What Exactly Is Marketing and Public Policy? Insights for JPPM Researchers

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Authors
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Abstract
In this article for the 40th Anniversary of the Journal of Public Policy & Marketing (JPPM), the authors first share what is meant by “policy,” “public policy,” and “marketing and public policy” for researchers in our field. The authors then offer examples of JPPM research informing policy across different stages of the policy-making process: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation. They also discuss important sources of public policy (e.g., federal, state, and international agencies; self-regulation; the courts; nonprofits; society; industry standards; company policies; personal ethics) and their role in the marketing and public policy process. The authors then offer JPPM application examples (consumer protection; antitrust/competition; vulnerability; diversity, equity, and inclusion; nutrition labeling; addiction, cannabis, and antidrug research; tobacco warning labeling and education; and privacy and technology) and share ideas for developing research that contributes to the marketing and public policy discipline and in making a positive difference in society and people’s lives.

Keywords
marketing and public policy, policy process, research contributions

Beginning marketing scholars, researchers in related disciplines, and those submitting to the Journal of Public Policy & Marketing (JPPM) for the first time may express a strong interest in contributing to the marketing and public policy field, yet may wonder:

“What exactly is marketing and public policy?”
“How do I get involved and make a useful contribution?
“How does my research fit in?”

There are many reasons for these questions, including perhaps a desire to right a wrong, to protect consumers, and/or to address general frustrations with society or market limitations. Perhaps it is due to getting a “taste” of the interesting topics and sessions at the annual American Marketing Association (AMA) Marketing and Public Policy Conference (MPPC) yet lacking an in-depth study of the field in doctoral programs. Or perhaps these issues have been studied, but from a related but different discipline (e.g., public health, communications, technology, economics, consumer psychology, philosophy, law). Without specific knowledge or immersion in marketing and public policy, it is tempting to simply include a generic nod in a manuscript to implications for unnamed “public policy makers” and ship it off to JPPM.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to share what we feel is meant by “policy,” “public policy,” and “marketing and public policy” for those interested in our field. These policy areas will be expanded and applied specifically to how JPPM promotes well-being on the individual, societal, and environmental levels. In doing so, we offer examples of JPPM research informing policy across different stages of the policy-making process: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation.

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formulation, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation (e.g., The Texas Politics Project 2020). We also discuss important sources of public policy (e.g., federal, state, and international agencies; self-regulation; the courts; nonprofits; society; industry standards; company policies; personal ethics) and their role in the marketing and public policy process. We then offer JPPM application examples (consumer protection; antitrust/competition; vulnerability; diversity, equity, and inclusion; nutrition labeling; addiction, cannabis, and antidrug research; tobacco warning labeling and education; and privacy and technology) and share ideas for developing research that contributes to the marketing and public policy discipline.

Policy, Public Policy, and Marketing and Public Policy

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “policy” as “a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.” This deliberate course of action or set of principles helps guide decisions and achieve intended outcomes. In turn, “public policy” can be defined as a public course of action created and/or enacted, typically (but not always) by a government, in response to a problem in society (Rinfret, Scheberie, and Pautz 2018). Although many sources of public policy exist, a major aspect of public policy is the system of laws, regulatory measures, and enforcement actions developed to address societal issues (Kilpatrick 2000). As Figure 1 shows, the public policy process is a multistaged and cyclical one, including informing one or more of the following policy stages (The Texas Politics Project 2020; see also Anderson 2014; Knill and Tosun 2020): (1) problem identification (the problem is defined based on influential opinions expressing dissatisfaction with the status quo or policy), (2) agenda setting (crafting policy alternatives to compete for space on congressional, agency, and organizational agendas), (3) policy formulation (policy developed to address the problem and to be authorized), (4) budgeting (appropriations which can be based on cost–benefit analysis to determine how much to spend on the policy), (5) implementation (agencies

