members as mere tools for the organization). Nowhere are there proven specifics about how to improve nonacademic writing or how to better manage its expanding technology. Nor are there any rules or hints for those of us who would like to make our everyday writing of e-mail, technical manuals, and administrative evaluations more efficient and effective. Instead, one of the chapter authors, Dorothy Winsor, concludes that it cannot be taught by rules—although she offers no practical, tested alternatives. (Curiously, experts who go unmentioned in this and the other chapters have demonstrated the worth of simple principles for improving nonacademic writing; e.g., Anthony Trollope, working to improve the reports written by officials of the postal system a century ago, brought about significant changes in the clarity of, and time invested in, administrative writing.)

So would Nonacademic Writing make worthwhile reading? Perhaps only to those interested in the theories and philosophy of nonacademic writing and its technology. To me, a psychologist with a private practice for academic and nonacademic writers, this book offered no returns for a difficult read. Those of us who want to "get things done" (to paraphrase the editors) might want to wait for a more nonacademic account of nonacademic writing.—Robert Boice, State University of New York at Stony Brook.


The United Nations has proclaimed 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. This fifth publication from the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) compiles a prodigious amount of information on alternative poverty conceptualizations, theories, policies, and research, although it is not a handbook in the customary sense of the term nor strictly a comparative treatise on methodologies of poverty research, as the title might suggest. The Programme itself was created through the collaboration of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and UNESCO's Sector for Social and Human Sciences, both of which provided funds for this monograph along with the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the Centre for Health and Social Policy Studies of the University of Bergen, Norway.

Poverty: A Global View is appropriate to both social sciences/social welfare and area studies collections. Its twenty-five chapters are organized into six parts, the first and last of which are composed of a total of six chapters providing a comparative review of poverty concepts and theories. The analysis reveals the political nature of social research in general, and how political regimes and institutional bases of research support influence the characterizations of the poor and the etiologies constructed to explain poverty within developed and developing countries. The diffusion of Western (especially U.S.) definitions and measures of poverty around the globe is particularly interesting given the lack of consensus for a standard among researchers and policymakers here. Having adopted the notion of a "poverty line," which demarcates the poor and nonpoor, researchers in other countries have waded into this intractable measurement mire. Taken together, these chapters elucidate the many different conceptions of poverty from absolute to relative need, and from personal to structural explanations.

The remaining central parts of the book provide country-specific poverty research approaches and findings. These four parts focus on, respectively, the Asian region (South Asia, Korea, India, Southeast Asia, China, and New Zealand); the African region (Egypt,
Anglophone West Africa, and South Af-
rica); 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 stan-
dardized format, each chapter stands
alone as a description of the individuals
and/or institutions engaged in poverty
research, their theories and methodolo-
gies, and the resulting research programs
and data sets. Unfortunately, the chapter
focusing on the U.S. and Canada foot-
notes the two leading national data col-
lection 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 Pov-
erty and the University of Michigan's
Survey Research Center's Panel Study of
Income Dynamics). Although they allude
to their results, specific reference to ma-
jor studies such as the Seattle/Denver
Income Maintenance Experiments and
the Survey of Income and Program Par-
ticipation would have been appropriate
for a "handbook."

Although the editors are to be com-
mended for assembling an internation-
ally representative panel of contributors,
the predominance of sociologists and
economists has limited the range of dis-
ciplinary perspectives and methodolo-
gies. An integrative, cross-national dis-
cussion 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 re-
peatedly lamenting the paucity of quali-
tative work. Finally, the absence of any
mention of some of the better-known left-
ist 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 of-
ten 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 summa-
ries 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 chap-
ters. Furthermore, the detailed subject in-
dexing 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 vari-
ous international organizations) and by
subpopulation (e.g., aged, children,
women, rural/urban residents). Ironi-
cally, 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 mi-
gration 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 Inequal-
ity: The Deepening Social Crisis in
149p. $55.00. (ISBN 0-415-90764-0.) LC
95-46613.

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