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Liquid Consumption

FLEURA BARDHI
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This article introduces a new dimension of consumption as liquid or solid. Liquid consumption is defined as ephemeral, access based, and dematerialized, while solid consumption is defined as enduring, ownership based, and material. Liquid and solid consumption are conceptualized as existing on a spectrum, with four conditions leading to consumption being liquid, solid, or a combination of the two: relevance to the self, the nature of social relationships, accessibility to mobility networks, and type of precarity experienced. Liquid consumption is needed to explain behavior within digital contexts, in access-based consumption, and in conditions of global mobility. It highlights a consumption orientation around values of flexibility, adaptability, fluidity, lightness, detachment, and speed. Implications of liquid consumption are discussed for the domains of attachment and appropriation; the importance of use value; materialism; brand relationships and communities; identity; prosumption and the prosumer; and big data, quantification of the self, and surveillance. Lastly, managing the challenges of liquid consumption and its effect on consumer welfare are explored.

Keywords: liquid consumption, digital, access-based consumption, dematerialization, ephemerality, Bauman

In this article we introduce a new dimension of consumption as solid and liquid. We define liquid consumption as ephemeral, access based, and dematerialized, and solid consumption as that which is enduring, ownership based, and tangible. The consumer behavior literature to date has focused primarily on solid consumption. Liquid consumption represents a novel concept in consumer behavior necessary to understand the types of consumption-related phenomena surrounding the digital, access-based practices, and global mobility. It argues for a different logic of consumption, from that of accumulation, appropriation, and celebration associated with solidity, to those practices embodying fluidity, use, access, immediacy, and dematerialization. That is, consumer value moves from appropriation to the acquisition, use, and circulation states of the consumption cycle. Liquid consumption also argues for an ephemeral attachment to digital or physical consumption, which is valued temporarily and because of the access it provides, as well as the speed by which it provides access.

In developing the concept of liquid consumption, we are inspired by Bauman's (2000; 2007a, 2007b) theorizing of liquid modernity. In it, he uses the metaphor of liquidity to explain how everyday life has moved from being stable and secure to being more uncertain and rapidly changing. We apply a similar logic to the domain of consumption. We are not arguing that solid consumption will disappear. Rather, we conceptualize liquid consumption as existing along with solid consumption on a spectrum, and we point out factors that are likely to result in one or the other. Bauman (2000, 2007a, 2007b) also points out that at the societal level, liquidity is rarely beneficial, as more uncertainty and less stability have negative consequences. We again follow this logic to point out that although liquid consumption is facilitated by the rise of digitalization, increased mobility, and social acceleration (Rosa 2013), it is not necessarily a positive development for consumers, as

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it eliminates sources of security and stability. Overall, our contribution lies in envisioning liquid consumption, differentiating it from solid consumption, and delineating a spectrum of consumption from solid to liquid.

Liquid consumption gives us the theoretical tools we need to understand why and how consumers sometimes do not want to own things, may not want to align their identities with their consumption, or may not want to create links with a brand or others who use the same brand. While we are not arguing that all consumption will become liquid, liquid consumption does challenge many of the cornerstones of consumer behavior—such as the importance of possessions and ownership, the nature of relationships to objects, and the nature of brand attachments and communities—and raises questions about where consumer value resides in the process/cycle of consumption. Thus, it has the potential to advance consumer research agendas in a variety of domains, which we outline in the implications section. Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould (2012) have already demonstrated that consumers' relationship to objects can be liquid, and Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong (2009) have demonstrated that liquidity can affect brand connections. Binkley (2008) finds that anti-consumerism is an attempt to seek community amid the dislocation of liquidity, although anti-consumerist discourse ultimately serves to reinforce the disembeddedness of social relations in liquidity. We go beyond these studies by applying the theory of liquidity to the nature of consumption itself, and conceptualizing what liquid consumption would look like in a wide variety of domains beyond possessions, brand connections and anti-consumerism.

The discipline of marketing in general, and consumer research in particular, has a dearth of conceptual papers, and it is imperative to the field that scholars put more emphasis on conceptual articles to generate big ideas and bring to light new concepts (MacInnis 2011; Yadav 2010). To address this, we use our new concept of liquid consumption to highlight implications and future research for a wide variety of consumer research domains, such as consumer attachment and appropriation; the importance of use value; materialism; brand relationships and communities; identity; prosumption and the prosumer; and big data, quantification of the self, and consumer surveillance. Finally, we highlight past findings that we can see differently if we apply a liquidity lens to them, which MacInnis (2016) has identified as being core to the contribution of a conceptual article. To begin, we introduce the theory of liquid modernity.

LIQUID MODERNITY

Zygmunt Bauman introduced the theory of liquid modernity (2000, 2003, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2013), which characterizes the nature of late modernity as being fluid as a result of the decrease in industrial production in the West and the rise of the service, knowledge, and digital economies. Liquid modernity is a social condition where social structures are no longer stable or long-term, and thus cannot serve as "frames of reference for human actions and long-term projects" (Bauman 2007a, 1). Traditional sources of security, such as family, community, and religion, as well as social institutions that guide behavior, including marriage, nationality, class, and gender, undergo swift changes and transformations (Bauman 2000). For example, the institution of marriage has changed as in the case of gay marriage, and research illustrates that this transformation impacts the consumption rituals and practices surrounding the institution of marriage, and that these practices themselves are being revised (Eichert 2015), or in our language, becoming more liquid.

As a theory of modernity, Bauman's work has origins in and builds upon broad literatures of globalization, global flows and mobilities (Appadurai 1990; Urry 2007), soft capitalism and knowledge society (Thrift 1997), network society (Castells 1996), and risk society (Beck 1992). Bauman underlines the change and instability of late modernity, while other scholars have emphasized the speed that characterizes these changes (Rosa 2013). Acceleration has always been the rhythm of modernity. However, in liquidity, immediacy (specifically, proximity and instantaneity of content) produced by new media technologies (internet of things/digital) is the cultural principle increasingly replacing the industrial underpinnings of machine speed (Tomlinson 2007). Acceleration has transformed from a technological and economic factor to a cultural one by being the pace of the social and the everyday life (Rosa 2013). Moreover, we are using fewer or no materials to deliver the same level of functionality, a process called dematerialization (Thakara 2006). Liquid modernity is attributed to the shift from life organized around production to life organized around consumption, to technological transformations and to the expansion of the market globally, so that every aspect of life is subject to market logic; and results in the redrawing of class lines. These macro-level social and institutional transformations can shape and transform what consumers value in the marketplace, how they consume, the nature of marketplace artifacts, the nature of market institutions, and consumer identity.

