

Consuming Shared Space: Collective Practices, Tensions and the Making of Community

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Cite as:

Vignali Greta, Koller Monika, BORGHINI STEFANIA (2026), Consuming Shared Space: Collective Practices, Tensions and the Making of Community. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (133925)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



Consuming Shared Space: Collective Practices, Tensions and the Making of Community

Consumers increasingly carry out consumption practices within shared physical spaces (Gruen and Bardhi 2025; Hill, Canniford, and Eckhardt 2022). Such spatial arrangements profoundly influence how individuals consume, appropriate, and relate to their environments, while structuring the collective experiences that can arise through inhabiting space together. In some contexts, shared space arises from necessity, as individuals navigate the unaffordability and crowding of contemporary urban housing and rental markets (Harten and Boeing 2024). In others, shared spaces are voluntarily pursued, particularly in settings where shared passions and rituals draw consumers into collective worlds of belonging (Hill, Canniford, and Eckhardt, 2022). The aim of this special session is to explore how shared space shapes consumer practices, community dynamics and rituals, and relations to the collective - including emerging forms of collective psychological ownership and care. The contributions highlight shared space as a socio-material actor that gives rise to diverse forms of ownership, identity, and, at times, conflict.

The first two papers explore shared domestic spaces, with particular attention to emerging alternative co-living arrangements in urban contexts where rising unaffordability pushes consumers toward shared living. The third paper extends this perspective to urban spaces linked to brand communities, exploring the context of Milan's La Scala opera house.

Discussant Eric Arnould (Aalto University) will integrate the contributions by situating them within broader CCT debates on spatiality, brand communities, collective consumption, and consumers' relationships to the material environments they inhabit. His commentary will guide the session by drawing theoretical connections across the papers and by outlining future research directions that address the shifting conditions of contemporary life.

Renegotiating Ownership in Precarity: A Study of Generation Rent

Greta Vignali*, Fleura Bardhi, Aleksandrina Atanasova, Bayes Business School

Generation Rent consumers face structural precarity due to socioeconomic instability and unaffordable housing, leading to prolonged renting and shared housing arrangements. This study explores how notions of ownership shift in this precarious context. Findings reveal fragmented psychological ownership in traditional rentals and collective psychological ownership in alternative co-living environments.

Dynamics in Shared Living Space – A Qualitative Exploration

Monika Koller*, Till Bieg, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business

This paper focuses on the dynamics in shared living spaces by exploring antecedents for behavior, interactions inside the space, and potential consequences. Based upon qualitative insights, we develop theory on feelings of collective psychological ownership and different motivations in shared living arrangements.

When Proximity Hurts: The Double-Edged Power of Place in Brand Communities

Stefania Borghini*, Antonella Carù, Bocconi University, and Bernard Cova, Kedge Business School Marseille

This study revisits the spatial dimensions of brand communities, challenging the dominant focus on virtual, non-geographically bound forms. Drawing on ethnographic research on the community surrounding Milan's La Scala opera house, we examine how shared physical spaces shape social interactions, rituals, and conflicts among members, demonstrating that place affordances both foster belonging and intensify tensions.