

The government sticking its nose into familial, educational, and health care systems to inculcate their youth is not everyone's cup of tea. Moreover, this blurring of private and public can create programs that are difficult to monitor and control. Already our systems of juvenile justice are rather loose in their attempt to regulate delinquents—too often creating a legal process in which one part of the system is in conflict with another. The author's call for better coordination in meeting stated nondiscriminatory objectives is a familiar one.

Levesque leaves to others the work of being more specific about the kinds of programs that could be created. More work also is needed to link the developmental perspective on adolescence with the way values can be effectively inculcated. A certain value orientation that fights discrimination is presented as a given without discussing in detail how that orientation would impact deep-seated beliefs. Levesque recognizes this when he acknowledges early on that prejudice has its implicit, unconscious sources. The key is to identify specific ways in which those sources of bias can be appropriately confronted. This book is clearly a step in the right direction.

Blaming the Victim: How Global Journalism Fails Those in Poverty, by **Jairo Lugo-Ocando**. London: Pluto Press, 2015. 224 pp. \$34.00 paper. ISBN: 9780745334417.

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As I was sitting down to review *Blaming the Victim: How Global Journalism Fails Those in Poverty*, I came across a *New York Times* op-ed (“To Unite the Earth, Connect It,” Sunday Review, September 27, 2015, p. 9) by rock star Bono and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg that perfectly captured everything that is wrong with the media's discussion of poverty, according to the author of this passionately argued book. With Jairo Lugo-Ocando's stirring words fresh in my mind, I read this seemingly unassailable do-good essay in a new light. Who could object to guaranteeing Internet connectivity to the

entire world's population, so that people around the world can “feed, heal, educate and employ themselves”? What's wrong with urging Silicon Valley to rise to the challenge of helping “those most marginalized, those trapped in poverty”? What's wrong with two big names loaning their fame to such a good cause?

Well, for starters, the proffered micro-solutions (apps that help Nigerian citizens to better track “whether governments keep their spending promises” and Guatemalan mothers to receive information about how to have healthy pregnancies) are patronizing and absurdly inadequate to the problem, not to mention self-serving for Silicon Valley. A plight rooted in centuries of colonialism and economic inequality is reduced to a techno-fix. The celebrity authors locate poverty outside the system, as exceptional, when in fact widespread global poverty *is* the system: some 80 percent of the world's population subsists on less than \$10 per day (p. 83). Also conveniently excluded from the self-congratulatory account are the global North's culpability and especially the culpability of those, such as Bono and Zuckerberg, whose philanthropic efforts do not diminish the fact that they have personally hoarded such a grotesquely disproportionate share of the world's wealth. Or, as Lugo-Ocando sharply puts it: “the reason why so many have so little is because so few have accumulated so much” (p. 4). Celebrity poverty relief is part of the process of diverting attention from the true character of poverty: It is not about extreme misfortune, but rather widespread and increasing inequality; it is not rightly our free decision to “generously” give to the global poor, but rather our debt and obligation to even the scales we tipped so long ago; it will not be ameliorated with more technology and economic growth, but only through substantial redistribution of wealth.

This is a powerful and controversial indictment. Lugo-Ocando has effectively staked his ground in a live debate about the social construction of poverty, disputing the dominant global definitions of the problem, causes, and solutions (though in the latter case, not proposing much in the way of concrete policy alternatives). The introduction and first chapter trace the legacy of centuries

of colonialism and neo-colonialism by western powers. Self-serving discourses (social Darwinism, Malthusianism, eugenics, philanthropy as a limited, discretionary response of "pity") solidified during the Victorian era still circulate in various forms today. Promoted by governments and international bodies, these dominant ideas effectively serve as mystifications of dominant interests. Blaming poverty on the corruption or incompetence of southern elites diverts attention from northern capitalists' ongoing exploitation and more than their own fair share of corruption and greed. Even humanitarian NGOs mostly serve to reproduce the status quo. As Lugo-Ocando argues in Chapter Six ("Spinning Poverty"), NGOs perpetuate a view of poverty as rooted primarily in crisis situations (famines, natural disasters, etc.) because such a narrow construction best fits with their own organizational needs for branding, fundraising, and gaining access to political decision-makers.

In the remaining five densely argued chapters and the conclusion, three of them co-authored (on the "poverty of ideas in the newsroom," with Steven Harkins; on Africa, with Patrick O. Malaolu; and on visual journalism, with Scott Eldridge II), Lugo-Ocando turns his attention to journalism's central role in maintaining the status quo. Readers hoping for significant in-depth original research on newsroom practices or international reporting beats will be disappointed. A few interviews with poverty reporters enliven the text. With the exception of snippets of original content analysis dropped unannounced in some of the chapters (notably, on Africa), the evidence for patterns of media coverage is based on close readings of non-randomly selected individual articles supplemented by secondary literature.