Several characteristics of liquid modernity are relevant for our purposes, including instrumental rationality, individualization, risk and uncertainty, and fragmentation of life and identity (Bauman 2007a). *Instrumental rationality*, the mode of thought and action that identifies problems and works directly toward their most efficient or cost-effective solutions (Kolodny and Brunero 2015), is a dominant logic in liquid modernity as a result of neoliberal market ideology (Bauman 2007a; Harvey 2007). Instrumental rationality not only motivates economic exchange, but can also underlie social exchange and personal relationships (Bauman 2003; Eckhardt and Bardhi 2016). The liquefaction of social structures is loosening the role of traditions, loyalties, and obligations (ethical or familial) that constrained the rational calculation of effects leading

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to a privatized version of modernity (Bauman 2000; 2007a, 2007b; Lee 2011). Manifestations of instrumentality can be seen in the commodification of the intimate space of the home, such as in renting one's home to strangers on Airbnb; or in the dominance of the quantified self, where quantification systems hold people accountable for their professional, consumer, and personal performances, such as in online ranking and reputation systems and academic quantification systems (Etkin 2016; Scott and Orlikowski 2012).

Another important feature of liquid modernity is the extreme process of *individualization*, where identity is transformed from a given into a task where one has the responsibility to perform and be accountable for the consequences of their performance (Bauman 2000, 31; 2013). As institutions and traditions liquefy, individual identity and identity projects can become more fluid, ephemeral, and in flux (Gill and Pratt 2008; Kociatkiewicz and Kostera 2014). Individuals have to find other ways to organize their lives as social forms and institutions may no longer serve as frames of reference; marketplace institutions, such as brands, and consumption can become a main way for them to do so (Bauman 2007b). Within consumer research, Giesler and Veresiu (2014) provide an example of the individualization process in their study of consumer responsibilization, wherein people, rather than institutions, are held responsible for society-wide issues, and "are reconstructed as free, autonomous, rational and entrepreneurial subjects who draw on individual market choices to invest in their own human capital" (842). That is, the responsibility for societal-level issues—such as the environment, health, or the financial stability of markets—is taken from political, social, and corporate institutions and placed onto individual's shoulders, to be dealt with via their consumption.

Liquidity is not celebratory, but rather is associated with conditions of risk and uncertainty that attenuate the vulnerabilities of individualization (Bauman 2000). People face an array of conflicting life choices on their own, and increasing isolation with little prospect of assistance from any collective body or system (Rindfleisch et al. 2009). Individuals experience insecurity of their position, entitlements, and livelihood, and uncertainty of their futures as well as their possessions, location, and community (Poder 2013).

Fragmentation of life and identity results as notions of permanence, long-term thinking, and life projects are challenged and difficult to maintain in a liquid world (Bauman 2000, 2007b). Fragmentation of social life demands that individuals be flexible and adaptable—to be constantly ready and willing to change tactics at short notice, to abandon commitments and loyalties without regret, and to pursue opportunities according to their current availability (Bardhi et al. 2012). Mobility, flexibility, and openness to change are currencies of liquid modernity demanding an ability to be light and fluid, and to embrace a deterritorialized cultural capital (Bardhi et al. 2012; Featherstone 1995; Hannerz 1996). The desire for durability, stability, and security can potentially be a liability in liquid modernity (Bauman 2007b, 31); disposability is desired with a heightened emphasis on the next novelty or upgrade, placing greater value in the quick turnover and acquisition of the next thing.

We adopt Bauman's theory at two levels of analysis. First, at the macro level, we utilize his social analysis of late modernity to characterize the social and institutional transformations that contextualize liquid consumption, providing an explanation for why liquid consumption has emerged. Second, we apply the logic of liquidity and solidity to the meso level of analysis in our examination of the nature of the consumption process, where we develop our concept of liquid and solid consumption. The logic of liquidity and solidity has been extended outside Bauman's analysis to examine various social phenomena. For example, Ritzer and Rey (2016) argue for a liquefaction of the binary categorization of consumption and production into the concept of prosumption, given that all economic activities now involve some degree of each. Additionally, research has examined how work is liquefying, with the increase of contract-based, freelance employment and flexible work arrangements (Pinsker 2015), and the transformation of the traditional office into coworking spaces (Toussaint, Ozcaglar-Toulouse, and Eckhardt 2014). Jemielniak and Raburki (2014) have also introduced the notion of liquid collaboration to conceptualize the cooperative process of constructing social media content in open communities, relying on fragile, impersonal interactions and transient cooperation, such as in Wikipedia. Finally, sociomateriality research has conceptualized the fluidity between the social and material, the subject and the object as interwoven and co-emerging in practices, networks, and boundaries that are liquid and temporal (Scott and Orlikowski 2012). For example, Nyberg's (2009) study of technology use in call centers shows that actors are configurations of social and material entanglements, where no boundaries are experienced during the performance of a customer service call; rather, the actors (human, technology, and other) perform the practices collectively. These applications of the liquidity perspective highlight that researchers can utilize it to elaborate on phenomena that involve co-emergence and dissolution, transience, flows, and fluidity of boundaries, categories, and materials. We adopt a similar approach in our application of liquidity to the domain of consumption to conceptualize liquid consumption.

LIQUID CONSUMPTION

The logic of liquidity enables us to see a new dimension of consumption along a solid-to-liquid spectrum. Based on

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our enabling theory (Bauman 2000), as well as recent findings within consumer research specifically on global nomadic lifestyles and access-based consumption (Bardhi et al. 2012; Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012), we define liquid consumption as ephemeral, access based, and dematerialized. Although these characteristics are presented as discrete, they are interrelated. Conversely, we define solid consumption as an enduring, ownership-based, and material form of consumption. We expand on the characteristics of liquid consumption next.

Ephemerality

Liquid consumption offers value to consumers in particular contexts, and the expiration date of this value is increasingly shortening. This relates to the fast pace of the liquefaction of social structures (Bauman 2000; Rosa 2013), the shortening of product life cycles as a result of technological transformations, as well as the perceived obsolescence built into the consumption system. The implication is that the nature of consumers' relationships to objects, services, and experiences, as well as the value derived from them, can be temporal and particular to a specific context. For example, Bellezza, Akerman, and Gino (2016) point out that consumers are careless with possessions such as phones to justify the guilt they feel for wanting continuous product upgrades. In other words, they desire ephemerality and use carelessness to defend their longing for new technology upgrades. Ephemerality is illustrated in the liquid relationship to possessions identified among global nomads (Bardhi et al. 2012), who value possessions only temporarily in each locale. It is also found to be a characteristic of the relationships that develop in social media (Arvidsson and Caliandro 2015). Pop-up spaces such as retail stores, art galleries, and events, which are designed to be temporary and which have multiple, flexible uses, are another illustration of ephemeral value (Bauman 2007d; de Kervenoael, Bajde, and Schwob 2016). This logic also extends to luxury brands, where the meaning of luxury is varied in different contexts and for different consumers at any given time (Berthon et al. 2009), and to the value of a vintage item, which changes substantially in each makeshift market (Duffy and Hewer 2013).

