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World economic prospects [book review]

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BOOK REVIEWS

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BOOK REVIEWS



Introduction

Stacey Marien

The purpose of this section of the *JBFL* is to review books of interest to business librarians. Each review covers the purpose of the book and the success of the author or publisher in fulfilling that purpose along with information on the scope, content, and organization of the source.

If you are interested in reviewing a book for the *JBFL*, please contact:

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AMERICA'S TOP RATED CITIES: A STATISTICAL HANDBOOK, 13th ed. Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, Inc., 2006, 4 vols., 3,094 pp., \$195.00, ISBN 978-1-59237-140-2.

INTRODUCTION

Originally a Universal Reference publication (first edition, 1992), *America's Top Rated Cities* was included in the acquisition of Universal Reference Publishing by Grey House Publishing in 1999. This title is now part of Grey House Publishing's line of "Statistics and Demographics" reference books, which also includes such similar books as *America's Top Rated Smaller Cities*, *The American Tally: Statistics & Comparative Rankings for U.S. Cities with Populations over 10,000*, and *The Comparative Guide to American Suburbs*, among others.

SCOPE

America's Top Rated Cities, a four-volume work, covers 100 cities with populations over 100,000. The cities are selected for inclusion based on their ranking in prominent business and living surveys, such as those found in *Travel & Leisure* and *Forbes*, as well as direct research by the staff of the publisher. Each volume covers a different region: Southern, Western, Central, or Eastern, and the 25 cities included in each volume are conveniently listed on the front covers. (Surprisingly, though, the four maps in the front of each volume do not correspond precisely to the four regions covered by the volumes.)

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

For each of the 100 cities included, four sections of information are given: "Background;" "Rankings;" "Business Environment;" and "Living Environment." The "Background" section is a one-page essay about the city—a mix of basic history, current status, and trivia. Often included in these essays are primary businesses and industries, major attractions and events, colleges and universities, and general climate. These essays provide a great amount of interesting material in a brief, readable format.

The “Rankings” are drawn from almost 200 sources, including such diverse sources as the Pep Boys’ “America’s Most Drivable Cities,” AXE Deodorant Bodyspray’s “America’s Best (and Worst) Cities for Dating,” and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America’s “2005 Fall Allergy Capital Ranking.” These rankings have been conveniently divided into 10 categories: “General;” “Business/Finance,” “Health,” “Women/Minorities,” “Seniors/Retirement,” “Children/Family,” “Safety,” “Sports/Recreation,” “Dating/Romance,” and “Miscellaneous,” although all 10 categories are not included for each city. For many of the rankings, the criteria on which the rankings are based are given.

The Business Environment and Living Environment sections include statistical tables: 50 for business and 38 for living. Just to name a few are topics such as city government finances/revenue/expenditures, age distribution, ancestry, average wages, air and public transportation, hospitals, Superfund sites, and school enrollment. Again, all topics are not included for all cities.

Each volume also includes the following appendices: Historical Metropolitan Area Definitions; Current Metropolitan Area Definitions; Comparative Statistics (which has alphabetical tables for forty-one demographic and economic topics for all 100 cities); Chambers of Commerce; and State Departments of Labor.

The volumes are clearly meant to stand on their own as well as be part of a series, as each volume has an identical introduction, maps, appendices, and an essay about the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans and why the editors could not include this city although it has been represented in each of the previous editions.

EVALUATION

America’s Top Rated Cities is an excellent source for those wanting to learn more about a particular city or relocating a family or business. It covers a wide range of governmental, demographic, social, environmental, and economic characteristics, all in a well-organized and easy to navigate format.

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GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE: A GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMS. Martin, Jeanette S. and Lillian H. Chaney. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006, 178 pp., \$34.95, ISBN 0-27598-815-5.

