Competition and Evolution in the Distributive Trades. By LOUIS P. BUCKLIN. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972. Pp. xiv+369. $10.95.

This book undertakes to describe, explain, and evaluate the structure and performance of retailing and wholesaling in the United States. The descriptions are quantitative and analytical whenever possible. Bucklin "explains" by identifying factors associated with changes in the structure of the trades. He "evaluates" by looking at the vigor of competition among agencies, by estimating the cost of (or value added by) the distributive trades, and by analyzing the factors that determine this cost.

The book opens with a discussion of the social status of tradesmen, the functions they perform, the factors that determine whether goods move into use directly or through middlemen, and the economic significance and present structure of the trades. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 consider retailing. One of these presents a condensed history of retailing to 1929, when the first census of business was made; the second describes changes since 1929; and the third discusses limitations upon competition and their consequences. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 repeat the pattern for wholesaling, with a chapter on history prior to 1929, one on structural changes since 1929, and one on the effectiveness of competition. Chapter 8 offers a new estimate of the cost distribution and endeavors to explain that cost.

Most of Bucklin's material comes from well-known sources, including his own writings. His orientation is primarily economic, and his selection of materials reflects that fact. Given this constraint, he has done well in assembling his materials and integrating them into running narratives or into his own logical structures. Those who seek leads into the literature concerned with the function and structure of distribution may well start with his summaries, footnotes, and bibliography.

His own major contributions are scattered through the book, usually in the form of equations. Most of these show a relationship between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable in which he is interested. In chapter 1 he also devises some new measures of the flows of ownership, information, and the physical goods, by means of which he determines when direct distribution is more costly than dealing through middlemen, or vice versa. These equations are derived from armchair reasoning and are given no empirical tests.

Chapter 3 derives from census data some equations that account for the number of retail establishments in existence, sales per establishment, and the proportion of aggregate retail sales taken by chain stores. Similar equations in chapter 6 account for the ratio of aggregate sales by wholesalers to aggregate sales by retailers, the number and size distribution of wholesale establishments, sales per employee of wholesale establishments, and the distribution of sales volume among different types of wholesaler.

In some of his formulations Bucklin makes good use of available statistics. An example is his estimate (p. 208) dividing sales by manufacturers in 1939 and 1963 between direct sales to users and sales through intermediaries. Another is a factor analysis (pp. 110–13) of the principal forces influencing the overall structure of retailing in the United States. Further examples are a new estimate (p. 300) of the contribution made by retailing and wholesaling to national income, a derivation (pp. 312–16) of aggregate supply and demand functions for distributive services, and some equations (pp. 318–25) showing functional relations between the cost of distribution and a country's level of economic development.

A detailed criticism of Bucklin's book would require space far beyond what is permissible in this review. However, a few general judgments can be offered. The book is not easy to read. The writing is sometimes awkward, obscure, and uncertain. Its analytical tools and its conclusions are not rigorously proved. Despite these flaws it is an important book that makes significant contributions to marketing theory in general and specifically to an understanding of what middlemen do, when and why they are useful, and how well they do their jobs.

REAVIS COX

Manchester Business School

Marketing Communication: Modern Promotional Strategy. By FREDERICK E. WEBSTER, JR.
New York: Ronald Press, 1971. Pp. viii+694. $11.00.

Marketing authors have been producing a number of textbooks that fit under the titles of "marketing communication," "promotional strategy," "promotional decision making," etc. In the past five years there have been at least a dozen proposed, in draft, or actually published. The idea behind these books is consolidation. The feeling is that the student and future manager can do a better job if he or she takes a planning approach which covers not just advertising or selling but all the elements of marketing communication. And since communication has been studied so thoroughly in the social sciences, it is seen as the best area in marketing in which to espouse and apply a behavioral point of view, with quantitative techniques providing the planning framework.

Webster's textbook is an example of this trend. His preface states, "The marketing communication concept . . . advances the idea that advertising, personal selling and other aspects of promotion are most effective when they are developed to take advantage of their synergistic effects. . . . This book offers a comprehensive introduction to the behavioral, analytical, and management aspects of marketing communication strategy."

This reads well, but Webster's book, like all the others currently available in the field, fails to keep the promise of the marketing communication idea.

The problem is that advertising, selling, and other promotional aspects only sometimes have synergistic effects. Putting things together doesn't automatically create synergy. Each part of the whole must make a strong