

Exploring perceived consumption values and space construction: the case of a brazilian trade fair

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EXPLORING PERCEIVED CONSUMPTION VALUES AND SPACE CONSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF A BRAZILIAN TRADE FAIR

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in research efforts on trade markets from areas such as economics, sociology and anthropology, both from the perspective of the impact on economic activity and from the perspective of the nature and cultural aspects of its participants (Chikweche, Stanton, and Fletcher, 2012; Follman, 2012; Mason, Chakrabarti, and Singh, 2013). Considering these markets' dimensions in economic terms, and how they are integrated to global trade networks, some research even discusses the importance of rethinking the business model of such markets as an alternative to alleviate poverty (Follman, 2012; Araújo, 2013; Mason, Chakrabarti, and Singh, 2013; Piacentini and Hamilton, 2013).

According to Sheth (2011), emerging markets in general have clear differences with well-established markets: the former are highly heterogeneous with unbranded competition, receive great influence from geopolitical institutions, and have chronic shortage of resources and inadequate infrastructure. As Sheth (2011) invites us to rethink about the emerging markets, the trade fairs need to be rethought due to the difference between these environments and the modern traditional consumption places.

Trade fairs exist all around the world, taking different forms depending on the region where they are located. In every region of the planet, these spaces of trade acquire particular properties, with smells, melodies, colors, products, people and cultures. Such blending of characteristics does not occur only between markets, but within the same market. The heterogeneity permeates the daily life as well as the evolutionary process of trade fair (Salazar, 2003; Chikweche, Stanton, and Fletcher, 2012; Araujo, Kjellberg, and Spencer, 2008).

The heterogeneity of trade fairs is revealed in everyday practices of its actors, in the parameters of market behavior of its agents as well as in the social activities of its vendors and consumers (De Certeau, 1998; Araujo, Kjellberg, and Spencer, 2008; Lindeman, 2012). Trade fairs are pointed out by Izberk-Bilgin (2010) as suggestive research fields to analyse consumer resistance against novel massified forms of consumption. The consumers as well as other fair agents, such as vendors, tourists, products, environment etc., transform the trade fair into something more than sites of procurement and trade. These agents also practice the fair space through socially shared arts of doing, giving them the opportunity for interaction, meetings and pleasure.

One of the most important reasons to visit or shop in trade fairs is the low price and other utilitarian features. However, other reasons besides the utilitarian economic rationality, such as cheaper products, quality, freshness, and accessibility (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Rajagopal, 2010b), are pointed as being responsible for motivating people to visit it. The symbolic consumption, entertainment, ethnic and social aspects, human contact etc., are also important reasons to choose trade fairs as a purchase place (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b; Rajagopal, 2010a, 2010b).

From this consumer's multifaceted feature in relation to the reason that lead to consumption. This present research uses the consumption values theory (Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991) to explain how consumers see the products of trade fair. Thus, from the interaction of consumer and trade fair, using space creation (De Ceartau, 1998), this paper analyses how consumer cocreate the trade fair a place of consumer practices. Hence, from

consumption values theory it observes the trade fair as a kind of context that can be constructed and consumed.

Consequently, this study aims to investigate the consumer behavior and the construction of a trade fair space by its actors. As specific objectives, this research explores the perceived values of consumers through the Theory of consumption values (Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991) and how these visitors interact to transform and appropriate the trade fair space (De Certeau, 1998). For this perspective, this study emphasizes the dynamics of appropriation and transformation of commercial spaces, arguing that consumers are not mere passive receivers, but active agents who shape and resignify spaces through their daily practices (De Certeau, 1998).

This study is divided into four sections besides this introduction. First, we synthesize the main theoretical aspects of the themes approached in this work related to the theory of consumption values, the values of consumption present in trade fairs, and how its context is cocreated in the milieu of the social practices of its actors. Secondly, the research design and the methodological properties are presented. Thirdly, the results found in the research are analysed and discussed through the theoretical lenses suggested. Finally, theoretical and empirical contributions are presented.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Consumption perceived values

Perceived value is a multi-dimensional construct constituted by several interrelated attributes. Perceived values are originated from assessments of the benefits related to choosing a product or accomplishing an activity and its associated trade-offs. These benefits are not only measured in terms of utility or performance, as equated in the theory of utility (Tellis and Gaeth, 1990), but in a larger spectrum of different attributes.

