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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rethinking scarcity and poverty: Building bridges for shared insight and impact

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Abstract

Resource scarcity is a powerful construct in social sciences. However, explanations about how resources influence overall wellbeing are difficult to generalize since much of the research on scarcity focuses on relatively affluent marketplace conditions, limiting its usefulness to large segments of the global population living in poverty. Conversely, poverty research provides cultural insights into resource deprivation, yet it stops short of explaining the systematic variation of scarce resources among impoverished individuals. To bridge these intellectual silos and advance a deeper understanding of scarcity, we integrate resource scarcity research, which builds upon a psychological tradition to understand various forms of everyday deprivation, with poverty research, which builds upon a sociological tradition to understand extreme and enduring deprivation. We propose a novel framework that integrates the concept of consumption adequacy and clarifies resource scarcity's forms, intensity, duration, and dynamic trajectories. We leverage this framework to generate a research agenda, and we propose ways to stimulate dialog among scarcity and poverty scholars, policymakers, and organizations to help inform impoverished life circumstances and generate effective solutions.

KEYWORDS
consumption adequacy, poverty, resource scarcity, resource trajectories

On the surface, it is ironic that topics of consumer poverty and consumer resource scarcity have rarely been studied together. Looking deeper, we see distinct approaches for exploring various forms of scarcity, while noting that scarcity and poverty research do differ on dimensions other than resource deprivation. In particular, resource scarcity research builds upon a psychological tradition and develops cognitive models using diverse theories and perspectives to help consumer scholars understand how people think, make decisions, and consume when their resources are lacking in either objective or subjective ways (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). By contrast, poverty research builds upon a sociological tradition to explore consumers' experiences with extremely low resources and seeks insights into marketplace interventions and policy. To do so, consumer poverty scholars often examine a focal context (e.g., homelessness, rural trailer parks, developing economies) and analyze cultural meanings using theories that illuminate macro-level constructs (Hill & Stamey, 1990; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Üstüner & Holt, 2007; Viswanathan et al., 2010).

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Despite a shared focus on various levels of resource deprivation, these two research streams largely operate in separate silos and address scarcity differently. In particular, resource scarcity research often examines point-in-time, temporary (often primed) cognitive facets of scarcity in contexts where the majority of people live with at least a baseline of essential resources such as food, clothing, and shelter (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; though also see these references for notable exceptions). On the other hand, poverty research examines more enduring and visceral aspects of resource scarcity in contexts where people struggle to maintain a modicum of goods and services or are far below sufficient resources for a reasonable quality of life, with little expectation of relief (Andreasen, 1975; Hill, 2002).

We take these differences and the potential for integrative impact on global challenges as motivations to examine pathways for bridging resource scarcity and poverty research. Researchers can solve important problems not only by digging deeper into mechanisms but also by constructing intellectual bridges across these silos (Peracchio et al., 2014). Such conceptual bridges may juxtapose psychological models with sociological perspectives, lump and split constructs across paradigms, or develop new questions at their intersection (e.g., Fournier & Alvarez, 2019; Zeithaml et al., 2020). Thus, beyond juxtaposing two research streams to enhance each other's theoretical reach, the purpose of this paper is to integrate these two areas into a more holistic framework that stimulates fresh insights, broadens its applicability, and accelerates important work on understanding people living at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

To accomplish this goal, we probe recurring debates within resource scarcity research, including the implicit nature of "what" resources are and "how" resource scarcity shapes overall well-being. In particular, descriptions of "what" resources can be far more implicit than explicit. Resources have been described as a "quantifiable entity that offers utility" (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019) or as physical (e.g., money, time) and cognitive resources (e.g., executive control; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). These concepts provide comparability, but their generic and static nature makes them less useful for fully identifying the dynamic and aggregate experiences in everyday life that influence "how" scarce resources affect overall wellbeing (Gorgievski et al., 2011). To address these issues, we elaborate on aspects of scarcity that illustrate our position using examples, which highlight individuals' physiological states and some under-theorized, sociological aspects of resources that are far less observable or quantifiable (Molden et al., 2012) but are critical under conditions of poverty.

Our integration develops and leverages two dimensions of resource scarcity: scarcity intensity and scarcity duration. To understand *scarcity intensity*, we draw on the concept of consumption adequacy, which reflects a baseline of resources (goods and services) required to meet basic needs essential for survival (Hill, 2022; Martin & Hill, 2012). To understand *scarcity duration*, we examine the influence of time and the trajectory of consumer resources. These two dimensions serve as bridging points to move forward in the debates about "what" resources are and "how" resource scarcity shapes overall well-being. Our contributions seek to: (1) clarify the implicit nature of resources and how they manifest across a wide scope of socioeconomic contexts using resource properties of availability, access, shock, and slack to make more explicit what is now relatively implicit; (2) develop a unified model of scarcity that delineates four forms of scarcity and provides a greater correspondence between theories, research findings, and everyday lived experiences; and (3) identify a dynamic perspective of resource scarcity, using resource trajectories, to go beyond point-in-time approaches and guide innovative solutions for addressing scarcity across diverse life scenarios. We summarize the research distinctions, gaps, opportunities, and our proposed contributions (see Table 1). We conclude by discussing our contributions, with implications for researchers investigating novel contingencies and ideas for managers and policymakers to support people living in chronic scarcity.

WHY SCARCITY AND POVERTY RESEARCH BELONG TOGETHER

To illustrate how bridging resource scarcity and poverty can aid in scientific inquiry and practical impact, we offer an example of rent-to-own promotional mechanisms in impoverished neighborhoods. Consider an individual who desires a refrigerator but lacks either the ability to purchase or buy on credit, with access to a retail store that offers rent-to-own options. In this scenario, the scarcity literature might predict that individuals who purchase with rent-to-own are operating with time-inconsistent preferences and overvaluing the product at what other consumers see as excessive interest rates; it might also theorize the influence of cognitive load or short-sightedness (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013; Shah et al., 2015). Alternatively, using a poverty lens (Hill et al., 1998), scholars might explain that desire to have a refrigerator—a need that is so widely satisfied in the broader material culture—could reflect needs for symbolic dignity (e.g., ice cream after a late shift), thrift (e.g., saving leftovers), social interaction (e.g., ability to host a gathering), and thus lead them to financing promotions that would be considered unacceptable elsewhere in society due to restricted access to other forms of financing (Bone et al., 2014).

In this example, the scarcity literature sheds light on likely reactions to a lack of financial options, the relative value of what opportunities do exist,

TABLE 1 Distinctions and bridging opportunities between resource scarcity and poverty

	Resource scarcity literature	Poverty literature
Disciplinary Emphasis	Psychology	Sociology
Research Focus	Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of scarcity	Lived experience of scarcity on identity and well-being
(Select Articles)	(Paley et al., 2019; Roux et al., 2015; Salerno & Escoe, 2020)	(Hill & Stamey, 1990; Viswanathan et al., 2005)
Key Question	What are the cognitive and behavioral effects of scarcity?	What are the lived experiences of scarcity?
Contribution #1:	To clarify the ambiguity of resources and synthesize divergent scarcity concepts, this paper develops: (a) Four properties of consumer resources that illuminate a broader domain: availability, access, shock, and slack (b) A baseline of sufficient life resources that informs scarcity intensity and duration: consumption adequacy	
Scarcity Intensity	Mild scarcity of real or manipulated resources	Extreme scarcity of real resources
Resource Baseline	Above consumption adequacy with higher slack	At or below consumption adequacy with lower slack
Occurrence	Fewer and isolated experiences of scarcity	Many and overlapping experiences of scarcity
Context	Relative affluence in developed contexts	Impoverished in developed and developing contexts
(Selected Articles)	(Paley et al., 2019; Roux et al., 2015; Salerno & Escoe, 2020)	(Martin & Hill, 2012; Viswanathan et al., 2010)
Scarcity Duration	Point-in-time experiences of scarcity	Seasonal and enduring experiences of scarcity
Dynamics	Discrete, independent experiences of scarcity with fewer and shorter resource shocks	Continuous, connected experiences of scarcity with more frequent and more enduring resource shocks
Contribution #2:	To clarify the forms of scarcity for reconciling gaps and generating novel questions and interventions, this paper: (a) Develops a unified model, using scarcity intensity and scarcity duration, to delineate four forms of scarcity: incidental, conditional, episodic, chronic (b) Identifies scarcity dynamics, using consumer resource trajectories, to reflect the connected experiences of aggregate scarcity in life and the differential effects of shock and slack by consumption adequacy baseline	

and underlying mechanisms that reflect scarcity as a mindset or a threat (Goldsmith, Griskevicius, & Hamilton, 2020; Goldsmith, Roux, & Wilson, 2020). However, it might under-inform sociological aspects on how and why impoverished consumers think and act differently than more affluent consumers. Conversely, the poverty literature would shed light on vulnerability experiences, felt deprivation, and needs for consumer protection. However, it would under-inform the psychological mechanisms that manifest as a person lives within increasing intensity and duration of scarcity. Thus, a cross-pollination of the two paradigms can inform new and important questions about the access to and use of scarce resources.

