

Joe Karaganis (Ed.), **Shadow Libraries: Access to Knowledge in Global Higher Education**, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018, 320 pp., \$25.00 (paperback), \$18.00 (Kindle).

Reviewed by
Catherine Cassara
Bowling Green State University, USA

Shadow Libraries: Access to Knowledge in Global Higher Education is a fascinating collection of research reports that explore the reorganizations of the flow of educational and research materials as they pass from authors to publishers and libraries, to students and researchers from comparatively rich universities to poorer ones.

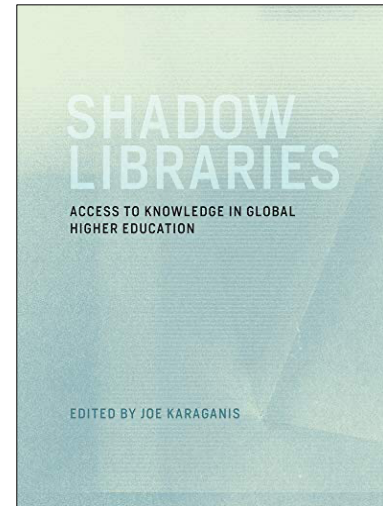
The volume is the result of a four-year research effort that sought to provide a framework for understanding the evolution of this ecosystem across a range of very different national contexts, including Brazil, Poland, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay, India, and the United States. The editor suggests that these different national experiences share an underlying story—the massive expansion of higher education systems in middle- and low-income countries. The conditions that produced efforts such as Sci-Hub are part of the story, but the larger goal of the research is to explore the question of access against the backdrop of the complicated globalization of higher education and the digitization of knowledge.

Most of the studies in the volume used mixed methods, including interviews, student focus groups, surveys, and legal research. The intention behind the design was to give each contributing group of researchers the opportunity to tell the best story they could about educational change and student practices in their respective countries. All of the country studies have a survey component based on a common template. The surveys were conducted at one or more universities in each country and ranged from several hundred respondents to nearly two thousand in the case of Brazil.

Unlike many edited volumes, this collection is a smooth read. The differences between the authors and their national and academic interests are evident, but the transition from chapter to chapter is not distracting. In the same way, while the contributors take different and distinct approaches to their subjects, each chapter adds to the understanding of the whole, and topical references between chapters are informative and useful.

The volume is easily accessible to scholars and graduate students, and some of the chapters might be comprehensible to advanced undergraduates. The subject matter ranges across discipline boundaries between law, media and communication, education, and information studies. The volume is well worth reading.

Volume editor Joe Karaganis is vice president of the American Assembly at Columbia University. His work focuses on the regulation of the knowledge economy. The contributors include professors of higher education, sociology, law, technology, and cultural studies. Other authors are independent researchers, think tank staff, editors, and lawyers. Chapter contributors include Balázs Bodó, Laura Czerniewicz, Mirosław



Filiciak, Mariana Fossatti, Jorge Gemetto, Eve Gray, Evelin Heidel, Joe Karaganis, Lawrence Liang, Pedro Mizukami, Jhessica Reia, and Alek Tarkowski.

In his introduction, Karaganis provides an overview of shadow libraries, addresses the factors that lead to their creation, provides an overview of the chapters of the volume, and explains the origins and goals of the research project behind the book.

While public provisioning of instructional materials was often seen as necessary after WWII, the recent expansion of higher education has not produced any comparable public mandates. As the cost of textbooks, journal subscriptions, and monographs rose, the challenge of providing affordable access to materials was left to strained libraries and, more often in practice, to students and faculty to figure out for themselves. While growth of higher education is often identified with the expansion of U.S. and European public higher education systems, the real global boom has occurred in the past twenty years in middle- and low-income countries. In 1995, there were 283 million people with postsecondary educations. In 2015, there were 725 million. In the past 20 years, India's student population quadrupled. Brazil's tripled. South Africa's population doubled. Poland's more than doubled, as did Mexico's.