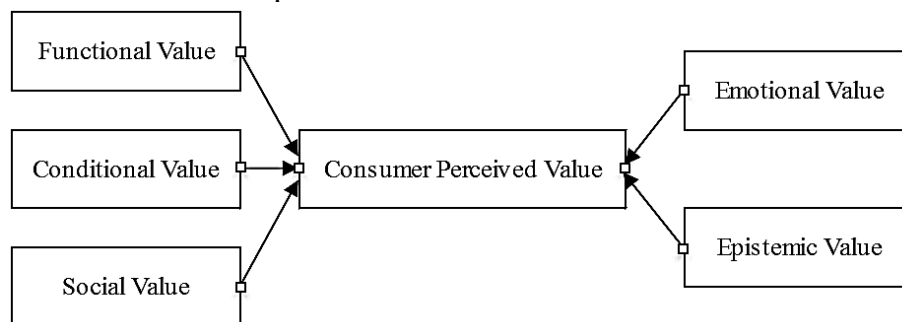
Perceived value is often poorly differentiated from personal value, which is defined as enduring prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs supported by a person (Rokeach, 1968). These values guide consumer behaviour working as implicit criteria for evaluating consumption situations. In this sense, perceived values are enhanced according to individual attributes (Parasuraman, 1997), self-identity, as well as situational disposition. Taking the relevance of these aspects into account, it is possible to state that the creation of consumers' values involves more than rational appraisals of utility.

Therefore, a multidimensional approach is required in order to access aspects related to perceived values other than utilitarian ones. Among the several multi-dimensional approaches, the theory of consumption values, proposed by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) provides a wide range of perceived values in associating a multifaceted set of attributes to consumption situations (Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

The main purpose of consumption values theory is achieving a deep and general understanding of consumer choice behaviour (Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991). The theory is composed by three fundamental axiomatic propositions. The first proposition states that consumers make purchases considering multiple consumption values. The set of values comprehend a vast domain of aspects, ranging from utilitarian to emotional aspects. The second proposition reveals that each consumption value exerts a differential role in any given situation. The perceived values guide the consumption experiences in different contexts, conducting the individual to take distinct decisions. The third proposition asserts that consumption values are independent from each other.

The theory elicits five consumption values – more or less present in any consumption situation. The perceived aspects related to the physical performance of an alternative are embedded in the functional value. A product has functional value when its utilitarian attributes have the capacity to efficiently accomplish a consumer’s need. On the other hand, social value is a sort of prestige acquired and exhibited in association to one or more social groups. Conspicuous consumption and cultural-ethnic identity construction are questions related to social value. In relation to emotional values, an alternative can arouse feelings and affective states in consumers. Hedonic aspects are strongly related to these values, insofar as they have the capacity to induce emotions like joy and pleasure for persons who search for emotional values. These attributes when perceived in a specific consumption experience can influence consumer choice and drive his/her behaviour. Other important aspects that consumers can bring in prominence are related to knowledge wishes. Consumers are continuously searching for novel alternatives in order to satisfy their curiosity. These aspects refer to an epistemic value, perceived in terms of the acquired knowledge derived from new experiences or simple changes in a consumption context. Finally, perceived conditional value is concerned with the benefits derived from especial circumstances. As an example given by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) seasonal products, such as Christmas cards, have their conditional value enhanced in specific situations. Therefore, this value is a function of specific contextual conditions. The five consumption values are presented in Chart 1.

Figure 1: Perceived consumption values.



Source: Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991).

The perception value, therefore, is conscious and unconscious assessments about a phenomenon. This perception is driven by volitional processes of consumers, measured in terms of personal values. Although all values exert important roles in developing whatever activity, specific values are most relevant depending upon the situational context. The context is an important behaviour guider as it alters the disposition of personal values used to evaluate a phenomenon (Brady and Robertson, 1999; Zeithaml, 1988; Bolton and Drew, 1991). For example, in a shopping mall consumers may let flourish social values due its remarkable sign of social prestige (Baudrillard, 2008). On the contrary, in a trade fair environment consumers may be oriented by functional values due its low price assortment (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999).

2.2 Trade fairs and values of consumption

Trade fairs are part of the daily life of the low-income population and they become the only way to access a number of products at an affordable price (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Rajagopal, 2010b). Trade fairs are considered old economic phenomena

dating back to the first human groups. They arose from the need for people to barter products and attract customers from distant localities. Trade fairs were central elements to the birth of the first settlements, having an essential role in the development of trade relations within and between different locations (Pirenne, 1997).

