INTERNATIONAL MARKETING EDUCATION AND THE GLOBALIZATION DEBATE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NORTH AMERICAN TEXTBOOKS

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In this paper we argue that the point-of-view a textbook author adopts significantly impacts the perceptions students have of globalization. We evaluate this proposition for the case of international marketing textbooks and argue that the framing of the information predisposes students towards a pro-globalist perspective rather than presenting multiple points-of-view.

The globalization literature has developed over the past ten years and dramatizes the schism that has arisen between those who believe that globalization has resulted in net positive benefits to members of the world community, those who believe it has resulted in a net decline in people’s well-being, and those who have not committed to a value position but have identified the reality that a transformation of social, political, physical, and economic change is underway that is significantly different than at any time in history. As the debate unfolds and arguments are posed in the various media, what do our textbooks report to marketing students as to the essence of this debate and ways the outcome could affect them as practitioners and citizens? Do the textbooks take a balanced approach and cite evidence and argument on both sides of the debate? Or, on the contrary, do they espouse a pro-globalist bias in the manner and the degree to which in which information is presented? These questions form the basis of the research. Our focus population is undergraduate international marketing textbooks used in North American universities.

We employ a number of research methodologies in efforts to answer the critical questions that drive the research: exhaustive literature reviews of several academic areas of research, focus groups to identify what globalization means to the student population, and content analysis of the eleven international marketing textbooks. Our findings suggest that, in general, authors present a pro-globalization perspective although variations across authors are evident. The textbooks de-emphasize issues related to the environment, global governance, and labour while emphasizing economic development, technology transfer, and new market exploitation.