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16 The Psychology of Access-Based Consumption

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Access-based consumption has become an important domain of consumer research over the past decade. Access constitutes “transactions that may be market mediated in which no transfer of ownership takes place” (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012, p. 881). Access represents an alternative mode of consumption to ownership. It acknowledges that ownership is not always the ultimate consumer goal; rather, ownership and access can each constitute a valuable alternative depending on the context. Access provides distinct benefits anchored in its temporariness and freedom from the financial, social, and emotional burdens of ownership. Its temporariness can challenge the sense of psychological ownership as well as the identity and social values in consumption. Thus, access is appreciated for its value in use (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) and as an experience (Chen, 2009). Access can also serve as a temporary lifestyle facilitator, allowing consumers to experience a level of affluence they may not ordinarily afford (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2010). In this sense, access may also contest the exclusivity and status signification associated with luxury and ownership as it democratizes status markers (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020; Pantano & Stylos, 2020).

Another important benefit of access-based consumption models is their potential to be more sustainable than individual ownership (Davies et al., 2020). Access promotes sharing and redistribution, as well as the shared use of resources, which may result in less overall use and waste of resources. This opportunity extends to many economic sectors, in which platforms are increasingly providing an effective means of connecting owners and users to make better use of underutilized resources, or recirculating them as secondhand goods (Styvén & Mariani, 2020). However, it remains unclear whether sustainability is an important motive that drives the preference for access (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

More broadly, access is not new; rather, scholars have indicated that it is an ancient acquisition practice and may even potentially outdate ownership (see Belk, 2007, 2010; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2016). For example, historically, individuals have always had access to consumption resources via social exchange, such as collective sharing of resources driven by community norms such as mutuality (Arnould & Rose, 2016), or intrafamily sharing (Belk, 2010). Public services have also provided consumers with access to various resources. Access via market exchange has been historically more stigmatized than ownership,

especially via practices of traditional renting (see Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012, for a discussion on this). More recently, and especially since the 2008 financial crisis, access via market exchange has become increasingly popular with the proliferation of sharing economy services and digital platforms (e.g., Airbnb, Uber, TaskRabbit, Deliveroo, Turo, etc.) (Perren & Kozinets, 2018). Digital platforms, often identified as platform marketing or lateral exchange markets, also constitute the burgeoning empirical domain of consumer research in access.

This chapter is based on a review of the last decade of marketing research on access. We follow a narrative synthesis method (e.g., Sharifonnasabi, Bardhi, & Luedicke, 2020) to systematically review the published articles on this topic. Narrative synthesis is a textual method that seeks to collate, review, and synthesize findings from prior research that fits prespecified eligibility criteria (Higgins et al., 2019; Rodgers et al., 2009). It provides a systematic procedure to develop a conceptual map of the research on access-based consumption. We analyzed a sample of 133 publications in the leading marketing and consumer research journals over the past decade, garnered by the search terms: access-based consumption, access-based services, sharing economy, sharing + marketing, platform + marketing, object pathways, renting, and collaborative consumption. This sample included both conceptual and empirical articles and spanned an array of paradigms and methodological approaches. We analyzed each article based on themes that emerged from its underlying theory, research focus, and findings or propositions. The broad and holistic approach of narrative synthesis allows us to encapsulate the diversity of theoretical approaches, contexts, and methodologies in the domain of access-based consumption.

Access-based consumption is an emerging research domain that grew in parallel with the popularity of the sharing economy services since the 2008 financial crisis (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Access has become an important research domain as also indicated by key publications, including the *Handbook of the Sharing Economy* (Belk, Eckhardt, & Bardhi, 2019), a *Journal of Consumer Research* tutorial (Lamberton & Goldsmith, 2020), an invited article in the *Journal of Marketing* (Eckhardt et al., 2019), and special issues such as those in *Psychology & Marketing* (Viglia, 2020) and *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* (Price & Belk, 2016). Early on, the focus in this research domain was predominantly theoretical, where a number of concepts were introduced to make sense of the various digital, nonownership, collaborative, and sharing-related phenomena, such as the concepts of sharing (Belk, 2007, 2010), community gifting (Giesler, 2006), mutuality (Arnould & Rose, 2016), access-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), lateral exchange markets (Perren & Kozinets, 2018), etc. Access has been studied from various perspectives, including that of liquid consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017), psychological ownership (Morewedge et al., 2021), macro (Barron, Kung, & Proserpio, 2021; Li & Srinivasan, 2019; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017), and strategic marketing, especially via the notion of access-based services (Schaefers, Lawson, & Kukar-Kinney, 2016; Schaefers et al., 2016). Recent scholarship has moved to empirical examination of access-based-related

phenomena not only in North American contexts, but also European and, more recently, emerging markets. Our review summarizes some of these findings.

We utilize the three stages of consumer behavior activity, specifically acquisition, consumption/use, and disposition (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010) to unpack the findings of this review on access. This chapter first introduces the conceptual foundations of access and discusses key access resources acquisition practices. The second section elaborates on the antecedent conditions of access. In the third section, we discuss the consequences of access by integrating the findings from our review studies under the framework of four paradoxes of access. Finally, we conclude with a list of proposed topics for future research regarding access acquisition practices; lifestyle, social, and communal motivations that shape preferences for access; governance of access transactions; consumer choice under access; and branding of access.

16.1 Conceptual Foundations of Access

16.1.1 Defining Access and Its Relationship to Ownership

Access, similar to ownership, represents a unique relationship between consumer(s) and object(s) that governs the individual rights and obligations towards the object(s). We build on Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2012) definition of access, as transactions that can be market mediated but where no transfer of ownership takes place. Access gives consumers the temporary ability to use and consume an object without the transfer of ownership.

Ownership and access coexist on a continuum that represents the nature of the relationship between a consumer and the object of consumption (see also Lambertson & Goldsmith, 2020). This continuum defines how consumers benefit from their consumption resources with access and ownership at each extreme. On the ownership side of the continuum, the consumer acquires full (*de jure* and *de facto*) rights to privately own a resource. Ownership represents the special relationship between a person and an object called *owning*, and the object is called "personal property" or a "possession" (Snare, 1972, p. 200). On the access side, the consumer is able to use a resource for a particular period without legal ownership of it. While access does not lead to a transfer of ownership, the consumer can gain the right to use the object via market-based or social contracts (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004).