Figure 1. The public policy process.
Notes: Adapted from The Texas Politics Project (2020).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Agency/Policy Institution</th>
<th>Primary Goal of the Agency/Institution</th>
<th>Article(s) in <em>JPPM</em></th>
<th>Authors (Publication Date)</th>
<th>Primary Stage(s) in the Public Policy Process</th>
<th>How the Article Helped Inform Policy and Key Takeaways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBB National Programs’ Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU)</td>
<td>CARU helps companies comply with laws and guidelines that protect children from deceptive or inappropriate advertising and ensure that, in an online environment, children’s data are collected and handled responsibly.</td>
<td>“An Evaluation of the Children’s Advertising Review Unit”</td>
<td>Armstrong (1984)</td>
<td>Problem identification and evaluation</td>
<td>This article evaluates CARU’s purpose and performance with an analysis of CARU case summaries. The recommendation is that CARU focus its efforts on policy development somewhat more than on enforcement to be more consistent with its limited resources and industry orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC Bureau of Consumer Protection (BCP)</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Strategic Planning at the FTC”</td>
<td>Murphy (1984)</td>
<td>Problem identification, agenda setting, and policy formulation</td>
<td>This article discusses the use of strategic planning by the BCP’s planning office. The historical use of planning by the agency, this office’s activities, problems in implementing the planning effort, and the appropriateness of strategic planning in government are examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Affirmative Disclosure at the FTC: Objectives for the Remedy and Outcomes of Past Orders”</td>
<td>Wilkie (1985)</td>
<td>Agenda setting, policy formulation, and implementation</td>
<td>The article presents alternative types of objectives as a continuum for FTC affirmative disclosure orders. The framework is based on an extensive study of FTC orders and helped with the evaluation of outcomes of FTC orders relative to its objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)</td>
<td>Ensures that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States</td>
<td>“Risk Disclosures in Televised Prescription Drug Advertising to Consumers”</td>
<td>Morris et al. (1989)</td>
<td>Problem identification and evaluation</td>
<td>Results of an experimental study indicated a trade-off in risk/benefit communications. Risk disclosures that produced greater risk awareness and knowledge also reduced promotional message awareness and knowledge. These trade-offs are important in FDA/CDER oversight of risk disclosures in televised prescription drug advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Public Policy Issues in Health Claims for Foods”</td>
<td>Calfee and Pappalardo (1991)</td>
<td>Agenda setting, policy formulation, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation</td>
<td>The article reviewed the usage of health claims (e.g., linking dietary nutrients with effects on disease) in terms of relevant economic theory (e.g., economics of information), cost–benefit analysis, and empirical evidence, with suggestions on future regulation being offered.</td>
</tr>
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<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Health Claims in Food Marketing: Evidence on Knowledge and Behavior in the Cereal Market”</td>
<td>Ippolito and Mathios (1991)</td>
<td>Policy formulation and evaluation</td>
<td>This study examines the ready-to-eat cereal market during a period in which producers were initially prohibited from advertising cereals’ health benefits but were later permitted to make health claims. Results indicate that producer health claims led to significant increases in consumer knowledge of the fiber–cancer benefits.</td>
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<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Effects of Alternative Nutrition Label Formats and Nutrition Reference Information on Consumer Perceptions, Comprehension, and Evaluations”</td>
<td>Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer (1994)</td>
<td>Implementation and evaluation decisions</td>
<td>Helped inform the CFSAN/FDA about nutrition labeling format effects across levels of consumers’ nutrition knowledge and target product nutrition value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S FTC BCP; FDA Risk Communication Advisory Committee (RCAC); and global agencies using warnings</td>
<td>FTC: Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace; FDA: Implementation of FSPTCA, RCAC.</td>
<td>“Intended and Unintended Consequences of Warning Messages: A Review and Synthesis of Empirical Research”</td>
<td>Stewart and Martin (1994)</td>
<td>Problem identification and evaluation</td>
<td>This review concludes that warnings inform rather than persuade consumers and consumers selectively attend to warning messages. They also examine research on potential warning message ineffectiveness due to frequent use, different consumer segments, and on possible reactive behavior induced by warning messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Advertising Research Issues from FTC Versus Stouffer Foods Corporation”</td>
<td>Andrews and Maronick (1995)</td>
<td>Implementation and evaluation</td>
<td>The authors review trade-offs for six copy testing and ad interpretation issues from the Stouffer Foods case: relative versus absolute claims, multiple claims, control ad groups, control questions, and disclosure information. The trade-offs are helpful to those conducting ad copy test research on FTC cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Labor</td>
<td>Review of agency decisions or on appeal of matters arising under a wide range of employee protection laws.</td>
<td>“The Americans with Disabilities Act: A Mandate for Marketers”</td>
<td>Stephens and Bergman (1995)</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>The authors provide five guidelines for marketing to consumers with disabilities from the ADA. The purpose of the guidelines is to help marketers conform to the spirit of the ADA and to enhance the efficacy of their marketing programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Deception, Materiality, and Survey Research: Some Lessons from Kraft”</td>
<td>Stewart (1995)</td>
<td>Evaluation and problem identification</td>
<td>The rationale for the design of the FTC research on the Kraft case is reviewed, as well as the materiality survey by Kraft. General issues related to the use of survey research in litigation is raised and the need for standards for extrinsic research in cases involving implied claims.</td>
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<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Can Consumers Interpret Nutrition Information in the Presence of a Health Claim? A Laboratory Investigation”</td>
<td>Ford et al. (1996)</td>
<td>Policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation</td>
<td>The authors report the results of an experiment that investigates whether consumers can evaluate nutrition information in the presence of a health claim. Results show that both health claims and nutrition information independently influence beliefs about product healthfulness.</td>
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<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Performance Characteristics of Seven Nutrition Label Formats”</td>
<td>Levy, Fein, and Schucker (1996)</td>
<td>Agenda setting, implementation and evaluation decisions</td>
<td>Implications of findings for the FDA policy on limiting health claims are provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senate, U.S. FTC Bureau of Competition, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives</td>
<td>U.S. Senate: Takes action on bills, resolutions, amendments, etc. by voting; holds hearings; Bureau of Competition: Enforces the U.S. antitrust and competition laws, which form the foundation of a free market economy.</td>
<td>“Slotting Allowances and the Retail Sale of Alcohol Beverages”</td>
<td>Gundlach and Bloom (1998)</td>
<td>Problem identification, agenda setting, and policy formulation</td>
<td>The authors examine the decision by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to prohibit slotting allowances in the retail sale of alcohol beverages. The findings were combined with analysis from other works on slotting fees by the authors, and testimony was made before the U.S. Senate Small Business Committee in 1999 for future policy on slotting fees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA CDER</td>
<td>Ensures that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States.</td>
<td>“How Super Are Video Supers? A Test of Communication Efficacy”</td>
<td>Murray et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>In a sample with over 200 commercials with supers, the authors analyze structural determinants of video super comprehension (e.g., presence of a voiceover, rate of presentation, presentation size). Results suggest that viewer opportunity to process information in a video super is a critical element in any strategy to increase viewer comprehension rates.</td>
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<td>United Nations</td>
<td>To protect human rights and the larger ecology.</td>
<td>“Global Poverty and the United Nations”</td>
<td>Hill and Adrangi (1999)</td>
<td>Evaluation and problem identification</td>
<td>Through the use of the human development index, United Nations data show that a significant percentage of the world’s people are income poor, die prematurely, and lack access to formal education. Suggestions for research with data focusing on poverty measurement and poverty reduction are offered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“The Impact of Health Claims in Consumer Search and Product Evaluation Outcomes: Results from FDA Experimental Data”</td>
<td>Roe et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Problem identification, implementation, and evaluation</td>
<td>Results from FDA experimental study data suggest that the presence of health and nutrient-content claims on food packages induces respondents to truncate information search to the front panel of packages. A claim also is associated with a halo effect (rating the product higher on other health attributes not mentioned in the claim) and, for</td>
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<td>U.S. FTC BCP</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“FTC v. Novartis: The Return of Corrective Advertising”</td>
<td>Mazis (2001)</td>
<td>Evaluation and problem identification</td>
<td>one of the three products tested, a magic-bullet effect (attributing inappropriate health benefits to the product). The FTC v. Novartis (“Doan’s Pills”) corrective ad case is reviewed for consumer research needed on deception assessment, materiality analysis, belief measurement, ad–belief linkage, lingering effects estimation, and remedy calibration. A review of the case evidence suggests that its weak remedy is likely to fall far short of correcting consumer misbeliefs about Doan’s, and the article considers possible future FTC remedies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA Center for Tobacco Products (CTP), court cases</td>
<td>Oversees the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, including performance standards, applications, warning labels, and advertising and promotion.</td>
<td>“Meta-Analyses of the Effectiveness of Warning Labels”</td>
<td>Argo and Main (2004)</td>
<td>Implementation and evaluation</td>
<td>The authors use a series of meta-analyses to demonstrate the impact of warning labels across five dimensions of effectiveness: attention, reading and comprehension, recall, judgments, and behavioral compliance. Warnings are found to influence behavior, with both the cost of compliance and the familiarity moderating behavior. Meta-analyses of warning effects are helpful to agency staff in providing generalizations across studies and for different moderating conditions.</td>
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<td>U.S. FTC BCP, FDA CDER and RCAC</td>
<td>FTC: Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace; FDA (CDER): Ensures that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States.</td>
<td>“Adherence of Prime-Time Televised Advertising Disclosures to the ‘Clear and Conspicuous’ Standard: 1990 Versus 2002”</td>
<td>Hoy and Andrews (2004)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>In the evaluation of over 660 televised ad disclosures for the FTC’s “clear and conspicuous” standard, the authors find a significant increase in disclosure incidence compared with 12 years earlier; however, adherence declined or remained unchanged for most individual guidelines. This helped both the FTC and FDA’s RCAC gauge the effectiveness of ad disclosures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP and courts</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“The Impact of the Daubert Decision on Survey Research Used in Litigation”</td>
<td>Ford (2005)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>This review helped inform the FTC and researchers about the criteria from the Daubert Supreme Court decision used to determine the admissibility of expert survey reports as evidence in court cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S FTC BCP</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“A Longitudinal Assessment of Online Privacy Notice Readability”</td>
<td>Milne, Culnan, (2005)</td>
<td>Problem identification and evaluation</td>
<td>This study evaluated the readability of a set of 312 online privacy notices across two periods and</td>
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<td>U.S. FTC BCP, BBB National Programs’ National Advertising Division, and court cases</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Covert Marketing Unmasked: A Legal and Regulatory Guide for Practices that Mask Marketing Messages”</td>
<td>Petty and Andrews (2008)</td>
<td>Problem identification, implementation, and evaluation</td>
<td>The article presents a typology of masked marketing practices, illustrating whether they may be deceptive to consumers. To accomplish this, the authors apply the FTC’s three-part definition of deception (i.e., misleadingness, reasonable consumer, and materiality). Implications for future FTC and National Advertising Division cases are provided.</td>
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<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Is Simpler Always Better? Consumer Evaluations of Front-of-Package Nutrition Symbols”</td>
<td>Andrews, Burton, and Kees (2011)</td>
<td>Implementation and evaluation</td>
<td>The authors predict and find that the Smart Choices front-of-package (FOP) icon leads to positive (and potentially misleading) nutrient evaluations and product healthfulness when compared with the Traffic Light-GDA icon or no-FOP icon control. When the Facts Panel is not present, the Traffic Light-GDA icon results in greater nutrition accuracy scores than with the Smart Choices icon or control.</td>
</tr>
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<td>U.S. FTC BCP, FDA CDER</td>
<td>FTC: Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive or fraudulent practices in the marketplace; FDA (CDER): Ensures that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States.</td>
<td>“Deception by Implication: A Typology of Truthful but Misleading Advertising and Labeling Claims”</td>
<td>Hastak and Mazis (2011)</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>The authors develop a new typology of truthful but misleading advertising and labeling claims (e.g., omission of material facts, inter- and intra-attribute misleadingness). This typology helped FTC staff in the identification of deceptive practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FDA CFSAN</td>
<td>Promotes and protects the public’s health by ensuring that the nation’s food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.</td>
<td>“Hold the Salt! Effects of Sodium Information Provision, Sodium Content, and Hypertension on Perceived Cardiovascular Disease Risk and Purchase Intentions”</td>
<td>Howlett et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Three studies indicate that hypertension status has a significant effect on attention to sodium on the Nutrition Facts Panel (Study 1) and moderates the influence of sodium disclosure on perceived cardiovascular disease risk and purchase intentions for restaurant items (Study 2). In addition, sodium level on a Nutrition Facts Panel interacts with the provision of health-related sodium educational materials to influence disease risk perceptions and purchase intentions.</td>
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<td>U.S. FDA CDER</td>
<td>Ensures that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States</td>
<td>“An Empirical Examination of the FDAAA-Mandated Toll-Free Statement for Consumer Reporting of Side Effects in Direct-to-Consumer Television Advertisements”</td>
<td>Aikin et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>(Study 3). These experiments were helpful to CFSAN staff given the limited data on consumer sodium perceptions. Results suggest that a toll-free statement can be added to direct-to-consumer television advertisements without significantly affecting risk and benefit comprehension and that certain presentations (text and audio) are preferable for communicating the statement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP, California State Senate</td>
<td>Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace.</td>
<td>“Surrendering Information Through the Looking Glass: Transparency, Trust, and Protection,”</td>
<td>Walker (2016)</td>
<td>Problem identification, agenda setting, and implementation</td>
<td>The author presents a sharing–surrendering information matrix, clarifying the difference between surrendering versus sharing information online. Based on the matrix, current efforts to protect privacy and security (e.g., enhancing trust and transparency) are suggested not to be effective in the digital age. The article is on the FTC’s public record and was presented to the California State Senate prior to the “California Consumer Privacy Act” legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. FTC BCP, CARU</td>
<td>FTC: Protects consumers by stopping unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices in the marketplace; CARU: Helps companies comply with laws and guidelines that protect children from deceptive or inappropriate advertising and ensure that children’s online data are collected and handled responsibly.</td>
<td>“Children and Online Privacy Protection: Empowerment from Cognitive Defense Strategies”</td>
<td>Andrews, Walker, and Kees (2020)</td>
<td>Problem identification, implementation, and evaluation</td>
<td>Different types of cognitive defense strategies are examined to encourage children/teens to limit access to their private information online and to restrict what they share on social media and video sites. Significant effects are found for a quiz with feedback and an educational video over the absence of a strategy in enhancing favorable online safety beliefs and in restricting online sharing. The research was presented at the 2019 FTC Privacy Conference and at the 2019 MPPC for CARU staff. This article should help with future COPPA revisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: While the agencies listed generally are ones within the U.S. government, many of the articles also have implications for global agencies and/or nongovernmental organizations. The JPPM articles referenced in this table serve just as examples with input from agency staff, as the table is not meant to be comprehensive in nature over JPPM’s 40-year period. The authors appreciate input from long-time federal agency staff members Kit Aikin (FDA CDER), Manoj Hastak (FTC BCP), Jan Pappalardo (FTC Bureau of Economics), and David Portnoy (FDA Center for Tobacco Products) in helping identify influential articles published in JPPM.
and organizations can carry out the policy via rules and regulations, providing services and products, interventions, public education campaigns, warnings and labeling, consumer redress, etc., and (6) evaluation (policy review internally and by outside evaluators, such as researchers, interest groups, and media). Such evaluations often trigger further identification of problems and a subsequent round of agenda setting and policy development. Table 1 includes examples of JPPM articles suggested by long-term, federal agency staff (e.g., FTC, FDA) that have informed one (or more) of these policy stages. Stages 1 (problem identification), 3 (policy formulation), and especially 5 (implementation) and 6 (evaluation) traditionally have been the stages receiving the greatest direct and indirect contributions from marketing and public policy researchers over the years (see Andrews 2001).