INTRODUCTION

This work provides an overview of international business travel tips and business etiquette and offers guidance for conducting business globally, regardless of local cultures and languages. Although this text provides some country-specific travel and etiquette information, the focus is general and geared toward common sense strategies and communication techniques that can be applied across travel situations and cultures. Interesting and innovative tactics, tips, and solutions are presented to deal with potential ethical dilemmas, corrupt practices, legal issues, and many other kinds of unexpected or unpleasant situations.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The book has nine chapters covering different aspects of international business etiquette:

- Travel Customs and Tips
- Language, Greetings, Introductions, and Business Cards
- Socializing
- Gestures and Other Nonverbal Communicators
- Dress and Appearance
- Cultural Attitudes and Behaviors
- Dining and Tipping Customs
- Conversational Customs and Manners
- Oral and Written Communication and Etiquette

Each chapter begins with an overview of the topic subdivided by different aspects of the topic in larger font and in boldface. For example, Chapter Three titled "Socializing" has the following subtopics: "Friendships;" "Punctuality and Time;" "Gift Giving;" "Relationship Building;" and "Women and Work."

Each chapter ends with a section labeled "Country-Specific Information." This heading appears in a larger font and in boldface. The section

furnishes country-specific paragraph-length analyses for the following 10 countries: Canada, China, England, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, South Korea, and Taiwan. The country names appear in boldface. Each analysis usually contains three to six bulleted points. The authors claim that these are the ten countries with which the United States trades most often (p. 17). In Chapter Four titled “Gestures and Other Nonverbal Communicators,” however, the additional countries of Iraq, Italy, and Saudi Arabia are included along with accompanying explanations of why they are included.

Interspersed throughout each chapter and always before the “Country-Specific Information” sections are approximately 63 short paragraph-length sidebars or blocks of information containing brief case studies, anecdotes, quotes, and interesting examples and facts relevant to the topics on the surrounding pages and that offer additional insights and glimpses into many cultures of the world. These special sections are simply contained in a pair of lines going across the book page. Sometimes, these blocks of information cut across two pages, rather than being neatly formatted to appear on one page, and often there are multiple sidebars after each other making it difficult to decipher if text is part of one of these special blocks of information or part of the normal chapter text. Despite this slight shortcoming, these sidebars are a rich source of cultural information and add to the readers’ understanding of the topics being discussed.

SCOPE

Much of the content of this book can be applied to office situations in the United States or alternatively, can be applied to hosting international visitors. As the title implies, this book targets cultural business etiquette, not general cultural etiquette, which is the focus of books such as Norine Dresser’s *Multicultural Manners* (Wiley, ©1996, ©2005) and Roger Axtell’s *Do’s and Taboos Around the World* (Wiley, ©1993). Both these books are frequently cited in the *Notes* section of *Global Business Etiquette*. Unlike other international business resources, such as Terri Morrison’s and Wayne A. Conaway’s *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business In More than 60 Countries* (Adams Publishing, ©2006) or the *CountryWatch* (<http://www.countrywatch.com>) subscription database with business etiquette information for all 192 countries of the world, *Global Business Etiquette*’s coverage is not

representative of many countries and therefore is not a comprehensive country resource.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX

This work is complemented by extensive *Notes* and an *Index*. The *Notes* section lists the source of each of the sidebars, as well as other cited materials in the text. The *Index* is not comprehensive. *Index* entries appear for topics, subtopics, and countries referenced in the text, but not for notable persons and organizations. For instance, one of President Clinton's cultural snafus with a foreign dignitary is mentioned in a sidebar (p. 28), but neither Clinton nor the dignitary is listed in the *Index*.

EVALUATION

This book can be effectively integrated into undergraduate and graduate business, human resources, and public administration coursework. The authors, academics and experts in the field of cross-cultural business communication, and co-authors of the textbook *Intercultural Business Communication* (Prentice Hall, ©2003), provide in-depth knowledge, proven techniques, and extensive practical advice for conducting business globally. This work is not a quick reference guide or pocket guide, though. Students and professionals will need time to read the various sections and sidebars and need time to understand the organization of this book. Therefore, this resource is not recommended as a reference collection purchase. The *Notes* can be used by librarians and information professionals to effectively develop and build their own international business collections.

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NATIONS OF THE WORLD: A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, & BUSINESS HANDBOOK, 6th ed. Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, Inc., 2006, 1,741 pp., \$155.00, ISBN 1-59237-079-9.