There is the assumption that lower income segments consume mainly in terms of low prices or accessibility (Trinkaus, 1980; Sherman, McCrohan, and Smith, 1985; Sherry, 1990a; Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999). Given the context of material limitations allegedly found in these sectors, a high degree of rationality would direct their consumption decisions, and so the price, product type and proximity would be key factors in their decision-making (Hill and Stephens, 1997; Williams and Windebank, 2001; Hill, 2008). This line of reasoning would be consistent with traditional economic theory that advocates the idea that consumption is carried out in a rational, objective and efficient manner, avoiding and minimizing unnecessary costs (Earl, 1990).

However, although trade fairs have been historically linked to the satisfaction of the basic needs of its consumers, in particular the provision of basic foodstuffs (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Rajagopal, 2010b), several studies have shown that these environments do not only evoke consumers' functional perceived value. Symbolic, emotional, socio-cultural aspects are also present at the milieu of the trade fair (Sherry, 1990a, 1990b; Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988; Rajagopal, 2010a). Emotional characteristics are also underlying consumer behavior. Multisensory aspects, personal consumer motives and fantasies are important drivers for consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The products – objects of consumption desire – are perceived as subjective symbols, that provides a singular experience.

In addition to the features traditionally seen, such as low prices, subsistence items and variety of products, the fairs also have a marked festive dimension. Such attribute is characterized, from the standpoint of the consumers themselves, by a sense of enthusiasm for the presence of hundreds of people and the experience of excitement in an open environment, with the opportunity to browse and negotiate various items for sale (Sherry, 1990a; 1990b). This type of consumption is related to the emotional perceived value through the consumer's shopping experience, in which subjective factors may vary depending on the context.

The consumption at trade fairs is less standardized and more immersive (dangerous or exciting), and the opportunity to experience this can be liberating for some and threatening to others. Frequent buyers in these markets think it is fun to look for deals; they perceive the service as friendly and enjoy the diversity of available products (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b). Moreover, in this extravagant and colorful world the consumer can pour consumption-related emotions. Although the nature of these markets is eminently commercial, they also function as cultural and leisure centers, where the consumption displays multiple dimensions.

Table 1 shows some of the motivations for choosing trade fairs found in literature and the methodological approaches used for obtaining these data. Most authors state reasons that go beyond functional motivations and objective purchases.

Table 1. Reasons for choosing trade fairs.

Reasons/Authors	Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf (1988)	Maisel (1974)	Ozuduru, Varol and Ercoskun (2014)	Petrescu and Bhatli (2013)	Pyle (1971)	Rajagopal (2010a)	Rajagopal (2010b)	Sherman, McCrohan and Smith (1985)	Sherry (1990a)	Sherry (1990b)	Trinkaus (1980)	Zinkhan, Fontenelle and Balaz (1999)
Environment					X							
Personal attention, human contact				X	X			X				X
Accessability			X		X							
Product quality					X	X						X
Symbolic consumption	X								X			
Festive nature, recreational purchases	X							X	X	X		
Fun/Entertainment	X		X					X				
Excitement/Enthusiasm							X			X		
Vendors' flexibility												X
Negotiation, haggle	X							X	X	X		
Low prices				X		X			X		X	X
Necessary products or services					X							
Feeling of freedom	X									X		
Socialization, social values		X		X	X	X						X
Showmanship									X			
Intercambio informal de mercaderías		X										
Ethnic-cultural values and meanings			X	X		X	X		X			X
Variety								X	X			
Research method												
Ethnographic approach	X	X							X	X		X
Semi-structured questionnaire						X	X					
Focus group						X	X					
Interview				X				X				
Questionnaire			X									
Historical					X							
Participant observation											X	

Source: Authors.

The heterogeneity of trade fairs is also evidenced by the existence of numerous reasons to visit them. Socialization, human contact, personal relationships, ethnic-cultural meanings and preservation of the historical roots of their regular customers – given the presence of typical regional items such as food, drinks and even music – are identified by several authors as reasons for visiting trade fairs (Sherry, 1990a; Rajagopal, 2010a, 2010b; Petrescu and Bhatli, 2013; Ozuduru, Varol, and Ercoskun, 2014).