Research suggests that ephemerality becomes salient in non-ownership consumption contexts (Weiss and Johar 2016). Ephemerality is one of the reasons consumers seek out and engage in marketplace performances, as in the case of the Burning Man festival (Kozinets 2002). Ephemerality can sustain the unique characteristics of such marketplace performances, such as the egalitarian autonomy and counterculture character of raves (Goulding et al. 2009). However, when raves became institutionalized and marketized, they lost their ephemerality and their nature changed. Although we understand little about how ephemerality impacts consumer behavior, these studies suggest it can affect psychological ownership, consumer motivations, and the character/performance of consumption.

Access

Access consists of transactions that can be market mediated but where no transfer of ownership takes place (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012, 881). We argue that in liquid consumption, access is valued in comparison to ownership and possession, whether for material or immaterial consumption. Thus, consumers would engage in access-based acquisition of consumption resources via renting, sharing, or borrowing from each other, public services, or the marketplace in liquid consumption. This is especially prevalent in contexts where consumers desire access in order to escape or not carry the economic, physical, emotional, and social obligations of ownership (Bardhi et al. 2012; Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012). Owning can be burdensome, and it can be more desirable to liberate oneself from this burden by temporarily accessing goods to enable a fluidity of consumer lifestyles (Belk 2007). In other words, access can serve as a lifestyle facilitator (Bernthal, Crockett, and Rose 2005), as it enables consumers who lack the necessary economic means to consume—albeit temporarily—brands, products, and services that would otherwise be out of reach. For example, Chen (2009) articulates the value of access to art museums for consumers who cannot afford to buy and collect art. Finally, access can also facilitate variety seeking. This phenomenon emerges when consumers choose to access a variety of car types and brands, rather than commit to owning one car, for example (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Lambert and Rose 2012).

Motives for accessing rather than owning vary. Lawson et al. (2016) find that motives for accessing can range from variety seeking to lower prices to status seeking to environmental consciousness. Schaefers, Lawson, and Kukar-Kinney (2016) delve deeper into why consumers turn to access to bypass the burdens of ownership, and find that higher financial, performance, and social risk all lead to higher levels of access-based consumption, in comparison to ownership. Edbring, Lehner, and Mont (2016) also examine motivations for engaging in access-based consumption as compared to ownership, and find that the most important are flexibility, lower prices, and the temporary nature of use. Additionally, they identify obstacles for engaging in access-based consumption, which are primarily a desire to own and concern for hygiene/contamination. Finally, Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) find that when consumers access rather than own, they are less likely to singularize objects—that is, to feel like the object is theirs, and to form a relationship with it. Gruen (2016), however, demonstrates that the design of the access system can affect this. That is, when all the cars within a car sharing system are uniform, for example, and each car feels the same

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to the driver because the electronic key remembers and implements one's personal settings in each car, there can be a stronger sense of attachment to accessed objects. What we can take away from this summary of the burgeoning work on access is that there are a variety of reasons and obstacles for engaging in it as compared to ownership, and that it facilitates a focus on the use value one can obtain from accessing, freedom from the burdens of ownership, and a lack of strong connection to accessed objects (although this can be overcome in some contexts).

Dematerialization

Consumption differs on the degree of dematerialization, defined as using fewer or no materials to deliver the same level of functionality (Thakara 2006). Dematerialization of consumption is manifested in the immateriality of digital products, such as digital consumption (Belk 2013), informational products (software; Laroche, Bergeron, and Goutaland 2001), intangibility of services (Laroche et al. 2004), immaterial/digital art (Lillemose 2006), consumption practices (e.g., digital music consumption; Magaudda 2011), and consumption experiences (van Boven 2005). While dematerialization of consumption is not new (Marvin 1990), contemporary dematerialization is a result of the use of fewer materials in products (Bernardini and Galli 1993) and advancements in digital technologies, the cloud, social media, and mobility technologies (Rifkin 2014; Thakara 2006), which has resulted in products becoming increasingly lighter, smaller, and more portable. In this process of dematerialization, new materials are recruited as infrastructure that facilitates dematerialized consumption, such as fiber optic cables and hardware. Dematerialization also implies that fewer possessions overall are desired in liquid consumption. For example, consumer research on consumption experiences, which are by definition less material, has demonstrated that, under certain conditions, they make consumers happier compared to material possessions (van Boven and Gilovich 2003) and are preferred as gifts over material objects (Chan and Mogilner forthcoming). Carter and Gilovich (2012) argue that experiences make people happier because experiences are more closely related to the self than possessions. This study shows that we are what we do rather than what we have (1304). Additionally, experiences rather than objects have come to be valued as luxuries in a shift toward inconspicuous rather than conspicuous consumption (Eckhardt, Belk, and Wilson 2015).

Research has also shown that dematerialization of consumption has several important consumer behavior implications. In his analysis of digital consumption, Belk (2013) questions whether the self can be extended in the digital as compared to material consumption (Belk 1988). Immateriality is a quality of the digital space that enables consumers to move freely between multiple identities. Belk (2013) also argues that dematerialized consumption may be perceived as less authentic and regarded as less valuable than material consumption. Further, research on digital consumption suggests that it fosters sharing and collective notions of ownership (Belk 2010; Giesler 2008). Additionally, dematerialization can impact decision making, as that which is dematerialized can be difficult to evaluate because of the high levels of uncertainty and risk that result from intangibility. This has been demonstrated, for example, in the services and digital contexts (Laroche et al. 2001; Laroche et al. 2004).

Table 1 summarizes how liquid consumption manifests in comparison to solid consumption at two levels of analysis: the product and the consumption practice level. As it shows, many tenets of consumer behavior anchored to the solid approach have emphasized object attachment, the centrality of ownership, enduring consumer involvement, and security and loyalty—all considered mainstays of the consumer behavior discipline. Ownership and possession have been considered the normative ideal because they ensure personal comfort and esteem (Bauman 2000; Belk 1988). Status and wealth are indicated by clear and enduring markers, such as ownership of luxury brands, large real estate properties, and cars. In contrast to the liquid perspective outlined above, a solid perspective places a premium on durability, reliability, and long-term security.

