritual de Consumo; Futebol

INTRODUCTION

Like consumption, magical-thinking pervades our lives (Fraser, 1922, Mauss 1902/1972), encompassing objects (amulets, totems, products, among others) that give luck, heal, protect and miraculously transform people (Belk, 1991; Daniels 2003). Symbolic, mystical, and supernatural forces influence consumer experiences, transcending the corporate, efficient, bureaucratic, and rational world of consumers, making it temporarily magical and fanciful (Kozinets, 1998). All these magical elements are part of our social relations and institutions (St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011). Through rituals laden with magical elements, consumers connect the visible and invisible worlds as a way of dealing with difficult social problems (Arnould, Price, & Otnes, 1999).

Recently, research in the field of consumer culture has used the concept of magical thinking to explain the influence of the unusual and the unreal in consumers' lives. Consumers use magical thinking to help them cope with stressful situations (St. James, Handelman & Taylor, 2011), or to transform mass-produced replica instruments into fetishes, through contagious and imitative magic, impregnating them with power and a radiant aura (Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011). According to St. James, Handelman, and Taylor (2011), magical thinking consists of the attribution of extraordinary, mystical, and meaningful connections to actions, events, and/or objects used to understand, predict, or influence events.

Our research advances the understanding about the presence of magical elements in consumption and in the reality that surrounds us. Magical thinking, characterized as unreal and unusual events, is not limited to our reality, but incorporated in studies on social phenomena. The study of the influence of magical thinking broadens our understanding of consumer behavior. The theoretical framework containing the explanation of magical consumption and consumption rituals is presented below. Next, the empirical context, the research methods used, the data collection, and results, are divided into three parts: (1) ritual of choice for the product, (2) ritual coating of magic, (3) ritual use of the magic product. Finally, the final discussion is presented with suggestions for future research.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Magical consumption

Historically, magic, religion, and science have always been present in the development of humanity and permeate social relations. Various attempts have been made by Western thought to distinguish among them (e.g., Fraser, 1922; Malinowski, 1954; Mauss, 1902/1972; Tambiah, 1990). Malinowski (1954), for example, defines the differences between them as

follows: magic consists of routine formulas that work in the real world, through supernatural mechanisms. Science is pragmatic knowledge based on observations and experiences. Religion is a systematized belief that involves supplications rather than routine instrumental manipulation. However, according to Anderson (2005), the practices of magic, science, and religion have recently been treated with much less distinction and often intertwined.

Although in modern science, magical thinking is regarded as a "primitive" thought pattern (Tylor 1871/1958) and viewed with suspicion and fear of something seen as ridiculous in the postmodern era (Firat & Venkatesh 1995), magical thinking has been used by many to explain consumer consumption and behavior (Baudrillard, 1998, Belk 1991, Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011, Thompson 2004, St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011). As predicted by Arnould, Price, and Otnes (1999), in postmodernity, magical thinking has risen from the margins of modern thought and has been reinstated into a cultural milieu. We use magical clothes, jewelry, and perfumes, drive magical cars, reside and go to magical places, eat magical foods and are involved in the magic of movies, television, and books (Belk, 1991).

Far from being a "primitive" practice of the past, magic is pervading our lives as consumers, embracing enunciations, symbolic forces, transcendent experiences, objects, and people through rituals that connect the visible and invisible worlds to concrete ends (Arnould, Price & Otnes, 1999). According to Arnould, Price, and Otnes (1999), recourse to magic is a non-Cartesian strategy for solving social problems that are difficult to solve or deal with. In the field of marketing and consumption, the imaginary, the mystical, and the magical pervade our institutions and social relations (St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011).

Magical thinking is everywhere in a diffuse state (Maus, 1972). Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989), in their seminal study on the sacred and profane, explain that secular objects are sacralized by the consumer and are clothed with magical powers through their consumption practices. Magic is widely used by consumers to imbue objects, such as relics, religious icons, numbers, amulets, fetishes, talismans, totems, drugs, potions, pills, and medicines (Belk, 1991, Geary 1998, St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011) with power to give people luck, help them receive grace, protect, empower, heal, enrich, achieve mystical experiences, and be miraculously transformed.