Trade fair environment has the capability to emerge a broad range of consumption values. The polysemic contexts and ever-changing disposition of assortment, people, and symbols of trade fairs conduct the consumer toward a multidimensional experience. Thus, not only do functional aspects guide the consumption experience of the attenders of a trade fair, but also a broader sort of aspect.

2.3 Construction of places through daily practices

The concept of social space is central to understanding how trade fairs evolve and adapt over time. According to De Certeau (1998), spaces are not static but are continuously constructed and reconstructed through the daily practices of their actors. In

his view, space gains identity when it is practiced by individuals through a temporary or lasting connection with places. Places are practiced spaces that are recognized, understood, and imbued with meanings and values through social practices (Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu 2016).

Therefore, practices are essential for understanding how places are constructed. Practices are embodied actions that materialize ways of doing in specific time and context (Shatski, 2006). They are a set of human activities socially shared by which the actors construct their networks of meanings (Barnes, 2001). The importance of practices resides on the immanence of their actions and activities. Through practices of the daily life, we organize our time and space (De Certeau, 1998). Moreover, the practices of place are capable to transform it in memorable and meaningful spaces. Although places are mere established spatial arrangements, spaces are the result of practices with cognitive and sensitive interaction. Whereas places simply exist in a material order, spaces are living dispositions in which persons cocreate their experiences (De Certeau, 1998).

As Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu (2017) argue, places are responsible for materializing cultural meanings and values that influence market practices and interactions. They create symbolic contexts in which products, services, and interactions gain relevance and resonance. Furthermore, places structure and frame the experiences of market actors. They influence how consumers, producers, and other participants perceive, experience, and interact within the market, providing a backdrop that guides behaviors and decisions (Castilhos and Dolbec 2019).

In the trade fair context, the appropriation of the place is a significative resistance tactic against strategies of dominant orders. The trade fairs are socially constructed by a set of practices shared by their actors – consumers, vendors, products, landscapes, open air environment, colours, sounds etc. (Latour, 2005; Cova and Cova, 2012). Trade fairs are living spaces changing at each meeting. The resistance practices of consumption perseverate in the quotidian of trade fairs – realms of market resistance in emerging and post-colonized countries (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010). Bounded with deep socio-historical roots, these practices resist to the novel ways of consumption, related to massified forms of acquisition, manipulation, and use of symbolic meanings and concrete attributes of products (De Certeau, 1998; Bourdieu, 1984).

Consumer experiences in these places differ from those in conventional retail stores (Rajagopal, 2010b). The ability to bargain over prices (Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2017) and develop personal relationships with sellers (Mukherjee, Jebarajakirthy, & Datta, 2020) enables consumers to exercise agency. They can then formulate practices that differ from, move away from, or even oppose the formal patterns of traditional markets (Santos, 2002).

The lively atmosphere of street markets, marked by colorful stalls, a variety of products, and engaging interactions, transforms them into lived spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). These practices make the fair space of resistance against standardized, mass-market consumption, offering a more personalized and immersive experience (Rajagopal, 2010a; Castilhos; Dolbec, 2016).

The trade fairs are temporal intertices, in which practices resist and adapt to cultural and contextual changes over time. By walking, seeing, touching, hearing, and feeling (De Certeau, 1998), the consumers practice the trade fair. As the passage metaphor of Walter Benjamin (2006), being and passing by its environments, consumers experience the trade fair as a bridge to an atemporal and polisemic context.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

A qualitative methodological approach was conducted in order to achieve the research objectives. To collect the data, two methodologies were used. First, participant observation was conducted. Secondly, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted by using the snowball method, in which one respondent referred another with similar characteristics.

Participant observation aims to capture the meanings and subjective experiences of the participants in the process of social interaction. Immersion in research environment, longitudinal compromise, and detailed accumulation of information are the main principles that led Becker and Geer (1957) to consider participant observation the most complete technique of social sciences. The method is in keeping with previous methodologic approaches used in trade fairs (e.g., Trinkaus, 1980; Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b).

As the trade fair is public and we did not have access problems, two co-authors frequented the Sunday fair from February 2013 to January 2015. To capture the emerged consumption values from the environment and its everyday life construction, the trade fair was visited more than 60 times, representing about 180 hours *in loco* and more than 50 pages of field notes. We also conducted several relational interviews (Gaskell, 2008; Spink, 2004) with consumers at the time of their presence in the trade fair. Moreover, 56 pictures were taken with the aim of helping researchers to identify the everyday practices of the trade fair.

