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Global Social Issues: An Encyclopedia (2012, 978-0-7656-8292-5, $349) from Sharpe Reference deals with a much broader topic and is intended for a broader audience than SAGE’s Encyclopedia of Trauma. Edited by veteran encyclopedia editor James Climent and Christopher G. Bates of California State Polytechnic Institute at Pomona, this three-volume set contains 136 individual chapters discussing specific global issues that would be of interest to upper division high school students, undergraduates, and the interested lay reader.

Almost every chapter provides a section on historical background while at the same time trying to place a geographic perspective on the issue by noting its importance and impacts in a variety of countries and regions. In addition, the current and future status of the issue is given a solid airing. Generally, two primary source documents, or excerpts from the document, are provided for each issue — one historic, the other contemporary. While sticking to a general formula there is no exact template employed for these chapter. As a result, some chapters offer more comprehensive treatments. However, each one fulfills its mission by providing a solid foundation for further exploration. Value-added features include a topic finder divided by broad categories, lists of further readings for each chapter, and a general index.

Global Social Issues: An Encyclopedia is the type of reference work that students will naturally turn to in order to locate background information on a topic. Each chapter provides a straightforward treatment that places the issue in historic context while keeping a focus on current status and recent developments. In addition, each chapter offers solid leads to books, journal articles, and Web resources useful in furthering a student’s research. Libraries serving undergraduates and high school students with assignments on global issues will find this set worth considering.

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