

Anglophone West Africa, and South Africa); the Western region (Western and Eastern European countries, Israel, and North America); and the Latin American region (Latin America, Brazil, and Mexico). Individual chapters vary in comprehensiveness based on the history and volume of poverty research in a country. Although adhering to a standardized format, each chapter stands alone as a description of the individuals and/or institutions engaged in poverty research, their theories and methodologies, and the resulting research programs and data sets. Unfortunately, the chapter focusing on the U.S. and Canada footnotes the two leading national data collection agencies rather than specifically identifying poverty research initiatives (with the exception of reports emanating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty and the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center's Panel Study of Income Dynamics). Although they allude to their results, specific reference to major studies such as the Seattle/Denver Income Maintenance Experiments and the Survey of Income and Program Participation would have been appropriate for a "handbook."

Although the editors are to be commended for assembling an internationally representative panel of contributors, the predominance of sociologists and economists has limited the range of disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. An integrative, cross-national discussion of inequality, such as found in geographer David M. Smith's *Where the Grass Is Greener: Living in an Unequal World* (1979), as well as in his subsequent publications, would have added balance. So, too, would a thorough review of the contributions of applied anthropologists to our understanding of poverty through ethnographies undertaken in developed and developing countries, rather than repeatedly lamenting the paucity of qualitative work. Finally, the absence of any

mention of some of the better-known leftist writers (from liberal to Marxist, e.g., Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven to Ralph C. Gomes) suggests that some views are less well represented in the political debate over the causes of poverty. But then the Far Right is too often presented as conservative, leaving conservatives and centrists to share the label "liberal."

Overall, *Poverty: A Global View* fills two gaps in the reference literature. First, it brings together in one volume summaries of the major poverty research efforts and findings for regions and countries worldwide. Second, it conceptually and analytically integrates this information through introductory and closing chapters. Furthermore, the detailed subject indexing across all chapters readily enables comparisons across countries by topic (e.g., concepts, definitions, and measures of poverty, and construction of poverty lines; data sources; and the roles of various international organizations) and by subpopulation (e.g., aged, children, women, rural/urban residents). Ironically, it is the quality of the indexing that revealed the paucity of specific attention given to the role of ethnic, racial, and political violence, as well as internal migration and immigration, in regard to the prevalence and persistence of poverty. Nevertheless, the strengths of the volume far outweigh its weaknesses, and it is hoped that the latter will be addressed in either regularly updated editions or separate topical monographs within the CROP series.—Gary McMillan, *Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

Schiller, Herbert I. *Information Inequality: The Deepening Social Crisis in America.* New York: Routledge, 1966. 149p. \$55.00. (ISBN 0-415-90764-0.) LC 95-46613.

Herbert Schiller, professor emeritus of communication at the University of California at San Diego, is sounding an alarm regarding a lurking social crisis that has

grave implications for society. He states that the information crisis—"inequality of access and impoverished content of information"—is "deepening [an] already pervasive national social crisis." He continues: "The ability to understand, much less overcome, increasingly critical national problems is thwarted, either by a growing flood of mind-numbing trivia and sensationalist material or by an absence of basic, contextualized social information." Specifically, he asserts that the information crisis increases social inequality and intensifies other national social crises as well.

Schiller is eminently qualified to make such an observation, having been professor of economics and communications at the University of Illinois, and preceding that, chair of the Department of Social Studies at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. He also has authored and edited numerous articles and books in the area of mass communication research, including: *Mass Communications and the American Empire* (1969, 1992); *The Mind Managers* (1973); *Communication and Cultural Domination* (1976); *Culture Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression* (1989); and *The Ideology of International Communications* (1992).

The primary source of the information crisis Schiller identifies in the book is the interaction of the "freewheeling corporate enterprise system" with the "unprecedentedly influential and privately-owned information apparatus." In the pivotal first chapter, Schiller explains key mechanisms and structural determinants of the free market. Two important features of the free market are salient and play decisive roles in maintaining corporate control over the media/information sphere. First is the concentration of ownership of the cultural industry, which includes film, television, radio, music, education, theme parks, publishing, and computerization. This concentration leads to vertical integration of the industry, thereby linking these sectors and cre-

ating even greater power in the marketplace. As a result, products cluster around the center and the "space for a free marketplace of ideas narrows." The second significant feature is the selection and training process used for "culture industry managers."