Demarcating ownership and access matters because each poses unique consequences for the nature of consumption, especially the acquisition process, consumption/use, value, and consumer type(s) that adopt it. For instance, ownership is more private, permanent, and characterized by an intimate relationship with the object, whereas access is more temporal, public, and characterized by a circumstantial relationship to the object (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012, 2017; Belk, 2010; Chen, 2009). Consumer research has demonstrated that ownership implies individualism, appropriation, and distinction, which may not carry over into

certain access practices. For example, when access is gained via social exchange, such as sharing, a joint sense of ownership as well as community may emerge (e.g., intrafamilial sharing of possessions) (Arnould & Rose, 2016; Belk, 2010). Others have shown that because access is temporary, it may not allow for consumer appropriation as well as extension of the self in consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Quantitative studies of access-based consumption contexts further find that consumers who prefer access to ownership tend to value possession attachment and utility less and are more trend- and convenience-oriented (Hennig-Thurau, Henning, & Sattler, 2007; Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010).

Ownership and access have come to represent equal alternatives in many consumption contexts. Consumers are faced with the choice of access or ownership before they have to make a brand choice, for example, and research has started to unpack the value of, and contexts for, each. On the one hand, prior research finds that access is embraced when consumers are aware of the burdens/costs of ownership, such as the perceived financial, performance, social, and emotional risks associated with owning (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Schaefer, Lawson, & Kukar-Kinney, 2016). Consumers are more likely to choose access to escape the burdens of ownership, particularly in liquid contexts, such as mobility/travel (e.g., access may be preferred during business or leisure travel), life transitions (e.g., temporary renting during a period of in-between jobs or homes as well as during youth), and digital consumption (e.g., streaming) (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017). At the same time, access comes with its own obligations, particularly associated with its social interdependence (e.g., sharing use or collaboration with others/strangers) as well as its temporariness. Thus, Hazée, Delcourt, and Van Vaerenbergh (2017) find that some consumers resist adoption of access-based services because they may fear contamination from others, enhanced responsibility from using something that is not theirs, concerns with lifestyle fit, as well as perceptions of complexity and reliability of using access-based services. Thus, it is important to recognize access and ownership as alternative consumer choices about the nature of a relationship as well as the nature of their own consumption.

16.1.2 How Do Consumers Acquire Access?

Based on our review, we find that people engage in access-based consumption through a range of both market and social exchange acquisition practices. Overall, access can be gained via market and nonmarket exchange, specifically via five acquisition practices: renting, leasing, sharing, borrowing, and collective sharing.

First, access may be gained via market exchange, predominantly via acquisition practices, such as renting. Prior research has identified various forms of renting based on temporality, such as occasional renting (e.g., occasional renting via car-sharing clubs) (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), or long-term renting (e.g., via traditional car-renting services). Renting also differs by its level of anonymity (see Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012); some rental forms are more social as

they take place between consumers. This is the case for peer-to-peer (P2P) renting (Stofberg & Bridoux, 2019), as in the context of renting from other consumers via platforms like Airbnb (Graul & Brough, 2020; Osman, D'Acunto, & Johns, 2019). Leasing represents a long-term rental and, thus, a greater psychological sense of ownership may be developed toward the consumption object in contrast to renting; however, we have very little research on this practice (except Aspara & Wittkowski, 2019). Another popular form of access acquisition facilitated by digital platforms is streaming, such as via Spotify for music or Netflix for films and TV content (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2017; Hennig-Thurau, Henning, & Sattler, 2007; Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010; Papies, Eggers, & Wlömert, 2011; Sinclair & Tinson, 2017; Wlömert & Papies, 2016). Consumers of such platforms can access vast libraries of entertainment media for free or via a membership fee.

Second, social exchange can also provide consumers access to consumption resources (Aspara & Wittkowski, 2019; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2016). Access can be gained outside the market via social exchange, specifically via sharing (Belk, 2010), borrowing (Aspara & Wittkowski, 2019; Jenkins, Molesworth, & Scullion, 2014), or collective sharing (i.e., mutuality) (Arnould & Rose, 2016; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011). Some have argued that these are historically the original practices of gaining access (Belk, 2010; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2016). Sharing constitutes a resource acquisition practice that leads to access via social exchange rather than a model of consumption. This is consistent with Belk's original definition and study of sharing within social exchange and the context of the family (Belk, 2007, 2010); however, it differs in that it recognizes sharing as a practice of access resource distribution.

Here, we have provided an overview of the nature of access-based consumption as well as the acquisition practices of access. We move next to discussing the antecedents of access.

16.2 Antecedents of Access

Our review indicates that an important area of research in access is the study of the antecedent conditions under which access is preferred or chosen over ownership. We summarize these findings around two core categories: (1) consumer motivation and individual differences, and (2) firm marketing activities. These findings help us understand why and under what conditions consumers prefer or choose access versus ownership, as well as how firms' marketing activities shape these choices.

16.2.1 Consumer Motivation for Access

This stream of research examines the individual differences as well as the motivations behind the choice for access. These studies address how we can identify the consumers who adopt and use access. They typically involve

large-scale survey and cluster analysis studies, mainly in the USA, UK, and Scandinavian countries across various sectors of the sharing economy services. Overall, this stream of research finds that consumers who prefer access and adopt it are motivated primarily by variety-seeking motives, followed by economic motives, and then sustainability or ethical motivations (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018; Lawson et al., 2016; Oyedele & Simpson, 2017; Schafers et al., 2021; Styvén & Mariani, 2020). Prior research systematically shows that variety-seeking drives access adoption because access is associated with experimentation rather than commitment, and is thus perceived to carry lower risks than ownership (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018).