Consumers also lend magical thinking to their consumer experiences. Mountain men produce a magical world in an enclave in nature and time that is separated from everyday existence to escape the rules, contraptions, and stresses of modern day-to-day life in the city (Belk & Costa, 1998). Members of the Burning

Man community participate in a one-week anti-market event “where things regain their magical significance” (Kozinets, 2002b, 32). Temporarily, they experience delightful experiences that transcend the normal bureaucratic and corporate existence of consumers and replace their rational and efficiency-driven social world with one of fantasy and magic.

Research in the field of consumer culture has used magical thinking to explain the magical significance of products and their role in consumers’ lives. St. James, Handelman, and Taylor (2011) define magical thinking as the creation of extraordinary connections (symbolic relationships based on a belief or intuition in the presence of mystical forces in the world) to understand, predict, or influence events. The authors explain that magical thinking helps consumers deal with stressful situations, such as weight loss. Fernandez and Lastovicka (2011) report on how consumers use contagious and imitative magic (Frazer’s sympathetic magic laws) to transform mass-produced replica instruments into fetishes, impregnating them with power and radiant aura. However, while magic is cultivated through ritualistic practices (Arnould, Price, & Otnes, 1999), little is known about rituals performed by consumers to clothe the products with magical powers.

Consumer Ritual

The notion of ritual has been important for understanding cultures and society. Durkheim (1915) states that all belief systems necessarily need a number of rituals that have similar goals and fulfill the same functions. Through ritual, collective beliefs are generated, experienced, and affirmed as real by the community. According to Driver (1991), rituals provide three social gifts: they organize society, develop a community, and transform participants. Through ritual, we take as routine a way of seeing, hearing, touching and perceiving the environment. Driver (1991), in his work on the magic of ritual, reveals that ritual helps individuals construct alternative worlds, which are called “real worlds,” even though they are different worlds from everyday life. In addition, ritual, through its communicative function, fosters and enhances the human capacity to create and design imaginary structures (Driver, 1991). These characteristics described by Driver (1991) provide the basis for understanding the function of ritual in magical consumption.

Several researchers in the field of consumer culture have used ritual theory to understand consumer phenomena (Kozinets, 2002a, McCracken, 1986, Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001, Nguyen & Belk, 2013, Rook, 1985, Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Sherry, 1983). These researchers defined and described the concept of

ritual consumption explaining its dimensions, cultural meanings, elements, components, and practices. Rook’s (1985) definition of ritual, as well as the analysis of the four processes of consumption of ritual (exchange, possession, personal care, and discontinuance) elaborated by McCracken (1986), have been used by several researchers in the field of consumer culture (Arsel & Bean, 2013, Karababa & Ger, 2011, Russell & Levy, 2012). Recently, Arsel and Bean (2013) used Rook’s perspective to describe the practice of ritualization in the taste regime. Karababa and Ger (2011) identified the consumption of the coffee houses of the Ottoman Empire as ritualistic leisure activities using the elements of the ritual of consumption proposed by Rook.

According to McCracken (1986), ritual is an opportunity to affirm, evoke, and attribute conventional symbols and meanings of the cultural order. Ritual was defined by Rook as “a type of expressive and symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in a fixed and episodic sequence and tend to repeat themselves over time (Rook, 2007, p. 83). Rook (1985) describes personal rituals and focuses on the structural elements of ritual, listing four tangible components: (1) the artifacts used, (2) the script followed, (3) the roles represented, and (4) the audience. Rituals influence how individuals acquire and use objects, and generate and perpetuate meanings, linking society’s belief system with ritual practices (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Within the same perspective, consumer rituals transform objects symbolically, constructing meanings that draw them out of the profane world or trade relations and place them in a sacred realm (Kozinets, 2002), transforming a commodity into a singular, sacralized good (Epp & Price, 2010, Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989).

CONTEXT, RESEARCH METHOD, AND DATA COLLECTION

Empirical context: Soccer team supporters

The context of soccer team supporters was chosen to help answer the research questions posed by presenting various characteristics related to the magic and ritual of consumption. Soccer has an important role in the culture of several countries. McDonagh (2016) argues that soccer produces a global audience for the World Cup and develops a market of millions of fans who celebrate national championships annually. Foer (2005) explains how sports influence governments, popular struggles, and religion. Giulianotti (2012) highlights the social, political, economic, cultural, and historical dimensions of soccer and its growing relationship with the phenomenon of globalization. Regarding the Brazilian context, Rosenthal and

Cardoso (2015) discuss the evolution of the nature of the symbolic meaning of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, relating the event to the changes experienced by Brazilian society regarding the rejection of the use public resources and corruption.

