

limited in scope to be used as a text outside of specialized courses on nationalist phenomena. On the other hand, it is written so that it is accessible and relevant to informed readers from many disciplines. Its focus on nation-groups and on comparative accounts makes it stand out as one of the most valuable of the recent additions to the literature on nationalism.

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V. Lynn Tyler, ed. *Culturgrams: The Nations Around Us - Volume 1, North and South America, Western and Eastern Europe*. Brigham Young University, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. (Garrett Park, Md: Garrett Park Press, 1985). Unpaged, \$14.00 paper.

Ten years ago Brigham Young University conceived of and began to produce “Culturgrams.” “Culturgrams” appeared singly as four page cultural summaries of nearly eighty different countries. A “Culturgram” on a country is “a briefing to aid understanding of, feeling for, and communication with other people.” A “Culturgram” begins with an enlarged map of the country addressed, noting major cities and with a key in kilometres and miles. To the side of the large map is a smaller map placing the addressed country in relation to surrounding countries on its continent. The “Culturgram” then presents in narrative style some combination of the topics of: customs and courtesies, the people, lifestyle, the nation, useful words and phrases, and suggested readings.

Culturgrams: The Nations Around Us, Volume 1 presents a collection of fifty single “Culturgrams” bound into one volume. Each of the bound “Culturgrams” is identical to the individual gram available from Brigham Young. The bound version, *Volume 1*, presents “Culturgrams” of forty-seven countries in North and South America, and Western and Eastern Europe. (Belgium is split into Flemish and French emphasis and Canada into Atlantic, Western and Ontario, and French.) The “Culturgrams” present an effective overview of a single country. They make—as would any summary of a country—a simplified generalization of a country and its cultures, but one that is usually sensitive and on the whole, correct. One must question many of the individual points raised

and specific instances cited with regard to the true ability to generalize over an entire country. Customs change and also differ in different parts of the country. To attempt to portray an entire country as homogenous enough to take up only four typewritten pages is impossible—especially since each country regardless of size and complexity, from the USSR to Luxembourg, is condensed into four pages. (Exceptions are Canada and Belgium.) If “Culturgrams” are used as general guidelines and used in conjunction with more current and extensive readings, they can help a user of the series to better understand other countries and customs.

“Culturgrams” are not so detailed that they attempt to explain why customs exist—nor is that their intent. But if understanding is desired, much supplemental reading must be done. “Culturgrams” may raise many questions and, in that role, their purpose is good.

The suggested readings were found to be dated, the most recent being 1983 (and that, rarely; most cite late 1970s resources). “Culturgrams” themselves were undated. A danger in purchasing “Culturgrams” in the bound form rather than each individually as updated is that *Volume I* will remain in libraries and updates will not be purchased. If they are purchased, they will be ignored by users because the updates are in a different location. It is doubtful that one would wish to repurchase *Volume I* each time a single “Culturgram” is updated, even if BYU republishes each time.

With the caveat that “Culturgrams” be used in conjunction with in-depth, current information, they present a simplified, fairly accurate portrait of the countries reviewed. Aspects of culture and custom are commented upon, as well as history and economy.

The reviewer questions the wisdom of purchasing the book and advises that updates are extremely important. It may be more advisable to purchase singly all “Culturgrams” available, place them in a looseleaf notebook, and replace dated “Culturgrams” with new ones as they appear.

If *Volume I* is to be purchased by students in a classroom as a supplemental study guide, perhaps it will serve its purpose well. The countries are, however, arranged in alphabetical order, *not* by continent, and are not paged, making it difficult to use as a study guide in relation to areas of the world.

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