To stimulate this integration, we focus on (1) *scarcity intensity* based upon a person's degree of consumption adequacy (Martin & Hill, 2012) and (2) *scarcity duration* based on the time and dynamic trajectory of consumer resources themselves, and the ability to resolve scarcity discrepancies as resources fluctuate (Cannon et al., 2019). Both dimensions reflect multi-faceted continua shaped by overlapping experiences of resource scarcity in everyday life—some momentary and others enduring. For illustrative clarity, our discussion depicts them with levels (e.g., high/low in our tables and figures); we, however, emphasize their continuous nature throughout our theorizing. In the next subsection, we describe boundaries for resource scarcity research, including the ambiguity of what constitutes a resource, the contextual elements often omitted, and the divergence of resource scarcity research with the realities of poverty.

Boundaries of scarcity research and the need for poverty insights

Within the resource scarcity literature, the meanings of what constitutes a resource and how it promotes well-being are far more implicit than explicit. For example, resources have been depicted generically as a form of economic value (Maritan & Peteraf, 2011), as a quantifiable utility (Cannon et al., 2019), and as conduits for achieving goals (Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). Thus, they are assumed to be inherently valuable. Yet, this value is based on whether they can be quantified or depleted (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019), and whether they are tangible (vs. intangible; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). These implicit depictions have been criticized for being vague and ambiguous (Gorgievski et al., 2011).

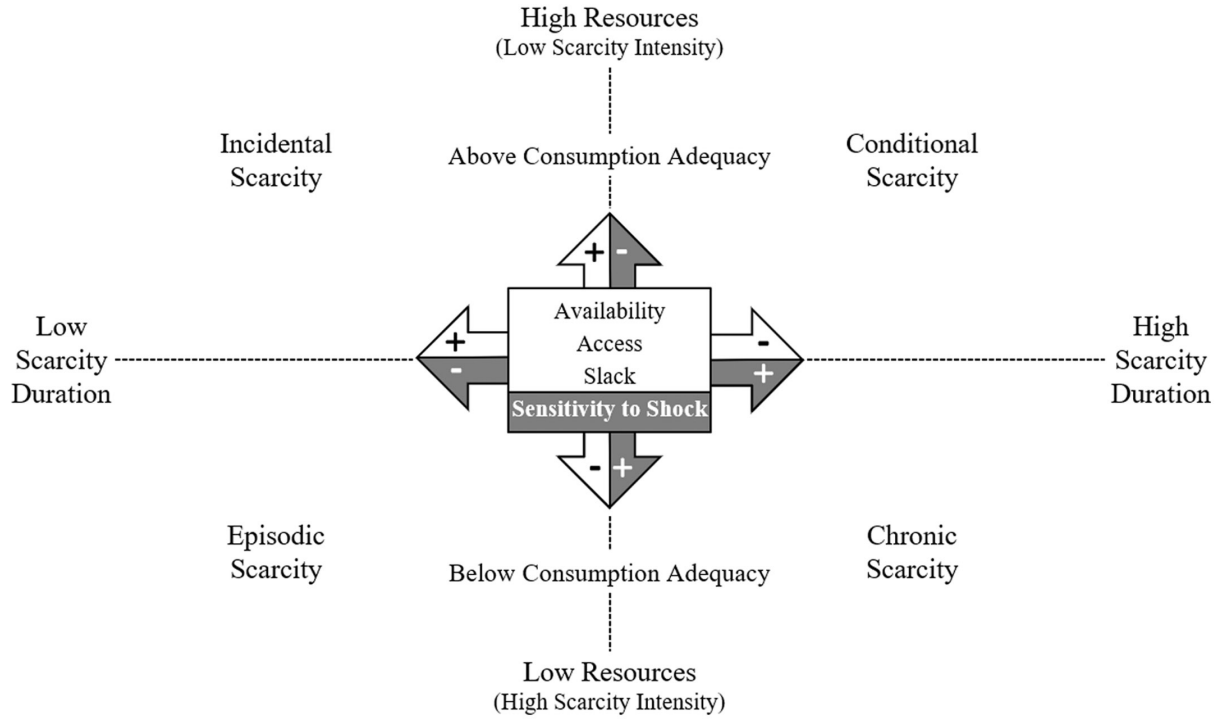
Sociological aspects of resources

To clarify this ambiguity, we highlight sociological aspects of resources that are commonly ignored, including differing values for resources across persons, contexts, and purposes. Most resource definitions specify a universal value (e.g., money, food, or shelter). However, the value of a resource varies widely across consumers (Sirmon et al., 2011). Some resources have clear value-in-context (e.g., financial literacy). Others have lower value-in-context (e.g., poorly explained bank loans). Resource value changes based on diverse purposes, such as whether a resource helps secure basic needs (Hobfoll, 2011) or directly facilitates preferred outcomes (Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). In this paper, we focus on sociological aspects most relevant to bridging scarcity and poverty. At the same time, we recognize a host of contextual conditions that may help scarcity researchers test boundaries and reconsider their underlying assumptions (see Appendix S1 for a summary).

Sociological conditions of poverty

One path for identifying under-theorized sociological aspects of resources is observing scarcity within the realities of impoverished consumption. A growing number of scarcity researchers have been studying the effects of resource deficiencies on lower-income, social class, and/or socioeconomic status (SES) populations (e.g., Griskevicius et al., 2013; Jacob et al., 2022; Mittal et al., 2020; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013; Shah et al., 2015). This line of work reflects an important development toward better understanding the effects of resource scarcity in impoverished (vs. affluent) contexts.

When juxtaposed against the poverty literature, our review indicates that the movement to widen the investigation of scarcity needs to push even deeper into populations that are below consumption adequacy (e.g., lack access to assets such as a car or a computer) and reside at or below typical "poverty-line" standards (e.g., approximately $28,000 USD or less for a family of four; U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). In particular, research shows that the poorest respondents in typical panels are not similar to more base-of-the pyramid consumers without regular access to technology (Bryant & Hill, 2019), which underlines the need to further bridge scarcity and poverty research to generate an even deeper understanding of the effects of resource deficiencies. Another path for identifying under-theorized aspects of resources is exploring less-quantifiable resources, as this emphasis has been challenged by scholars who highlight the exclusion of those resources, which are nonquantifiable but may be critical under conditions of poverty (e.g., Mead et al., 2011; Molden et al., 2012). Many options to reduce the scarcity are also inaccessible due to poverty-related restrictions (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), such as a lack of disposable income (Orhun & Palazzolo, 2019) or disempowered identity markers (Jacob et al., 2022). For example, gender can cause unequal control over resources and scarcity differences even within the same family (Hoddinott, 2006).



Forms of Scarcity	Illustrative Example (Housing Context)	Exemplar Research (Various Contexts)
Incidental Scarcity	Comparing a Luxury Home to Current Home	(Roux et al., 2015; Sharma & Alter, 2012)
Conditional Scarcity	Mortgage Financed Paycheck-to-Paycheck	(Mittal & Griskevicius, 2016; Shah et al., 2015)
Episodic Scarcity	Temporary Eviction from Apartment	(Chaplin et al., 2014; Viswanathan et al., 2010)
Chronic Scarcity	Extended Homelessness	(Blocker & Barrios 2015; Hill, 2010)

FIGURE 1 Integrated model of resource scarcity.

Additionally, scarcity research tends to study point-in-time and temporary effects (e.g., recalling past experiences of scarcity before completing a hypothetical shopping task), which can lack correspondence with the everyday physiological states of impoverished consumers (e.g., shopping with acute money and family stress). A growing number of experimental researchers have been studying the longer-term effects of experiencing resource scarcity during childhood (e.g., Amir et al., 2018; Griskevicius et al., 2013; Mittal et al., 2020) or adulthood (e.g., Jacob et al., 2022; Mani et al., 2013; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013; Shah et al., 2015; Stephens et al., 2007) on consumer psychology and behavior—another important step toward better understanding the effects of resource scarcity in impoverished (vs. affluent) contexts. At the same time, the use of point-in-time measures (e.g., after receiving an unexpected bill, Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013; before and after harvest; Mani et al., 2013) is still fairly common to assess such effects. This approach stops short of a comprehensive understanding of the compounding resource deficiencies that a person with low levels of consumption adequacy experiences and that amplify their vulnerability and uncertainty. Resources are also susceptible to wear and tear under acute conditions (Park & Folkman, 1997), which can lead to loss and gain cycles of resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998). Understanding the potency of resource losses over time and how it promotes further losses and reduces the capacity to gain resources is integral for closing the gap between scarcity insights and the lived experience of poverty.