Among the various types of fans who cheer for a specific team and attend their games, those who draw attention to their involvement and have a strong emotional relationship with the soccer team are the fans who are passionate about the team. They attend stadiums regularly, paint themselves in team colors, dress in team uniforms, travel to watch distant matches, and always support their favorite soccer club. The fanatic and passionate supporter is one who has a long-term personal and emotional investment with the club, consciously committing him/herself to show solidarity and offer financial support to the club (Giulianotti, 2012).

Being a type of sports consumers, passionate soccer team fans have a different behavior from conventional consumers (Redden & Steiner, 2000). The identification of the sporting consumer with the team, or teams, is very strong both in the victories and in the competitions (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999). Their passion for the product, their involvement with the sports brand, their internalization of its attributes, and their knowledge of the conditions under which the product is delivered, differs from conventional consumers (Melo Neto, 2013). Melo Neto explains that many companies use fanaticism as a communication strategy. These include messages that seek to awaken the passion for the sport, the club, and the fans' connection with the stars, emotionally involving the enthusiastic consumer.

Method of research and data collection

To answer the research question, we have studied the ritualized consumption practices of soccer and soccer fans regarding the jerseys worn during their teams' games. The jersey was chosen as the focus of analysis of the research for contributing, according to the informants' speech, especially to the victories of their teams. The informants reside in the great Belo Horizonte and cheer for the following soccer teams: América-MG, Atlético-MG, and Cruzeiro. Data collection was performed during one year through interviews. The data that we used in the collection and the analysis were obtained by conducting phenomenological interviews (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio 1989, Fischer, Castilhos, & Fonseca, 2014) with the fans. Ten soccer team fans, aged between 17 and 57, were interviewed, as well as four athletes from MG, four from Cruzeiro, and two from América-MG.

The technique adopted for the selection of the interviewees was the one of judgment (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To address the objectives of the research, we initially chose superstitious soccer team fans. After the first interviews, snowball sampling was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this sampling technique, the researcher asked respondents for indications of other individuals who might be interviewed. Informants indicated friends and other members of the consumer subculture who also shared the same values related to superstition. The interviews lasted an average of 90 minutes and were held in the informants' houses, and the authors got the opportunity to listen in loco to the informants' stories about the meanings built with the jerseys and their collections. Figure 1 shows the informants' profile.

Respondent*	Age	Schooling	Profession
Jair	57	Graduated	Teacher
Maria	50	Graduated	Probation officer
Tardelli	31	Incomplete higher	Electrical technician
Victor	30	Incomplete higher	Administrator
Reinaldo	24	Incomplete higher	Student
Marques	17	Complete Higher School	Student
Raul	43	Graduated	Projects manager
Dirceu	41	Pós graduado	Electrical engineer
Fábio	31	Complete Higher School	Mechanical
Alex	32	Complete Higher School	Administrative manager

*Fictitious name given to the interviewees for protecting their identities

Figure 1 – Respondents' profiles.

In the interviews, we sought to understand and describe the ritualistic consumption practices performed with soccer team jerseys that, according to informants, contribute to the victories of their teams. Once identified, we verified if there were differences between the practices of consumption with the other

jerseys and objects related to the soccer team that the informant supports. We tried to understand if the consumption practices related to the jersey were different in relation to the other objects of the soccer team that the informant possesses in relation to the

location in the house, space occupied, washing care, times of use, among other issues.

The interviews began with general questions about objects related to the informant's soccer team, which allowed subsequent questions related to practices of use, choice, purchase, among other things. Then, after understanding the dynamics of ritualistic consumption practices related to the objects of the informant's soccer team, questions were asked about the objects that contributed in some way to the results of the team. Since the first interviews, every informant revealed that they have a jersey that contributes in a special way to the victory of their team in the games.

Qualitative data were analyzed jointly by the authors using the hermeneutical approach (Thompson, 1997). Through a series of interactions, analyzing each part first, and then analyzing the whole, we identify the main themes revealed in the interviews. Following the guidance of Thompson (1997), the interactive process was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the transcribed interviews were read and analyzed to understand the meanings of the consumption practices of each informant contained in the texts. In the second stage, we sought to identify the similarities and differences between the interviews.