An alternative perspective is that JPPM articles can address and inform one or more of the following general facets of public policy: problems, processes, policies, procedures, and/or protocols (Stewart 2014). Thus, marketing and public policy research has served to describe problems (e.g., addiction, poor nutrition, pandemics, poverty, mental health, student debt, unfair business practices), processes (e.g., changes in laws or society such as stricter online privacy regulations or legalization of cannabis), policies (e.g., prevention of unfair business practices, environmental marketing guides), procedures (e.g., different deceptive ad copy testing methods, frameworks for forensic analysis or judicial reasoning), and/or protocols (rules or standards; e.g., Food & Drug Administration [FDA] prescription drug/vaccine approval, Department of Justice [DOJ]/Federal Trade Commission [FTC] merger guidelines).

How marketing and related disciplines can help address these policy stages and facets is an important aspect of JPPM contributions. A sample of general questions to “jump start” the study of public policy might include the following:

- What types of marketing problems in society justify the development of public policy (e.g., interventions by federal, state, and nonprofit agencies)?
- How might public policy be designed to identify and address such problems, societal concerns, and support principles of social justice?
- How can marketing research positively inform public policy? Are there gaps in the knowledge of consumer and/or market behavior that might be studied? How can research contribute to problem identification, agenda setting (e.g., policy alternatives), policy formulation, budgeting (e.g., cost–benefit analysis), implementation, and evaluation stages?
- What kinds of policy changes or reforms might promote the goals of society (e.g., economic efficiency, free exchange, fairness)? What changes or reforms might improve the policy and better address the problem?

In AMA “Meet the Editors” sessions over the years, JPPM editors have noted that marketing and public policy traditionally represents one of four areas: (1) effects of public policy on firms’ marketing practices (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] and marketplace experiences; Baker, Stephens, and Hill 2001), (2) effects of public policy on consumers and society (e.g., Nutrition Labeling Education Act and consumer evaluation of nutritional labeling changes; Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer 1994; Levy, Fein, and Schucker 1996), (3) effects of marketing practices on public policy and society (e.g., ad copy testing principles for researchers in FTC deception cases; Andrews and Maronick 1995; Stewart 1995), and (4) the study of public policy per se with implications for marketing theory and/or practice (e.g., advertising law in the United States vs. the European Union; Petty 1997).

In addition, as encouraged by the editors and described by other scholars in the field, “marketing and public policy” refers to the broader relationships of “marketing and society” and “marketing and ethics,” yet with implications for specific parties and/or organizations studied (Mazis 2011; Wiener, Ellen, and Burton 2020). This includes the role of nongovernmental organizations (e.g., humanitarian organizations, advocacy groups, religious institutions, charities) in addressing problems of marketing and public policy, marketing and society, and marketing and ethics.

With this broader view in mind, recent and interesting areas of research include marketing and political activity (Korschun, Martin, and Vadakkepatt 2020), the role of technology in marketing and public policy (Walker, Milne, and Weinberg 2019), marketing and responses to natural disasters/pandemics (Baker 2009; Okazaki et al. 2015; Scott et al. 2020), marketing and sustainability (Iyer and Reczek 2017; Schwartz and Loewenstein 2017), the role of misinformation and trust in social media, and consumer well-being and wisdom (Mick et al. 2012). With such an expansion, it still is important for authors to tie their contributions to specific policy issues, parties, and governmental or nongovernmental organizations in the research. Such specifics, coupled with supportive evidence and objective findings, are always preferred over hypotheticals and generalities in moving toward a successful outcome for a JPPM submission.