Finally, a person's aggregate resource sufficiency shapes their overall well-being. Scarcity researchers aim to understand the consequences of "not having enough" (Cannon et al., 2019; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), and have looked at the correspondence between various types of resource scarcity (e.g., money, time, calories; Shah et al., 2015). Yet, a conventional assumption of basic resource sufficiency lacks correspondence with the concerns of a person in poverty seeking basic human rights, needs, and growth (Chakravarti, 2006; Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Nussbaum, 2000), and lacking multiple resources at once (e.g., Saatcioglu & Corus, 2014). Even when resource sufficiency is recognized in scarcity research, the reality of having to survive with minimal goods and services is difficult to fully explain using extant approaches.

Boundaries of poverty research and the need for scarcity insights

Idiographic portrayals of fragmented themes

Empirical poverty research tends to emphasize the lived experience of chronic and extreme resource deprivation across various contexts, such as homelessness (Blocker & Barrios, 2015; Hill & Stamey, 1990), working-class neighborhoods (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013), rural settings (Lee et al., 1999), disaster areas (Baker, 2009), and subsistence markets (Üstüner & Holt, 2007; Viswanathan & Lalwani, 2020). Poverty research, in the consumer literature, tends to have an "idiographic" character (Thompson et al., 1994). That is, studies highlight the cultural and subjective experiences of specific impoverished groups and illuminate unique aspects that set them apart from affluent or other impoverished groups. Such an approach has offered insights on concepts such as disempowerment, social capital, vulnerability, disadvantage, stigma, coping, and resistance (e.g., Adkins & Ozanne, 2005; Blocker et al., 2013; Corus et al., 2016). That said, the idiographic nature of this work has produced relatively fragmented insights that stop short of informing systematic variation in poverty, such as the converging effects of specific types of scarcity (e.g., money, time, calories; Shah et al., 2015) or of shorter- versus longer-term experiences of resource deprivations (e.g., Mani et al., 2013), which could help bridge scarcity and poverty research.

Divergence with the nomothetic progression of scarcity research

With some exceptions (e.g., Martin & Hill, 2012, 2015), poverty research draws upon qualitative inquiry in a sociological tradition through in-depth interviews and ethnographic methods. This approach offers several advantages, yet it has failed to produce commensurable constructs, cross-population comparisons, or programmatic insights to facilitate synthesis. Thus, the literature offers less generalizability, especially for the nature of resource scarcity intensity and duration. By contrast, the "nomothetic" approach of scarcity research seeks to generalize the understanding of specific effects; for example, how people allocate resources to the self and others, the nature of priority shifting, or how people attempt to restore control. In addition, the resource scarcity literature examines subjective aspects of resource deprivation, which should also inform contexts of poverty, distinguished from poverty work on coping, to understand when and how a scarcity mindset manifests in such contexts.

Thus, scarcity research and poverty research belong together. Integrating the two domains can help explicate the effects of extreme resource scarcity in poverty from its well-known, but often opaque, consequences (e.g., restricted freedoms and powerlessness). Additionally, by building on the growing number of conceptual and empirical models on the effects of resource scarcity, this stream of research can help poverty research differentiate low-duration (short term) and high-duration (chronic) resource scarcity across varying degrees of scarcity intensity.

BUILDING AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF RESOURCE SCARCITY

Despite their differences, resource scarcity and poverty research share a focus on resource deprivation and understanding how people acquire, cultivate, preserve, and define their resources (Cannon et al., 2019). Both fields seek insights into human hardship, coping, and recovery that translate into effective interventions and transformative outcomes (Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019). With a backdrop of "why" these areas can fruitfully overlap, we now provide a unified framework for explaining "how" they can be integrated and "what" this means for stimulating impact in theory and practice (see Figure 1).

The primary axes of the model—resource scarcity intensity and resource scarcity duration—were previously introduced as dimensions that broaden the boundaries of scarcity research to offer comprehensive coverage of the phenomenon and correspond to a wider swath of the global population. In the following sections, we develop the model using consumption adequacy as a bridging construct between the scarcity and poverty literatures and theorizing availability, access, shock, and slack as properties of consumer resources. These properties conceptually inform scarcity intensity and duration. The model derives four forms of scarcity (incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic) and provides a single landscape for understanding resource scarcity for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Scarcity intensity, scarcity duration, and consumption adequacy

As noted, scarcity research aims to understand the consequences of "not having enough" (Cannon et al., 2019; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). To better theorize scarcity intensity, we draw from poverty research to identify a wider range of resource baselines, from low scarcity intensity (high resources) to high scarcity intensity (low resources), as portrayed by the vertical axis of Figure 1. Note that intensity can be due to an increased deprivation within one type of resource (e.g., lacking money), as more commonly studied in scarcity research, or multiplicatively across various types of resources (e.g., lacking money, time, and space), as more commonly studied in poverty research. Consumption adequacy is overlaid along the vertical axis of scarcity intensity. As a central construct in poverty work,

it reflects "essential goods and services that must be acquired before citizens within a nation can rise above a short-term focus on continued existence" (Hill, 2005, p. 217). Here, the adequacy baseline reflects a person's ability to consume vital resources or "global public goods" (Nussbaum, 2000), for example, healthy food and water (Grier & Davis, 2013), safe shelter (Motley & Perry, 2013; Perry, 2019), sufficient clothing, health care (Dorsey et al., 2020), and personal growth through education and jobs (Viswanathan et al., 2010).

We employ consumption adequacy as a conceptual bridge for scarcity and poverty research by serving as a context-dependent reference point for understanding the intensity of scarcity at, above, or below an aggregate baseline of resources. Several facets of this construct enable it to bridge these literatures and inform the future study of resource scarcity. On the one hand, consumption adequacy construes poverty using a resource lens anchored on "essential goods and services." This approach corresponds to quantifiable and tangible resources that are prevalent in scarcity research. On the other hand, consumption adequacy emphasizes the individualization and time-bounded nature of resources (Farrell & Hill, 2018). Thus, consumption adequacy incorporates both objective and subjective elements, which aligns with definitions of resource scarcity (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019) and recent conceptualizations of SES and consumer wealth (Antonoplis, 2022; Tully & Sharma, 2022).

Subjective facets draw the understanding of scarcity intensity closer to the lived experiences of consumers in poverty. For example, consumption adequacy emphasizes a person's perceptions of unmet basic needs, such as seeing certain products in a contemporary society (e.g., smartphone) as essential resources for life. Subjective perceptions of scarcity may also be reflected in unique coping strategies (Snibbe & Markus, 2005), lay theories (Chaplin et al., 2014), decision-making (Mittal & Griskevicius, 2016), and emotional processes such as anxiety and despair (Hutton, 2015). With individualization, consumption adequacy research emphasizes a consumer's position in the market and their access to available resources (Farrell & Hill, 2018). This dimension conveys how disadvantage in one domain (e.g., low education) may exacerbate other types of disadvantage (e.g., income) and lead to other forms of deprivation like stigma (Corus et al., 2016; Hutton, 2019).

Consumption adequacy also identifies the temporal aspects of poverty that manifest through fluctuating and diminishing resources. For example, distinctions often exist between a sudden onset of poverty through tragedy versus long-term and systemic deprivation. To better theorize scarcity duration, we draw from both consumer scarcity and poverty research to identify a wider range of experiences, along a continuum of low-duration to high-duration, as portrayed by the horizontal axis of Figure 1. As noted, resource scarcity research tends to focus on low-duration experiences, such as incidental cues (e.g., magazine covers; Goldsmith, Roux, & Wilson, 2020) or social comparison (e.g., comparing oneself to someone worse or better off; Sharma & Alter, 2012), and point-in-time assessments of longer-term experiences (e.g., Griskevicius et al., 2013; Jacob et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2015; Stephens et al., 2007). Conversely, poverty research tends to focus on high-duration experiences such as subsistence consumers (e.g., trailer park community residents, Saatcioglu & Corus, 2014) or disaster recovery (Baker & Hill, 2013). Temporal dynamics may shape different psychological processes (e.g., perceived mutability; Cannon et al., 2019), understandings of constraint (Claro et al., 2016; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013), and behavioral responses (Hill & Sharma, 2020). The same scarcity-related event (e.g., natural disaster) can also generate scarcity experiences of varying durations depending on one's resource level prior to the event (Baker, 2009), given that scarcity intensity and duration can be interrelated.

Theorizing resource properties to inform scarcity intensity and scarcity duration

To elaborate upon the axes of the integrated model, we focus on four properties for discussing scarcity intensity and duration: *availability, access, shock,* and *slack*. These properties form the building blocks of our model and help break through the previously described research boundaries by probing cultural aspects of resources in a sociological tradition that illuminates impoverished consumption. Availability and access help clarify the nature of scarcity intensity and scarcity duration, as both contribute to a person's ability to continuously secure resources and maintain consumption adequacy. Slack and shock also help clarify the nature of scarcity intensity and duration, as both contribute to the dynamics of how resources are developed, maintained, or lost, and a person's aggregate resources over time.