The following sections present the results obtained from the data collected and analyzed. First, we present the characteristics and values of the consumer subculture that the informants are immersed in, and then explain the rituals performed by consumers to imbue their jerseys with magical thinking. They are: ritual of choice of product, attribution of magical thinking, and use of magic product. Finally, we present the contribution of the work in relation to the other studies carried out in the field and present possibilities for future research.

ATTRIBUTION OF MAGICAL THOUGHT TO PRODUCT

The informants surveyed are consumers immersed in the subculture of soccer consumption. As explained by Schouten and McAlexander (1995), they participate in a distinct subgroup of society that shares the same involvement with a particular consumer activity having specific beliefs, values, ethos, rituals, and symbolic modes of expression. The members of the consumer subculture of the sports market invest time and money in building their identities as fans of their favorite soccer team.

Interviewees consider themselves fanatical fans, passionate about soccer, and the team at heart. Informants are part of the supportive partner programs of their teams, go to stadiums regularly to cheer for the club, watch home games, travel to support the team in distant cities, buy various team products, and have a

wide collection of jerseys, tickets of the games they watched, among other things. Maria relates her involvement with América.

Everything I see of América team I buy. I have many jerseys, ornaments, tables, chairs, watches, games, and banners. Compared to Atlético and Cruzeiro, it is more difficult to find things of América, because the club only has an official store. I found a store in the Central Market that has many products from América. Whenever I go there I buy more things to increase my collection ... Everything I see I buy, I just do not have more things because my husband does not agree. I know that I spend a lot of money on these things but it's my pleasure.

Among the various values of the subculture of consumption, superstition is one that stands out. Dirceu, when asked about the choice of jersey to be worn in stadiums on game days, answers that: "Ah, there are some who only go with a certain jersey in the field. There are others, that when the chances are bad, he appeals to some old jerseys that he used when the chances were good ... so he uses ... well, each one has his superstition, right?" In order to help the team win again, informants wear the same outfit on game days, and the same rituals and practices of consumption.

Informants use superstition as a way to help them avoid or deal with defeats and possible frustrations with the team. Among the several singular products (Kopytoff, 2008) belonging to the constellation of objects of the informants soccer team, one of them is chosen to be the product coated with magical power. Each chooses an object, in the case of our informants, a jersey, and attribute magical thinking to that object to deal with stress situations (St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011) related to team performance, trying to help the team win the game and win the tournaments.

In the consumer subculture of soccer fans, each supporter must have a lucky charm, or an object, which helps the team to win the game. In the case of our informants, the chosen object is the jersey. The jersey thought to be covered in magic is only used in special games of the team in the soccer stadiums, be it in Belo Horizonte (Estádio Mineirão, or Independência) or in another city. Before the game starts, informants check in with friends who will go to the stadium together to make sure everyone is wearing the lucky jersey. This check is part of the ritual of preparation for passionate fans to watch the important games in soccer stadiums. Having a lucky jersey and using it in the right moments is part of one of the consumer subculture codes of the informants interviewed.

To help the team win and to increase the magical power of their chosen jerseys, informants use the magic jersey following consumption rituals defined by the consumer subculture in which they are inserted. According to Driver (1991), the ritual provides participants with the assurance that their behavior is being performed correctly. Through ritual practice, consumers behave in ways that align with the immanent transcendent forces in the magical context (Arnould, Price, & Otnes, 1999). In doing so, informants try to use the magical power of the jersey and at the same time ensure that this power does not run out.

Next, we explain consumers' consumer rituals to choose, coat with magic, and use the magic jersey. These rituals of consumption, as described by Rook (1985), involve artifacts (magic jersey), script to be followed (attribution of magical thinking, how and when the jersey should be used), the roles represented by passionate fans and the audience (friends and other participants of the consumer subculture).

Rituals of choice of product

Among the various ways of choosing the jersey to be coated with magical thinking used by informants, two of them stand out: gift and contagion. The gift plays an important role in the choice of the magic product. Informants show great appreciation for jerseys received as gifts from relatives and friends they cherish. The gift, or dyadic gift-giving ritual (Sherry, 1983), has great symbolic value for the consumer. Several studies have demonstrated how the ritual of gift-giving is important in Western consumer culture, and is of great value to the parties involved in gift-giving (Belk, 1979, Belk, 2010, Giesler, 2006, Sherry, 1983, Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012). Tardelli explains the special meaning one of his jerseys from his collection that he received as a gift possesses.