Sustainability and ethical motives emerge as a key driver of adoption or preference for access as, for many consumers, access may be perceived as a more sustainable consumption model. In addition, sustainability can also be part of a consumer lifestyle, which may be shaped by an environmentalist identity (Hartl, Kamleitner, & Holub, 2020) or even traditional types of values (Roos & Hahn, 2017). Consumers who pursue an anti-consumerist lifestyle are highly engaged with access-based platforms in addition to the secondhand markets, both seen as parts of the circular economy (Hellwig et al., 2015; Pantano & Stylos, 2020; Styvén & Mariani, 2020). However, the conditions under which sustainability drives the choice for access remain unclear (see also Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). For example, Hartl, Kamleitner, and Holub (2020) find that sustainability seems to motivate owners rather than users of access. So, distinguishing between the two groups of consumers may be important to differentiate motivations behind these choices.

Prior research also shows that consumers who prefer access tend to be less possessive and materialistic, and, in general, they are young, highly educated, and urban (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Lawson et al., 2016). There are also some scholarly indications that some consumers are motivated by social motives (Belk, 2010; Stofberg & Bridoux, 2019). For instance, Caldwell et al. (2020) argue that consumer attraction to the sharing economy is anchored on a longing for marketplace exchanges imbued by a sense of greater intimacy, community, and moral obligation. Research on sharing and social exchange has also highlighted social motives as a core driver of access adoption (Belk, 2010; Jenkins, Molesworth, & Scullion, 2014). However, the conditions under which communal and social motives drive adoption of access remain unclear.

Moreover, there is little research on the individual differences that shape preferences for access (Lamberton & Goldsmith, 2020). The work of Aspara and Wittkowski (2019) is one exception. They find that individual intelligence is associated with higher adoption of access-based services and acquisition practices. This is so because highly intelligent consumers demonstrate stronger generalized trust, and also because they have more resources available to them. Interestingly, this study was done in the Finnish context and also considers nonmarket access practices such as borrowing and collective sharing.

Finally, scholars have explored whether and how low-income consumers are adopting access. Traditionally, low-income consumers have used access-based

practices, such as sharing resources, borrowing, and collective renting (Belk, 2010; Thompson, Henry, & Bardhi, 2018). Building on this, Schafers et al. (2021) conducted an experimental study within a rural Indian context and found that in contrast to consumers with higher income, low-income consumers perceive access-based services to entail less financial risk, resulting in a greater inclination to access, rather than to own, goods. This study highlights the importance of access-based services in addressing the limited availability of resources and facilitating potential pathways to alleviate poverty.

16.2.2 Firm Marketing Activities

A second stream of research examines the ways that marketing strategies can shape preferences for access versus ownership, ranging from branding to service innovation, communications, design, and pricing (e.g., Mukherjee & Kadiyali, 2011). The findings here are dispersed across these domains of marketing strategy. For branding, prior research has been inconclusive. On one side, Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012, 2017) have challenged the value of product brand in access, even though they find that the platform brand (such as the brand of Zipcar in their case) may be important in providing sign value to consumers. However, Baumeister, Scherer, and Wangenheim (2015) find that brands seem relevant in the fashion context, but less so across other product categories of access offerings. More future research is needed to unpack the value of platform brands as well as the product brand in access.

From a services marketing perspective, access is also seen as a form of service innovation, related to the service innovations in the sharing economy. Adopting an innovation lens, this line of research asks: What are the barriers to adopting access? Providing insights into this question, Hazée, Delcourt, and Van Vaerenbergh (2017) find six categories of barriers that impede customer adoption and usage of access: complexity, reliability, contamination, responsibility, compatibility, and image barriers. Thus, managers of access-based services may need to expand their customer service to address customers' worry about compatibility (Karahanna, Agarwal, & Angst, 2006) and image (Kleijnen, Lee, & Wetzels, 2009), but also contamination and responsibility, to increase the adoption of access-based services.

The complexity of branding and marketing communication of access-based goods and services is also evident in the marketing of access. In their study of P2P businesses, Costello and Reczek (2020) highlight that there is a high perceived provider–firm independence, where providers are viewed by consumers as relatively independent from the platform on which they offer goods/services. They find that when P2P brands use provider-focused (vs. platform-focused) marketing communications, consumers perceive a purchase as helping an individual provider to a greater extent, which increases consumers' willingness to pay and their likelihood of both making a purchase and downloading the brand's app. This effect takes place because provider-focused communications lead consumers to adopt an "empathy lens" as they think about the provider rather than the platform.

Providers are not only firms but also consumers in access-based contexts. In a recent study, Graul and Brough (2020) show that an owner's expression of attachment affects others involved in a transaction in the P2P context. Through evidence from secondary data and four experiments, they find that although some owners mistakenly expect attachment cues to enhance a product's appeal, attachment cues instead tend to deter prospective renters. They attribute this effect to renters' desire to avoid the responsibility of protecting (e.g., from damage, loss, or theft) an item to which the owner is emotionally attached.

Finally, we also find that the design of the access object as well as the platform can shape consumer choice for access and related consumption consequences. Some research highlights the design of the access objects as a way to transform the nature of access-based consumption. For example, in her ethnography of a car-sharing club in Paris, Gruen (2017) finds that consumers do identify with and care for accessed cars, in contrast to the findings of Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012). Gruen (2017) argues that this is because of the design of the shared electric cars, which encourages consumers to anthropomorphize them and eventually appropriate the shared cars. In this way, she proposes that design of the object can play a key role in enhancing the sense of psychological ownership as well as community in access-based consumption. Thus, echoing Hazée, Delcourt, and Van Vaerenbergh's (2017) research, as with ownership, there are "burdens" to access that are likely to act as deterrents to the appeal and adoption of this consumption mode. Across several dimensions, the burdens of access often manifest as several paradoxical consequences of access, which we discuss in the next section.

16.3 Consequences of Access-Based Consumption

There are myriad consequences of access for a variety of stakeholders, ranging from consumers affected at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, to marketers and brands, and society as a whole. In analyzing the consequences of access across the studies in our review, we noted that paradoxes underlie most of them (see also Belk, Eckhardt, & Bardhi, 2019). Using a paradoxes lens (e.g., Alvarez, Brick, & Fournier, 2021; Mick & Fournier, 1998), our narrative synthesis identifies four key paradoxical consequences of access-based consumption. Specifically, these paradoxes relate to the nature of consumption (more consumption/less attachment), consumer perceptions ("mine"/not "mine"), consumer signals (prosocial/pro-status), and social impacts (empowerment/exploitation). We outline these paradoxes next.