At the product level, we propose that consumer value, the nature of attachment, benefits, level of possession, and meaning differ from liquid to solid consumption. For example, IKEA has transformed what was a durable product based on craftsmanship—furniture—into a disposable product that facilitates the ability to change styles frequently and ensure quick delivery and setup by using lightweight, nonwood materials. At the consumption practice level, consumer value, stability of practice, temporality, benefits, and nature of attachment differ between liquid and solid consumption. For example, we can contrast the solid consumption practice of collecting (Belk 1988; Chen 2009) with the liquid practice of digital entertainment consumption (Magaudda 2011). The centrality of access versus ownership in digital entertainment consumption enables a shared form of consumption versus a private one (Belk 2013). In contrast, collecting emphasizes private consumption, strong self-identification with the collection, and long-term relationships (Chen 2009). Table 1 offers consumer researchers a sense of which lens—liquid or solid—is more appropriate for understanding a given consumer phenomenon. In addition, it can be used to unpack issues such as the nature of ownership in liquid consumption, or how consumers develop in liquid consumption the security/stability traditionally associated with the solid.

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TABLE 1

COMPARING SOLID AND LIQUID CONSUMPTION

	Solid	Liquid
Definition	Extent to which consumption is enduring, ownership based, and material.	Extent to which consumption is ephemeral, access based, and dematerialized.
At the product level		
Consumer value	Value resides in size, weight, fixity, security, attachment, and commitment.	Value resides in being flexible, adaptable, fluid, mobile, light, detached, and fast.
Nature of attachment	Long-standing possession attachment/loyalty; stronger attachment to identity-related objects.	Fluid possession attachment/lack of loyalty; attachment to fewer objects; however, may be higher to particular products if they provide access.
Benefits	Identity and linking assume greater importance.	Use value assumes greater importance.
Level of possession	Emphasis on ownership and possession of material objects; more possessions are better.	Emphasis on access and intangible objects; fewer possessions are better.
Meaning	Consumption meaning is stable across contexts.	Consumption meaning varies by context.
At the consumption practices level		
Consumer value	Centrality of ownership and possession	Centrality of access, sharing, and borrowing.
Stability	Practices are stable across contexts.	Practices vary by context.
Temporality	Enduring types of consumer involvement (e.g., loyalty, fanaticism, commitment) and relationships.	Ephemeral consumer involvement and relationships.
Benefits	Consumers value consumption for the identity and linking value it provides.	Consumers avoid emotional engagement and identification with the marketplace; however, this is not a form of consumer resistance or market alienation.
Nature of attachment	Emphasis on object attachment aspects of consumption (e.g., extending the self).	Emphasis on consumption practices, experiences, and networks.
Downsides	Burdensome.	Instability/uncertainty.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIQUID AND SOLID CONSUMPTION

We conceptualize liquid and solid consumption as poles on a spectrum; consumption can be located at various positions between liquid and solid extremes. As illustrated in Table 2, under certain conditions liquid consumption is more prevalent, while other conditions lead to solid consumption. We identify four conditions that affect the extent to which consumption is liquid or solid: relevance to the self, the nature of relationships, accessibility to mobility networks, and the nature of precarity. These conditions are not exclusive and are used to illustrate the boundary conditions of the concept.

Relevance to the Self

The first factor affecting whether consumption will be liquid or solid is relevance to the self. When relevance to the self is high, consumption will be more solid. Prior research has demonstrated that possessions that are meaningful to the self often have an intimate connection to and become part of the extended self (Belk 1988). Consumers attempt to extend the life of these possessions (Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000) and suffer their loss (Ferraro, Escalas, and Bettman 2011). Consumers also value owned possessions more, as ownership creates an association between the item and the self (Swaminathan and Dommer 2012). Consumer brand relationships are also solid when brands have high relevance for the self. For example, research demonstrates that consumers develop strong emotional brand attachments when the brand's personality fits with the actual self (Malar et al. 2011).

When relevance to the self is low, such as in the case of car sharing where consumers avoid identification with the item and value the ease and convenience of using the car sharing service to get from point A to point B (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012), consumption will be more liquid. Research further shows that consumers rely more on digital access and ownership rather than physical ownership when the item is less relevant to the self, because it has less emotional value and is perceived to be less valuable than the physical (Belk 2013; Petrelli and Whittaker 2010).

Nature of Social Relationships

The nature of social relationships will also impact whether consumption takes a more liquid or solid form. In contexts where relationships are singularized and based on strong ties, such as in brand communities, the nature of consumption can be solid. Research in brand communities has shown that consumption is enduring and characterized

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TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIQUID AND SOLID CONSUMPTION

	Liquid Consumption	Solid Consumption
Consumer identity	• Low relevance to the self (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012)	• High relevance to the self (Belk 1988)
Nature of social relationships	Commoditized and monetized relationships • Brand publics (Arvidsson and Caliandro 2016) • Social media (Zwick and Bradshaw 2016)	Noncommoditized social relationships • Brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001)
Accessibility to mobility networks	High accessibility • Global nomads (Bardhi et al. 2012) • Global cities (Sassen 2005)	Low accessibility • Isolated towns and rural areas
Nature of precarity	Professional precarity • Cultural creatives (McWilliams 2015) • Gig economy prosumers (Ritzer and Rey 2016)	Economic precarity • Downward mobility (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013) • Greek economic crisis (Chatzidakis 2017)

by high levels of brand loyalty, attachment, and identification with the brand—all characteristics of solid consumption (Fournier and Lee 2009; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). In contrast, in contexts where social relationships are more underlined by instrumentality, liquid consumption can be more dominant. For example, research on brand publics, whose members connect only digitally, shows that consumers use relationship to brands and each other to promote themselves (Arvidsson and Caliandro 2015). Similarly, Arvidsson (2016) argues that social media platforms such as Facebook are turning ordinary social relations into sources of financialization. Finally, online communities represent the middle point between the liquid and solid, because they retain aspects of a traditional community in a liquid domain (Avery 2012; Mathwick, Wiertz, and de Ruyter 2008).