An Overview of Marketing and Public Policy Issues and Research

At the federal level in the United States, Congress can pass laws that affect marketing communications, such as the 1998 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (FSPTCA), and the 1990 Nutrition Labeling Education Act (NLEA). In addition, antitrust laws address anticompetitive collusion, exclusion, mergers, and other conduct that unreasonably restrains trade (Cohen 1995; Gundlach 2001a, b). This includes issues such as price collusion and discrimination, refusals to deal, tying clauses, tech monopoly power, intellectual property, and so on. In the United States at the national level, the FTC is the primary regulatory agency of business investigating and preventing both unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices affecting commerce. The Commission’s
two primary missions are to protect competition and to protect consumers. The DOJ also shares responsibility of the protection of competition with the FTC. At the FTC, “policy” can come in the form of a trade regulation rule (against an entire industry, e.g., 1999 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Rule), an individual enforcement action (e.g., deceptive or unfair ad case), operating policy statement (e.g., COPPA applied to voice recordings in 2017; FTC/DOJ antitrust policy), or guideline (e.g., 1992 Environmental Marketing Guides or “Green Guides”). In turn, the FDA is the federal agency in charge of regulating package information and contents for food, drugs, biologics, medical devices, tobacco, and other products. At the FDA, regulatory policy and rulemaking procedures can come from U.S. law, Executive Orders and memoranda issued by the President, and the FDA’s own regulations. Some JPPM articles based on FDA policy and rules include Levy, Fein, and Schucker (1996), Kees et al. (2010), Berry, Burton, and Howlett (2017), Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer (1994), and Netemeyer et al. (2016). There are also exceptions to FTC and FDA coverage, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s oversight of meat and poultry, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and individual state actions (e.g., California Consumer Privacy Act). In addition, there are international agreements affecting marketing (e.g., Paris Climate Accord) as well as worldwide policy and regulations influencing health (e.g., World Health Organization), trade (e.g., World Trade Organization, “TRIPS”), regions (e.g., European Union, Mercosur) and individual countries (e.g., Canada’s Competition Bureau and Health Canada, China’s State Administration for Market Regulation). Arguably, international policy issues and actions have become more important than U.S. domestic ones recently, especially for generating research ideas in areas such as food labeling and tobacco regulation.

Of course, partners in many countries are self-regulatory agencies, such as the BBB National Programs’ National Advertising Division and Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) in the United States. Nonprofits can also play an important role in guiding marketing and public policy, including organizations fostering social entrepreneurship and public health campaign partnerships (e.g., “Truth,” “The Real Cost”; see Farrelly et al. 2017). At the company level, injunctive relief from false advertising or intellectual property violations is available through the federal courts via the Lanham Act (Cohen 1995). Finally, societal, ethical, and social justice issues play an important role in marketing and public policy, as highlighted in Henderson and Williams’s (2013) research on marketplace diversity and inclusion. Work on societal, ethical, and social justice also is supported by the Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) and Consumer Culture Theory fields as applied to policy (Bahl et al. 2016; Burroughs et al. 2013; Davis, Ozanne, and Hill 2016; Hein et al. 2016; Mick et al. 2012). For example, the TCR movement calls for strong and sustained research focused on quality-of-life issues about trends and activities of consumption worldwide, with the goal of assisting consumers and policy to positively affect consumer decisions and well-being. These dimensions include, but are not limited to, the scholarly study of vulnerable consumer groups (e.g., the poor, children and adolescents, the illiterate); tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse; nutrition and obesity; physical, psychological, and financial health decision making; product safety; environmental sustainability; and consumer welfare in general (Mick 2006; Mick et al. 2012).

For readers interested in a general overview of research on these marketing and public policy topics, we suggest comprehensive reviews of research categories and trends (Martin, Borah, and Scott 2021; Sprott and Miyazaki 2002), prior meta-analyses (Argo and Main 2004; Cox et al. 1997; Keller and Lehmann 2008; Purmehdi et al. 2017), general topic reviews (Andersson 2001; Bloom and Gundlach 2001; Gundlach, Block, and Wilkie 2007; Gundlach and Wilkie 1990; Petty 1992), in-depth specific reviews (e.g., advertising and public policy; Kees and Andrews 2019), front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition labels (Anders et al. 2014), tobacco warnings (Andrews, Choiniere, and Portnoy 2015), product warnings in general (Andrews 2011; Bettman, Payne, and Staelin 1986), general background on consumer protection issues (Andrews and Shimp 2018, Chapter 4), antitrust policy and law (Cohen 1995; Gundlach 2001a, b, 2002a, b), and/or social justice and ethical principles (Laczniak and Murphy 2012; Loureiro et al. 2016; Santos and Laczniak 2009). Important work on vulnerable consumers has appeared in JPPM, including research exploring how the visually impaired navigate the ADA (Baker, Stephens, and Hill 2001), global poverty issues (Hill and Adrangi 1999), institutionalization and consumer behavior (Cornwell and Gabel 1996), and juvenile delinquency consumption and reform programs (Ozanne, Hill, and Wright 1998). JPPM Policy Watch articles also offer helpful overviews of emerging areas and research needs that are useful to aspiring scholars interested in recent policy-relevant topics (e.g., policies and research on cannabis; Kees et al. 2020; Kelly et al. 2021).

Although there have been many key areas of note across 40 years of JPPM research contributions (see Martin, Borah, and Scott 2021), the following section highlights eight important applications areas: consumer protection; antitrust and competition policy; vulnerability research; diversity, equity, and inclusion research; nutrition labeling; addiction, cannabis, and antidrug research; tobacco warning labeling and education; and privacy and technology research. In doing so, we discuss a brief history and evolution of each area, including area concentrations, theoretical support, JPPM example articles, and future research directions.

**Application Area Examples**

**Consumer Protection**

Consumer protection policy in the form of regulatory and non-regulatory efforts is argued to be justified when the benefits (e.g., consumer choice, product quality improvements,
reduced prices) outweigh the costs (e.g., compliance, enforcement, unintended side effects) (Mazis et al. 1981). Since 1914, the FTC has been the primary regulatory body of business, with protection benefits for consumers (e.g., via regulation of deceptive or unfair acts and practices) first coming into play in 1938 with the Wheeler-Lea Amendment to the FTC Act. This also was the same year that the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act was passed, establishing quality standards by the FDA for food, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics manufactured in the United States (tobacco was added in 2009). Self-regulatory efforts for consumers began in 1971, with the National Advertising Division, National Advertising Review Board, and the Children’s Advertising Review Unit—with all these activities (and privacy) under the BBB National Programs today.

Since its beginning in 1982 under Editor Tom Kinnear, *JPPM* has served as an outlet for many important consumer protection research topics, such as FTC information remedies for deception and unfairness (Mazis and Staelin 1982; Wilkie 1982), including early work on Warner Lambert (“Listerine”) corrective advertising in attempting to remedy prior deceptive advertising (Armstrong, Gurol, and Russ 1983; Bernhardt, Kinnear, and Mazis 1986; Mazis, McNeill, and Bernhardt 1983; see also Wilkie, McNeil, and Mazis 1984). Such work laid the foundation for further research and guidelines on corrective ad cases, such as *Novartis* (Mazis 2001). In a broader sense, and based on information processing theory, a review of FTC remedies and outcomes by Wilkie (1985) reveals choices on a continuum from more cognitive information provision (e.g., posting danger signs, educational campaigns on safety) to the more behavioral (e.g., signing a liability release; restricting access). Finally, work on FTC ad copy testing guidelines on major deception cases has appeared in *JPPM* over the years (Andrews and Maronick [1995] for *Stouffer*; Stewart [1995] for *Kraft*; for a review, see Hastak and Mazis [2014]), as well as the criteria from the *Daubert* Supreme Court decision used to determine the admissibility of expert survey reports as evidence in court cases (Ford 2005).

Another area of important research contributions is that of warnings and disclosures, beginning with the most-cited article in *JPPM’s* first 20 years, Bettman, Payne, and Staelin’s (1986) “Cognitive Considerations in Designing Effective Labels for Presenting Risk Information” (see Sprott and Miyazaki 2002, p. 122). Other warnings and disclosures research in *JPPM* offers important meta-analyses of the field (Argo and Main 2004; Cox et al. 1997; Purmehdi et al. 2017; for a review, see also Andrews [2011]) and applications of the FTC’s “clear and conspicuous” standard for ad disclosures (Hoy and Andrews 2004). Warnings research in *JPPM* includes an examination of alcohol warning labels (e.g., Andrews, Netemeyer, and Durvasula 1990; Smith 1990) and graphicness levels for tobacco warning labels (Kees et al. 2010; Netemeyer et al. 2016) as well as identifying opportunities for research on tobacco health warnings and public education campaigns from the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products (Andrews, Choiniere, and Portnoy 2015). A related and important area in *JPPM* has offered analysis of consumer product safety, product liability, and duty to warn (Morgan 1987, 1989).

