Roundtable  Is It Worth It? If So, Research It: Exploring the Place of Diversity Research in Marketing

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As we all know, Marketplace Diversity has become one of the most important pursuits in marketing practice as of late. Given the changing demographics of the U.S. in particular, and the world, in general, it is no surprise that profit-maximizing firms would seek to make themselves as attractive as possible to previously underrepresented global consumer segments (as defined by race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).

Although it has not been our practice as marketing academics to concern ourselves with the currency of marketing practices, many have paused (individually and/or collectively) to wonder why multicultural research has not found a bigger place in the marketing literature. In this ACR Roundtable, it is our interest to understand why such research has not found a firmer footing in our field as it has in sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, and even marketing practice.

One of the primary issues to be discussed will be what marketing scholars think is “valid” or not—also known as “what’s the underlying construct?” Currently, there is no consensus on what some of these acceptable constructs and theories are that adequately account for observed marketplace diversity phenomena. Those who do research in this area need to talk about to make sure we are handling culture, race, ethnicity, gender constructs in rigorous ways and ensure that these have broader understanding, recognition, and application.