Access to Mobility Systems

Third, access to mobility systems and infrastructure will enable one to engage in liquid consumption. Urry (2007) discusses the importance of these mobility systems in enabling movement across borders: airlines and hotels, for example. Mobility systems are organized around the processes that circulate people at various spatial ranges and speeds. Unlike social or cultural capital, which tends to be embedded in one context or milieu, network capital can be transferred across borders. Being rich in network capital requires travel, copresence, and mobility. These types of deterritorialized networks are typically found in global cities, where the networked economy is located, and where deterritorialized transactions in cultural and social realms tend to take place (Sassen 2005). When consumers have access to these networks, consumption can be liquid; when access to mobility networks is limited, consumption is mostly solid.

Precarity

The fourth factor is precarity, which highlights a specific subjectivity, the lived experience of insecurity, instability, uncertainty, and a lack of individual agency (Joy, Belk, and Bhardwaj 2015; Standing 2011). Precarity can be managed by either solid or liquid consumption depending on its source. When precarity stems from economic downward mobility, especially among the middle classes (Schram 2015; Standing 2011; Ulver and Ostberg 2014), consumers look to solidify their consumption as a way to regain a sense of stability, security, and control. For example, research has pointed out that consumers develop strong self- and communal-brand relationships, which we characterize as solid, as a safety mechanism for enhancing their sense of security in conditions of high stress and uncertainty (Rindfleisch et al. 2009). Additionally, Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) study a context of economic precarity among low-income trailer park residents and show that among the downwardly mobile consumers in their study, consumption is organized around regaining lost security, protection, and prosperity embedded in a prior experience of being middle class. Consumption is underlined by a solid logic, with its focus on saving money and caring for and maintaining possessions, especially the family home. Similarly, Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis (2015) find that financial constraints increase consumer desire for long-lasting material goods.

Precarity can also stem from professional insecurity—contingent, flexible work—such as in the creative industries (Gill and Pratt 2008). In this case, consumers rely on liquid consumption to manage precarity, as it enables the

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flexibility needed. Creativity now demands a reliance on entrepreneurial savviness and readiness to endure uncertainty and unpredictability (Morgan and Nelligan 2015). In professional precarity, one way consumers engage in liquid consumption is by relying on the sharing economy. For example, they tend to access rather than own consumption resources, inhabit coworking spaces, and rely on high-tech, portable technologies and digital communication to carry out their jobs and social relationships (McWilliams 2015; Schram 2015). In sum, consumers facing economic precarity often turn to solid consumption as a source of security, stability, and control. However, those facing professional precarity often turn to liquid consumption, as it facilitates the professional mobility and flexibility demanded of them.

Coexistence of Liquid and Solid Consumption

Conceptualizing liquid and solid consumption as a spectrum implies there will be various points along that spectrum. We acknowledge that there will be middle points, where consumption can be both solid and liquid. "Smart" objects, as in the internet of things, may fit the middle points, such as a smart refrigerator, where the object itself is solid and bulky, but the technology that runs it is fluid and flexible. We can also think about buying a vinyl record that comes with a digital code for downloading, which Maguadda (2011) calls the process of coexisting. In these middle points, we see the liquefaction of solid consumption as well as the solidification of liquid consumption. For example, digital consumption, which is characterized by liquidity, frees us from physical objects, such as printed photos. But at the same time, consumers can still engage in the practice of collecting, normally a solid consumption practice, as in the case of digital hoarding (Denegri-Knott, Watkins, and Wood 2013). In sum, consumption can be solid, it can be liquid, and it can also be a combination of the two, depending on the four conditions we identify here.

Next, we discuss implications and future research for key research domains, followed by how consumers manage the challenges of liquidity via consumption.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

By introducing the concept of liquid consumption, we aim to stimulate new lines of inquiry in a variety of domains within consumer research. Here we outline possibilities for seven spheres.

Consumer Attachment and Appropriation

Liquid consumption can have implications for the nature of consumer attachment and appropriation. Consumer research on attachment to objects has systematically established the important role of material possessions for consumer identity. Possessions are considered part of the self by extending it in relation to the environment (Belk 1988), thus providing a sense of who we are, maintaining relationships over time and space, and providing opportunities for identity transformation (Arnould and Thompson 2005), as well as enabling social connections and community building (Cova 1997; Mehta and Belk 1991).

In contrast, in liquid consumption, we suggest that consumers are attached to fewer objects, and that the nature of attachment will be more fluid (Bardhi et al. 2012). In other words, consumers are temporarily attached to objects, as their value is context-related. Possessions that may tether consumers to past destinations, relationships, and identities, and solidify their identity, can become problematic in liquidity. Fluid attachment enables individuals to be flexible and highly adaptable to the unpredictable demands of global mobility, economy, and labor markets. To manage this, consumers minimize their possessions and rely on access. Thus, consumers will be more attached to products that provide access. Consumers are also more likely to replace a product for the next, upgraded model but remain loyal to its upgraded functionality. In sum, liquid attachment may be of shorter duration, and to fewer possessions, except for those that enable access and mobility. This is distinct from solid attachment, which is an enduring link to material possessions motivated by identity and linking value.

Additionally, liquid consumption suggests a reduced appropriation and personalization of the consumption object. In liquid consumption, consumers may not be interested in appropriation of goods, services, or experiences, and may not be looking to extend the self (Belk 1988). Recent research supports this assertion; for example, consumers tend to avoid identifying with objects they access for temporary use (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Weiss and Johar 2016). Certainty of a possession granted by legal ownership and appropriation is problematized in borrowing (Jenkins, Molesworth, and Scullion 2014, 137). Consumer researchers, especially within the consumer culture paradigm, have long argued that the value in consumption comes from the appropriation of the object through the "work" the consumer engages in within the consumption process (Miller 1988). However, liquid consumption suggests a shift from appropriation in use to an emphasis on quick circulation of resources via acquisition, use, and redistribution of the object in the consumption process (MacInnis and Folkes 2010). Thus, value can be accrued in ways not related to appropriation, but rather to quick circulation of consumption resources.

Importance of Use Value

Liquid consumption suggests that the use value of consumption assumes greater importance than the identity and

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linking value, which dominate in solid consumption. That is, consumers may value consumption for the practical benefit an object can offer, rather than for its linking value in connecting them to other consumers (Cova 1997), or to their own or others' identity (Belk 1988). This is closely related to the idea that the market economy has gained the role of superstructure in contemporary consumer societies, and instrumentality has emerged as the underlying logic of market and social exchanges (Eckhardt and Bardhi 2016; Giesler and Veresiu 2014; McAlexander et al. 2014). Thus, use value, utility, and functionality have themselves become part of the reflexive symbolic repertoire of things in consumer culture. Use value can in and of itself gain symbolic value in liquid modernity (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012, 890). Use-value-based relationships can liberate consumers from reciprocity obligations that arise from social capital (Marcoux 2009). Also, Baskin et al. (2014) demonstrate that gift receivers prefer gifts with use value over those with symbolic value. Other research has also found that use value dominates in access-based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012) and underlines the consumer–object relationship in global nomadism (Bardhi et al. 2012). However, we lack systematic empirical research that examines the value consumers derive in liquid versus solid consumption. Could consumers derive identity or linking value in liquid consumption? Prior research on life transitions and consumer acculturation would suggest that this is possible. Future research could explore conditions where this is a possibility.