Motivated by FTC hearings in the 1970s, work on children’s advertising in *JPPM* includes an evaluation of CARU’s programs (Armstrong 1984) as well as important contributions in later issues (e.g., Armstrong and Brucks 1988; Desrochers and Holt 2007; Hoy, Young, and Mowen 1986; Martin 1997; Moore and Rideout 2007). Readers are encouraged to see work on children’s advertising and socialization in other outlets as well, such as Goldberg, Gorn, and Gibson (1978), Shimp, Dyer, and Divita (1976), John (1999), Macklin and Carlson (1999), and Brucks, Armstrong, and Goldberg (1988).

Nutrition information disclosure research has been one of the most consistent consumer protection topics in *JPPM* over the years, beginning with research on voluntary U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition information (Brucks, Mitchell, and Staehlin 1984; Levy et al. 1985), then to work with the NLEA (1990) and FDA’s Nutrition Facts Panels (Block and Peracchio 2006; Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer 1994; Howlett et al. 2012; Levy, Fein, and Schucker 1996; Moorman 1996), and extending to FOP labeling (Andrews, Burton, and Kees 2011, 2014). Health claims research with moderating conditions and disclosures (Calfee and Pappalardo 1991; Ford et al. 1996; Ippolito and Mathios 1991; Mitra et al. 1999; Roe, Levy, and Derby 1999) provided important information for policy decisions for the FDA’s Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition and the FTC.

Research on online privacy has long been a focus of *JPPM*, including an early special issue on privacy (Caudill and Murphy 2000; Culnan 2000; Milne 2000). With the passage of COPPA (1998), and subsequent revisions, *JPPM* has offered important theoretical (Walker 2016), survey (Fox and Hoy 2019), and experimental research on children’s online privacy (Andrews, Walker, and Kees 2020) and will continue to do so.

Thus, arguably, *JPPM* has been the leader across the entire marketing discipline for articles on remedies for deception and unfairness, warnings and disclosures, product safety/liability, nutritional labeling, health claims, children’s advertising, privacy, and many other consumer protection topics. Of 683 articles published in *JPPM’s* first 20 years, the protection of consumers was the leading research topic (Sprott and Miyazaki 2002), with societal issues gaining prominence following this period. The recent review by Martin, Borah, and Scott (2021) provides an update. In terms of Figure 1, most of the consumer protection articles have focused on problem identification (#1), implementation (#5), and evaluation (#6), yet some have addressed other stages, such as policy planning (#3) (Murphy 1984). It is likely that future consumer protection research will mirror new FTC division areas, such as privacy and technology, and include the following key topics: social media and misinformation; e-cigarettes, education and youth (Berry, Burton, and Howlett 2017; FDA’s “The Real Cost” Campaign); pandemics, vaccine information, and persuasion (see *JPPM*s COVID-19 commentaries in the January
sustainability/environmental marketing (Iyer and Reczek 2017); adolescent drug use, addiction, and mental health issues (Kelly, Swaim, and Wayman 1996); and student debt and financial literacy (Salisbury and Zhao 2020; Zhang, Wilcox, and Cheema 2020), among others. No doubt, *JPPM* research on all of these important consumer protection issues has contributed to public policy in making a difference in consumers’ lives.

**Antitrust and Competition Policy**

The intersection of marketing and competition policy and law (i.e., antitrust law) offers particular promise as an area for future research by marketing scholars. This important area of policy and law has historically derived its understanding from neoclassical economics and more recently from industrial organization. However, concerns that over time it has become “more theoretical than practical” (Lao 2010, p. 475) have led to calls for the intellectual foundations of competition policy and law to be updated to reflect much more of the reality of actual firm behavior based on the findings of contemporary research on business practice (Khan 2016) and that any “new thinking” from this research be incorporated into the development and application of the policy and law (Teitelman 2019, p. 1). Thus, research that augments extant understanding of business and marketing practices involving mergers, horizontal collaboration and collusion, vertical supply and distribution practices, and intellectual property and other areas of competition policy and law holds considerable potential as promising areas of research. In addition, research that aids in the application of competition policy and law to specific sectors of the economy shows considerable promise (e.g., technology, health care, agriculture). Examples of research in *JPPM* that builds on the intellectual foundations of economics and industrial organization to augment competition policy and law includes work that addresses the conceptual and theoretical foundations of antitrust (Gundlach 2001a, b; 2002a, b; Gundlach and Phillips 2002), resale price maintenance (Gundlach and Krotz 2020; Gundlach, Manning, and Cannon 2017), category management and captains (Desrochers, Gundlach, and Foer 2003), slotting allowances and practices (Gundlach and Bloom 1998; Wilkie, Desrochers, and Gundlach 2002), predatory pricing and practices (Dixit et al. 2006; Gundlach 1990, 1995), essential facilities (Gundlach and Bloom 1993), collaboration (Gundlach and Mohr 1992), and consumer welfare and efficiency (Gundlach 1996).

**Vulnerability Research**

Vulnerability research is an outgrowth of the origins of the Association for Consumer Research and its emphasis on people other than marketers. This work was spearheaded by such luminaries as Alan Andreasen (1975; also see 1993), who concentrated his attention on inner-city African Americans and racial discrimination in the marketplace. His leadership led to a host of studies and foci that included race, gender, physical disability, poverty, and subsistence markets. For example, Williams, Quails, and Grier (1995) studied exclusive real estate advertising and its potential impact on attitudes and behavioral intentions among African American buyers. Gender scholarship has examined several issues from a feminist approach, with Dobscha and Ozanne (2001) selecting the narrow but important “ecofeminism” path to understanding how some women negotiate their consumption environments. Physical disability research was, in part, an outgrowth of the ADA (see Mayer et al. 1995) and eventually homed in on considerations such as visual impairments (Kaufman-Scarborough and Childers 2009).

Poverty has also received substantial attention, and it is often cast (explicitly or implicitly) using an intersectionality lens (Corus et al. 2016). Some of the extant scholarship studied impoverishment at the global level (Hill and Adrangi 1999), while other investigations selected specific contexts (Chaplin, Hill, and John 2014). A significant research stream in *JPPM* has been developed from Madhu Viswanathan and his colleagues, with a concentration on subsistence marketplaces and the empowerment of women in India, Africa, and South America (e.g., Viswanathan et al. 2019). All of these articles are captured under the “vulnerability” conceptual frame that was brought together by Baker, Gentry, and Rittenberg (2005). Their perspective was a decidedly subjective one, placing the onus on consumers to determine if and when they are vulnerable. More recent theoretical development has broadened their approach to include judgments made by outside observers such as policy makers, and it centers on availability of and access to various resources that either allow an entrée to markets or indict the abundance of goods and services within those same markets (Hill and Sharma 2020).