Schiller draws particular attention to the class-based educational system as the foundation for the culture industry's selection process. Schooling generally "impart[s] outlooks and beliefs that support rather than challenge basic institutions, [especially] the political process and the structure of the economy." These values, internalized in school, bear fruit later in life where successful candidates for promotion are "distinguished by a lifelong unquestioning goalongism," called consensus-building in today's business parlance. The result is that the principal actors in the economy (as well as those librarians who take the corporation as a model for the nonprofit sector) are remarkably similar, quite homogeneous in thought, and can be counted on to act within the "commanding logic of corporate business."

Schiller also points out that advertising is crucial to the operation of the corporate marketplace. It "reaffirms daily . . . that consumption is the definition of democracy." We have the freedom to choose any, or none, of the products offered. Cultural production at this point is market-driven and the main purpose of the media/informational sphere becomes selling goods. Most important, Schiller emphasizes that cultural outputs must satisfy not only advertiser preferences for products that offer ideological comfort and support to the prevailing social order, but also stockholder demands for higher and higher profits. Thus, cultural products that deal with social issues from a critical perspective are rarely promoted.

In summation, Schiller demonstrates how the corporate domination of culture with its transnational character works to

drown out any alternative voices striving for the attention of a larger national audience. The free market, transformed by the demands of corporate business logic, does not operate for the public good: it breaks down the social fiber of community, and when the market becomes global, it breaks down the legitimate authority of the state.

This book, although not Schiller at his best, deserves a wide audience among academic librarians of all stripes, especially those in smaller, nonresearch libraries with limited budgets for collection development. He explains very well how the corporate free market and its particular ideology work to limit information available for a national discourse. Schiller correctly identifies, as have Buchanan and Gingrich, that "Cultural, media, and informational issues already are, and increasingly will be, centers of social dispute." Academic librarians, as culture managers, can and must play a role in this social struggle if their libraries are to remain centers of true research and scholarship.

Schiller's style and the book's organization are more typical of a series of introductory lectures than a tightly structured argument. Consequently, the reader must work hard for clarity in certain areas. It is troubling that such an important book has no bibliography and that the index is minimal, chiefly limited to proper nouns. Concepts such as "ideology" and "hegemony" are used in the text without descriptions or even brief definitions. With a more thorough index, the reader could massage the text for a clearer understanding of such subjects.

Schiller does provide sufficient documentation to support his arguments throughout. Endnotes follow each chapter but, on occasion, are less than ideal. For example, note 11 in chapter 5 gives the reference "Gore speech." A close reading of the section surrounding the note gives clues to chase it down. (Notes like this, however, are one of the things

that make being a reference librarian fun.) Still, despite these mechanical shortcomings, the book is worth reading. Indeed, it is a welcome introduction to a crucial area in the sociology/anthropology of information.—Noel D. Young, *Rehoboth, Massachusetts*.

Webster, Frank. *Theories of the Information Society*. London: Routledge (International Library of Sociology), 1995. 257p. \$17.95. (ISBN 0-415-10574-9.) LC 94-49029.

The central question in this book by a professor of sociology at Oxford Brookes University is whether the information society in which we now live is a new kind of society, different in character from any previous society, or whether it is basically just an "informatized" version of a familiar old kind of society. This sounds as if it ought to matter to information professionals, who could be expected to benefit from occupying a strategic position in a novel kind of society. Webster's book will do nothing to encourage such hopes; he is skeptical of any claim of novelty for the information society.

He begins by reviewing, and quickly dismissing, accounts of the transition to a new type of society that are expressed in terms of quantitative increases in information technology, information production, information occupations, information transfer, or exposure to media culture. He turns for illumination on the significance of information in modern society to a variety of social theories and theorists. Few of these are explicitly concerned with the idea of an information society, but all are relevant in various ways. Daniel Bell's theory of a post-industrial society gets sharply criticized. Herbert Schiller's critique of the dominance of market criteria and corporate self-interest in information development, and of class inequalities in access to information, gets a very sympathetic exposition. So does Anthony Giddens's account of the nation-state's longstanding