

Call for Papers
SPECIAL ISSUE OF MERCATI E COMPETITIVITA'

Buying, gifting, renting, sharing... In search of a new theory of acquisition

Marketing and consumption scholars traditionally consider buying as the main practice through which individuals obtain consumption resources. Since the seminal studies of Howard and colleagues (Howard 1963; Howard and Sheth 1969), a large stream of research called “buyer behaviour” has conceptualised buying as the predominant, if not unique, practice in acquiring products. Now, however, the association between acquisition and buying is challenged by the continuous development of new and alternative acquisition practices. With the rise of the sharing (or gift) economy in the last decade, individuals are increasingly getting consumption resources by renting, sharing or even bartering them. That is, buying is no longer the only practice they can use to satisfy their needs (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012). Indeed, peer-to-peer communities, sharing platforms and swapping communities are just a few examples of the new systems through which it is now possible to acquire desired products (Belk 2010, 2014).

The new scenarios through which consumers acquire goods and services is particularly interesting from the viewpoint of marketing and related subjects. The sharing economy is an emerging market, in which new business models are gaining significant attention. Airbnb, Uber and Zipcar are only some of the numerous successful cases that are developing in the market. Thus, it is important to understand how the market is changing and which paradigms are becoming fundamental to compete in it successfully (Lamberton and Rose 2012).

From the consumer’s point of view, this trend is particularly relevant because it clearly shows that the theories about marketing and consumer behaviour should be reconsidered. For instance, we traditionally see the consumption process as “a cycle of acquisition, consumption (use) and possession, and disposition processes” (Arnould and Thompson 2005; MacInnis and Folkes 2010). However, we tend to equate acquisition with buying. Instead, acquisition should be better problematised to identify the various ways through which consumers actually obtain consumption objects. New studies in this emerging stream of research are introducing new constructs into the literature, such as access-based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012), sharing (Belk 2007, 2010) and consumer gift systems (Giesler 2006). These new labels are particularly useful in

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interpreting the new context of consumption. However, new research is needed to understand how the marketplace is evolving.

This special issue will discuss how acquisition practices are changing and what this means for marketing and consumer behaviour theories. This call for papers solicits both theoretical and empirical contributions, which draw on different research streams and disciplines, including marketing, organisation, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Methodologically, we welcome qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research approaches.

Topics of Interest (include, but are not limited to):

- Access-based consumption
- Acquisition practices
- Bartering
- Borrowing
- Collaborative consumption
- Crowdfunding
- Donation platforms
- Gift economies
- Peer-to-peer communities
- Renting
- Sharing economy

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Submission Deadline

Full paper submission deadline: **July 17th, 2017**

Authors should submit full papers to the Guest Editors of this MC Special Issue at the following e-mail: matteo.corciolani@unipi.it.

Submissions will undergo a double blind, peer review process. Full paper manuscripts must follow the submission guidelines of MC (<http://ojs.francoangeli.it/ojs/index.php/mc/about/submissions>).

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