Of course, there are many ways that this stream of research may continue to advance over the coming years. One way is to expand on the reasons why people are vulnerable, and gender identity is one possible path. As Gen Y and Gen Z make their way in the world, the idea of firm designations as to what constitutes “male” versus “female” may continue to be blurred. It clearly is a place where people with fluid or transgender identities are likely to face continuing and significant discrimination across multiple dimensions including the marketplace. In addition, the idea that vulnerability is particularly troublesome for consumers below what Martin and Hill (2012) refer to as “consumption adequacy” requires further study. If it is true that people who lack sufficient food and water, clothing that is suitable to climate and culture, adequate and safe shelter, access to remedial and preventative health care, and opportunities for education and job growth respond differently to marketers, it behooves public policy makers to recognize these differences and respond to crises in diverse ways.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Research**

The diversity, equity, and inclusion research had its origins with Sexton (1971, 1972), but its renewed emphasis starting in the 1990s and beyond was spearheaded by Jerome Williams and Gerri Henderson. These two dedicated scholars passed recently, and their loss will be felt for a generation or longer. One of their
most prominent articles was published in *JPPM’s Policy Watch* section (Harris, Henderson, and Williams 2005), and it explicitly examined racial or ethnic discrimination through court cases. In their development of a theoretical and practical frame for categorizing these market problems, their final call for additional research was widely answered. A special issue on these topics was published in 2013, and Henderson and Williams (2013) opened with a look at marketplace exclusion, especially for African Americans, in an attempt to increase perceptions of inclusion through adjustments of the 4Ps. Several excellent articles resulted, including Thomas (2013), who compared and contrasted Millennial White and Black men as they undergo identity work through their consumption behaviors.

More recent research continues this impressive scholarship, ever broadening the reach with both authors and topics. An award-winning article by Grier and Perry (2018) set the stage for a better understanding of how gentrification in urban areas reduces rather than improves diversity, resulting in tensions between long-term and newer residents that play out in the marketplace. Such work continues to pave the way for research in interdisciplinary domains such as critical race theory (Poole et al. 2021), investigating how oppression still occurs in exchange processes for people of color, and how scholars and policy makers can make substantive changes to reduce their negative consequences. Martin and Scott (2021) applaud these efforts, and they reinforce the long-standing tradition to publish articles that “make a difference.” Their call was answered in their special issue on the COVID-19 pandemic, and it further opened readers’ eyes to disparities that exist across race and ethnicity (see Crockett and Grier 2021). Their work makes clear that the effects were far-reaching, ultimately impacting survival among people of color.

One of the consistent concerns in this literature is the vast differences in the ways that people of different races experience discrimination in the marketplace. In their attempt to examine racial issues in the Obama-era “postracial” U.S. society, Bennett, Hill, and Daddario (2015) asked a sample of African Americans, Latinx Americans, Asian Americans, and Caucasians about their personal sense of marketplace equity. The three former groups all believed that serious areas of discrimination continued to exist, while the sole latter group believed the pendulum had moved too far in favor of minority consumers. These data predicted the rise of Trumpism and the backlash against equal rights that exists in the present time, as well as the attempts by the current Republican party to hold on to power by placating conspiracy theories and the violence of White nationalism. Looking at these societal tensions and determining how they are impacting access to resources in the marketplace are immediate considerations.

**Nutrition Labeling**

As noted previously, the U.S. FDA is the federal agency in charge of regulating package information and contents for food, drugs, biologics, medical devices, tobacco, and other products. At the FDA, regulatory policy and rulemaking procedures can come from U.S. law, Executive Orders and memoranda issued by the President, and the FDA’s own regulations.

For example, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) of 1990 was a law passed that helped address some weaknesses in nutrition labeling on packaging in the United States. The law provided the FDA with the authority to require packaged foods to include standardized nutrition labeling (i.e., Nutrition Facts Panels). It also required that all nutrient content claims (e.g., “high fiber,” “low sodium”) and health claims (e.g., “a diet low in total fat may reduce the risk of cancers”) were consistent with agency regulations based on public health evidence. Some *JPPM* articles served as sources of input into the final regulations established by the FDA for the marketplace (Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer 1994; Levy, Fein, and Schucker 1996), offered commentaries about the law (Pappalardo 1996; Silverglade 1996), and provided assessments related to changes emerging from the NLEA (Keller et al. 1997; Mitra et al. 1999; Moorman 1996). To communicate nutrition information more effectively, there has been substantial recent global interest in nutrition labeling and icons on the front of packaging (Andre, Chandon, and Haws 2019; Andrews, Burton, and Kees 2011; Elshiewy and Boztug 2018). Questions remain about the most effective means of providing FOP information formats using Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs), traffic lights, icons, and symbols, stop sign warnings, as well as other emerging formats and how effects of FOP labeling differ across moderators. Similarly, because obesity remains a global problem, there has been a focus on the 2010 law requiring inclusion of calorie information on chain restaurant menus in efforts to improve communication of nutrition information in the context of a daily diet (Berry et al. 2019; Breck et al. 2017; Burton, Biswas, and Netemeyer 2019). The CDC has estimated the

**Drug Addiction, Cannabis, and Antidrug Campaign Research**

Drug addiction has been defined as “a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking, continued use despite harmful consequences, and long-lasting changes in the brain” (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2018). It is considered both a medical and mental illness because of repeated misuse of a substance or substances. Drug addiction includes the abuse of substances ranging from alcohol and nicotine to both illicit and prescription drugs.

The personal and societal costs associated with drug abuse/addiction are staggering. It has been estimated that addiction to alcohol, nicotine, and illicit drugs costs the United States more than $740 billion a year in health care, crime, and lost productivity (Birnbaum et al. 2011). In 2019, drug overdoses killed over 70,000 people in the United States, while another 95,000 died from excessive alcohol use (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] 2021). The CDC has estimated the
economic cost of the U.S. opioid epidemic to be $1,021 billion, including cost of opioid use disorder estimated at $471 billion and cost of fatal opioid overdose estimated at $550 billion (Luo, Li, and Florence 2021). Given that other sections of this article are devoted to tobacco/nicotine research, the following will focus on antidrug advertising and media campaigns with respect to illicit and prescription drugs.

The large majority of studies examining persuasive campaigns to prevent drug abuse have been conducted by public health and medical scholars (see Andrews and Netemeyer 2015), with the evidence suggesting both positive and negative effects (for reviews, see Allara et al. [2015] and Wakefield et al. [2010]). Some marketing scholars have also shown a pointed interest. For example, Block et al. (2002) analyzed data from 1987 to 1990 from the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study conducted by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. They found that recall of antidrug ads was associated with a lower probability of marijuana and crack cocaine use. However, they also found that recall of antidrug ads was not associated with the amount of marijuana or crack cocaine being used by those already using each drug. Using a sample of U.S. teens, Carpenter and Pechmann (2011) evaluated the effects of the National Youth Anti-Drug (antimarijuana) Media Campaign from 2006 to 2008. They found that the campaign was associated with lower self-reported marijuana use for eighth-grade girls, but the effects for other groups of teens were not significant. Other research has evaluated key methodological aspects of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, including tracking and the ad copy testing process in determining advertising effectiveness (Pechmann and Andrews 2010).

Two of the studies by marketing scholars noted previously (Block et al. 2002; Carpenter and Pechmann 2011) appeared in the American Journal of Public Health. There have been several studies in JPPM addressing the topics of drug abuse/addiction or media campaigns designed to help prevent drug abuse/addiction or educate consumers as to the risks associated with drug abuse. However, the collective focus of these JPPM studies has been fragmented. We briefly touch on a few key studies next.

One of the earliest studies to appear in JPPM was conducted by Hirschman and McGriff (1995), who investigated how recovering addicts reacted to the portrayal of addicts in motion pictures. This research was instrumental in offering suggestions for addict treatment programs. More recently, Netemeyer et al. (2015) examined prescription drug abuse among teens and found that several affective states and traits (e.g., teen anxiety, the desire to be popular among peers) were associated with underestimating the risks associated with using prescription drugs and the self-report abuse of prescription drugs. Their research suggested some potential information and prevention/intervention strategies for high school counseling. Sullivan et al. (2017) focused on how consumers process prescription drug risk information in direct-to-consumer ads and found that when colorful distracting visuals were present, consumers tended not to focus on risk information.