Materialism

As liquid consumption implies a less material and less ownership-oriented perspective, important questions arise about how it relates to materialism. Is liquid consumption materialistic? One argument can be made that liquid consumption is less materialistic than solid consumption. In liquid consumption, consumers rely on fewer possessions, keep them for a shorter time, and place less importance on material objects. Materialistic individuals may be less likely to engage in access-based consumption practices, such as sharing (Belk 2010), or to manage social uncertainty and insecurity through strong self- and communal-brand connections (Rindfleisch et al. 2009). However, a counterargument could be made. Liquid consumption could be more associated with materialism than solid consumption. Practices associated with liquid consumption, such as access, that lead to quick accumulation and circulation of possessions can be characterized as materialistic (Holt 1995). Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) suggest that materialism promotes adoption of access-based services because such services enable consumers to afford a luxury consumer lifestyle they could not afford otherwise. In sum, conflicting arguments and evidence are provided about the relationship between liquid consumption and materialism, and research is needed to explore this further.

Liquid consumption also raises questions about the nature and conceptualization of materialism. Richins and Dawson (1992) advance a value-orientation definition of materialism as consisting of acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. A liquid consumption perspective on materialism does not align with these values. Moreover, a liquid consumption perspective would further suggest that quick circulation of consumption objects could be a dimension of materialism. We propose that future research should reexamine the concept and measurement of materialism in light of liquid consumption.

Brand Relationships and Communities

Liquid consumption also has implications for consumer and brand relationships and communities. What is the nature of the relationships valued in liquid consumption? Are interpersonal relationships valued similarly to object relationships for providing novelty, variety, and disposability? Is it desirable that they be upgradable, with loose ties that are easy to cut? A liquid consumption perspective suggests that instead of partners, consumers value networks, virtual relationships, and semidetached relationships, where complex, emotional attachments are avoided (Bauman 2003; Turkle 2013). Given these implications, we suggest that consumer relationships with other consumers as well as with brands can be more ephemeral and based more on use value, rather than identity, within liquid consumption. We have already seen evidence of this in the context of car sharing (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012) as well as consumer borrowing (Jenkins et al. 2014).

This suggests that the implications for relationship constructs such as loyalty or commitment could be significant. We propose that in conditions of liquid consumption, relationships can become more transactional and bonds more loose and disposable. Consumers may not want committed relationships or emotional attachments, and relationships may be increasingly based on instrumentality and market logic (Eckhardt and Bardhi 2016). This is in contrast to conditions of solid consumption, where value is placed on enduring relationships with partners that are reliable, trustworthy, durable, time resistant, and secure. These solid relationships can become a burden in liquid consumption, though.

Liquid consumption also suggests the fundamental nature of brand communities may change. There is already evidence of this assertion in the digital space (Arvidsson and Caliandro 2016; Zwick and Bradshaw 2016). In social media, conversations within communities are more likely to be purpose-driven and pragmatic, participation to be transitory, and relationships among community members to be weak (Zwick and Bradshaw 2016, 109). Arvidsson

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and Caliandro's (2016) work can provide an explanation for this. They demonstrate that consumers who use the #LouisVuitton hashtag on Twitter, for example, do not do so to be a part of a brand community. Rather, they use the platform to gain a larger audience to promote themselves more effectively. This brand public is not a source of identity, or even a platform of interaction, but is primarily a medium for individual publicity.

There is little empirical research on the nature of relationships to brands and brand communities from a liquid perspective. We suggest future research focus on what the boundary conditions of enduring relationships might be. Will brand fanaticism (Fuschillo and Cova 2014) and tribalism (Cova, Kozinets, and Shankar 2007) be on the wane, and if so, for which types of consumers and in which types of product or service categories? Based on Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), we suggest that consumers may not want strong relationships with sharing economy brands that provide access rather than ownership. We posit that relationships fostered in liquid consumption will be more ephemeral as well as focused on creating temporary bonds, which serve a utilitarian purpose in the moment, rather than on creating lasting bonds, which serve identity purposes.

Identity

Liquid consumption has implications also for the research and conceptualization of consumer identity. In line with recent critiques (Askegaard and Linnet 2011), the liquid consumption perspective highlights the overemphasis in consumer research on identity projects. This perspective suggests that there are contexts where identity is not the primary driver of consumer behavior. At the phenomenon level, this also raises questions about the nature of consumer identity from a liquid perspective, where social structures are not stable and social life is based on serial, ephemeral, and dispersed social and brand relationships (Bauman 2000, 2003; Jamieson 2013). Constructing a linear and durable identity that coheres over time and space becomes increasingly difficult.

Research in the digital space proposes a networked nature of the self in liquidity, with a shift from long-term loyalty to family, friends, and place-based communities toward more fluid and dispersed social networks, resulting in a networked, mobile, and flexible sociality (Haythornthwaite and Wellman 2002; Papacharissi 2010). Digital technologies afford a new form of networked sociality, wherein community is not the only means of practicing and attaining sociality. These technologies mean sociality can also emerge from autonomous yet connected agents interacting offline and online, from the domestic and work, public and private spheres. This kind of sociality recognizes identity as performance and the self as a networked self, socially enabled by the affordances of social networking sites (Papacharissi 2010, 317). The notion of the networked self provides a starting point for unpacking the nature of identity in liquidity. It can help to answer questions such as, how do consumers manage fluidity or rigidity among their liquid selves?

Prosumption and the Prosumer

Another opportunity for future research relates to the taken-for-granted subject position of the *consumer* in consumer research. Liberatory postmodernism challenged the consumer–producer dichotomy early on, arguing that the consumer should be viewed as both a producer and consumer of marketplace symbols and meanings (Firat and Venkantash 1995). The notion of liquid consumption takes this further, and views the consumer as a producer not just of symbols, but of market offerings as well. Simply put, a liquid perspective recognizes that consumers innovate, produce products, offer advertising content, rent personal possessions in digital marketplaces, and co-create market value (McWilliams 2015; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008). This opens the possibility for fluid subject positions as the individual moves freely between the roles of the consumer, producer, and entrepreneur. These categories collapse, as captured by the notion of prosumption, which involves both consumption and production without focusing on one over the other (Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010). Indeed, Ritzer and Rey (2016) suggest that the categories of producer and consumer are solid concepts, and that prosumption is inherently liquid, as production, consumption, and (most importantly) the fluid relationship between them are built into the concept itself.