INTRODUCTON

Global learning is becoming an important topic in undergraduate courses. It is important for students to learn about other countries to prepare them for both globalization and life and work in a multicultural society. Libraries are experiencing demand for resources that contain international research and global issues information. This new edition of *Nations of the World* will provide undergraduate students with general political, economic, and business information.

SCOPE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Nations of the World is a timely reference of political, economic, and business information with narrative overviews, maps, charts, and tables. The book's principal sources of information are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AFDB), Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), U.N. agencies, individual central bank reports, and national statistics.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

The book discusses 230 nations arranged in alphabetical order by nation or territory, and is divided into three parts. The first part includes an overview of each country, key facts, and key indicators. The first part also includes narrative paragraphs that offer an overview of the current economic and political conditions of each country as well as its economic outlook. The second part contains country profiles that include a historical profile, political structure, education, population, religion, and health. The economic section of each country's profile includes an overview of external trade, agriculture, industries, climate, entry requirements, holidays, and working hours. This second part also includes

practical information about services available (e.g., mobile phones, electricity supply, security, transportation), weights and measures, and social customs. The last part consists of a business directory with area codes, contact numbers for chambers of commerce, banking information, travel, Internet sites, and other useful addresses.

Nations of the World includes a regional map and three tables that summarize the information found in the narrative paragraphs. The first table includes key facts about the country (official name, head of state, head of government, ruling party, area, population, etc.). The second table provides key indicators (population, Gross Domestic Product, exports, imports, balance of trade, etc.), and the third table offers a risk assessment of the country's economic, political, and regional stability and stock market position.

The end of the book includes a world overview of Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. This section offers information on the political and economic climate of these regions, their key indicators, currencies, a map of the region, and a list of U.S. embassies in the region. The book contains a CD-ROM that includes all of the country profiles in PDF format.

EVALUATION

The sixth edition of *Nations of the World* offers great insight into countries' political and economic climates. The book does not go into great detail but provides a background report and an overview of these countries. It is an excellent source of practical and essential information for people traveling to these countries, and it can serve as a starting point for a country analysis project or research for those considering locating a business in a different country.

The economy section provides a good overview of the current situation, but this section is brief. The book is missing key marketing information. I did not expect a complete analysis, but some key marketing facts would have been useful, for example, major markets, leading sectors, investment climate, etc.

The Internet sites section only listed associations' and agencies' sites and is missing key U.S. government sites that give information about these countries, such as the Department of Commerce, Library of Congress, and the Central Intelligence Agency. This section would have been an ideal place to include the U.S. embassies' Web sites, instead of the long list of U.S. embassies at the end of the book.

The CD-ROM contains all country profiles in PDF format, which makes it easier to print the information. A better option would be to offer the table's information as MS Word documents with the option of downloading to CSV format. In order to obtain the CD-ROM the customer needs to fill out a form and mail it to the company, an extra inconvenience to the customer. It would be better to include the CD-ROM with the book.

Nevertheless, I found the book to be well organized, accurate, and affordable. This is a great reference tool for public, academic, and special library collections.

OTHER SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INFORMATION

CIA World Fact Book: Released by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1999. Data are available for more than 260 countries. It includes map, flag, geographic, population, government, economic, communication, transportation, military, and transnational issue information (<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>).

Handbook of International Economic Statistics: Released by the CIA. Provides statistics for comparing the economic performance of major countries and regions. It includes economic profiles, trends, energy, agriculture, foreign trade and aid, and real gross domestic product. It also includes a collection of maps, charts, and tables (<http://www.odci.gov/cia/di/products/hies/index.html>).

Library of Congress Country Studies/Area Handbook: Prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. It contains a historical, social, economic, and political study of 100 countries (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>).

Overseas Business Reports: Created by the U.S. Department of Commerce. International Trade Administration (1982-1991). Ceased publication. Most current edition available through the University of Missouri–St. Louis (<http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/obr/index.html>).