Legalized marijuana sales were close to $18 billion in 2020 and could go as high as $30 billion by the end of 2021, with much of the sales growth driven by young people (under 25 years of age) (NORML 2021). There are currently laws in place in 33 states and the District of Columbia that make medical and/or adult use (i.e., recreational) of cannabis legal. Despite legalization at the state and local levels, federal laws continue to prohibit all possession and use. This results in an interesting and challenging regulatory environment for regulators. As public laws and policies across all levels of government continue to evolve, it is important for scholars in the marketing and public policy community to conduct research to help government officials develop evidence-based policy (Iacocca and Vallen 2021). Kees et al. (2020) offer a helpful framework to guide research in this area, and Kelly et al. (2021) examine the potential effects of the legalization of recreational marijuana. They focus on harm reduction and risk perceptions and offer a compelling agenda for future public policy research geared at adolescent uptake of legalized marijuana. Each of these articles offer important directions for much-needed empirical work in this domain. For example, labeling considerations (e.g., potency and risks) is an area of research that is particularly important given that cannabis, like tobacco, can pose serious health risks to consumers. In particular, research is needed to help regulators determine how warnings should be displayed on packages and in advertising and what types of warnings can be most useful to vulnerable consumers.

In addition, Kelly et al. (2021) offer several other health- and policy-related questions about adolescent recreational marijuana use that have yet to be addressed. For example, could legalized marijuana and increased usage lead to more favorable attitudes and intentions toward illicit drug use? What are the short- and long-term effects of legalized recreational marijuana? Does recreational marijuana advertising increase its appeal, or does “overadvertising” decrease its appeal?

So, in general, where do marketing scholars studying addiction and targeting JPPM go from here? As evidenced by the recent rise in prescription opioid addiction and other substances, clearly antidrug media campaigns still represent a rich area of research for marketing and public policy scholars. Some important questions for marketing and public policy scholars to address include the following: What might be key moderators of the effects of antidrug media campaigns on actual (not just self-reported) use of illicit and prescription drugs? Though several personality traits and consumer demographic characteristics have shown effects (Allara et al. 2015), does consumer subjective and objective knowledge gained as the result of an antidrug campaign have effects? And if so, what is more effective: what consumers actually know (objective), or what they think they know (subjective)?

**Tobacco Warning Labeling and Education**

Diseases related to tobacco account for more than 480,000 premature deaths in the United States and some five million deaths globally. JPPM has a long history of publishing research on tobacco-related issues, including restriction of tobacco promotions viewed by children (e.g., “Joe Camel” ad campaign; see
Calfee 2000; Cohen 2000), as well as evaluations of tobacco regulations in the United States (e.g., Master Settlement Agreement; see Goldberg and Kozlowski 1997; Petty 1997).

Perhaps the greatest attention has been paid to the study of tobacco warnings and disclosures associated with FDA labeling initiatives to curb tobacco usage and death (Andrews, Choiniere, and Portnoy 2015). In particular, the topic of graphic health warnings for cigarette advertising and packaging has been of interest for the journal for over 15 years (Kees et al. 2006, 2010; Netemeyer et al. 2016). With proposed changes for graphic health and text warnings by the FDA (2020), research may be needed in testing different message types, images, formats, sizes of warnings (e.g., smallest/least obtrusive size to be effective), disclosures, and modified risk claims and how they might interact with one another. Further, are there different pathways to quitting intentions and actual behavior from health warnings for different segments of vulnerable smokers (e.g., adolescent experimenters, social smokers, dual users with e-cigarettes, long-term smokers, different ethnicities; see Andrews et al. 2014; Tangari et al. 2007)? Extensions to international research on plain pack branding in conjunction with the graphic health warnings for vulnerable populations (e.g., adolescent experimenters) may be in order (see Andrews et al. 2016).

Finally, research is certainly warranted on the development and evaluation of educational efforts in reducing youth dependence on tobacco products, such as the FDA’s “The Real Cost” campaign, estimated to have prevented at least 350,000 U.S. youths aged 11–18 years from smoking between 2014 and 2016 (Farrelly et al. 2017). This might include a better understanding of how messages might be misperceived by youth; measuring passive versus forced exposure and impact of digital ads; and identifying differences among nicotine-specific, product-agnostic, and product-specific messaging.

Recently, the prevalence of electronic cigarettes worldwide has generated research related to e-cigarette labels, warnings, and claims (e.g., Berry and Burton 2019; Berry et al. 2017). For lesser known, yet major e-cigarette risks (e.g., lung disease as opposed to addiction), research has shown the effective application of graphic health warnings in reducing e-cigarette cravings and susceptibility for adolescent experimenters (Andrews et al. 2019). Yet, in this context, risk modification claims tend to attenuate these effects. Certainly, more work is needed in this area to guide public policy around emerging products that gain popularity with vulnerable populations (i.e., adolescents). The general topic of tobacco labeling and warnings continues to be a fruitful area of research as the tobacco industry evolves with new nicotine delivery mechanisms. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of tobacco warning/labeling regulation in the United States underscores the importance of this research in shaping public policy and impacting public health.

Privacy and Technology

Privacy research has been persistent in marketing, with common themes around the incongruence between what information consumers want private/public organizations to know about them and what marketers want to know about consumers. Innovations in technology that enable easy and cost-efficient collection/storage of personal information create a tension between privacy as an individual right and the usefulness of consumer data for marketing activities. This tension creates a perfect storm of (self-)regulatory challenges for marketers, industry practitioners, and government officials to contend with and offers a ripe opportunity for research in JPPM that offers societal benefits.

Much of the extant JPPM research on privacy and technology involves identifying problems and reflections on the regulatory actions and/or reactions of the FTC (see Boddewyn 1985; Wilkie 1985) and other private/public organizations that collect and use consumer information (e.g., Internal Revenue Service, Census Bureau, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Baker et al. 1986; Miracle and Nevett 1988; Shapiro 1986). Goodwin’s (1991) article, “Privacy: Recognition of a Consumer Right,” portrays a taxonomy of privacy states around control over information disclosure and control over the transaction environment. Foxman and Kilcoyne (1993) examine ethical issues of new information technologies, and Milne and Gordon (1993) identify direct mail as an implied social contract between marketers and consumers. In 2000, Milne edited a JPPM special issue, “Privacy and Ethical Issues in Database/Interactive Marketing and Public Policy,” and most articles in that issue are still well cited and provide a foundation for future privacy research, as well as alternatives for agenda setting and policy making (Milne 2000).

Privacy and technology research continued through the early part of the twenty-first century with JPPM articles focusing on more specific industries (cf. health information in Sheehan [2005]; church websites in Hoy and Phelps [2003]), the emerging capabilities due to internet usage for e-commerce and transaction purposes, as well as new means for advertising to consumers (Petty 2003; Wei, Fischer, and Main 2008). Evaluation of existing policies enacted by companies and regulation by government entities progressed during this time, as evidenced by longitudinal assessments of online privacy notices (Milne, Culnan, and Greene 2006), and the FTC’s focus on identity theft (Anderson 2006). Research around privacy and technology in the first decade of the 2000s continued to identify the privacy challenges facing key stakeholders and examined efforts by industry and government to manage those challenges.

A benefit of JPPM research is that it often involves government representatives of state/federal agencies who take part in setting policy agendas and parties involved with efforts to protect consumer privacy by offering guidance and/or insight. A good example is the 2014 JPPM article by former Commissioner and 2017–2018 acting FTC Chairman Maureen Ohlhausen, “Privacy Challenges and Opportunities: The Role of the FTC,” which addresses the evolution of the FTC as the primary federal privacy regulator. Research during this time period continues to focus on the impact of new technology on enabling the collection, storage, and use of personal
information about consumers, as well as acknowledging the increasing privacy risks for consumers, and protection efforts with the emergence of the Internet of Things (cf. Martin 2015; Pappalardo 2014). Walker’s (2016) conceptual JPBM article examines key constructs in privacy: transparency, trust, and protection. Portraying a macro view of privacy to assist researchers and practitioners, the sharing–surrendering information matrix helps identify policy gaps based on how (and whether) individuals actively or passively protect their privacy and clarify whether individuals and companies are engendering trust or faith in their information exchanges.