16.3.1 Paradoxical Nature of Access-Based Consumption

Access reshapes the very nature of consumption, generating subsequent effects for consumer attachment. As previously outlined, prior research has systematically shown that access-based consumption is a distinct mode of consumption

from ownership. Chen's (2009) influential study highlights this distinction, showing that ownership is characterized by possessiveness while access is characterized by temporary and more experiential forms of consumption. More specifically, Chen (2009) found that when comparing art owners (ownership) with art visitors (access-based), access-based consumers were likely to perceive and seek new, unique values from access-based offerings. Collectors who owned artworks perceived the value of collecting based on a sense of preservation, whereas visitors who only viewed artworks perceived the value of visits based on experiential aspects, such as a sense of calmness, imagination, forgetfulness of time during visits, and memories after visits (Chen, 2009). Additionally, this study indicates that as consumer practices transition from possession-based to access-based modes, consumer value perceptions may shift from an object focus to more of an individual focus (Chen, 2009). Because access is temporary and experiential, there are also fewer opportunities for traditional forms of consumer attachment. Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) also find that consumers tend to avoid identification with the accessed object in occasional renting.

Further, a lack of opportunities for traditional attachment can become exacerbated by changes to the ways in which we consume. For instance, research suggests that access-based consumption facilitates more varied consumption and more total consumption (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018; Lawson et al., 2016). As Bardhi and Eckhardt (2017) note, access is based on a circulation logic, so objects circulate faster along the consumption process because their value is ephemeral. Thus, while access-based consumers may be engaged in more consumption overall, they may be growing more detached from products (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017). We frame this as the "more consumption/less attachment" paradox of access-based consumption. Moreover, we recognize consumer work as a key process that unfolds in close relation to this paradox.

Paradox 1: More Consumption/Less Attachment. In essence, the more consumption/less attachment paradox encapsulates the paradoxical nature of access-based consumption that unfolds at the level of practice. This paradox denotes that the sheer proliferation and ubiquity of access offerings across many product categories may lead to more total consumption – partially due to the ease and affordability of new product discovery and product trial – but may not necessarily induce stronger levels of consumer attachment toward access offerings (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018; Lawson et al., 2016).

We have greater access to more goods and services than ever before (Quinn, 2022), with a host of "on-demand" sharing economy offerings that seem to provide an unlimited supply via subscription services content across several product categories. For instance, access via streaming platforms like Spotify not only results in more individual consumption, but also new opportunities for product discovery and variety-seeking (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018). As outlined earlier, most individuals who prefer and adopt access-based consumption are primarily driven by variety-seeking motivations (Lawson et al., 2016).

Moreover, access models can facilitate inconsequentially high levels of consumption as there is no virtual wear and tear for streaming via access-based platforms. Additionally, consumers can enjoy benefits unhindered by commitment as there is little or no additional price for new product discoveries, “in a way that was impossible in the past” (Lawson et al., 2016, p. 2622). Access tends to facilitate conveniences that liberate consumers from many noticeably tangible forms of product storage, maintenance, and restoration (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Belk, 2013). Also, by setting the price of additional product variety to zero, vast streaming services like Spotify can reshape how consumers perceive value on these platforms and can subsequently influence consumer practices. As a case in point, although streaming may benefit consumers with enhanced access to new product discovery and variety, it is less likely that consumers remain loyal to newly discovered content; in other words, “while it is easier to enter the consumption set, it is harder to stay there” (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018, p. 19). Thus, increased quantities of access-based consumption are not necessarily an indication of strong consumer attachment to access offerings.

A key explanation for this paradox suggests that because of its nature, access is likely to foster liquid relations between consumers and products, characterized by detachment and flexibility (Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Arnould, 2012). From this view, the ephemeral and dematerialized nature of access-based offerings bolsters liquidity and subsequent consumer detachment (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017). Importantly, liquidity garners a new dimension of consumption, inspiring new consumer valuations, meaning liquidity is not necessarily conceptualized as a decline in value. Rather, liquidity provides new forms of value, including situational value, which is based on the context-dependent utility of a product, and use value, akin to utilitarian value (Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Arnould, 2012). Further, as the nature of access-based consumption facilitates new opportunities for consumer–producer engagement, scholars find that consumers actively create new forms of value as an outcome of their own consumption. Consumer researchers refer to such activity as consumer work or prosumption, which relates closely to the more consumption/less attachment paradox, as we discuss next.

Consumers as Prosumers: Not Just “Users” but Also Workers. Although consumer work can occur outside access models (Cova & Dallı, 2009), it also emerges in tandem with the paradoxical nature of access. Consumer work – often used interchangeably with consumer labor, possession work, or prosumption – broadly refers to the consumer’s mental, physical, and technical labor performed to enrich the overall consumption experience (Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016). The concept of consumer work marks a notable departure from the traditional consumers–producers dichotomy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Cova & Dallı, 2009; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Consequently, the hybrid concept of the “prosumer” – who both produces and consumes different forms of value within a particular marketplace context – has emerged to account for the dual roles increasingly performed by individuals

within today's marketplace. Access consumers in particular "produce" in a variety of ways, which can bring about economic consequences, such as the co-creation of market value through "free" labor performed via prosumption. This, in turn, can provide prosumers with symbolic values through imbuing meaning onto products beyond exchange value (Cova, Dalli, & Zwick, 2011; Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016), and social outcomes resulting from the nature of exchange between actors (Cova & Dalli, 2009).

By engaging in forms of consumer work, the consumer's relationship with the product/object can grow stronger and more meaningful, and ultimately foster a sense of attachment as the consumer becomes more invested in consumption practices (Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994). Additionally, from a social network perspective, the collapsing of the boundaries between consumers and producers enables peer engagement behaviors, which are seen as voluntary and discretionary peer efforts to interact and/or co-create with other peers beyond fundamental transactions in a P2P context (Lin et al., 2019).

