

Citizenship and Consumption: All powerful, all powerless?



Call for Papers

ESA RN5 Midterm Meeting at SIFO

Oslo Metropolitan University in Oslo, Norway

26 to 29 August 2020

May you live in interesting times! The theme of “citizenship and consumption” acknowledges that cultural, economic, political and social spheres and consumption cultures are closely intertwined. There is, however, a degree of uncertainty and ambivalence toward the ability of the consumer-citizen / citizen-consumer to influence these spheres. In social life, the distinctions between consumption and citizenship coalesce, as individuals tend to switch between various contextual roles, rules and practices. The intersection of consumption and citizenship is gaining in importance, particularly when reflecting on the ability and power to enact social change, towards more inclusive and sustainable futures.

Theorizing consumption is currently demarcated by debates about rising inequalities and social exclusion, physical and cultural boundaries and political borders, as well as climate change and environmental crisis. Additionally, social media contributes to never ending updates of political deadlock, threats of anxieties and unresolved political and economic crises. Regions of Europe are facing stark exclusion and quasi-tyrannical rule. Neoliberal economic policies hold out the invisible hand, while on the other (less invisible) hand safeguards the wealth of the few with protectionist policies. At the same time, climate activism endorses the political imaginaries of students around the world. Those who engage in 'lifestyle changes' are increasingly demonstrating forms of prefigurative politics, in contesting established ways of doing, altering systems of provision and imagining alternative futures. These more affirmative notions consider the collective power of citizens and consumers serving as foresight that overcome ideological boundaries and urges to enact utopian practices in these interesting times.

All this introduces dilemmas and conflicts as well as opportunities and hope for consumers that reaches far beyond the antagonism in the transactional relationship between consumers as customers, and sellers of goods and services. Consumption not only challenges identities related to being a consumer or citizen, but also being a merchant, a farmer or a labourer (and potentially all at once). Consumption is related to social justice, welfare, class, empowerment, democracy, inclusion, exclusion and governance. The research network for “Sociology of Consumption” of the European Sociological Association invites to seek novel perspectives into powerfulness and powerlessness of citizenship and consumption. We invite submissions that address sociological theorizing in and around societal and political struggles in these current, interesting times.

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Abstract Submission

The abstract submission platform can be found at:

<https://www.conftool.org/sociology-of-consumption-2020/>

We invite the submission of abstracts for individual papers, organized paper sessions, lightning talks, roundtables, and working sessions. More detailed information about the session categories can be found below. Abstracts should address various aspects of the sociology of consumption.

Guidelines for abstracts

- Provide a title
- Length should be between 150-300 words

Abstract acceptance will be judged by the coherence of the following evaluation criteria

- Sociological background of the research (theoretical / research / policy problem...)
- Research questions and methodology (where contribution is empirical)
- Key findings, if research is completed. If research is in progress, state it.
- Implications and significance of the study/ findings

Letters of acceptance will be sent to participants by March 30th 2020.

Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- Citizenship and consumption
- Consumption & social movements
- Empowerment of consumers
- Ethical and political consumption
- Systems of provision
- Inequalities & social exclusions
- Generations and consumer culture
- Lifestyles and consumption
- Collaborative and sharing economy
- Compulsive consumption
- Consumption and body (politics)
- Social capital and consumption
- Cultural stratification
- Digitalisation and consumption
- Food consumption
- Gender and consumption
- Leisure and consumption
- Consumption and tourism
- Markets of consumption
- Material culture & immaterial consumption
- Politics of distinction
- Prosumption: Production and consumption reunified
- Sociology of taste
- Cultures of consumption
- Spaces of consumption
- Sustainable consumption
- Theories of consumption

Deadline: Abstracts should be uploaded by February 15, 2020.

Types of Submissions:

Individual Papers

Designed to be more comprehensive, lecture-based oral presentation. If a submitted paper abstract is not formally submitted as part of a proposed session, then it will be organized with other accepted paper abstract proposals that fit within a similar theme.

- Individual paper presentation length: Recommended 20 minutes (15 min presentation, 5 minutes Q&A)
- Length of required abstracts: 300 words max

Paper Sessions – Like the individual papers, the paper session is designed to be more comprehensive, lecture-based oral presentation. A proposed paper session is intended to be a collection of papers organized by the session organizer.

- Paper session presentation length: Recommended 20 minutes per paper (15 min presentation, 5 minutes Q&A)
- Session length: 90 minutes
- Total # of session participants: Up to 5
- Length of required abstracts: 300 words max

Lightning Talks

A lightning talk is intended to be a quick and dynamic presentation of a concept and/or subsequent research. This content is to be delivered in no more than 5 minutes followed by a discussion. All lightning talks will be organized into a collective one or more sessions.

- Lightning talk presentation length: 5 minutes max
- Length of required abstracts: 300 words max

Roundtable

This is an organized discussion-based panel without papers or timed 15-minute presentations

- Session length: 90 minutes
- Total # of session participants: Up to 5
- Length of required abstract: 300 words max

Working Session

Do you have any idea for a project or a paper and would enjoy bringing equally-interested individuals into the same room to brainstorm with the purpose of walking away with a tangible plan of action? A working session will provide you the space to refine your idea and find potential collaborators.

- Working session length: 90 minutes
- Total # of session participants: Unlimited based on interest
- Length of required abstracts: 250 words max