In-depth semi-structured interviews (Bauer and Gaskell, 2002) were also conducted with visitors to obtain a reliable qualitative triangulation of data. The major guiding questions were: What are your reasons to visit Birds' Fair? How important is the trade fair to your daily life – and for other people? Who are the people that visit the fair and what they look for? What are the attributes of the fair that guide you to visit it? What feelings arise in spending a day at Birds' Fair? Six consumers participated in an interview that lasted, on average, 45 min. Respondents were five men and one woman, which in total generated a 70-pages long transcription.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Context of research

The Birds' Fair is one of the main traditional markets in the city and one of the most popular in the region. The trade fair began in the colonial era by selling livestock and has remained alive for decades, transforming and reinventing itself. In the present, all kinds of products are sold there, from food to hardware and from clothing to electronic devices, and animals (Figure 2), including the illegal trade of birds, from which it derives its name. The Fair is open on Sundays and is frequented mostly by men.

The Birds' Fair takes place in the same location, alongside a large lagoon in the city suburbs, for more than 30 years. According to the latest municipally records, dating from 2013, there are about 2,500 formal vendors. The total number of sellers, however, has increased along the last years, mainly due the great quantity of informal vendors. Alias, many consumers contribute to implement this number, as they also bring trade products to the fair.

Figure 2: Trade of animals in Birds' Fair.



Source: Authors.

As it is characteristic of most trade fairs, many of the products sold are handmade with little added value or counterfeit, prohibited and even stolen products. The lack of oversight benefits the informal trade and illegal practices, which result in lower prices. Bartering is also very common, many prices are not visible and clients can haggle (Figure 3). This possibility attracts consumers, with the prospect of getting rid of products that are no longer useful, or getting something that they cannot pay for in formal markets.

Figure 3: Vendors and Consumers at the milieu of Birds' Fair.



Source: Authors.

Birds' fair activities provide daily survival to low-income population mainly in the form of occupation and income or in the form of accessibility to cheap products. These characteristics are related to the domain of functional perceived values. As monetary efficiency is pointed out by literature as one of the main reasons to choose trade fair as places of purchase, functional consumption value is prominent in these contexts and guides the consumer to a more rational purchase. Nevertheless, other perceived values are present at Birds' fair, helping to create its social imagery.

4.2 Perceived Value of Trade Fair's Products

As indicated by literature, the motivations that bring people to the trade fair vary. Among them, the low price characteristic is a central attribute. As pointed out by several authors that developed studies in trade fairs, this functional value is fundamental to choose the place of purchase (Sherry, 1990a; Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Williams and Windebank, 2001; Hill, 2008; Rajagopal, 2010a).

The variety of products available at the Fair also denotes a functional value. Mrs. Julia, a 67-year-old baker, highlights this attribute to frequent the trade fair: "they have everything, every kind of product you think you need. It is very difficult for someone to go to the Fair looking for something and not finding it". Mrs. Julia, who states that she goes to the Fair only to buy the necessary products for her home. Foodstuffs, especially fruits and vegetables, home appliances and appliance parts are the main products she seeks: "I just go for this [type of products], because [the Fair] has fresh vegetables, and whenever I need a new part for the stove or the blender, there they have them".

Respondents commented that, given the need to buy very specific items that can hardly be found in conventional stores, they turn to the Fair to find them. It may be parts of electrical appliances for Mrs. Julia, chickens and goats for Mr. José Messias, tool parts or electronic components for Mr. Nonato, Mr. Reginald and Mr. Batista; there is always the possibility of finding second hand items at rather affordable prices.

The opportunity to bargain and bartering second hand products are other usual practices in the quotidian of the fair. The importance of these practices is evidenced by the quote from 47-year-old Reginald, who frequently goes to the Fair for the possibility of *fazer o rolo*, to make shady businesses and exchanges, a common practice among clients:

When you have something lying around the house, you take it to the Fair to make business with it, you have an old thing and you go 'I will trade you this for that', 'is there a way we can exchange?' One thing for the other.

This excerpt shows the functional value related to the exchange practice in the fair. The construction of a specific expression, moreover, highlights how common and institutionalized this activity is. This practice is ubiquitous within the fair and is one of the most relevant in the construction of its space. Consumers and sellers share similar characteristics to develop the daily activities of the fair – sometimes consumers behave as sellers and sometimes sellers take the role of buyers. The shared values among them approximate the two perceptions and make possible the polyssemic construction of the space fair.