Consumer work has become an integral part of access-based consumption, owing largely to the platformized nature, business model, and technologies that govern many access-based offerings. Platforms function as the bridge connecting consumers and economic actors to co-construct networked pathways to collective forms of value (Figueiredo & Scaraboto, 2016; Makkar, Yap, & Belk, 2020). Yet, with different actors contributing to platforms, each with their own distinct goals, and often competing logics, obstacles to value co-construction inevitably arise. The sheer heterogeneity of actors on platforms often results in conflicting expectations, stemming from social and communal networking, establishment of trust, and level of personalized offerings afforded by sharing economy platforms (Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2022). Actors can benefit from a particular series of consumer work, "orchestration work," consisting of multiple overlapping actions that "assist consumers in overcoming challenges to co-creating unique, valuable experiences for themselves" (Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2022, p. 34). For instance, in their study of the hospitality sharing platform, Couchsurfing, Scaraboto and Figueiredo (2022) found that orchestration work can be used by consumers to mitigate challenges of interpersonal trust by revealing (e.g., demonstrating openness and willingness to share), cultivating reviews (e.g., hosting friends in exchange for reviews), and scaffolding (e.g., meeting co-creation partners in public spaces first).

In addition to human actors, other entities, such as technology and novel digital affordances, also play key roles in governing opportunities for value co-creation on access-based platforms. For instance, digital affordances allow platforms like Airbnb to function as a buffer that absorbs blame when problems unfold, and balance social risks by standardizing the boundaries between intimate and economic relations (Makkar, Yap, & Belk, 2020). In turn, consumers, platforms, and technology configure in ways that continue to blur the once traditional boundaries between consumers and producers, giving way to new opportunities for, and threats to, prosumption and value co-creation.

In sum, the first paradox of access-based consumption suggests that consumers may become satiated from higher levels of consumption and wider, inconsequentially priced access to product variety. It echoes a similar sentiment to Mick and Fournier's (1998, p. 126) engaging/disengaging paradox of technology, whereby "technology can facilitate involvement, flow, or activity, and technology can lead to disconnection, disruption, or passivity." Correspondingly, access-based providers may be facilitating consumption that emphasizes the quantity of offerings available, but at the expense of the strength of consumer attachments given the abundance of offerings. Having more consumer choice can also impact consumers on an intrapersonal level, by shaping how they may perceive ownership of products, as we highlight next.

16.3.2 Paradoxical Sense of Ownership in Access

Access-based models, by their nature, disrupt traditional forms of ownership and possession, and, subsequently, consumer practices and perceptions. That is, access-based consumption also affects consumers on an intrapersonal level, influencing how they perceive ownership of products. Unlike possession and ownership-based models that bundle products with property rights, access-based models unbundle the two, facilitating what can be understood as fractional ownership. Fractional ownership models separate property rights to grant consumers temporary acquisition of goods and services that are often shared with, or crowdsourced by, many other consumers (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Eckhardt et al., 2019; Morewedge et al., 2021).

Interestingly, even though a lack of full legal ownership characterizes access-based consumption, consumers may still feel a sense of perceived or psychological ownership with access-based offerings. In other words, consumers often perceive access-based offerings as "theirs" in some ways, while also "not theirs" in others. This is because a perceived form of ownership, or psychological ownership, can manifest independent of legal ownership (Furby, 1980; Morewedge et al., 2021; Peck & Shu, 2009; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). Although both forms of ownership are closely related (i.e., legal owners are expected to feel higher perceived ownership than those who are not legal owners), perceived ownership has been found to be influenced by factors beyond legal ownership (Peck & Shu, 2009). We identify this as the "mine"/not "mine" paradox of access-based consumption, which has numerous downstream consequences for individual consumers and marketing practitioners. Further, this paradox exemplifies aspects of the hybrid nature, uniqueness, and complexity of access-based consumption in that it requires a critical view of perceptions and practices as well as legality.

Paradox 2: "Mine"/Not "Mine." For decades, consumer perceptions of ownership have traditionally been linked to two well-known concepts from prospect theory – loss aversion and the endowment effect (for reviews, see Ericson & Fuster, 2011; Morewedge & Giblin, 2015). The former is a value function whereby a loss lowers one's utility more than a gain of the same size

would increase one's utility, whereas the latter is the tendency for an individual who owns a product to value it more than those who do not (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). However, more recently, scholars argue that the endowment effect may result from consumers' perceived sense of ownership. Perceived ownership, or psychological ownership, refers to a state in which a consumer perceives something to be closely connected to the self, creating a feeling that something is "mine" (Furby, 1991; Kirk, Peck, & Swain, 2018; Peck & Shu, 2009; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). Importantly, according to both psychological ownership and loss aversion explanations of the endowment effect, consumers are more likely to evaluate goods based on what can be lost rather than what can be gained. However, the stakes as to what is to be gained or lost differ. From a psychological ownership perspective, consumers build an emotional attachment to products as they associate them with the self and/or label products as "mine." Thus, such forms of attachment and associations with the self are considered at stake. In contrast, from a prospect theory perspective, consumers place higher value on owned products and are more likely to value products more when giving them up rather than acquiring them. Thus, the perceived (overstated) value of what one owns is considered at stake, prompting a loss-averse reaction to safeguard what is owned. As implied, a key distinction between these perspectives is the assumed role of the self in shaping consumer perceptions and valuations. The role of the self has become more prevalent in recent ownership research, and therefore is a key underpinning facet of the "mine"/not "mine paradox.

Moreover, the concept of psychological ownership has garnered significant attention by scholars over the last decade, especially given its notable implications for access-based consumption. This emergent scholarly interest stems from observations that the nature of consumption modes can affect whether and to what extent a consumer can feel that a product is "theirs." Specifically, in practice, access-based consumers are more likely to find it difficult to navigate the three core routes to psychological ownership: gaining perceived and/or actual control over a target (e.g., consumption object), coming to know a target intimately (e.g., through active association and building a meaningful relationship with the target), and investing themselves in a target (e.g., via prosumption and customization practices) (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). A range of factors determine whether a consumer can access such routes to psychological ownership in the absence of full legal ownership, including target-focused conditions like the physical materiality of the product acquired, the level of perceived control in acquiring and using the product, and the stability or permanence of the product. We expand on these factors next.