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GLOBALIZATION: ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TRADE, LABOR, AND POLITICS. Vaidya, Ashish K. (Ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006, 968 pp., \$185.00, ISBN 1-57607-826-4.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is more than just the fact that my shoes were made in Indonesia or my bananas grown in Ecuador. It is more than just the fact that I can follow the WTO meetings in my daily newspaper. The extent of globalization's impact on my life is better reflected in the fact that a portion of every paycheck I receive is automatically invested in a retirement portfolio that includes equity in hundreds of companies from around the world. My more or less ignorant participation in international financial markets is one small indication of how intertwined the lives of everyone on the planet have become.

Globalization is now so fundamental as to be almost invisible for many people, although the term still carries with it controversy. Kofi Annan has said that "arguing against globalization is like arguing against the law of gravity," but even if globalization is irresistible it is far from immutable. It evolves daily, sometimes touching us imperceptibly, sometimes wrenching our attention. Globalization is a diffuse concept, impossible to isolate and difficult to encapsulate. It disregards the silos of scholarly disciplines, instead demanding a multi-faceted treatment. *Globalization: Encyclopedia of Trade, Labor, and Politics* provides such a cross-disciplinary approach to the subject, providing an excellent overview and serving as a quality reference source.

SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION

Globalization is a holistic reference work addressing the economic, political, legal, social, environmental, and business aspects of globalization since World War II. *Globalization* is bound in two volumes, each containing two parts.

Part One encompasses trade and investment issues under such headings as "Antidumping and Countervailing Duties," "Labor Markets and Wage Effects," "Protectionism," and "Dollarization." The individual essays provide overviews of these topics, summarizing their history and highlighting current events and trends. Special attention is paid to

emerging markets, the impact of technology, and the internationalization of finance.

Part Two outlines major business and economic sectors such as agriculture, financial services, and transport. Each sector is characterized in the new global context, and the particular manifestations of globalization in that sector are examined, along with recent trends and possible developments.

Part Three lists and describes 32 international blocs and organizations including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Bank. The nature, purpose, and activities of each organization are explained and the outcomes of significant meetings are highlighted. Other information provided can include lists of member nations and excerpts of founding documents.

Part Four addresses other issues in the context of globalization, including copyright, culture, the environment, and urbanization. Although these concerns are sometimes touched on in previous sections, here they receive fuller attention. For example, the concept of sustainable development is briefly discussed in essays on natural resources, the Group of 8, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but also receives full attention here in a separate essay.

Each part is organized alphabetically. In addition to the table of contents there is a 38-page index. The essays include references to facilitate further research. Tables, charts, and maps are included in grayscale, although plain text predominates in most essays.

AUDIENCE AND EVALUATION

As an encyclopedia, *Globalization* cannot meet the deep research needs of faculty at an academic institution, although it can serve as a ready reference. Students will find it an excellent orientation to the key concepts and players in the globalization phenomenon.

The essays are authored by over 100 scholars from around the globe. The tone is consistently objective and the writing straightforward and clear. The organization in parts makes it easy to research trading blocs, economic sectors, or the financial or legal issues of globalization, whereas the index allows for more comprehensive investigation of a topic as it crosses these boundaries. However, the index may disappoint less rigorous users. For instance, a person interested in global

warming will neither find it listed in the index, nor in the “climate change.” Instead one must look for “global climate change.”

Globalization is reasonably priced at \$185.00 for the print edition and is also available as an e-book, an attractive option both for the convenience of remote access and the power of full-text searching. This cross-disciplinary encyclopedia is recommended for libraries serving any institution or community with interests in business, economics, or politics.

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WORLD ECONOMIC PROSPECTS: A PLANNER'S GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL MARKET CONDITIONS, 4th ed. *London: Euro-monitor PLC, 2003, 248 pp., \$490.00, ISBN 1-84264-296-0.*

INTRODUCTION

Companies are entering the world market knowing that current global economic conditions are pivotal to their future success. Understanding internal conditions and existing challenges in a target country are as important as knowing whether a product has export potential. This publication explores global economic performance, major challenges, and other issues that could play a vital role in the success or failure of a company's efforts at globalization.