To this day I have the first Galo jersey I've received. I remember it was Christmas 1994. I do not wear it any more. It's stored in the wardrobe. It's grimy and has a few tears. Of course it does not serve me anymore, but I do not have the guts to give it away, let alone throw it away. This first one will always be the favorite of my collection.

Victor's most special jersey was received as a gift from a friend.

So, this jersey (Jersey 11) was actually a gift from a friend of mine, right? He was actually a professional colleague. He works in Goiania, you understand? Then there was an Atletico game that was there ... and he went to see the game, understood? Then he took it and after that game, he got it, went and was very is ... let's say so ... he got very ... is ... very moved with the game of Atletico and such and went to cheer for Athletic too. Then he took it and sent me this gift jersey ...

Oh, since then, I have a very big appreciation for this jersey, understood?

Besides as a gift, contagion also stands out as a way of choosing the magic jersey. For informants, the jerseys lined with magical power were autographed by their idol players (contagion) at special moments. Raul chose his 1997 Cruzeiro jersey to receive the autographs of the players of the Libertadores champion team. He went to the team's training center to get the autograph of several team players.

My most special jersey is from 1997. I made a point of going to the Toca da Raposa to get the autographs of the idols of the Libertadores title: Dida, Gotardo, Nonato, Palinha, Ricardinho, Marcelo Ramos, I have all of them. Thanks to these heroes we won the first title of the Libertadores, unforgettable.

Among the several jerseys in his collection, Jair reveals the special appreciation for the jersey signed by the player Jair Bala from América, which is a replica of the model from 1971. As described by Fernandez and Lastovicka (2001), regarding the replicas of musical instruments, Jair wore the replica of Jair Bala's magical jersey.

A very special jersey for me is that of Jair Bala, a special edition replica of the model used in 1971 with the autograph of the eternal idol Jair Bala embroidered on it. I like it too much ... I like it because Jair Bala is a very nice guy. He was the best player that ever passed through América. I had the opportunity to talk to him. He does not show off. He's a very cool idol.

Contagion plays an important role in choosing the product that will be donned with magical power by the consumer. Frazer (1959) explains that people and objects that have contact with other people and objects can become permanently influenced by the transfer of some or several properties or essences from one to the other. Through contagion, consumers consecrate their objects (Argo, Dahl & Morales 2006, Belk, 1988, Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989, Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011). Informants, in order to imbue their jersey with magical thinking, perform the autograph ritual, urging their idols to write their names on their chosen jersey in anticipation that the contagion will happen and their jersey will increase their chances of being cloaked with magical powers.

It is noteworthy that the contagion and the gift are two of the main ways the passionate fan chooses the jersey to be coated with magical thinking, but this is not enough for the object to become magical. For the object to be cloaked with magical power it is necessary for the consumer to attribute to the product, in the case studied, the jersey, through the ritual of consumption, the

magical thought that will imbue it with a special meaning. Regardless of whether it was received as a gift or autographed by an idol, the chosen jersey must demonstrate that it helps the team to win the most important matches thus possessing magical power.

Ritual of coating magical thinking

The jersey being coated with magical thinking may be part of the informant's collection, but its magical power may not yet have been tested. Once the jersey is chosen, the informant starts to use it in important and decisive games of the team to check the level of magical power of the jersey. With each team victory, the informant increases the power of magical thinking clad in the jersey. The informant relates the magical power of the jersey with the victories of the team in special games. This initial moment is characterized as the transition zone of the object, when the consumer performs the ritual of coating magic thought on the product several times. Through this ritual, Victor attributed the magical thinking to his Jersey 11.

There were several important games at which I always wore this jersey... so you get that mystique of the same jersey, the mantle there and such, and you wear it whenever you need the result that goes with it. And it works out and it's been a long time, so you come here already having this tradition of important games with the jersey ... (...) I wore it in the final of the Libertadores, I went in the Cup Winners' final wearing it, in the Brazilian Cup final and in several other games that always needed the best result, something like that, I've always been worn it and I've been carrying this mystique there ...