First, a product's physical materiality can contribute to a greater perceived sense of ownership. For instance, in their study of "physical" versus "digital" counterpart products, Atasoy and Morewedge (2018) found that consumers perceived greater psychological ownership with more physically material products in comparison to dematerialized digital counterparts. For instance, using

a pay-what-you-want field experiment design, Atasoy and Morewedge (2018) found that tourists paid more for physical souvenirs (instant film photographs) than digital photograph versions. This effect was consistent in further studies wherein US consumers indicated higher purchase intentions and willingness to pay for physical rather than digital books and movies, and students were also willing to pay more for physical over digital textbooks (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018). These results can also be explained from a sensory perspective, as more physically material products enable haptics that can satisfy consumers' need for touch (Krishna, 2012; Peck & Childers, 2003). As a case in point, across several product categories (i.e., using Playfoam, Slinky toys, mugs, and pencils), Peck and Shu (2009) found that being able to touch an object increased perceived ownership, which can, in turn, enhance valuation of objects.

Additionally, a key antecedent of psychological ownership, perceived control, goes hand in hand with a product's physical materiality to create a sense that a product is "mine" (Peck & Shu, 2009; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). Further, more physically material goods are more conducive to perceived ownership, as consumers feel more able to physically control objects they can touch and potentially manipulate (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018; Peck & Shu, 2009; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). In fact, a sense of perceived control and ownership can even be established through imagined touch (Peck, Barger, & Webb, 2013) or via digital touchscreen interfaces (Brasel & Gips, 2014). Beyond primarily individual touch-related forms of perceived control, consumers may also gain a sense of perceived control over a product by deciding who else can use it (Rudmin & Berry, 1987) or controlling its design process (Baxter & Aurisicchio, 2018). Such feelings of control can also be reinforced by the more stable, permanent nature of physically solid consumption objects (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017).

In turn, because these forms of control and ownership are mentally constructed in the minds of consumers, individuals can also benefit interpersonally, by satisfying their fundamental motives to have control and mastery over their environment and how they express their identities to themselves and others (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018; Belk, 1988). Additionally, psychological ownership can also bring about benefits to society, as recent studies show increasing consumers' psychological ownership can facilitate stewardship of public goods (Peck et al., 2021).

Taken together, there are several well-documented conditions under which a consumption object can enable a potential route to psychological ownership in the absence of legal ownership. However, most of these conditions are atypical of access-based consumption based on two core dimensions, materiality and legality, as synthesized by Morewedge et al. (2021). In terms of materiality, access-based offerings are often dematerialized (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017), ephemeral (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), or experiential in nature (Morewedge et al., 2021). In terms of legality, access-based offerings typically enable legal access rather than legal (full) ownership, which can engender a perceived fluidity and lack of stability (Bardhi & Eckhardt,

2017) or impermanence (Morewedge et al., 2021) as consumers access more and more objects that were once traditionally owned. Consequently, a form of fractional ownership emerges through the coupling of dematerialized/experiential and legal access facets of access-based consumption, which can pose several threats to psychological ownership (Morewedge et al., 2021). At the same time, access-based consumption also facilitates opportunities for more liberating consumer lifestyles such as contemporary cosmopolitanism and global nomadism (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Arnould, 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2015).

16.3.3 Paradoxical Consumer Signaling via Access

Ownership-based possessions have traditionally been associated with materialism; that is, placing a disproportionate emphasis on wanting more things to meet one's needs and highly valuing acquisition as a means to achieve important life goals (Richins, 2017). But how might this have changed given the rise in access-based consumption in recent decades? Based on our review of these literature streams, we identify two polarized ways in which access-based consumption can be used to signal consumer values and motivations to the self and others. We synthesize the implications of these findings as the prosocial/pro-status paradox of access-based consumption.

Paradox 3: Prosocial/Pro-status. Growing global narratives have issued urgent cries for consumers to think and act more like citizen-consumers; that is, to vote with their consumer choices and voice. Within this milieu, scholars across disciplines have observed the paradoxical nature of access: Access enables more sustainable pathways to consumption but also attracts greater demands for more supply, hyper-local, individual convenience, and rapid logistics (Moncef & Monnet Dupuy, 2021; Verboven & Vanherck, 2016). More narrowly, marketing scholars have shed light on how consumers behave, both in terms of prosocial (citizen-driven) and pro-status (individual consumer-driven) signals. Building on Guyader (2018), we synthesize this as the prosocial/pro-status paradox of access-based consumption.

On the one hand, consumers may participate in line with a “pro-social orientation centered around community values,” likely driven by altruism and generalized reciprocity (Guyader, 2018, p. 703; see also Bagozzi & Moore, 1994; Osterhus, 1997; Wang, John, & Griskevicious, 2021; White, MacDonnell, & Ellard, 2012). For some consumers, one means of engaging in more prosocial consumption is through owning less and, instead, relying more on temporary access to shared goods and services for many transactions. This has been a particularly prevalent perception held by many access-based consumers (for a literature overview, see Hartl, Kamleitner, & Holub, 2020). For example, in their study comparing car-owners and nonowners, Hartl, Kamleitner, and Holub (2020) found that the extent to which one identifies as an environmentalist predicts car-owners' willingness to offer carpooling, but does not affect non-owners' willingness to use carpooling services. These

findings demonstrate the role of identity in influencing why consumers may engage in prosocial activities. In this way, consumption modes can be used to signal to the self and others that one is an “environmentalist.”

Similarly, consumers can demonstrate prosocial behaviors in the ways that they access public goods. For example, Peck et al. (2021) found that increasing psychological ownership of communally shared public goods can foster a greater sense of responsibility amongst users. Across their studies, Peck et al. (2021) manipulated a sense of psychological ownership by allowing lake users to assign a nickname to a public lake (Study 1), view a “welcome to YOUR park” sign (Studies 2 and 4), and allowing park visitors to plan their own route with a map (Study 3), finding that increasing psychological ownership enhances both effortful stewardship (e.g., picking up trash from a lake; Study 1) and financial stewardship, (e.g., donating money; Study 3). Such prosocial acts are expected to cater to individualistic feelings, like altruism, but also collectivist aspects such as social norms, fairness, and reciprocity (Peck et al. 2021). Overall, these findings suggest that consumers can engage in accessing public goods in ways that signal prosocial types of values and motivations. This can further deliver self-enhancing benefits to consumers, such as self-verification, by reinforcing consumers’ perceptions of their own identities and through self-congruent appraisals received from others.