These properties recognize diverse aspects of scarcity and coping strategies (Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019), and cognitive and emotional processes that have both market and consumer well-being outcomes (Ennis et al., 2000; Mittal & Griskevicius, 2014, 2016). Investigating resource availability, access, shock, and slack may spark scholarly curiosity about solutions and interventions that incorporate subjective experiences and temporal dynamics. For instance, these resource properties may shed light on scarcity shaped by shortages of supply due to drought or pandemic. They may also reveal power dynamics and structural inequalities, such as inequitable market access due to gender and/or race (Leary & Ridinger, 2020).

Within the integrated model (Figure 1), we articulate that increasing availability, access, and slack contribute to lower scarcity intensity and lower scarcity duration.

TABLE 2 Conceptual building blocks for integrating scarcity and poverty

Property	Definition	Illustrative examples
Availability	Extent to which resources are present in the consumers' environment	Product stock-outs, natural resource shortages, geographic gaps in market reach, regulatory, institutional, and structural barriers (Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019)
Access	Extent to which available resources can be obtained by consumers	Disability, traveling distance, identity-based discrimination, and family power structures (Bone et al., 2014)
Shocks	Disruption of resource availability or access brought on by internal events in life or external conditions	External: pandemic, natural disaster, and local economic downturn Internal: accident, illness, death of loved one, and job termination (Hobfoll et al., 2003; Holmgreen et al., 2017; Kabeer, 2015)
Slack	Stability and certainty of consumer resources to buffer shocks	Cash and/or liquid assets for emergency, government job protection, family/friend "safety net," insurance, mental health, and social network (Cantillon & Hutton, 2020)
Forms		
Incidental	Lower intensity and lower duration scarcity reflected in isolated, everyday deprivations (above consumption adequacy)	Product variety scarcity, preferred store going out of business, and competitive or upward social comparisons (Sharma & Alter, 2012)
Conditional	Lower intensity, but higher duration scarcity reflected in persistent life conditions (above consumption adequacy)	Prolonged debt, seasonal illness, layoff with severance, and chronic injury with sufficient healthcare (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013)
Episodic	Higher intensity, but lower duration scarcity reflected in sharply felt but shorter-lived deprivation (near consumption adequacy)	Intermittent stability and insecurity for job, food, housing, safety, and other basic needs (Chaplin et al., 2014)
Chronic	Higher intensity and higher duration scarcity reflected in enduring consumption restrictions (below consumption adequacy)	Prolonged deprivation of basic needs: homelessness, incarceration, and prolonged/intense health issues (Hill, 2010)
Dynamics		
Trajectories	Continuous path of aggregate and fluctuating resources relative to overall resource sufficiency (consumption adequacy) over time	Impact of childhood poverty on adult decisions, immigrant mobility, and differential recovery from disaster (Akresh, 2006, Baker, 2009, Martin & Hill, 2012, Mittal & Griskevicius, 2016)

Sensitivity to shock contributes to higher scarcity intensity and higher scarcity duration. In what follows, we elaborate on these properties using literature, examples that interface with the realities of poverty, and ideas for bridging them in theory and practice (see Table 2 for a summary).

Resource availability

Resource deficiency is a defining characteristic in both scarcity and poverty research. Yet, these research streams focus on different causes of deficiency. The scarcity literature tends to emphasize the lack of availability (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). Conversely, the poverty literature tends to focus on lack of access (Bone et al., 2014; Leary & Ridinger, 2020; Martin & Hill, 2015). We propose that expanded and integrated perspectives on both can create new insights. We define *availability* as the extent to which resources are present in consumers' environments, and we define *access* as the extent to which available resources can be used or obtained by consumers. For example, shopping in a grocery store with limited inventory (low availability) is quite different from being unable to purchase products in the store due to low income (low access). Neither scarcity nor poverty research makes clear distinctions between lack of availability and lack of access to resources. Sometimes these terms are even used interchangeably (Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019; Martin & Hill, 2015).

Resource availability can change based on natural causes, such as climate changes (Lowe et al., 2015), ecological disasters (Baker et al., 2015), or pandemics (Scott & Martin, 2021), which disrupt the supply of resources. Availability can also be artificially reduced by restricting production or distribution (Cialdini, 2007). A lack of availability tends to impact consumers universally. That said, we propose that the negative impact of availability scarcity will vary greatly based on a person's consumption adequacy, access, and existing resource slack.

Resource access

In contrast to availability, which is a necessary condition for access, resource access involves an unbalanced distribution and/or control over resources. Restricted access impacts some consumers more than others. Resources may be inaccessible due to a broad range of restrictions and personal identity markers. Access can be restricted through assortments and geographical proximity (Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). For instance, food deserts, corner stores, and bodegas may have food available.

Yet, they lack access to healthier foods as compared to suburban grocers, and the latter is often difficult to reach for consumers living in poverty areas (Andreasen, 1995). In some cases, distance is not the issue. Instead, data-driven decision-making may propagate service inequities around access, as seen in Amazon's controversial mapping of same-day delivery along racial divides in cities like Boston (Ingold & Soper, 2016).

Resource access can be restricted through barriers of entry and information. For instance, when seeking a bank loan, minority consumers may require more vetting and are presented with fewer options than white consumers (Bone et al., 2014). Access can also be restricted through ability or beliefs. Illiteracy, religious views, and stereotypes may hinder the adoption of products and services (Lin et al., 2015). Access can also be shaped by gender, as women represent a disproportionate percentage of people living in poverty (Chant, 2006). Studies of immigrant women find that gender, ethnicity, and class negatively affect access to resources (Akresh, 2006). Similarly, divorce can deprive women of economic and social capital when they must move due to the stigma of divorce or pressure from their husbands (Erel, 2010).

Research directions for availability and access

Drawing distinctions between resource availability and access can help both scarcity and poverty researchers generate deeper research questions and insights. For example, what is the differential impact of restricted access to resources under different tiers of consumption adequacy? What forms of unavailability and inaccessibility contribute to a long-lasting scarcity mindset (Goldsmith, Griskevicius, & Hamilton, 2020; Goldsmith, Roux, & Wilson, 2020; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013)? We anticipate that a person's experience of low resources under diverse conditions of adequacy baselines may have very different causes and consequences, especially regarding anticipated uncertainty in the future availability or their access to resources.

Diverse experiences, decision-making trade-offs, and coping may require very distinct solutions and interventions. By better circumscribing the phenomenon of interest, researchers can better identify similarities and differences between the various causes and build a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of resource scarcity. Researchers who use availability and/or access properties may more clearly explain how power dynamics produce structural, recurring vulnerabilities at a macro-level and ask more questions about who controls access to resources and whose access is limited. Studying consumers' perceptions of structural inequities for access to resources may help uncover more nuanced forms of scarcity. Consumers living in poverty may hold less trust in formal systems, which could in turn affect attributions of and reactions to their relatively restricted access to resources (Hill, 2022).

Resource shocks

The dynamics of a person's resources for consumption adequacy are shaped by resource shocks, which are defined as disruptions of resource availability and/or access brought upon by personal or external circumstances. A "shock" may arise from unanticipated occurrences such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Hamilton, 2021) or a natural disaster (Baker, 2009). Many shocks are more personal, such as an accident, illness, death of a spouse, job layoff, or large unforeseen expenditures (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). These examples reflect major shocks, but there are also less noticeable shocks, such as missing a single meal, a toothache, or losing $20. Mullainathan and Shafir (2013) suggest that shocks cause people to fall into scarcity traps, where their attention may be short-term focused, depending on the context (Sharma et al., 2019). Still, scarcity research tends to focus on more minor shocks for people who live (well) above consumption adequacy with lower scarcity intensity and scarcity duration.

By contrast, poverty research articulates shocks involving tragedies in life and resource disadvantages that span different durations (episodic to chronic) and intensities (at or below the adequacy baseline). Shocks may have immediate (e.g., inability to afford rent or car payments) or long-term (e.g., loss of savings due to a pandemic) consequences, and occur in intermittent or persistent, and mild or severe ways. The poverty literature suggests that shocks can be classified along a continuum of increasing magnitude and necessary responses, depending on the category of shock experienced and how it depletes existing consumption resources (Kabeer, 2015; Rowland et al., 1985). For instance, first-order shocks may involve cutting back on the number of meals consumed. Second-order shocks might mean borrowing from neighbors or money lenders, thus perpetuating scarcity, and third-order shocks might result in migration.

