

## **Emerging Issues in Marketing**

### **Definition (short):**

Emerging Issues in Marketing research examines how marketing evolves as technological innovation, institutional change, and geopolitical and societal forces reshape the conditions surrounding markets. It focuses on how firms, consumers, and market systems adapt when the context of exchange is increasingly dynamic, uncertain, and contested. This includes, for example, emerging contexts such as immersive environments (e.g., VR/AR), evolving data and privacy regimes, and sustainability-related challenges.

### **Sub-Research Track: Market Environments & Business Models**

#### **Definition (short):**

This subtrack looks at how technologies and changing market structures are shaping where and how marketing happens. Topics include immersive environment technologies such as VR, AR, new platform models such as creator economies, and how these changes affect competition, consumer decisions and behaviors, and the way value gets divided between brands, platforms, and consumers.

#### **Definition (long):**

This subtrack examines how emerging technologies and new forms of intermediation reshape where and how marketing takes place, and how firms create and capture value.

Research in this area investigates marketing in evolving contexts of exchange, including immersive and hybrid environments (e.g., virtual and augmented reality) and new interaction modalities such as voice interfaces, ambient computing, and wearable technologies. These developments change how consumers discover and engage with products, leading to fragmented attention, non-linear consumer journeys, and new forms of digital identity, self-presentation, and avatar-based interaction. Recent advances in AI—such as large language models and generative systems—further accelerate these shifts by enabling new interfaces, content generation, and modes of interaction, while raising questions about how consumers navigate increasingly mediated environments. These shifts also raise fundamental consumer agency - that is, how much control people feel they have over their search, choice, data, and experience, as environments become more immersive and algorithmically shaped.

The field also examines how these technological changes are accompanied by new market structures and monetization models. This includes the design and governance of platform-based ecosystems (e.g., marketplaces, retail media, and intermediaries), as well as emerging models such as subscriptions, creator-driven economies, and decentralized or tokenized systems.

Research in this area studies how these structures shape competition, pricing, targeting, and the

allocation of value across firms, platforms, and consumers. One open question is who ultimately benefits from these new structures and how the gains are distributed, broadly or concentrated among a few dominant platforms.

### **Sub-Research Track: Institutions, Regulation & Societal Forces**

#### **Definition (short):**

This subtrack looks at how changing laws, regulations, and broader societal forces affect marketing decisions and consumer welfare. Topics include consumer and data privacy, antitrust scrutiny of platforms, sustainability and climate related pressures, and rising social and political polarization, and in response, how firms and consumers react to these changes.

#### **Definition (long):**

This subtrack examines how evolving legal frameworks, geopolitical dynamics, and societal pressures reshape marketing decisions, market outcomes, and consumer welfare. More broadly, it focuses on marketing in environments characterized by institutional change, uncertainty, and contested norms, where both the constraints and expectations governing market behavior are in flux.

Research in this area investigates how marketing operates under changing and often fragmented rules of the game. This includes shifts in data privacy and ownership, the transition to post-cookie measurement, and increasing regulatory scrutiny of platforms through antitrust and governance interventions. As markets become more regionally differentiated, firms must adapt strategies to heterogeneous regulatory environments, while rethinking how to measure effectiveness, target consumers, and allocate resources under growing constraints. These pressures are further complicated by geopolitical tensions, for example, cross-boarder data restrictions.

The field also examines how broader societal forces—such as climate change, sustainability concerns, and rising social and political polarization—shape both firm behavior and consumer responses. These forces introduce new forms of risk and accountability, raising questions about credibility, signaling, and long-term resilience. At the same time, the increasing mediation of interactions through digital platforms amplifies issues of trust, misinformation, and perceived fairness, influencing how consumers form beliefs, engage with markets, and respond to marketing actions, as well as how identities and communities evolve in digital ecosystems.