Victor explains that the jersey got "that mystique" over time. The mystique, or magic power of the jersey, was built with the team's victory. The consumer, hoping to have a magic jersey, starts to use the jersey in special games in the expectation that it helps the team to win. If the team wins, the supporter relates victory with the magical power of the jersey. The magical thinking coating on the jersey relieves the stress of the informant in relation to the next important games of the team, as the supporter will wear the jersey that has already guaranteed several victories for the team. Magic restructures and integrates the minds and emotions of those involved (Arnould, Price & Otnes, 1999). Whenever the team needs to win important games, Victor goes with the magic jersey.

Dirceu, like Victor, uses his magic jersey when the Cruise has to win. In tough decisions or situations, he resorts to the magical power of his jersey to ensure his team's victory. He uses the marks that the jersey has (marks of sparks of the flag that fell on the

jersey in the final of the Copa Libertadores) to explain the strength of the magical thought that he bestows on his jersey.

I have two jerseys that I know give luck to the Cruzeiro, one bought in the year that Cruzeiro won the Triple Crown (state champion, national champion, and the Brazilian Cup). When the Cruise needs to win, I wear it, it is guaranteed! For example, in difficult situations like the 2011 Brasileirão (the Cruzeiro suffered a risk of relegation), I wore it and was confident that it would work. In recent Brazilian titles I also wore it and it worked. The other is a jersey that the sponsorship and number are already fading. It was remarkable in a match, Cruzeiro x Ipatinga, and caught sparks from the flag. It was a difficult game, but the Cruise came out victorious. From there, I came to notice that it is very lucky, especially in games of the Copa Libertadores.

The informant does not know the level of magical power of the jersey, which is revealed every time the team wins. In the transition zone, the informant observes whether the jersey is lucky or not, based on whether the team wins the matches or not. The informant's expectation is that his magical power will increase with each game. But despite the informant relying on the magical power of his jersey, he is not sure if he will be strong enough to help the team win the specific game. In his speech: "I wore it and was confident that it would work." Dirceu reveals the constant threat of the magical thinking-lined jersey losing its magical power in the face of the team's defeat. Therefore, the magical power assigned to the jersey is constantly threatened by the performance of the team.

But as the attribution of magical thinking demands time and effort from the consumer, informants devise various strategies to prevent the magic jersey from losing its aura and remain the lucky jersey. The informants find justifications to explain defeats as not caused by the jersey, but by another external factor that did not comply, as expected. When the informant is wearing the magic jersey and the team loses, the fault of the team's defeat is transferred to some other external factor. Maria, for example, blames the judge or the players: "I only use (magic jersey) when América needs a lot to win, which is not to waste the luck. It's very difficult for América to lose when I'm wearing it. If they lose, it's certainly because of the referee's failure or because of the players' lack of shame."

Victor refutes any possibility of the team's defeat having been because of the loss of the luck of his magic jersey. If the team loses, it is not their fault or the jersey's fault, but the result of some other factor.

I have a superstition in soccer. In a classic day between Atlético and Cruzeiro, I do not wear anything blue (rival team color), I do not wear flip-flops, underwear, jerseys, tennis shoes, or socks because it's bad luck ... I have a very old jersey number 11 that I believe gives luck to the team. When I'm using it, I think I'm doing my part to help the team win. If I sometimes lose, I'll be calm, with the certainty that it was not my fault. I have new jerseys, but when it's a hard match I go with that old jersey, even if it's dirty.

The consuming practice of the informer Victor is charged with magic and superstition. The informant believes the jersey has magic power in such a way that even if the team is defeated, the jersey does not lose its strength. The magical thought remains attached to the jersey. The product itself is magical, regardless of the outcome of the team. Just as in the study by St. James, Handelman, and Taylor (2011), magical thinking encased in the jersey helps the consumer deal with the stressful situation of defeat.

Ritual of use of the magic product

The use of the magic jersey is characterized as an invented tradition (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983) of the consumer subculture of soccer fan fanatics, for it is ritualistic, symbolic and repetitive behavior. The magic jersey is used only in special team games when informants go to the soccer stadium. Informant Tardelli reports that "on an important game day I always choose to wear the jersey of the 2009 season, it is very lucky ...". He adds that in 2009 he attended "all the games in the Mineirão using it (magic jersey) and they did not lose any." The magic jersey is not used on a daily basis, much less on days of less important games. This reveals the care that informants have with the effort undertaken in attributing and reinforcing the magical thought of luck in the jersey.