Resource slack

Slack reflects the stability and certainty of one's resources, including quantifiable, everyday resources (e.g., money) and less-quantifiable, rarely used resources (e.g., emergency childcare help from a co-worker). Along with greater availability and access, slack helps a person recover from resource shocks by curtailing shock intensity and duration. From a scarcity perspective, slack provides a sufficient stock of accessible resources (buffer) above consumption adequacy that can be rallied to absorb shocks (Kuusela et al., 2017). For example, if a person is evicted from their apartment based on the inability to pay a rent increase, slack may manifest in the form of an emergency advance in pay to temporarily stay in a motel until more stable housing is found, friends or family who share a room for free, or a nonprofit temporary housing service. In these examples, slack can reduce scarcity

intensity and duration following a shock, and thus slack operates independently from one's baseline resources (e.g., income, consumption adequacy).

We identify two distinctions between how the scarcity and poverty literatures characterize slack. First, we observe different phenomena when a person operates with finite versus abundant resource slack. A person with abundant slack (i.e, well above consumption adequacy) has sufficient resources to buffer against resource shocks and maintain critical resources for survival. By contrast, a person living in poverty either at or below consumption adequacy operates with low slack and strives to vigorously stretch and protect resources. Slack can take various forms, from more tangible, quantifiable, and direct forms, such as liquid assets (e.g., cash available for emergencies; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), to less tangible, unquantifiable, and indirect resources, such as help from family (Hsee & Weber, 1999), or government job protection. Additionally, the coexistence of loss and gain cycles of resource availability, access, and shocks in the context of poverty and low slack means that, during periods of loss, impoverished consumers are more likely to attempt to establish offsetting gain cycles to create more slack by mobilizing their resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998). For example, when faced with temporary unemployment and sickness (i.e., shock) and without enough cash (i.e., low slack) and access to low-cost credit (i.e., low resource availability and access), an impoverished consumer might revert to pawning their limited belongings to help bridge over these hardships, further lowering their overall consumption adequacy. Such behaviors that subject impoverished consumers to punishingly high costs would not occur for those with high resource slack.

Second, we observe distinctions between slack allocation versus slack management. Both scarcity and poverty scholars acknowledge the concepts of resource shortage, imbalance, and competition, which affect the nature and amount of slack (Zauberman & Lynch Jr, 2005). However, the tension between allocation and management of slack resources is particularly noticeable through the lens of poverty. The scarcity literature suggests that slack management changes how consumers allocate resources (Fernbach et al., 2015; Shah et al., 2015). When a person is impoverished, far more energy is spent managing remaining resources and trade-offs to ensure adequate resources (Cantillon & Hutton, 2020; Cappellini et al., 2019). In some cases, resource slack trade-offs pay dividends in the short term but create long-term complications. For instance, a person might use cash to pay for emergency healthcare while foregoing saving for educational expenses. Psychological reactions to shock also depend on the chronic scarcity of resource slack. For instance, childhood deprivation increases daily stress and child learned helplessness (Brown et al., 2016), making garnering resources to deal with shock all the more difficult even when slack is available later in life (Amir et al., 2018; Griskevicius et al., 2013).

Research directions for shock and slack

A deeper analysis of resource scarcity's dynamics with the properties of shock and slack helps us see new opportunities for bridging scarcity and poverty research. For example, there is no robust empirical evidence or theory to describe the nature of shock and coping under very different levels of consumption adequacy or slack. What types of shocks are most detrimental? How do shock's varying intensities and durations intersect with slack, whether tangible and direct forms of resource slack (e.g., savings) or more intangible and indirect forms (e.g., hope; MacInnis & de Mello, 2005)? When people living in poverty experience overlapping types of disadvantages, how do shocks in one domain of life (e.g., sick child needing healthcare) affect other domains (e.g., wages or compliance at work)?

The management, allocation, and trade-off of resource slack under such scenarios could also benefit from views of consumer wisdom, which concentrates on advancing well-being through intentionality, contemplation, emotional mastery, openness, and transcendence (Luchs & Mick, 2018). Such factors may help explain more fruitful resource trade-offs when confronted with time-inconsistent preferences (e.g., short-term versus long-term loss/gain). Alternative perspectives may also be conducive to a better understanding of the range of tactics, skills, and adaptive abilities of consumers who live in poverty and face volatility caused by resource shocks (e.g., Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Viswanathan & Lalwani, 2020). As an example, what forms of future-oriented and preventative coping do consumers use to mitigate shocks (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Biggs et al., 2017)? Taking these perspectives into account can help researchers distance themselves from implicit assumptions about impoverished consumers' strategies and tactics as flawed or dysfunctional. For instance, promoting financial literacy among impoverished consumers can be irrelevant when money and time slack are inexistent, while interventions such as unconditional cash transfers or vouchers for services designed to reduce the burden of unpaid labor would more effectively help them gain slack (Whillans & West, 2022).

Delineating four forms of resource scarcity

Using the continua of scarcity intensity and scarcity duration, we conceptually delineate (MacInnis, 2011) incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic forms of scarcity. In doing so, we contend that what are often understood as disparate and disorganized phenomena—across the silos of scarcity studied in relatively affluent contexts using psychological models versus the scarcity described in impoverished contexts using sociological theory—can, in reality, be organized and structured in a single domain using the proposed dimensions and

properties. Delineating these forms facilitates comparison and synthesis across existing and future research. The four forms of scarcity are conceptualized using their dimensions; however, we augment these representations with the following examples and provide extended vignettes in Appendix S2.

Incidental scarcity (lower scarcity intensity, lower scarcity duration) reflects the more isolated, everyday fluctuation of scarcity experiences often revealed with experimental research. Examples might be comparing one's financial situation to someone better off (Sharma & Alter, 2012) or reading a news article about an impending economic recession (Griskevicius et al., 2013). *Conditional scarcity* (lower scarcity intensity, higher scarcity duration) reflects enduring forms of scarcity based on persistent conditions in life, even as the consumer experiences consistent access to higher levels of goods and services based upon their aggregate resources. Examples might be working-class consumers (Stephens et al., 2007) or lower-income shoppers at a mall (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). *Episodic scarcity* (higher scarcity intensity, lower scarcity duration) reflects the nature of scarcity common among consumers on the sharp edges of impoverishment, who experience a lack of access because of fluctuations in prices/incomes and the lack of acceptable alternatives for necessary purchases, such as prescription drugs. Examples might be income cycles (Mani et al., 2013) or a large unexpected bill when slack is low (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). *Chronic scarcity* (higher scarcity intensity, higher scarcity duration) reflects the nature of scarcity under conditions experienced by society's most impoverished members. Examples might be subsistence consumers (e.g., trailer park community residents, Saatcioglu & Corus, 2014) or homeless individuals (Hill & Stamey, 1990). In this form, consumers exist in material environments such as food deserts, where a lack of access to basic goods and services is inevitable. Furthermore, chronic scarcity tends to involve simultaneous, overlapping experiences of scarcity.

Resource trajectories and the dynamics of scarcity intensity and duration

To provide a dynamic extension of the integrated scarcity model (Figure 1), we develop the concept of *consumer resource trajectories*, defined as the aggregate bundle of fluctuating consumer resources relative to one's overall resource sufficiency over time. Concepts in diverse fields inform the logic of trajectories. For example, in the field of physics, the trajectory of an object through time and space reflects the object's position, path, and momentum over time. Furthermore, scholars studying phenomena such as relationships, child development, aging, and narrative psychology draw upon the trajectory metaphor to investigate the progression or decline of health and well-being (Adler et al., 2015; Fournier, 1998; McAdams et al., 2001).

For our goals, we extend our scarcity framework using the trajectory concept to highlight under-theorized aspects of scarcity intensity and scarcity duration that shape a consumer's aggregate resources and influence incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic scarcity. In particular, we propose that intensity and duration are more accurately reflected by recognizing the continuous, connected, and overlapping experiences of scarcity in life (which Figure 1 cannot fully capture), as opposed to the treatment of scarcity experiences as primarily discrete, independent, and isolated (Table 1). We note that a person's aggregate resources—as shaped by the properties of resource availability, access, shock, and slack—can take on infinite manifestations throughout a person's life. Thus, the intent here is not to map a precise trajectory onto a person's quantifiable resource bundle or develop a taxonomy of resource trajectories. Rather, by conceptualizing the developmental course of resources in everyday consumption, we uncover novel contingencies and parse out the nature of resource scarcity in different contexts.

The illustrative consumer resource trajectories we conceptualize span: (1) contexts of abundance, where people live consistently above consumption adequacy and may experience upward trajectories; (2) contexts of intermittent consumption (in)adequacy with fluctuating trajectories; and (3) contexts of poverty, where people live consistently below consumption adequacy and often experience downward trajectories (see Figure 2). Using the same y-axis from Figure 1, we present two demonstrative panels, displaying patterns that theorize how scarcity unfolds over time (*x*-axis) relative to a zone of consumption adequacy (horizontal dotted line).