Almost two decades after the first special issue on privacy, a 2019 JPPM special issue identifies privacy problems and prospects for future research as a result of the emerging challenges created by innovative technology and infinite consumer data, “Marketing and Public Policy in a Technology-Integrated Society” (Walker, Milne, and Weinberg 2019). Articles in this special issue address the intersection of data, regulation, and technology to explore the impact of innovative technologies and infinite data as they influence global privacy challenges around (1) agility and connection, (2) use and abuse, and (3) control and access. As privacy becomes more prominent, and as consumers and companies embrace more privacy-focused products and services, JPPM research continues to examine the interplay between marketing research and public policy practice. Recent research examines a specific European Union regulation around privacy, the General Data Protection Regulation (Bornschein, Schmidt, and Maier 2020), and the effects of privacy invasions on consumers (Esmark Jones et al. 2020). Research on children’s online privacy protection (Andrews, Walker, and Kees 2020) informs specific contexts and implications of federal policy such as COPPA and industry compliance efforts (CARU). The increasing reliance on technology during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights many consumer privacy issues (Brough and Martin 2021).

Marketing and Public Policy Research Development

In general, one suggested starting point for beginning scholars interested in marketing and public policy research is with Brinberg and McGrath’s (1985) “validity network schema.” In the validity network schema, researchers develop, clarify, and select elements and relationships from conceptual, methodological, and substantive domains. Next, the researcher is to combine elements and relationships from two of the three domains and then integrate it with the third domain. In marketing and public policy research, it is the substantive domain that is so important for the initial development and focus in combination with either the conceptual or the methodological domains. For example, and based on the last section, Walker’s (2016) “sharing–surrendering information matrix” conceptualization addresses the important substantive issue of online information exchanges and the privacy risks associated with socially transmitted data. Similarly, for the substantive issue of (children’s online) privacy, methodological approaches (e.g., experimentation) have been combined with conceptual support (e.g., cognitive defense strategies) (Andrews, Walker, and Kees 2020). A focus on the substantive domain in question requires a full immersion in the marketing and public policy topic. This can be accomplished by thoroughly investigating the many sides of an issue, attending agency webinars and conferences, participating in MPPC sessions, contacting researchers and policy officials, serving as a visiting scientist or on advisory committees at agencies, and so on. As part of the immersion process, researchers should ask the following questions about the policy issue:

- What is known? Not known?
- Are there knowledge gaps?
- Is there policy without consumer and/or marketplace evidence?
- Are there unfavorable effects on consumers due to marketers’ promotion, price, product, or supply chain practices, or challenges in the external environment that should be addressed through new, proactive policy (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic; Scott et al. 2020)?

Beyond policy issue immersion, there are additional recommendations for researchers considering work in marketing and public policy (see Andrews 2001). These include examining the policy issue from different perspectives (e.g., economic, psychological, public health, and/or legal disciplines), offering theoretical support for policy application tests, including rigor in one’s design (e.g., realistic stimuli, control groups, sufficient sample), the use of multiple approaches (e.g., qualitative research, experimentation, survey work, meta-analyses, legal analyses, case studies), and programmatic (“streamed”) research. Such careful efforts are appreciated by frontline staff working in agencies and organizations developing, implementing, and evaluating major public policy.

Conclusions

Research that makes a difference in the lives of individuals and society can be quite rewarding for authors in many ways. Without exception, and for each of this article’s authors, conducting research that has longer-term societal benefits beyond a single academic publication or narrowly tailored marketing topic has been personally rewarding, but also of value in studying issues among the less fortunate in society. This includes examining the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., children, the homeless, the disabled, the marginalized), those addicted, marketplace inequities (e.g., consumer protection, intellectual property, antitrust, competition), consumer rights (e.g., privacy), consumer education (e.g., nutrition and health information), and so on, yet with an eye toward implications for public policy.

Thus, a major purpose of this article was to clarify the meaning of “policy,” “public policy,” and “marketing and public policy” for those interested in the field and provide
examples from JPPM with suggestions for future research development. Public policy can be complex, but nothing has taught us more than our direct experience and interactions with state, federal, and private-sector staff who make important decisions that impact consumers and organizations. Our hope is that this article offers a guide for scholars who are interested in informing and impacting societal, marketplace, and individual well-being. We know that it is possible to simultaneously informing and impacting societal, marketplace, and individual well-being. We find the challenge of doing both rewarding.

This article provides an overview of many topics for which the findings are shared with and used by U.S., global, and state agencies as well as nongovernmental organizations. While not exhaustive, this includes citations in this article on broad consumer protection issues (e.g., see the work by Andrews, Hill, Burton, Kees, Netemeyer); data privacy (Walker, Andrews, Kees, Netemeyer); consumer vulnerability, diversity, and inclusion (e.g., Hill, Andrews); communication of nutrition information to consumers (Andrews, Burton, Kees, Netemeyer); tobacco warnings, antidrug education, and cannabis (Andrews, Netemeyer, Burton, Kees, Hill); and anti-trust/competition issues (Gundlach). Table 1 illustrates the direct influence that such work in JPPM has had on policy considerations and evaluations.

However, one caution in policy research development is that there is an important learning process in first immersing oneself in the policy issue with key agencies and organizations to fully understand the issue and research approaches applied—often from the perspective of other disciplines. Yet, this interaction certainly is a “two-way street” in that such agencies and organizations truly appreciate our broader knowledge and research techniques applied to the policy issue in question. As an example, research on homelessness during the housing crisis of the 1980s led to major opportunities for work with local to national governmental entities in search of solutions (for details, see Hill [2002]). These organizations valued scholarship that sought to understand underpinnings, lived experiences, and implications of this complex social and public policy dilemma. Such work also revealed the possibility of moving academic research from journals and conferences to various forms of application.

In his JPPM article reflecting on the arc of his career involvement in public policy, Alan Andreasen (1997) noted that he “had stumbled into a career focus that, over the years, would yield some fairly useful contributions to both the basic science of the marketing profession and the resolution of important social problems” (p. 129). In the spirit of this reflection, the authors were asked to offer some responses to following three items. A few of these are now summarized:

What has research on marketing and public policy meant to you and your career?

It clearly changed my life. I was fortunate to have [mentors that] educated us, even as undergraduates, to the role of the Federal Trade Commission and other such government agencies in the lives of consumers. After several years of seeking publication on social issues, I finally realized that JPPM and its community of scholars was the best possible home for my research and presentations. I’ve never looked back!

It has meant everything. In a way, it makes you proud to tell others outside of our field what you are working on, often generating great discussion, and positive feedback rather than blank stares! I’m indebted to my mentors at my doctoral and current institutions for guiding me toward MPP/FTC issues, as well as a parent that liked my dissertation, but suggested that I might do something important.” She then recommended research on a consumer protection issue before Congress being considered without any data. We conducted that study, and the rest is history.

What is the overall importance of marketing and public policy research versus non–marketing and policy research?

I coined the phrase “Changing the world one article at a time” as part of my dialogue with the other AMA journal editors when we described what made each of us unique. I meant it then and mean it now. When you look at all the social and public policy issues around the world that continue to plague humankind, no other outlet has taken on the challenges of supporting efforts for positive change like the Journal and its conference.

It’s really about trying to make a contribution that is rigorous yet valued beyond the academic setting as applied to real and often complicated social and policy issues. JPPM has been a welcome outlet for this research.

I view public policy as the key lever for change with societal issues in marketing that are important (to me). When JPPM research can be understood and utilized by policy staff in state/federal agencies and the private sector, then individual and societal challenges can be transformed.

Provide any personal reflections:

If I have a legacy, I want it to be: “He made a positive difference.” JPPM is the centerpiece of these efforts.

I can’t imagine my career without my colleagues from JPPM, MPPC, and the many agencies that I’ve worked with over the years.

In conclusion, it is important to reiterate Wilkie’s (1974) point that public policy will continue with or without the help of marketing researchers. So, we are hoping that you will become “immersed” in public policy research and join the growing number of scholars who are studying interesting and important issues and trying to make a positive difference in society and in people’s lives.

Authors’ Note

A shorter version of this article appears as an AMA Research Curation at https://www.ama.org/2021/01/04/what-exactly-is-marketing-and-public-policy.

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