However, additional meanings are inserted in this practice. Although financial returns are markedly present in these activities, they gather both functional and emotional

values. Sherry (1990a) highlights the practice of bargaining as an activity to reach hedonic outcomes. Signals of emotional value are presented in interviewed discourses and conversations with consumers. Joining the bargain game and having the opportunity to obtain good results generate positive expectations, in the form of hope, joy or simple distraction. The products also have specific symbolic meanings for each consumer, leading them to experience different sensations depending on the tonality of his/her emotional perceived value.

Friendship is another attribute that increases emotional perceived values. Beyond friendship with other clients, consumers at the Fair develop, due to the relaxed and attentive service, solid and lasting relationships with the vendors (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Rajagopal, 2010a; Petrescu and Bhatli, 2013). The strong relationship among the actors at the Fair highlights the sense of integration present in its quotidian construction.

As for the social perceived value, the offering of a wide quantity of counterfeit luxury brands reveals the preoccupation to social status. Due the quality of the products, the consumption of counterfeit products is not deceptive; therefore, the consumers are aware of purchasing fake products. Consumers frequently use counterfeit products to visit the trade fair, what also denotes concern about prestige. However, the authors agree that this preoccupation does not influence substantively the relationship among consumers and other actors of the trade fair.

Finally, there are products that are specific of trade fairs. Regional beverages, popular music cds and vinils, local food, natural and homeopathic medicines, animals of the local fauna, among others, contribute to enhance consumption conditional values. Acquiring these products at another place does not represent the same meanings for consumers. The relation between product and ambience increase the perceived consumption values and raises symbolic significance for consumers.

4.3 Perceived Value of Trade Fair's Context

Although the theory of consumption values approaches mainly the relation between consumer and products, some studies (*e.g.* Brady and Robertson, 1999; Zeithaml, 1988; Bolton and Drew, 1991) emphasize the importance of the consumption context on the perception of value. In the case of Birds' fair, the context is also responsible for raising several aspects that also influence the perception of value.

There are attributes that connect trade fairs to their consumers. Trade fairs are rooted in the social imaginery of many countries around the world. There is an ethnic-cultural identity between this market arquetipic and the daily life of a great mass of individuals (Rajagopal, 2010a). Thus, the trade fair represents a model that satisfies multidimensional aspects of consumer needs.

Thus, despite the massive variety of low price products, it is possible to assert that the trade fair itself constitutes an important component to attract consumers. The context exerts an essential function in the process of perceived value formation. In this sense, the trade fair emerges as a polissemic environment that allows consumers to transit across an infinity of miscellaneous ambiences, with colourful aisles, different people and sounds. Being and transiting through the paths in the trade fair, as a *flâneur* in the Walter Benjamin (2006) perspective, means to walk purposeless through ways paved with nostalgic remembrances, ethnic values, and good expectations.

Excerpts extracted from consumers' discourses evidenciate the excitement and diversity present in the trade fair:

“It has movement, it has stands it has food, it has everything and the people like that [...] It is well known, that trade fair, tourists always come, it is packed [...] It's like the fair of São Cristóvão [Rio de Janeiro], foreigners come to visit and shop at the fair”

“The best trade fair of the region it's this one. There is no other like this one”

In addition, consumers highlight the importance of the festive dimension among the reasons to frequent the Birds' fair. Confirming the leisure and recreational activities observed by Sherry (1990a, 1990b), “the Fair, to me, is a leisure option and I attend just to relax a little”, says a frequent visitor, 62-year-old José Messias, retired. The excerpt indicates the importance of recognizing the emotional characteristics of the place of purchase. The Fair has a strong characteristic related to an emotional perceived value (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b; Rajagopal, 2010a; Ozuduru, Varol, and Ercoskun, 2014).

Whereas places consist of simple spatial arrangements, the practices born in trade fairs give them tonality, transforming places in spaces (De Certeau, 1998). As a result of these practices of place, the spaces arise as a *locus* where the person can express themselves and experience different sensations. The consumers create the everyday life of the trade fair by sharing social practices with a plethora of other agents, such as vendors, products, environment etc. These practices are simply arts of doing (Schatzki, 2006), with which the trade fair actors organize its network of meanings. By walking, experiencing, talking, feeling or learning, this network is constantly reconstructed and the consumer can ever appropriate the fair space (De Certeau, 1998). Besides the capacity to evoke emotional perceived values in consumers by this eternal movement of construction and appropriation, the fair space also sheds light on other consumption values.