Victor explains that he only uses his Lotus 11 Jersey without sponsorship "when it's a different game, a more important game I usually go with it, do you understand?" When asked if he uses the 11 Jersey when watching games elsewhere Victor reported that "No, every time I see the game, I always have an Atletico jersey,... I always preserve Jersey 11 for when I go on the field ...". To preserve the mystique of the jersey, Victor chooses the most important games to use it:

Researcher: And you wear it (Jersey 11) every time you go to the field?

Victor: No, more important games, understand? That same year I used it only in the first game of the Libertadores that was here, against Universidad del Valle and Atlético won at 1 to 0... Then it was a more decisive game, Atlético's first game inside

the home in the Libertadores, so I went with it ... but the rest of the other games that I went to this year, I was already in 6, these others are common games.

Informants use the magic jersey when they go to the stadium to cheer for their team in special games to help the team win the game. For them, the soccer arena is where the mystique of the jersey is renewed. As a special and sacred place, the victory of the team in the stadium reinforces the magical thinking. The jersey is taken to the shrine and offered to the altar (Sherry & Kozintes, 2003) symbolized by the green lawn. The soccer ritual is celebrated by 22 players, plus 3 referees and presented to the audience for 90 minutes (and can be extended with the additions). The live emotion, the crowd, the consumer community (Schoten & MacAlexander, 1995), the spirit of camaraderie and community (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989) present during the ritual help reinforce the magical thinking encased in the jersey. The ritual of using the super-singularized jersey is performed publicly, requiring the participation of other people, since the construction of meaning is performed collectively.

DISCUSSION

Our research expands our understanding of magical thinking (Maus, 1972) by helping the research field of consumer culture to advance the understanding of consumer behavior phenomena involving elements that are not circumscribed in our reality, but which are also part of the consumer phenomenon (Arnould, Price and Otnes, 1999; Belk 1991; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; St. James, Handelman & Taylor, 2011). The magical elements, characterized as unreal, provide an enlarged view of reality by embracing the representation of the real. The magic manifests itself without colliding with reality, flowing in an ordinary way. As part of social phenomena, magic must be considered to explain the world around us, as well as people's behavior.

Arnould, Price, and Otnes (1999), found that the consumer has contact with magical flows of thoughts and perceives it during some of the extraordinary consumption experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993). In this study, however, we verified that the magic power of the object studied is constructed by the consumer himself through the effort he has made over time to attribute magical thinking to the product. With magic thinking, the lucky jersey is now lined with the power to help the team win new games in the future. The consumer invests in consumer practices to reinforce the power of magical thinking attributed to the product, performing rituals of use publicly and collectively. At the same time, the consumer devises strategies to prevent the magical thinking attributed to the magic jersey from being lost.

Our work contributes to advancing the studies of the field of consumer culture on magical thinking, recently addressed by St. James, Handelman, and Taylor (2011) and Fernandez and Lastovicka (2011), explaining how consumers make efforts to imbue the objects of power (Belk, 1991; Daniels 2003; Geary 1998), and the role of these objects in the lives of consumers who bring magical thinking into their consumption experiences (Belk & Costa, 1998, Kozinets, 2002b, 32).

Through consumer rituals, our research explains in detail how the phenomenon of attribution of magical thinking to the product happens, extending the literature on the subject and allowing new studies to be carried out in order to broaden the understanding of the concept and the reality surrounding us. In addition, our research describes applications of consumer rituals (Driver, 1991; Rook, 1985) detailing rituals of product choice, attribution of magical thinking, and use of magical products, paving the way for further research.

The results of the present study may be further enhanced in future research exploring other consumption practices of products imbued with magical power. In addition to magical thinking, other elements can also be described to explain the magic of products, places, people, and events. Researchers in the field of consumer culture can advance studies in this area by expanding the findings on magic and magical thinking. Finally, future research may also verify the occurrence of magic in other empirical contexts with categories of products that have a greater or lesser degree of emotional involvement of the consumer, considering both material and immaterial goods (Belk, 2013).

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