On the other hand, the pro-status side of this paradox represents the persistent materialistic or consumerist desires that continue to permeate access-based modes of consumption despite its less material, ownership-based nature. That is, rather than a prosocial communal focus, consumers may prefer to use access to strategically signal status, lifestyles, and trend behaviors, in satisfaction of emerging self-interest motives and consumerist goals (Guyader, 2018). Research in the context of access-based consumption has found that consumers can be materialistic; however, the nature of materialism differs (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017). Consumers have traditionally used materialism as a mechanism to signal status and co-construct their identities (Richins, 2017). Thus, when consumers with strong materialistic desires engage in access-based consumption, they are likely to continue to forge paths wherein they can enact their cultural capital and taste distinctions (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021) and acquire forms of luxury (Pantano & Stylos, 2020). For instance, in their article on the broadening boundaries of materialism, Atanasova and Eckhardt (2021) find that access-based consumers are likely to focus more on: strategic curation of objects as opposed to quantity via accumulation; prioritization of experiential consumption rather than ownership; and the adoption of bricolages as consumers transition from solid to liquid forms of consumption. The adoption of bricolages in particular sheds light on consumers’ strivings to achieve materialistic goals by polarizing aspects of consumption (e.g., luxury/budget) and negotiating trade-offs for optimal outcomes. To illustrate, informants utilized house-sitting via the sharing economy to enjoy a luxury vacation in Spain, in exchange for looking after the house-owner’s pets (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021). In this way, consumers can access

lifestyles associated with higher income levels, status, and social class regardless of their actual wealth, background, and demographics.

Access can therefore serve as a democratization of luxury and may challenge existing social status signaling in consumption (Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Samsioe, 2020). To provide deeper insights into these findings, Pantano and Stylos (2020) investigated why consumers may be more motivated to show their status via renting rather than owning luxury fashion. Their series of content analyses centered around the hashtag #RenttheRunway on Twitter revealed five main motivators: the need to wear new clothes for a special event, inspirations created by the products/brands, the possibility to explore a new way of consuming luxury goods, the need to make more sustainable choices, and the desire to increase the life cycle of each luxury product (Pantano & Stylos, 2020). Interestingly, the last two motivations signal that consumers are motivated to rent luxury products to prolong product utility and foster more circular consumption and less waste for the planet, echoing a previously identified key motivator for adoption of access (Hartl, Kamleitner, & Holub, 2020; Lawson et al., 2016). That is to say, consumers are using access-based models to afford luxury in a way that is economical for them but also potentially beneficial to the environment. Such findings not only exemplify the citizen-consumer mindset, but also how consumers can engage in both prosocial and pro-status types of behavior simultaneously.

16.3.4 Paradoxical Social Implications of Access

From a more critical perspective, there is also a dark side to access-based consumption, especially for vulnerable individuals and wider society. Similar to Buhalis, Andreu, and Gnoth's (2020) conceptualization of the bright side and dark side of the sharing economy, we highlight two main paradoxical social consequences and risks of access. We synthesize these as the empowerment/exploitation paradox, which centers around the precarious nature of consumer work (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Cova & Dalli, 2009; Cova, Dalli, & Zwick, 2011; Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016).

Paradox 4: Empowerment/Exploitation. Effervescent and open contexts, such as the participatory Web 2.0, social networking sites, P2P and sharing platforms, all implicitly promise users some degree of empowerment. Empowerment revolves around the idea of gaining control over one's life and enhancing one's ability to perform certain acts or achieve certain goals. More specifically, consumer empowerment is about one's ability to do so within the context of the marketplace, involving "the strengthening of people's abilities, rights, or authority to consume or otherwise fulfill their objectives as a marketplace actor" (Kozinets, Ferreira, & Chimenti, 2021, p. 429). However, as prior research has noted, platforms, in particular, function as a paradox that empowers but also disempowers, so as to maintain some form of balance (Kozinets, Ferreira, & Chimenti, 2021; Labrecque et al., 2013). Taking an affordances (i.e., action possibilities) perspective of platforms and empirically

studying Latin America's largest consumer feedback platform, Reclame Aqui (RA), Kozinets, Ferreira, and Chimenti (2021) find that RA offers individual consumers discovery affordances that inform their choices, narration affordances (e.g., the opportunity to voice complaints), contact affordances which can be used to seek justice, and meta-voice affordances that include their evaluation in an important reputation rating.

Regardless of how empowering sharing economy platforms may be to consumers, they may also pose threats to consumer agency. Consumers may engage in forms of unpaid work by providing "free" consumer labor in access-based services and platforms (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Cova, Dalli, & Zwick, 2011; Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016). Despite the benefits of prosumption for consumers and overall access-based exchanges, from a more critical view, consumer work manifests as a form of free labor, conducive to a new form of consumer ensnarement wherein consumers' own labor keeps them locked into specific markets and obstructs separation (Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016). As a result, we categorize these effects as part of the dark, exploitation side of access-based consumption. The notion of platformization (i.e., platform dominance) rings true here as consumers are increasingly overcome by various forms of counterproductive platform reliance, often conjuring perceptions that switching or exit costs are too high to incur (Airoldi, 2021; Helmond, 2015). Nonetheless, consumer ensnarement can transpire in harsh and sometimes emotionally painful drawbacks for consumers, such as the unexpected loss of personalized data, user configurations, and digital rewards and accomplishments (e.g., status ranks or progress gained within a virtual world enabled by a sharing platform) that consumers have accumulated over hours, if not years (Molesworth, Watkins, & Denegri-Knott, 2016; Watkins and Molesworth, 2012).

16.4 Future Research Directions

In this final section of the chapter, we outline some areas of significant theoretical relevance that require further conceptualization and investigation to better understand access going forward. It is also worth consulting extant research agendas and curations for future research in the domain of access-based consumption (see Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Eckhardt et al., 2019; Lambertson & Goldsmith, 2020; Lin et al., 2019; Morewedge et al., 2021).