The second chapter, authored by Bodó, tracks the development of the major shadow libraries in Russia. The story draws a direct line from the samizdat—the underground copying and smuggling networks that resisted Soviet censorship—to the efforts of Russian academics a generation later in the 1990s to digitize and distribute academic literature in the face of economic crisis and institutional collapse to more ambitious activities another generation later to aggregate and organize those immense collections that began the shadow library reality.

Bodó also wrote the third chapter in the book, a fascinating and insightful look at the first large Russian shadow library, Library Genesis—LibGen—via numbers. Described as a quantitative analysis, the chapter is so much more. It exposes how these services operate, who they serve, and in the end what harms to publishers and authors can reasonably be attributed to shadow archives. LibGen and its mirror sites infringe the copyrights on hundreds of thousands of works, in theory undercutting the market for those works. But they also respond to clear market failures where work is unavailable or unaffordable.

In chapter 4, Heidel explores the history of access to educational materials in Argentina. There, access to educational materials has been shaped by a combination of factors that are relatively unique in Latin America, including a long tradition of free public university education, extended periods of public investment in libraries, a publishing industry well established by the beginning of the twentieth century, and literacy rates well above Latin American norms. It has also been shaped by features more common to Latin America in the latter half of the twentieth century—most important, the retreat of the state as a guarantor of educational and other rights, beginning under the dictatorships of the mid-1960s.

The fifth chapter, by Gray and Czerniewicz, explores access to learning resources in post-apartheid South Africa. To address the topic the chapter deals with three interrelated subjects: the legacy of apartheid; the organization and radical transformation of the commercial publishing market; and the mix of new-technology-enabled strategies by which students do their best to get the textbooks and other materials they need. They suggest the pressure for reform has produced tensions on all three of these fronts. The role of

shadow libraries in the South African context—during apartheid and after—has to be understood in the light of the extremes of inequality and the concomitant levels of student poverty—both educational and financial—that have needed to be addressed in the wake of apartheid.

In chapter 6, Filiciak and Tarkowski look at access to materials in the context of the boom and restructuring of Polish higher education after the collapse of Communist Party rule in 1989. While the restructuring was viewed as a success story in educational modernization, the Polish situation epitomized the dilemma of a small-language based educational system, operating in an increasingly globalized, English-based academic culture—a situation common to most of the countries in Europe.

In chapter 7, Liang explores the history of Indian struggles for access to books—first as a function of library policy and later through the innumerable channels of student photocopying, sharing, and downloading that accompany the current boom in Indian higher education. The larger aspirational structures that have always shaped library building in India frame the chapter. The age-old desire to unify human knowledge visible in the mythologies of Babel, Alexandria, and Google at one level competes at the more personal conception of libraries as pathways for self-realization.

Chapter 8 provides an examination of access and sharing among university students in Brazil. Authors Mizukami and Reia set the story against a complex landscape of institutional and political factors including the restricted legal scope for educational copying, the inability of publishers to set up a functional licensing regime for photocopying, increasingly aggressive enforcement actions targeted at universities, copy shops, and diverse open publishing efforts.

The volume ends with a chapter about student-led efforts for copyright reform efforts in Uruguay. Gemetto and Fossatti use a copy center crackdown to map the landscape of academic access to research, class, and scholarly items in Uruguay. The crackdown was triggered by the Foundation of University Culture (FCU)—the main editor, distributor, and vendor of course material at the law school. While the FCU had its origins in the Office of Course Materials—organized by students in the 1940s to make educational materials more available and affordable. Over the course of the intervening decades, the organization became more like conventional commercial publishers, offering discounts to students but no longer pushing seriously against the problem of affordability. Reaction to the raid was immediate and intense. Demonstrators demanded that the copy centers be reopened, while students called for “free and democratic access” to the full corpus of human knowledge. Law school students called for copyright law reform, especially expansion of educational exceptions to copyright, enough to legalize most educational photocopying. The Uruguayan Book Association blamed widespread photocopying for the high-price, low-print-run model, while the students in turn blamed high prices for widespread photocopying.

The collection explores the top-down examples of the influences of formal institutions like universities, publishers, and government policy, as well as bottom-up influences of students and the informal networks they built—in person and across information technological platforms—to get and share access to the research and textbooks they needed. *Shadow Libraries* is a study of the tensions in educational information in the digital era.