Trajectories panel A: resource baselines

For the purpose of conceptual envisioning and explication (MacInnis, 2011), the trajectories in the top panel depict the aggregate resource baseline of forms of scarcity relative to their position above, at, or below consumption adequacy. Whereas conditional scarcity recognizes less intense but persisting conditions (e.g., working-class job; Stephens et al., 2007) within a broader context of a generally upward trajectory, incidental scarcity reflects more isolated experiences that occur within the other aggregate trajectories (depicted as a call-out box) within everyday resource fluctuations (e.g., social comparison; Sharma & Alter, 2012). Episodic scarcity, where individuals' lives span the zone of (in)adequacy, is associated with the highest degrees of uncertainty, and it corresponds to definitions of episodic homelessness (below the adequacy line), which may be frequent but short in duration (Blocker & Barrios, 2015). Chronic scarcity reflects the highest scarcity intensity and duration within a broader context of a generally downward trajectory (e.g., enduring restrictions on access, such as years or decades without basic needs being met; Hill & Stamey, 1990).

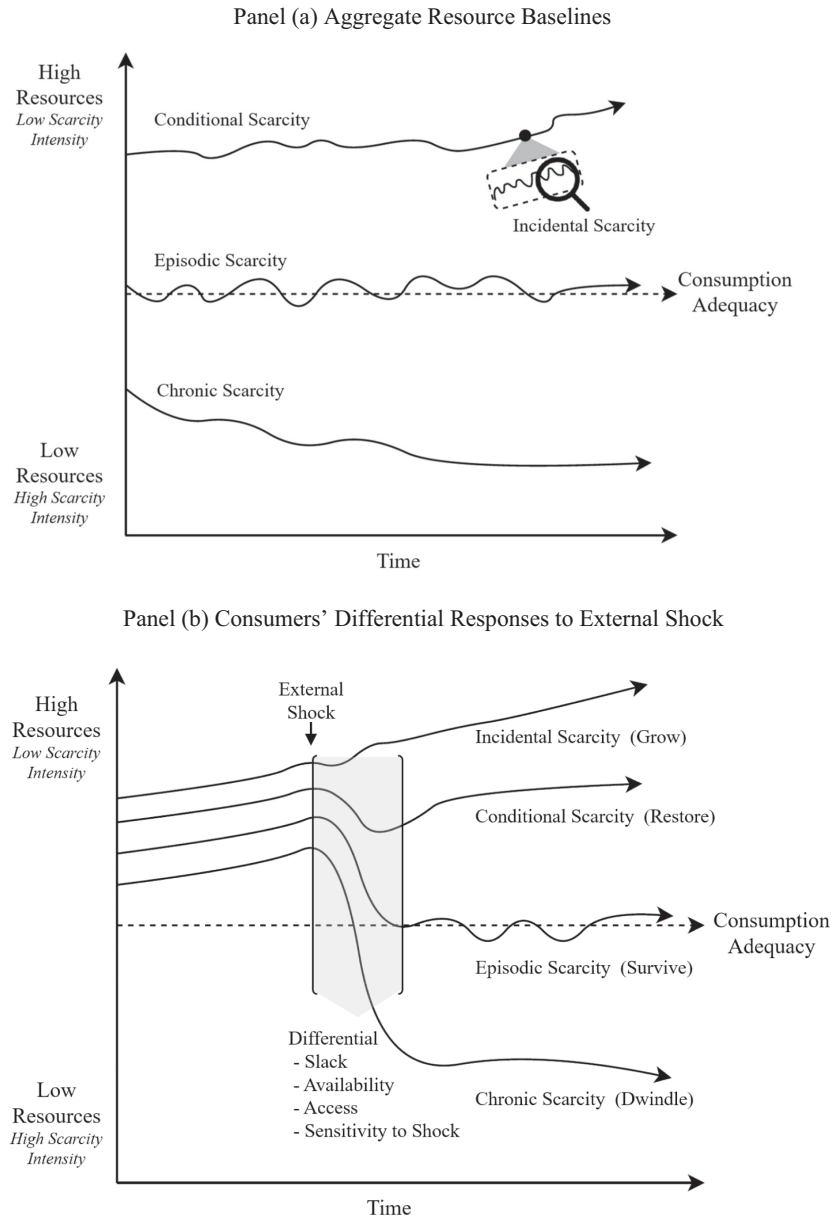


FIGURE 2 Dynamic extension of scarcity forms—consumer resource trajectories. Panel A: Aggregate resource baselines. Panel B: Consumers' differential responses to external shock.

The illustrative dips and rises in different trajectories reflect varying magnitudes/slopes of scarcity intensity and duration that may arise across forms of scarcity. Thus, a person's baseline along with associated resource availability, access, shock, and slack may influence lower scarcity intensity/duration or higher scarcity intensity/duration. For example, lack of resource availability (e.g., few jobs in one's field and location), access (e.g., hard to obtain a desired job based on ethnic discrimination), slack (e.g., lack of savings), and shock (e.g., sickness and accidents) would shape one's scarcity intensity and duration. Furthermore, quantitatively similar resources fluctuations (e.g., $100 increase in rent or an unexpected parking fine) may unfold in qualitatively different ways (e.g., more felt uncertainty) for a person experiencing conditional versus episodic scarcity, and depending on their position relative to consumption adequacy and structural or personal means for gaining resource access.

To illustrate, when life is experienced above the consumption adequacy threshold, scarcity intensity and duration do not alter the quality of life to the degree it would for the other two conditions (Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Hill, 2020). Consider that a consumer whose aggregate resources reflect the top trajectory and who is dealing with rising expenses may experience conditional scarcity, such as the need to forego dining out as frequently. Although less convenient, this disruption poses a lower level of interference to overall well-being. Social capital may diminish somewhat, but the trajectory generally remains unchanged. However, the second

trajectory reveals a consumer who oscillates above and below adequacy over an extended period, occasionally going hungry or temporarily becoming homeless. These resource interruptions can be short in duration but sharp in intensity, since a small change in access (e.g., a small boost in income that triggers a loss in governmental assistance) leads to significant disadvantages (Corus et al., 2016; Farrell & Hill, 2018). The persistence of scarcity experiences along this trajectory can create significant stress and uncertainty, and negatively impact the consumer's psychological and emotional resources (Chakravarti, 2006; Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019). Finally, the bottom trajectory is consistent with consumers depicted by Martin and Hill (2012), who experience variations in resource access while chronically going without goods and services required to lead a reasonable quality of life. This trajectory reflects the most severe scarcity intensity and duration due to the detrimental and compounding effects of low resources.

Trajectories panel B: differential shock recovery

The lower panel depicts how individuals with varying aggregate resource baselines may experience differential effects of (similar) resource shocks and subsequent forms of scarcity and recovery. These sharper, differential effects of scarcity are more likely to manifest in individuals with fewer aggregate resources relative to consumption adequacy. On the left-hand side, we envision consumers who are living with varying bundles of consumer resources (e.g., based upon their job, income, or SES). However, the experience of a common external shock (e.g., company-wide layoffs) may interactively influence different scarcity intensity and duration (harsher negative effects) based upon individuals' resources relative to consumption adequacy and alter the time and ability to recover. In particular, beyond quantifiable resource deprivation, individuals who lack access to important, but nonquantifiable resources (Cannon et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019) may experience greater scarcity intensity and duration. For example, greater risk aversion (Amir et al., 2018) and lower social capital (Stephens et al., 2014) may discourage a person from pursuing a full-time education to change careers. Differential consumer resource trajectories might also be attributed to the pre-existence of more latent overlapping forms of scarcity, such as the lasting effects of one's past experiences of scarcity at "baseline" (Amir et al., 2018) or in response to threats (Griskevicius et al., 2013), and interactively amplify shock and influence scarcity intensity and duration.

To use another example, consider the natural hazard event examined by Baker (2009). The authors found that many residents of an affected Wyoming town lost much or all of their possessions, but the roads to recovery after the distress of the initial destruction and associated deaths were quite distinct. People sought to reclaim their social standing based on differences in previous resource availability and access. Eventually, depending upon different sources of slack, some prospered (top trajectory), others recouped previous access levels (second trajectory); still others were less well-off (third trajectory), with some becoming more disadvantaged (fourth trajectory). A similar case might be the global pandemic that has highlighted sharply different safety nets (quantifiable and nonquantifiable resources slack) and the fragility of some forms of slack (Hamilton, 2021).

Note that all trajectories encounter at least a temporary decrease in resources. However, consumers with less sensitivity to shock and higher resource availability, access, and slack (Figure 1) are likely to experience lower intensity and duration of further shocks (Figure 2, Panel B top two trajectories). By contrast, those with greater sensitivity to shock and lower resource availability, access, and slack are likely to exhibit forms represented by the lower two trajectories (Figure 2, Panel B). We anticipate that the nature of recovery across the trajectories is likely to correspond to various forms of scarcity; labeled here as grow, restore, survive, or dwindle, and corresponding to one's aggregate resources. Individuals experiencing incidental scarcity are likely to return to a prior path of growth before the shock, but other trajectories are less likely to reveal such patterns. Research indicates that control-restoration routes may involve different (non) deliberate types of coping and compensatory behaviors (Cannon et al., 2019), and we expect significantly different forms of recovery based on the intensity and duration of scarcity, its perceived mutability (Cannon et al., 2019), and one's past experiences of scarcity (Amir et al., 2018; Griskevicius et al., 2013). Thus, across the four illustrative trajectories, Panel B depicts multiple contingencies that may result from a singular shock, based on the differential effects of shock, the presence and robustness of slack, and the availability/access to resources. Additionally, it illuminates how slack (or a lack thereof) may facilitate (temper) the consumers' ability to recover.