Furthermore, the spatial design of a trade fair significantly influences its perceived value. The fair's lively atmosphere, marked by colorful stalls, a variety of products, and engaging interactions, generates feelings of joy and excitement. Additionally, the fair's special context – often associated with specific times (such as Sundays) and themes (like regional products) – enhances its appeal. These elements distinguish trade fairs from the market spaces discussed in the literature (Castilhos and Dolbec 2019), as trade fairs do not impose a uniform script of experiences on consumers. Instead, they celebrate diversity and the meeting of different backgrounds, where individuals from various social classes can freely navigate the spaces between the stalls. This openness creates a unique environment filled with diversity and fluidity, fostering more organic and inclusive interactions among participants.

Given its space disposition, the trade fair represents a mosaic of multifaceted set of tactical space practices (De Certeau, 1998), where consumers search for different attributes from those present in modern centers of consumption. One of these attributes – entirely dissonant between the two market forms – is the endeavor in trying to find new products and experiences behind each stand or at the end of an aisle. In this regard, the curiosity guides the consumers' treasure hunting (Sherry, 1990a), in an endless search for items with symbolic values and accessible prices. This practice shows how perceived epistemic value may arise from the environment of Birds' fair.

Curiosity and learning represent the two main aspects of epistemic dimension. The desire to search for and learn about new products contribute to compose the epistemic values to attend the Fair, since they are related to the consequences of an activity that provides knowledge increment – unconcerned with efficiency or finances (Sherman,

McCrohan, and Smith, 1985; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b). An excerpt from the speech given by Mr. José Messias is very representative of that category:

Something that also must be highlighted is the fact that we go to the Fair to learn, to learn new things. For example, I wanted to buy an aquarium but I knew nothing about raising fish or aquariums. After a few weeks talking with vendors and other consumers I could buy one at reasonable price [as well as] some fish for my grandson.

According to him, the Fair is a shopping street that invites visitors to walk in an outdoors environment. Also, out of curiosity, they can meet friends, learn and, above all, have different life experiences. These simple practices certainly depict the resistance against standardized ways of consumption in modern markets (De Certeau, 1998).

Moreover, another meaningful passage highlights the Fair like a game:

The good and bad go together there. Some trying to do well and others doing evil. God and the Devil are walking together, side by side. God is calling you to one side, and the Devil is like, 'come by my side'. The game at the Fair is like the game of life.

The passage evidenciates the presence of epistemic aspects in the fair space and constitute underlying attributes to construct its daily life. The Birds' fair as whole is practiced and continually rebuilt as a simulacro of life itself. Obviously, the network of meanings of the trade fair is not as complex as the richness of meanings of life, but it preserves aspects inherent to the daily life of its visitors.

All the actors present in the trade fair cocreate its space. The place is transformed and appropriated, constructed and reconstructed by various agents through social practices (Barnes, 2001). These practices are tactical forms of doing contrary to dominant market orders. The cocreation is a manner to appropriate the space and resist against massified forms of consumption (De Certeau, 1998; Izberk-Bilgin, 2010).

Consequently, multiple sensations are evoked from the trade fair. These sensations are apprehended through several consumption values. The consumers perceive the fair space through multidimensional dimensions that transcend the aspects of the theory of consumption perceived values. However, the multidimensionality of the theory and the complex interaction between its constructs permit us to make useful inferences about the consumer behavior.

On the other hand, practices are ways of doing that organize not only spaces but also time (De Certeau, 1998; Schatzki, 2006). They imprint regularity and routinization through planning and expectation. As a conditional perceived value, therefore, Sunday represents the Birds' fair day for its attendees. The discourse of a consumer evidenciates how the trade fair is present in his weekend days: "I go every Sunday to help my neighbour set up the stall and after that, we have a beer right there" (Mr. Juan, 65, retired). Another consumer addresses the same issue, demonstrating the relevance of frequenting the Birds' fair in his quotidian: "It is sacred! We [my brother-in-law and I] always stopped by to have barbecue and beer" (Mr. Nonato, 50-year old carpenter).