However, in prosumption, one is not compensated for one's labor in the way an employee would be, and thus, prosumption can be characterized as exploitive. The emergence of the sharing economy can be seen as an expression of the type of individualization and instrumental rationality that comes along with producing and consuming market offerings, where the ideal sharing-economy worker holds a variety of insecure jobs, and is forced to be entrepreneurial to make ends meet (Slee 2015). Molesworth, Watkins, and Denegri-Knott (2016) warn about negative consequences of digital spaces, where prosumption renders consumers susceptible to financial exploitation and disrupts their relation to their possessions. The subject position of the prosumer-entrepreneur invites future research to examine questions such as: How and why do consumers become micro-entrepreneurs? What social and technological changes facilitate such shifts? What skill sets are needed to transition between these new consumer roles, and how do consumers develop them? We suggest that such entrepreneurial marketplace engagements can also transform an individual's life, consumption orientations, and identity, and not necessarily for the better. Indeed, Schor et al. (2016)

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point out that within the sharing economy, where prosumption dominates, class inequality is reproduced, rather than providing more equity among participants. This results in what they call the "paradox of openness." Longitudinal research can capture these types of dynamics, and explore the question of how personal consumption and identity change as a consumer becomes a micro-entrepreneur.

Big Data, Quantification of the Self, and Surveillance

A liquid consumption perspective also has implications for understanding how big data and quantification are becoming part of our daily lives, examined from the theoretical perspective of technologies of the self (Foucault 1998). In social contexts where people have to rely on instrumental, liquid relationships, they demand surveillance to help them manage relationships with others, as illustrated by systems used for managing car sharing (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012). Bauman and Lyon (2012) argue that the nature of surveillance is becoming more flexible and mobile, seeping into many areas of life where it previously held no sway. Surveillance in liquid consumption, especially based on big data, may result in social sorting of varying target segments, often by consumers themselves. Companies use the data consumers willingly share about themselves to provide them with personalized products and services. Research suggests consumers are eager to engage in this self-surveillance and self-profiling in their desire to lift themselves out of invisibility in an alienated world (Bauman and Lyon 2012).

As Pridmore and Zwick (2011) note, "by constantly (re)producing, storing and analyzing massive amounts of digital data, current forms of commercial surveillance of consumer behavior represent a powerful response to the quickly changing desires, fluid identities, and spatial mobility of contemporary consumers" (271). Self-surveillance helps consumers achieve connectivity via social networking sites and in turn achieve better results in the marketplace via prosumption (Pridmore and Zwick 2011). That is, surveillance in liquid consumption can act as a powerful way to engage in self-governance (Foucault 1998), with potentially negative consequences for consumers. For example, Etkin (2016) demonstrates that consumers who track and quantify their daily activities—through such technologies as the MyFitnessPal app or the FitBit—experience decreased enjoyment and engagement in these activities, and a decline in subjective well-being.

Managing the Challenges of Liquid Consumption

As previously mentioned, we do not regard conditions of liquid consumption as ones to be celebrated; no one would choose to live with the uncertainty and ambiguity inherent in extreme liquidity. Some people are even less able to manage the challenges of liquidity than others, however. Those who are thrust involuntarily into liquidity, such as homeless people, are particularly vulnerable. The literature has shown that they try to manage this unwanted liquidity in their lives via solid consumption. That is, they value durable, material objects and consumption practices (Hill and Stamey 1990). The homeless lead a very liquid life, though, in that they constantly have to move from shelter to shelter, and lack a secure place to keep their few possessions. The homeless are a nomadic society, where portability is valued. Belongings are lightweight to facilitate mobility, and their value stems from instrumentality (Hill and Stamey 1990). Thus, while their consumption is liquid, solid values and possessions can become salient.

Importantly, managing liquid consumption requires access to appropriate economic and cultural capital. Solid consumption is becoming a luxury, a new form of distinction, which only people with specific types of resources can afford to engage in. For example, to own a turntable to play vinyl records, one must have the space for it within one's home, a rare commodity in cities. One also needs monetary resources to buy the records themselves, which are much more expensive than MP3s. One must further have the time to physically engage in the process of listening to a record (turning the record over when each side is done; cleaning the records to keep them listenable). Finally, moving a turntable and records, which are heavy, to another home is very expensive as well as difficult, again requiring resources to do. We can see a similar pattern with regards to being able to access spaces where one can engage in slower, solid consumption. For example, hotels that deliberately provide no Wi-Fi are becoming much more popular but are always very expensive. That is, to access what Rosa (2013, 83) calls "oases of deceleration," where one can reconnect to the self and others, away from the liquidity and speed of everyday life, is a luxury only certain people can afford. In sum, managing liquidity via solid consumption in particular aspects of one's life is a resource-heavy indulgence. We expect those who can manage it most successfully will be those who have mobile lifestyles, who are millennials comfortable with digital consumption, and who inhabit global cities and more Western consumer cultures.

Finally, we reflect on the overall negative consequences of liquid consumption, especially with regards to the issue of consumer welfare. Considering that solid consumption practices and possessions provide long-term security and safety, the question remains as to whether liquid consumption can also provide these. Historically, consumers have built their safety nets around solid consumption practices such as retirement savings, as well as enduring relationships to products, brands and communities, and rituals. However, these are being liquefied rapidly: the social welfare and support provided by governments and communities are also dissolving or moving down to the individual

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level (Bauman 2000; Giesler and Veresiu 2014). It remains unclear how consumers will establish security in the long run without ownership, possessions, or safety nets, or how they will live with enduring insecurity. We encourage future research in this domain to identify those resources and capabilities that consumers would need to manage liquidity in the long run. How well consumers manage liquidity via consumption is also important in terms of which consumers will rise up and which will become failed consumers (Ulver and Ostberg 2014). Liquid consumers are those who can develop flexible skill sets and identities, but we know little of how these capabilities are developed, what they are, and their relationship to such solid social institutions as class, education, or the press. For example, how will consumers from different social backgrounds manage liquidity? Can the old elites, whose status and power resides in solid resources, still maintain their position in the social game via consumption? Will consumers who fail to cope with liquidity become the new underclass, as suggested by Bauman (2007d)?