Acquisition Modes. The choice between access and ownership at the acquisition stage becomes a crucial one because it has implications for the rest of the consumption process (i.e., consumption and disposition) (see Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Chen, 2009). However, we know little about how the choice of various access acquisition practices impacts the nature of consumption as well as disposition that follows. In other words, how does consumption and disposition under P2P renting differ from pure renting (which is anonymous)? Future research can explore how access-based consumption may change when

renting is social versus anonymous. Another under-examined acquisition practice that leads to access is leasing, typically characterized as long-term renting. Future research can systematically explore the differences between access-based consumption under leasing versus renting. Here, the impact of the temporariness of access could be empirically explored.

In addition to renting, access can also be acquired via social exchange practices, such as sharing, which has received some, albeit limited, scholarly attention (Belk, 2007, 2010, 2014); however, more work is needed on other social exchange practices, such as borrowing or collective sharing. For instance, borrowing is likely to result in lower feelings of psychological ownership than renting (Morewedge et al., 2021). Future research should examine: Under what conditions are borrowing practices versus collective sharing versus renting preferred means of acquisition? What are the implications for the consumption process that follow under each?

Lifestyle Motivations for Access Adoption. Recent research shows that consumers may be motivated to choose access because of: intrinsic factors like intelligence levels; intrapersonal factors, such as social trust in individuals and institutions; and socioeconomic factors such as financial standing and tendencies to seek savings (Aspara & Wittkowski, 2019). However, Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) also note that consumers may choose access as a form of political consumerism, which can signal ideological values via consumption. Taking this together with our earlier discussion of prosocial/pro-status signaling implications of access, future research should investigate: How do aspects of consumer lifestyle (i.e., activities, interests, and opinions) also predict access adoption? How does this vary across different consumption contexts and consumer segments?

Communal and Social Motivations for Access. Another important area for future research is the study of how the nature of exchange (social versus market) impacts the nature of access-based consumption that follows (e.g., Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018; Harding et al., 2019). For example, how does the nature of consumption and disposition differ in renting versus sharing consumption contexts?

Moreover, research on social exchange has also highlighted social motives as a core driver of access adoption. Future research should clarify: Under what conditions (e.g., product categories, brand characteristics, framing of the access offering, etc.) do communal and social motives drive adoption of access? For instance, more research is needed to understand how the nature of P2P renting as a social context of exchange (e.g., Stofberg & Bridoux, 2019) shapes its consumption. For example, in their study of P2P accommodation (Airbnb) versus traditional market exchanges (Booking.com), Osman, D'Acunto, and Johns (2019) find that consumers treat these experiences differently, characterizing an Airbnb stay as "home" and an institutional stay/hotel as "away." This, as well as the bond with the host, also impacts the level and nature of consumer reviews about their experience, such that consumers tend to make fewer negative reviews of P2P rental experiences. Particularly for consumer segments that

prioritize social aspects of access, how can managers design, frame, and communicate offerings to better leverage social elements of exchange? How should managers strategically position the social nature of their offering as a point of differentiation to better reach their target market(s)?

Governance. Consumption in access often takes place in networked contexts among strangers. This means either that a platform enables two or more people to engage in services or exchange goods, such as in the case of Airbnb or Uber, or that the consumption of access is shared among strangers and in a collective, such as in the case of car clubs like Zipcar. Access-based services are perceived as especially risky and untrustworthy because they are not fully regulated and the responsibility for transactions is not always clear (see Caldwell et al., 2020, for an extensive debate on this). Thus, the issue of how to govern and regulate these individual consumers in terms of their behavior toward the access object, the firm, and in relation to other consumers is an important one. Scholars have noted that hybrid forms of governance also emerge because most access-based services and platforms constitute a hybrid economy wherein both gift and market logics operate (Scaraboto, 2015; Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2022; von Richthofen & Fischer, 2019). While governance research deals with important strategic and behavioral issues, it remains an emerging area of research, with more insights needed on how these often competing logics coexist. How can firms coordinate governance mechanisms to achieve a fair sense of balance between competing logics and paradoxes of access?

Consumer Choice. Most prior research on access has examined access under conditions where consumers have freedom of choice. However, more research is needed in understanding how markets and institutions shape the proliferation of access practices as well as the consumer choice of these practices. How do consumers engage in access when faced with institutional or market arrangements that limit or expand their capacity for choice? (e.g., see Hill, Cunningham, & Gentlemen, 2016).

Brand Relevance across Product Categories. Research by Baumeister, Scherer, and Wangenheim (2015) finds that brands seem relevant in the fashion context, but less so across other product categories of access offerings. Thus, an important area of inquiry for future research may be to compare access offerings based on different product categories and assess the extent to which brands matter. Additionally, are different brand characteristics and strategies more effective in communicating certain forms of access (e.g., emotional appeals for long-term access versus informational appeals for more occasional access encounters)?

16.5 Conclusion

Access-based consumption is a multifaceted form of exchange that continues to transform how and why consumers choose to acquire, use, and dispose of marketplace offerings. Access reveals myriad implications for consumer research, allowing us to better understand consumption phenomena

related to sharing, renting, collaborative consumption, social exchange, digital platforms, and other emerging alternatives to ownership. Conceptually, the study of access has urged consumer researchers to reexamine the traditionally assumed role of the consumer as solely that of the buyer, user, or collector in consumption contexts. Rather, the introduction of a prosumer perspective, which challenges the dichotomization of producers and consumers, recognizes the multiple roles (e.g., consumer, producer, owner, and even entrepreneur) increasingly performed by individuals within most economic activities. At the same time, however, the implications of access are often two-fold, manifesting as paradoxes of access. Access may encourage more consumption/less attachment, and the perception that accessed products are “mine” in terms of access to use, but also not “mine” in terms of full legal ownership. Additionally, access may be adopted to signal prosocial behaviors and socially desirable ideological associations, which can, in turn, provide status benefits. Finally, access, especially when facilitated via digital platforms, can provide opportunities for empowerment, but also risks of exploitation, making the governance of access particularly important for its future.

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