access to global information resources in U.S. and Canadian research libraries. This is followed by a bibliography of references used in the text.

Aside from the information given in this study on the ARL initiative, there is a wealth of useful information that would be very time-consuming to gather separately, particularly the summaries of area studies library committees, the surveys on international publishing, and the information on the economic realities of maintaining area study collections. This study is well organized, very readable, and very important, and is supported by numerous useful figures and tables. Its title, however, barely hints at its contents, nor does it indicate that the study is a response to an imminent crisis that is being addressed by a very far-reaching project. Those who want to keep up on the development of this program can subscribe to ARL-Annc on the Internet, but ARL also needs to be even more aggressive in getting the word out to librarians and faculty than it has been up to now. And the issue of recruiting and training the next generation of area studies librarians must be brought to the fore as the strategic plan is implemented. The project and this study already have made a significant contribution by including Canadian libraries.

Three new developments support the concerns of this project: first, the U.S. government announced in January 1997 a proposal to make substantial cuts in the funding for the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), which would further diminish the resources on foreign countries that American scholars use for research; second, in January, the Mellon Foundation awarded this project a substantial grant that will allow for Southeast Asia and Africa demonstration projects and will enable ARL to move faster in promoting coordinated collection management; and third, U.S. libraries with South Asian collections have formed three regional consortia to address some of the same concerns addressed in this study.—Raymond Lum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.


Although the distance between the covers is not great, this book should play a major role in setting the agenda for discussion on the future of the dominant social science paradigm. Immanuel Wallerstein, distinguished professor of sociology, president of the International Sociological Association, and director of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems, and Civilizations at the State University of New York, Binghamton, is perhaps the preeminent scholar of the social sciences in relation to world systems and their study. Wallerstein, along with ten other scholars of world renown (six from the social sciences, two from the natural sciences, and two from the humanities), has brought to the fore several consequential issues for deliberation regarding the existing disciplinary structure of the social sciences.

In the first section of this book, the authors carefully outline the social and historical construction of the social sciences as a form of knowledge that was organized around two separate antinomies—one between the past and the present, and the second between the descriptive (nomothetic) and the interpretive (idiographic) disciplines. Cartesian dualism, the heart of contemporary inquiry, posited the bifurcation between the human, metaphysical world and the natural world. The Newtonian view of this natural world saw the universe operating like clockwork, mechanically tick-
ing away like an automaton, capable of
being controlled and manipulated. The
only task being to simplify and reduce
nature to its component parts, thus ren-
dering it relatively easy to discover uni-
versal, or “natural,” laws of causality
and the temporal connection between
event one “causing” event two.

The rise of the modern state at the
end of the eighteenth century de-
manded new types of knowledge on
which to base rational decisions. The
resultant definition of social science,
being distinct from the “two cultures”
of the natural sciences and the humani-
ties, was a response to this state-cen-
tric need. The general “profes-
sionalization of knowledge” that took
place during the nineteenth century in-
stitutionalized the emergent social sci-
ence within a revived university sys-
tem.

The subject areas addressed by this
nascent social science coalesced and
became recognizable as distinct disci-
plines unto themselves, each favoring
a different research method—one
method more descriptive, attempting to
find universal laws, and the other
method more analytic or interpretive.
Economics, political science, and soci-
ology formed the core nomothetic so-
cial sciences and endeavored to dis-
cover a systematic, secular, and univer-
sal knowledge of the world that could
be verified empirically. History and an-
thropology tended to look at each so-
cial group separately, to understand and
explain it from its own values.

World developments after 1945 pro-
foundly affected the social sciences. Or-
ganizationally, the individual disciplines,
divided and isolated, were unable to ef-
effectively study complex social phenom-
ena. (One response to this failure was
the advent of area studies in which a
multidisciplinary organizational struc-
ture was paramount). Epistemologically,
new breakthroughs in science also were
making problematic the search for “uni-
versal laws” of nature through the meth-
ods of positivism. Nature and complex
social phenomena now are believed to
be not only active and creative, but also
self-organizing. Combined, these orga-
izational problems and epistemologi-
cal difficulties questioned the degree to
which the social science heritage was
parochial rather than universal.

In the last part of this report, the au-
thors offer some possible paths toward
intellectual clarification of the social sci-
ences, by making a few suggestions
about where opportunities for creative
experimentation might lie. First, they
suggest an expansion of institutions
which brings together scholars from di-
verse disciplines for short periods of
time to work in common around spe-
cific urgent themes. Second, the estab-
lishment of integrated research pro-
grams and joint appointments of fac-
ulty between university departments is
seen as necessary for a cross-fertiliza-
tion of ideas. Joint work for graduate
students between departments also is
proposed.

These important insights for the fu-
ture of social science also are applicable
to librarianship. Most library research
in the United States is not theory driven
but, rather, is the result of a positivist
epistemology that addresses policy-ori-
ented administrative problems or other
technical questions. Library research
tends to be parochial, and this approach,
Michael Harris pointed out in his 1986
article “The Dialectic of Defeat: Antimo-

nies in Research in Library and Infor-
mation Science” (Library Trends, vol. 34,
no. 3), “not only fails to explain the prob-
lem, but actually tends to mask its real
nature.” We need to give priority to re-
search that examines complex social
phenomena, such as the role of library
service in face of the hegemony of mod-
ern corporate culture.

This book would do well as an intro-
ductive text for a graduate-level course
in research methodology. It reads well
and is logically precise. That there is no index is not missed. However, the book sorely lacked bibliographic references necessary for additional reading; there were only eleven footnotes throughout this scholarly treatise. The authors did excellent work of succinctly reporting on a pressing social problem regarding future knowledge production in our increasingly complex and interconnected world. This book is recommended reading for social science librarians, library educators, and others who wish to do library research. It would behoove all librarians to begin to discuss intelligently these same underlying issues.—Noel D. Young, Berkley Public Library, Berkley, Massachusetts.