CONTRIBUTIONS

This conceptualization of liquid consumption allows us to contribute to theory in a few ways. We conceptualize the nature and dimensions of liquid and solid consumption, and identify them as two ends of a spectrum. By doing so, we suggest that taking a liquid perspective will imply a different research focus, asking different questions. For example, in taking a solid approach to digital consumption, Belk (2013) examines how one can extend the self in the digital. A liquid approach, which does not suggest that we are what we have, would examine the fluid nature of digital materiality, or the impact of ephemerality on consumer practices. Similarly, a solid approach to objects would examine the role of material objects and ownership in sustaining individual and family identity (Epp and Price 2010), whereas a liquid perspective would invite questions around how objects mutate as they change their functionality (Zwick and Dholakia 2006). Also, conceptualizing liquid and solid consumption as a spectrum could encourage comparative studies on the nature of ownership or relationships, for example, in liquid and solid consumption.

Introducing the concept of liquid consumption allows us to synthesize past literature in a common conceptual space. For example, the nature of consumption related to alternative resource circulation practices, such as sharing (Belk 2007, 2010; Lambert and Rose 2012), access-based consumption and services (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Lawson et al. 2016; Schaefers et al. 2016), and borrowing (Jenkins et al. 2014) takes the form of liquid consumption, as it questions the dominance of ownership and possessions as the ultimate goal of consumer desire. Consumption in life transitions (Schouten 1991), where consumers engage in disposition of past possessions and new and frequent acquisitions, may also be characterized as liquid consumption. Additionally, material objects and places that can be perceived as solid can become liquid. We can see this in the context of both spaces and objects—for example, in coworking spaces, which shift between being an office, a home, or a third place (Toussaint et al. 2014), and in the act of object mutation, as embodied in the transformation of a solid, material object into a smart one via the internet of things (Campana et al. 2016). Finally, a liquid perspective can help explain consumer lifestyles motivated by voluntary simplicity (Cherrier 2009) as well as religious beliefs (Mick 2017) that engage in more detached and less materialistic practices. Overall, even though these past studies have not used a liquidity perspective, their findings can be explained through the lens of liquid consumption.

We do not see liquid consumption as an evolutionary imperative. That is, we do not think all consumption will eventually be liquid. For example, with the collapse of the economy in Greece post-2008, consumption was largely liquid. People shared apartments because they were not able to own their own, parking lots were turned into multiuse sites, and consumer collectives ran parks and places for barter and exchange (Chatzidakis 2017). By 2014, to manage their precarity, consumers resolidified their consumption by seeking more solid connections (e.g., to family), long-term identity projects (e.g., permanent jobs), and a return to solid ideologies (e.g., neighborly solidarity). The fact that in many areas of the West and many global cities, consumers engage in liquid forms of consumption does not deny the possibility that resolidification will occur in specific locations, given evolving socioeconomic conditions. The nature and role of consumption can vacillate between the two.

We also contribute to the theory of liquid modernity by introducing the concept of liquid consumption. Bauman did not study the nature of consumption given the structural transformations he described. Highlighting liquid consumption per se allows us to make the following contributions to the theory of liquid modernity. First, since we do not propose that liquid consumption applies to all consumption, but rather that the solid can exist within the liquid, and indeed be a reaction to the liquid, we raise a possibility that Bauman does not entertain. Second, we contribute by positing that liquid consumption is not evolutionary. While Bauman sees all the world moving from solid to liquid, we see the possibility that liquid consumption can become resolidified, and that there is not an inevitable move toward liquidity for all types of consumption. Third, by conceptualizing liquid and solid consumption as a spectrum and highlighting that there are middle points combining liquid and solid, we illuminate how these can coexist. In sum, applying the concept of liquidity to the consumption context allows us to understand the overall notion of liquidity in a more nuanced way.

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Finally, in response to MacInnis (2011) and Yadav (2010), who have suggested that conceptual development within consumer research is needed to move the field forward, we introduce a new form of consumption, liquid consumption; contrast it to solid consumption; and outline the relationship between the two, which helps us to reenergize research agendas related to key constructs. Our aim is to stimulate debate and future research on when, where, and how liquid consumption manifests in a variety of domains. There is much empirical work to be done, and we anticipate that many more insights into the tenor, structure, and implications of liquid consumption will emerge over time. We see this article as the beginning of a dialogue, and hope that other researchers will add other points of view to the conversation. In closing, we encourage scholars to reflect on whether some consumer behavior concepts themselves may be solid, and whether liquid ones are needed. While acknowledging that any attempt at conceptualization is an act of solidification, Ritzer and Rey (2016) suggest that we could also look for liquid ways of conceptualizing, which allow for permeability between categories of actors, abandon certainty, embrace ambiguity, and enable fluidity. Notions of prosumers as well as those related to actor-network theory, such as networks and assemblages, are examples of inherently liquid concepts. We hope the concept of liquid consumption as well as the logic of liquidity will inspire new ways of theorizing and conceptualizing in consumer behavior.

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Corrigendum

In the article "Liquid Consumption," by Fleura Bardhi and Giana M. Eckhardt, doi: 10.1093/jcr/ucx050, the reference to Binkley (2008) was not originally included. The following paragraph has now been updated to include this reference in the text:

Liquid consumption gives us the theoretical tools we need to understand why and how consumers sometimes do not want to own things, may not want to align their identities with their consumption, or may not want to create links with a brand or others who use the same brand. While we are not arguing that all consumption will become liquid, liquid consumption does challenge many of the cornerstones of consumer behavior—such as the importance of possessions and ownership, the nature of relationships to objects, and the nature of brand attachments and communities—and raises questions about where consumer value resides in the process/cycle of consumption. Thus, it has the potential to advance consumer research agendas in a variety of domains, which we outline in the implications section. Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould (2012) have already demonstrated that consumers' relationship to objects can be liquid, and Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong (2009) have demonstrated that liquidity can affect brand connections. Binkley (2008) finds that anti-consumerism is an attempt to seek community amid the dislocation of liquidity, although anti-consumerist discourse ultimately serves to reinforce the disembeddedness of social relations in liquidity. We go beyond these studies by applying the theory of liquidity to the nature of consumption itself, and conceptualizing what liquid consumption would look like in a wide variety of domains beyond possessions, brand connections, and anti-consumerism.

The full reference below has also been added to the reference list.

Binkley, Sam (2008), "Liquid Consumption: Anti-consumerism and the Fetishized De-fetishization of Commodities," *Cultural Studies*, 22(5), 599-623.

This original article has now been corrected.

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