SYNTHESIZING RESOURCE SCARCITY AND POVERTY: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

As noted, interest in scarcity research to understand consumer well-being surged in recent years (Goldsmith, Griskevicius, & Hamilton, 2020; Goldsmith, Roux, & Wilson, 2020). However, consumers with low consumption adequacy in both developed and developing contexts are likely to experience scarcity differently from

TABLE 3 Research directions at the intersection of resource scarcity and poverty

Extant scarcity research	Future research	Research priorities to re-examine extant research and expand the theoretical reach
Availability Unrestricted *Resources are assumed to be available*	Availability Restricted *Resource availability is subject to restrictions*	How might different forms of restricted availability (e.g., stock-out, natural resources, pandemic) affect scarcity intensity for people across consumption adequacy baselines? How might research effectively differentiate between availability and access issues? How do scarcity duration and ongoing resource availability shape consumers' uncertainty and coping strategies across different forms of scarcity?
Access Equal *Resources are assumed to be equally distributed*	Access Unequal *Resources are often unequally controlled*	How might differential access inform the structuring and/or classification of consumer resources (e.g., necessity versus discretionary, or primary, secondary, tertiary)? How do forms of restricted access, such as physical disability, geographic (travel distance, food desert), or identity (ethnicity, gender, age), shape scarcity intensity? How might restricted access shape norms and socialization into scarcity (expectations of threat, distrust for institutions) and/or structural (class, discrimination) consequences that alter scarcity intensity and duration, and the experienced forms of scarcity?
Shocks Narrow *Resource shocks are mild, isolated, and quantifiable*	Shocks Broad *Resource shocks can be extreme, overlapping, and nonquantifiable*	What are effective ways of conceptualizing and measuring sensitivity to shock? How does the presence of multiple, interrelated, and/or simultaneous shocks—reflected by scarcity intensity and scarcity duration—influence recovery? How do people who live above, at, and below consumption adequacy experience resource shocks in (dis)similar ways?
Slack Sufficient *Resource slack is stable and abundant for management and allocation*	Slack Insufficient *Resource slack can be dynamic and finite, requiring trade-offs*	What forms of (in)exhaustible and (non)quantifiable resources (e.g., education, social support), effectively buffer against extreme resource shocks? What models can best explain resource trade-offs and sacrifices under varying degrees of scarcity intensity and scarcity duration? What nontraditional and creative resilience strategies are employed by impoverished consumers to retain sufficient slack?
Resources Static *Resources are independent, discrete, and static*	Resource Trajectory *Resources are connected, interrelated, and shifting in aggregate over time*	What is the nature of availability, access, shock, and slack for progressively upward, flat, or downward trajectories of aggregate resources? How does the sequence of scarcity experiences over time influence scarcity intensity and duration for individuals at different levels of consumption adequacy? What are the patterns of loss-gain cycles for aggregate resources, and how do various cycles respond to different recovery efforts? What are the long-term effects of different resource trajectories on the development of individuals, groups, and broader collectives over time?
Scarcity Singular Form *Scarcity is predominantly explored as isolated experiences, above adequacy, affecting attention, and decision-making*	Scarcity Multiple Forms *Scarcity manifested with varying intensity and duration, observed across incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic*	How do the effects of the increasing availability, access, slack, and decreasing sensitivity to shock compare across the proposed four forms of scarcity (incidental, conditional, episodic, chronic) and delineate them (e.g., Figure 1)? What are the measures, models, and assumptions that are commensurable across the four forms of scarcity, and what new empirical and theory development is needed? How might comparative research across the four forms of scarcity reveal flawed assumptions about decision-making within episodic and/or chronic scarcity? How do scarcity intensity and scarcity duration manifest across different contextual dimensions (e.g., developed versus developing contexts, urban versus rural, younger versus older, individualist versus collectivist cultures)? Across the forms of scarcity, how does the subjective nature of resources (perceptions of consumption adequacy) influence experiences of scarcity and recovery strategies?

more affluent populations (Hill, 2020). Our paper identifies ways that resource scarcity and poverty research have often diverged, and sometimes converged, and synthesizes them to create conceptual bridges and integrative pathways (Peracchio et al., 2014). Our synthesis clarifies language around resource scarcity, including defining important resource properties of availability, access, shock, and slack that probe assumptions and stimulate questions around power, equity, and recovery within scarcity experiences. Using the dimensions

of scarcity intensity and scarcity duration, we delineate four distinct forms of scarcity (incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic) and use these four resource properties to facilitate a more comprehensive vision of how resources coalesce in a broader frame of a consumer's aggregate resource trajectories. The unified scarcity model, with the reference point of consumption adequacy, identifies commonalities and differences that address pressing questions to advance fresh perspectives (see Table 3).

For researchers: new insights at the intersection of scarcity and poverty

Integrative theory-building

To accelerate societal impact, it is important for researchers to address integrative scholarship within and across resource scarcity and poverty. Collaborations among diverse scholars who are invested in exploring similar phenomena—yet have traditionally been separated by paradigms, method orientations, target journals, and scholarly networks—may advance novel insights into resource scarcity in all its forms. As seen within exemplars of multi-method work (e.g., Bone et al., 2014; Whitley et al., 2021), diverse collaborations can offer insights about important, but under-investigated restrictions on resource access to generate causal inferences for cross-comparison (Table 3, Access). Furthermore, as seen within exemplars of work at the intersection of scarcity and poverty (e.g., Amir et al., 2018; Griskevicius et al., 2013; Jacob et al., 2022; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), diverse populations can offer insights about the converging effects of scarcity, such as caloric (vs. money or time) scarcity and attention to trade-offs (Shah et al., 2015) or shorter- versus longer-term scarcity and cognitive function (Mani et al., 2013). Similarly, insights can be examined along diverging lines of scarcity (e.g., social class and preferences, Stephens et al., 2007; childhood environment and adulthood health care decision; Mittal & Griskevicius, 2016). This intersection of scarcity and poverty research is ripe for further investigation by marketing researchers, as it is currently more commonly studied in other disciplines (e.g., management, economics, psychology), such as how experiences of scarcity during childhood may produce effects that last into adulthood (e.g., Amir et al., 2018) or arise only under threat (Griskevicius et al., 2013). Additionally, the interplay of resource availability and access could first be investigated qualitatively to reveal an array of lived experiences, then subsequently explored quantitatively to pinpoint more specific effects (e.g., Orhun & Palazzolo, 2019; Table 3, Availability). Further rounds of qualitative inquiry could co-create interventions, which are then tested experimentally and examined across different forms of scarcity (Table 3, Scarcity Multiple Forms).

Programs of research using a developmental lens and longitudinal design may be most effective for understanding sensitivity to resource shock, critical forms of slack, and associated resource trajectories across levels of consumption adequacy and units of analysis, including individuals, groups, families, and collectives (e.g., Chaplin et al., 2014; Chetty et al., 2020; Table 3, Shocks, Slack, Resource Trajectory). Research on resource scarcity is expansive, and its theories, methods, and applications are well beyond any single discipline (Hamilton, Mittal, et al., 2019; Hamilton, Thompson, et al., 2019; Roux et al., 2015). Consequently, the academic consumer community interested in resource scarcity and poverty research may consider partnerships with researchers in diverse fields. For example, investigators may come from (non)governmental organizations addressing significant gaps in childcare and healthcare professionals interested in proactive strategies for facilitating vaccine distribution in impoverished communities with low access (Casey et al., 2001; Table 3, Access), nutritionists seeking ways of combating poor nutrition and low availability of healthy options in food deserts (Arimond et al., 2010, Table 3, Availability), or architects building novel infrastructures in neighborhoods with substandard housing to understand the effects of resource trajectories on the development of communities over time (Emrath & Taylor, 2012, Table 3, Resource Trajectory).

Scholarly alliances and data

Interdisciplinary funding initiatives with governmental and philanthropic organizations, and scholarly alliances, may allow greater access to scarcity-relevant data sources and methods that are often overlooked or that seem out of reach for consumer psychology scholars. Consider the United Nations Development Program. This unit collects annual data on a vast number of consumer resources shaped by gender and racial inequality—impacting access, availability, shock, and slack—that influence healthcare delivery, education, and job options, and resources to purchase adequate clothing, food, and shelter (UNDP, 2020). Another example is the World Values Survey, which offers a comprehensive examination of the human condition across cultures, value systems, political climates, and other dimensions related to consumption and economic systems. These data have been used to explore consumption adequacy and identify, for example, how psychological variables operate differently across socioeconomic strata (Martin & Hill, 2012).