SCOPE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this publication is to provide international marketing analysts with information on driving forces, strategic options, and key potential benchmarks related to the world's largest economies. The main sources of data are the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Co-Operation and

Development (OECD), national statistical offices, central banks, national and international trade and industry organizations, and Euromonitor's own surveys and analyses.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

World Economic Prospects provides analysis and qualitative data examining factors affecting growth and success in potential markets in 52 countries. The volume includes an extensive foreword that provides a background report on world markets and the existing economic conditions in the countries covered in this book: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

The first section provides an overview of present conditions in the world economy. The overview covers global prospects and developments in the areas of demographic change and energy requirements. It also includes economic forecasts and international rankings. At the end of the first section is a chart providing an overall assessment of country prospects. Remaining sections of the book cover market conditions and prospects for all fifty-two countries. The country reports are arranged by region and include overviews of a country's economic situation, political stability, risks, prospects, and an evaluation of its market potential. The different sections include several tables with qualitative data.

EVALUATION

World Economic Prospects includes critical data on international marketing. The qualitative data included in the country overviews will be of great interest to economic and international business students, as well as businesses interested in marketing their products overseas. The only problem is that this is a print publication, and the majority of people interested in this type of data would prefer to download such data into an Excel file. Euromonitor allows users to purchase this publication in PDF format, but not in Excel. An ideal option would be to offer the

data in a document format with the option of downloading to CSV format. Another option would be to include the data on a CD-ROM that accompanies the book.

This publication is an excellent source for background information on the world economy. The country overviews and the prospects data allow a better understanding of the key determinants and major challenges in the world's largest economies. The quick reference tables provide an overall picture of the countries' market and economic situations. The charts showing major events provide consequences and repercussions of these events at a glance. Some of these data exist piecemeal in various government agencies' and associations' sources, but this publication brings them all together.

World Economic Prospects is a little bit expensive for today's library budgets, but it will be a great addition to public, academic, and specialized libraries' reference collections.

OTHER SOURCES FOR WORLD ECONOMIC PROSPECTS INFORMATION

Prospects for the Global Economy: Includes an overview and forecast of world economies, global growth, commodity markets, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, external balance, world trade, risks, and regional outlooks—by the World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/prospects>).

Market Research Library: Contains more than 100,000 industry and country-specific market reports—by the U.S. Department of Commerce (http://www.export.gov/mrktresch/exp_mr_index.asp).

World Economic Outlook: Presents the IMF analysis and projections for economic development at the global level in reports on major countries. Includes economic policy issues and an analysis of economic developments and prospects—by the International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2002/01/index.html>).

World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2006: An annual analysis of current developments and emerging policy issues in the world economy—by the United Nations (http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp2006/files/es_2006_english.pdf).

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THE ACCOUNTABLE CORPORATION. Epstein, Marc J. and Kirk O. Hanson (Eds.). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006, 4 vols., \$300.00, ISBN 0-275-98491-5 (set).

INTRODUCTION

The Accountable Corporation is a four-volume set of essays exploring various aspects of corporate governance and business ethics.

SCOPE, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTENT

The four volumes of the work cover the following:

- *Corporate governance*: history, roles and responsibilities of directors vis-à-vis shareholders and other stakeholders, various applications and suggestions for change
- *Business ethics*: foundations and history, ethical decision-making, creating ethical organizations
- *Corporate social responsibility*: history and development, building support, implementation
- *Business-Government relations*: history, perspectives, corporate government affairs strategies, critical issues

Each volume is 250-300 pages in length and contains ten to fifteen individual essays written by a mix of academics, attorneys, and business persons. The essays are arranged within the volumes topically, not alphabetically, and are accessible through the individual volumes' tables of contents and indexes. Most articles include extensive endnotes or reference lists. Although globalization has made international borders less meaningful than in the past (at least from a business perspective), the work tends to focus on examples and applications for companies in the United States.

EVALUATION

In the Introduction, the editors write:

We believe the modern corporation has entered a decidedly different era, one in which it must dedicate substantially more resources to being accountable, and to demonstrating to a skeptical society

that it actually is more accountable. This series documents many aspects of the transition to the Accountable Corporation . . .

