



THE
SOCIOLOGY
OF FUN

BEN FINCHAM



The Sociology of Fun

Ben Fincham

The Sociology of Fun

palgrave
macmillan

Ben Fincham
Department of Sociology
University of Sussex
Brighton, UK

ISBN 978-0-230-35857-7 ISBN 978-1-137-31579-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31579-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016945178

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Cover illustration: © Everyright Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

*For my children Nancy and Joshua
and my grandmother Betty Hutchings.
This was her idea really.*

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the first cohort of students that took the Third Year Undergraduate Course, 'A Sociology of Fun', in the Department of Sociology at the University of Sussex in the spring of 2014. They are an inspirational group of people who gave themselves wholeheartedly to the study of fun. So, thanks and credit to Laurie Amar, Sophie Anscombe, Charlene Aure, Ashley Barnes, Megan Bond, Rhyanna Coleman, Jess Di Simone, Geraint Harries, Zsuzsa Holmes, Rosie Hyam, Jennie Leighton, Juliette Martin Useo, Ella Matthews, Jess Midgely, Becky Reynolds, Amy Sarjeant, Beth White and Lainey White.

Thanks must also go to the 201 people that took part in the 'fun' survey.

I would like to thank people working at the Salvage Café in Hove in the spring and summer of 2015, where much of this book was written. In particular, I would like to say thank you to Matthew English, Tazz Khan, Lauren Joy Kennett, Holly Macve and Joshua Taylor who were patient in the face of what must have seemed like some weird questions at times.

I would like to thank Palgrave Macmillan publishers, especially Philippa Grand, Beth O'Leary, Harriet Barker and Amelia Derkatsch for their support and encouragement during the production of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. My mum and dad, Deborah and Barry, who provided the perfect backdrop for my fun growing up—I realise how lucky I am that they are my parents. I want to thank my brother, Joe—who probably does not know how prominently he features in my stories of fun throughout my life. Now my partner, Bree, is providing the perfect backdrop for my and my children’s fun—which is as important to me as anything. Thank you, Bree.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Theorising Fun	27
3	Fun and Games: Childhood	47
4	Fun and Frivolity: Adulthood	83
5	Fun at Work	121
6	Phenomenal Fun	155
7	Fun and Recollection	183
8	Conclusions	197
	Bibliography	207
	Index	209