Scholars may also seek to uncover novel data that can be mined using multiple methods. For instance, as affordable smartphones proliferate globally, data may capture several previously unobserved behaviors (e.g., app usage, location, spending), implicit expressions within vocal or visual manifestations (e.g., voice changes, facial data; Su

et al., 2020), along with explicit messages from impoverished consumers (e.g., text analysis of social media; see Berger et al., 2020) that offer large-scale, quantifiable insights on how diverse populations respond to scarcity. Research teams with divergent perspectives can analyze such new data and fill important gaps.

Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) provides intellectual support for bridging resource scarcity and poverty. Many of its contributions focus on gathering diverse scholars to study different forms and levels of marketplace vulnerability (Hill & Sharma, 2020). For example, gender, race, education, and other factors come together in complex ways that require researchers to look for multidisciplinary theories and methods that provide holistic explanations. While this movement has much to offer, advances may come from an array of theory domains, like resource scarcity, to fuel empirical work with more sophistication and impact (Ozanne & Davis, 2019).

Reimagining scarcity definitions

As suggested by Mullainathan and Shafir (2013), scholars involved in resource scarcity and poverty research can advance new insight by reassessing the lexicon in these domains toward more accurately reflecting the richness and diversity of perspectives. Consider the construct "maladaptive" that is often used to describe behaviors that stem from and exacerbate scarcity. However, this term overlooks the idiosyncratic nature of resource scarcity (Hagerty & Barasz, 2020). Some coping strategies deemed as maladaptive behavior by researchers studying incidental scarcity (e.g., poorer consumers paying more for products offered in their neighborhood) could—using a broader lens—be perceived as normal, appropriate, and even optimal given a person's lower consumption adequacy within a lens of episodic or chronic scarcity (e.g., due to heightened expectations of SES-based discrimination in outgroup settings; Jacob et al., 2022). Moreover, some psychological principles are ill-suited for high scarcity intensity and duration and may hide potential positive aspects of scarcity (e.g., when scarcity coping fosters resilience). Thus, similar to research that highlights judgments about low-income consumers (Hagerty & Barasz, 2020; Olson et al., 2016), researchers should probe existing scholarly assumptions about consumer scarcity experiences, especially in cases of low consumption adequacy (e.g., Jacob et al., 2022; Whillans & West, 2022).

Participants as research collaborators

Perhaps the most effective way to generate broader scarcity definitions and understanding is by engaging research participants, especially ones experiencing episodic and chronic scarcity, as collaborators and stakeholders in the development of interventions and throughout the entire research process (Hutton & Heath, 2020). Doing so can facilitate trust, potential insights, and impact in the form of pragmatic solutions and their buy-in for coping with scarcity. Although this approach is uncommon in some research domains, it reflects a ripe opportunity for collaboration across diverse scholarly teams using action-oriented research methods (Ozanne et al., 2022). One goal for integrative scarcity research is planning and executing interventions capable of meaningful changes for participants. Thus, reevaluating interventions in these domains to consider the form of scarcity experienced, and its enduring effects (e.g., brain development; Chan et al., 2018, Troller-Renfree et al., 2022), may facilitate greater impact. Case in point, assumptions and associated interventions (e.g., promoting financial literacy or access to financial resources when resource scarcity is below adequacy) may be viewed as irrelevant in certain contexts where such resources are often nonexistent (Whillans & West, 2022).

For policy and practice: new interventions leveraging consumer trajectories

Micro and macro-level policy

Bridging resource scarcity and poverty research may also generate insights for public policy and practice. Policymakers can first benefit from understanding when and how the effects of scarcity converge or diverge when experienced under different forms (i.e., incidental, conditional, episodic, and chronic). For instance, lower (higher) social class consumers tend to be more interdependent (independent; Carey & Markus, 2016), which can impact the effectiveness of "blanket" policies implemented for consumers from diverse backgrounds. For example, first-generation (vs. continuing-generation) college students often experience a cultural mismatch between the independence of college settings (e.g., individual assessments; Dittmann et al., 2020) and their interdependent background, which negatively impacts their educational attainment throughout their studies (Phillips et al., 2020). Policymakers can further benefit from understanding the interplay of resource availability and access at various levels of consumption adequacy. In a recent example, vaccine distribution and vaccination rates varied widely within cities, states, and countries during the pandemic, and this reality uncovered stark distinctions along consumption adequacy lines. What started as a lack of resource availability problem quickly became a lack of resource access one, and this lack of access has taken different forms (e.g., hard-to-reach vaccination centers, vaccination hours incompatible with rigid work schedules, or lack of childcare) for which solutions widely differed. Public policy can also be guided by a more refined understanding of resource

trajectories along with emerging data and methods. For example, resource trajectories help highlight consumer resource edges (often called policy cliffs), where consumers experiencing episodic scarcity must navigate the complexity of fluctuating resources that are dramatically shaped by even small differences, and policies that could help mitigate the enduring effects of resource deficiencies (e.g., cash transfer to low-income families to help improve infant brain development; Troller-Renfree et al., 2022).

At the global level, organizations such as the United Nations are driven by the desire to reduce scarcity that proliferates because of societal inequities, using goals inherent to our focus on consumption adequacy and trajectories (United Nations, 2016). However, resource availability and access are often subject to donor nations' political leanings (Berges, 2017). This mixture of political motivations can join forces with the larger business community to form public–private partnerships that seek tangible and positive immediate and future impacts for those facing resource scarcity, poverty, and their synergistic effects. To contribute to these complex dilemmas of scarcity around the world, we propose interdisciplinary policies, fueled by creative resource scarcity research, that motivate organizations to adopt policies with a broader spectrum of stakeholders. This work should recognize the importance of leveling the playing field through access to education and developing communication technologies that support positive resource trajectories. Of course, many consumers will not be able to take advantage of such opportunities, requiring interested parties, including governments, to provide a baseline of support for all.

Scaling marketplace interventions

In addition to policy implications (Nardini et al., 2022), business organizations and their leaders have an essential role in addressing resource scarcity. From an internal marketing perspective, large retailers, logistics operations, and hospitality organizations should better understand the daily realities of their frontline employees and create policies to address resource fluctuations they face and gain greater insight into work performance instabilities (Kaur et al., 2021). When shocks arise and trigger employee vulnerability, organizations are in a unique position to provide resource slack. For instance, investing in affordable housing near workplaces, facilitating transportation, providing affordable childcare, and developing flexible scheduling and emergency employee assistance programs in times of hardship can drastically alleviate resource shocks. Such initiatives may contribute to a less worried, healthier, and more focused workforce and an empathetic workplace with lower employee turnover—issues that lie at the core of high levels of resignations during the COVID-19 pandemic. As one example, back in 2015, the CEO of a credit card processing company raised the firm's minimum salary to $70,000 for its 120 employees such that, 6 years later in 2021, not only were there observed social benefits for employees (e.g., significant increases in first-time homeowners and decreases in personal debt), but the firm's revenue and attractiveness as an employer rose dramatically (Tayeb, 2021).

In terms of product and service designs, marketers could broaden their influence on scarcity by incorporating flexibility into offerings. For instance, credit card companies can, based on spending and payment patterns, identify when a customer's credit card payment delinquencies are due to temporary resource shocks beyond their control (e.g., layoffs and sickness). Instead of penalizing customers by charging the same or higher interest rates, which increases the chance of default and reduces credit scores that can trigger a downward resource trajectory, firms could develop flexible payment plans and suspend interest rate hikes and penalties in emergency situations. These empathetic practices are socially responsible and make good business sense—they can result in an increased likelihood of eventual full repayment and could engender long-term customer loyalty. Conversely, while businesses (e.g., Swedish firm Klarna; Lunn, 2018) have offered solutions to increase access to products when consumers lack immediate funds, more insight is needed to recognize when such solutions help provide resource slack and increase short-term consumption adequacy versus inadequacy.

Closing remarks

The grand challenges associated with widening resource inequalities that are being accelerated by economic and social crises and producing widespread concerns for mental health indicate an urgent need for integrating perspectives across resource scarcity and poverty. To advance this agenda, we probe diverse boundaries, common goals, and ambiguities across these domains. By overlaying the dimension of scarcity intensity, as informed by the reference point of consumption adequacy, with scarcity duration, our analysis generates clarity and converging pathways for correspondence between the empirical advances in resource scarcity research and the realities of chronic and extreme scarcity depicted within poverty. We hope that our conceptual bridging stimulates a broad range of options to accelerate progress toward transformative theoretical frameworks that realistically and comprehensively explain the contingent nature of resource scarcity for lives marked by impoverishment, eventually supporting the development of robust, innovative, and enduring interventions.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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