The purpose of the work is to explore the current status of corporate accountability, building from history and foundations to current institutions and practices, through the topical framework described above. In my view, the editors and authors were largely successful in accomplishing their purpose. These essays could be read profitably from beginning to end by students interested in getting a good comprehensive perspective on business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and corporate governance.

The work will also be valuable in a reference setting for those interested in background information (and as a source for further readings) on one of the specific subtopics covered. Specifically, the essays would be valuable to faculty members as a source of information for class preparation or course readings and for student research. The work might have been improved by some additional attention to the relationship between boards of directors and auditors, and I found the lack of a detailed article specifically on Sarbanes-Oxley and its implications curious, but these omissions do not detract from the overall quality of the work. The work would be suitable for all academic and larger public libraries.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD. Leonard, Thomas M. (Ed.). *New York: Routledge, 2006, 3 vols., 1,759 pp., \$565.00, ISBN 1-57958-388-1.*

As Thomas Leonard notes in his Introduction to the *Encyclopedia of the Developing World*, understanding the various issues that affect approximately three-quarters of the world's population requires a global and interdisciplinary approach. For one interested in gathering a basic understanding of the many aspects to the "developing world," this is a fine ready reference source on this subject.

The *Encyclopedia of the Developing World* comprises three volumes, which taken together, contain approximately 800 entries that cover all aspects of the developing world since 1945, particularly history, economic development, and politics. Each entry varies in length from a couple of paragraphs to several pages, depending on the complexity of the topic. Each entry provides references and further reading, some of which are rather extensive. “See-Also” cross-referencing at the end of most entries refers the user to other related subjects. The authors of these entries number over 250 and are drawn mostly from academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Given the rather broad scope of subjects covered in this book, the authors are drawn from around the world and represent a wide variety of fields including economics, religion, anthropology, law, and environmental science.

Accessing information in this source is well thought out. Each of the three volumes contains the same A-Z index covering the entire encyclopedia. Many of the entries in the index contain subheadings on various aspects of the subject indexed. These subheadings are very helpful given the interdisciplinary focus of this book and may even provide the reader with ideas about their topic that they had not considered. For example the entry on Argentina runs approximately three pages, yet the index lists 38 different subheadings including “income inequality” and “ethnic conflicts” that are covered in other entries. Each volume contains a thematic list of entries, broken into four sections: “Countries and Regions,” “Organizations,” “Persons,” and “Topics.”

Of the approximately 800 entries contained in the three volumes, about 180 cover individual countries. Each country entry provides information that one might also find in a general encyclopedia, for example, history, politics, and economy, but these entries are also written from the perspective of one researching development of the country. These country descriptions are useful for gathering background information but limited in their inclusion of more recent information, particularly economic data. For example, the Thailand entry provides GDP data only from 2003. In cases such as this, other sources such as the *CIA World Factbook* (www.cia.gov), *Europa World Fact Book* (Europa Publishing), or data available at Websites such as the International Monetary Fund (www.imf.org) would complement this source.

The encyclopedia also contains entries on over 160 organizations including political parties (Chinese Communist Party), religious institutions (Greek Orthodox Church), and government organizations (Central Intelligence Agency). The rather long list of non-governmental organizations that includes groups such as DAWN (Development Alternatives

with Women for a New Era) is particularly impressive and timely given the growing research interest among academics in NGOs.

The three volumes also include entries on approximately 134 people, most of whom are political figures in the developing world. There are also over 250 other topics that range from those that one might expect in a book with this title, such as “currency devaluation” and “foreign direct investment,” to entries covering “Buddhism” and “Guerilla Warfare,” that bear understanding when researching developing countries.

An attempt to draw together an overview of the “developing world” in just three volumes might be regarded as a rather ambitious effort, but the editor has done a fine job. The encyclopedia provides a broad-based overview and introduction to many of the issues facing the developing world. *Encyclopedia of the Developing World* is recommended for school, academic, and public libraries.

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