The passages also bring about another theme, constantly cited by literature as responsible to influence the consumer to choose trade fairs as purchase places: social relationship (Zinkhan, Fontenelle, and Balaz, 1999; Rajagopal, 2010b). The interpersonal relationship is very common among visitors as well as among consumers and vendors, transforming friendship relations in important aspects of daily construction of the trade fairs. The space of the Birds' fair is a confraternity, in which consumers can spend their day off interacting and updating this space with new and differentiated practices.

However, the authors agree that social perceived value is not intensely present in the quotidian of the trade fair. The idea of social status and prestige was found neither in the participant observation nor in the interviewers' discourses. The strong relations of friendship among consumers and sellers to some extent prevent the formation of perceived social values. Table 2 reveals the main aspects related to the perceived consumption values at Birds' fair.

Table 2. Aspects of products and fair context

Perceived Values	<i>Products</i>	<i>Fair Context</i>
Functional Value	Low Price	Variety
	Subsistence Items	Bartering
Social Value	Counterfeit Products	-
Emotional Value	Symbolic Items	Bargain
		Being and Transiting - <i>Flâneur</i>
		Integration - Relationship
Epistemic Value	Searching	Curiosity
		Learning
		Fair's Game
Conditional Value	Products of the Fair	Sunday's Trade Fair
		Trade Fair Space

Source: Authors.

Although the third axiomatic proposition of the theory of consumption values assert that they are independent from each other, the findings suggest that the perceived values have close relations. The relationship among the perceived values is not so fragmented. In the context of trade fairs, conditional attributes may conduct individuals to perceive emotional values. Likewise, there is a close relation between epistemic and emotional values. The curiosity and the fair's game aggregate more significance for the festive dimension of the fair. Moreover, functional and emotional values are not opposites. They can be found in similar circumstances such as in exchange and bargain practices. Therefore, perceived values are interrelated and influence each other to provide unique experiences for consumers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper explored how consumers behave and cocreate a trade fair space along with a multitude of other actors. The study contributes to increase the literature on empirical research on spatial transformation and appropriation through social practices associated to consumption. Moreover, the ways of doing socially shared by the actors of the trade fair give it a particular commercial configuration, which makes it resist to massified forms of consumption.

The findings challenge the traditional view of trade fairs as purely functional spaces, emphasizing the importance of emotional, conditional, and epistemic values in shaping consumer experience. It must be highlighted that the public who frequents the trade fair do not only look for cheap products in a utilitarian and rational activity. They are also seeking fun, entertainment, and a more playful and relaxing environment to fulfill emotional aspects. Another advantage of the Fair is the freedom of action, the absence of

a bilateral pragmatic buying and selling relationship. The possibility of bartering also stands out as a very common practice of cocreation and highly valued by consumers because it implies the functional (lack of money) and emotional (fun and entertainment) aspects of the purchase. Consumers can behave as both buyers and traders; there are no limits of interaction among passers-by. Likewise, for many, it becomes like a second home, where it is possible to meet friends, enjoy the liveliness, eat and drink, and to have everything at hand.

The study indicates a limitation related to the axiomatic assumptions of the Theory of consumption values. The perceived values do not seem to be independent, as the theory advocates, but interdependent. Epistemic values can lead the consumer to experience emotional values. Likewise, functional values can be raised by conditional values. These examples evidence the close relation among the consumption values.

The Fair visitors are, in fact, a reflection of the contemporary view of consumption, where individuals cocreate the spaces seeking to maximize their experience, understood in multidimensional terms. Therefore, it is a phenomenon that syncretizes well both purchase values: while the functional factors are the basis for the construction of the stage, the spectacle of purchase occurs by emotional, conditional, and epistemic attributes. In other words, multiple perceived values permeate the buying process, assisting, and sometimes taking the lead role in constructing the trade fair space.

Being at the fair space means being in several places at once, researching, learning, and saving money, all by interacting with several vendors and objects, meeting with friends, having fun, haggling and negotiating products of all sorts. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the fair space is a gathering of business and pleasure. The trade model presented by the Birds' Fair, therefore, is an interesting platform for searching, learning, purchasing, exchanging products, and interacting.

For future research, studies can benefit from recognizing that space is not merely a place for transactions, but also a place where consumers express their preferences, status, and lifestyles through interactions. The intersection of marketing and human geography provides an avenue for research that can help us understand consumer behavior. New research in this area can focus on how consumers use space to develop their identities. Additionally, new studies can investigate how consumers shape subsistence markets and consumption dynamics through spatial practices.

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