Even so, the analysis, drawing on studies of poverty, activism, and news media spanning two centuries, is often insightful and thought provoking. Breathing the same ideological air as their sources and audiences, Lugo-Ocando observes, journalists reach for commonsense conventions to structure their stories. Time pressures and cautious editors make it difficult to challenge the half-truths and misinformation of official sources even if reporters were so inclined, and most aren't, given their privileged backgrounds with no

direct experience of poverty. The situation has only grown worse as newsroom budget cuts mean fewer reporters with less time to double check or go beyond the news handed to them by public relations officers.

Nevertheless, journalists retain some discretion, and as a former journalist, Lugo-Ocando imagines how they might do their jobs differently. He calls for less reliance on elite sources and greater inclusion of the voices of the poor. He also calls for more structural causal analysis but does not say how he would overcome the tendency of personalized narrative journalism to privilege description over explanation. Most intriguing is Lugo-Ocando's suggestion that journalists stop "othering" the poor and grant them the same rights, including the right to a basic standard of living, we deem proper for ourselves: in short, the poor must become part of our "we" instead of a "they." Without that shift toward a less detached perspective, coverage will be rampant with double standards: for example, poor victims of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti dismissed as "passive," while relatively prosperous victims of the 2011 earthquake in Japan celebrated for their "resilience." The further implication is that poverty reporting ought to not only focus on the global South but also draw out connections between problems experienced in both North and South and our shared vulnerabilities to the devastation wrought by winner-take-all economic policies. Photos as well as narratives also need to respect the poor subject's dignity and in so doing help move western publics from spectatorship to action.

At least some journalists are moving toward this kind of explanatory reporting "in the context of equality" (p. 69). In the compelling penultimate chapter, "The Emergence of Alternative Voices," Lugo-Ocando highlights the positive examples provided by news agencies rooted in the global South, such as Al-Jazeera, the Inter-Press Service, the Catholic radio network *Fe y Alegría*, and the Bolivian news agency *Fides*, as well as alternative media in the United States such as *Democracy Now!* and *Radio Pacifica*. Not coincidentally, these media are all either non-profit or state-supported, which provides them with the institutional autonomy they need to challenge dominant capitalist narratives. Operating as part of an

increasingly integrated global news system, non-western and alternative media are reaching beyond their immediate audiences and even prompting changes at their commercial competitors (such as CNN International, which recently added a broadcast magazine "Inside Africa" that goes beyond the usual crisis reporting). Now, if we can just get Zuckerberg and Bono to take it to the next level . . .

The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice, by **Stephanie A. Malin**. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015. 238 pp. \$90.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780813569796.

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The product of Stephanie A. Malin's fieldwork in the region since 2006, *The Price of Nuclear Power* tells the story of several communities in the Colorado Plateau through archival research, surveys, and interviews. In this book, Malin provides an interesting and timely examination of communities in the Plateau faced with renewed uranium production. Specifically, the book looks at the "paradox" that uranium communities find themselves in. Despite high cancer rates and other illnesses, a sizable number of residents in these communities are in favor of renewed uranium production. This paradox provides thought-provoking insights on issues such as community identity, environmental justice, ideology, and neoliberalism. In particular, she argues that environmental justice is a project heavily influenced by local and material conditions.

Following the introduction, the book offers readers a history of uranium in the United States. The story of uranium's boom and bust cycles is similar to that of other communities that have fallen on hard times. Correspondingly, this book will be of great interest to those interested in the plight of struggling towns in rural America. One cannot help but think of similar issues, such as natural gas fracking, when reading this book. In fact, Malin remarks early in the book that Pennsylvania communities, like those in the

Colorado Plateau, experience similar problems such as spatial isolation. This suggests the potential for very interesting comparative work in the future. At the same time, Malin does an excellent job reminding us that uranium is unique in its political, economic and military significance. The focus on uranium gives the story of its extraction in the American West the ability to stand out among similar work.

Most of the book's chapters discuss specific communities in the Colorado Plateau. One chapter details the town of Monticello's struggle with waste material and illness caused by contamination. This chapter details the work of an activist group, Victims of Mill Tailings Exposure, and their advocacy for cancer victims. However, Malin also discusses ambivalent support for the group: some members support renewed uranium production despite the health risks. This chapter is followed by the story of a corporation called Energy Fuels and their return to Piñon Ridge. Malin notes that many of the area's residents see the company as "local," rather than a transnational corporation coming from outside. In fact, the company, in the words of Malin, has "masterfully" established itself as a local institution that seeks to provide jobs and healthcare to the community. Hence, some see the proposed mill as a "symbol of renewal," despite the work of activists opposing the mill.

The aforementioned examples support Malin's point that environmental justice cannot be reduced simply to the prohibition of uranium mining. Rather, the fight for environmental justice is complex, with different actors pursuing different goals. This is further influenced by the special material conditions faced by these communities. There are several threads, according to Malin, that connect the different positions of community members. Issues of isolation, poverty, and social dislocation affect both communities and activists. For instance, opponents to the uranium industry that live in areas where alternatives to mining exist (for example, tourism or sustainable agriculture) fight a very different battle than those who do not. Those who do not have alternatives are forced to define environmental justice differently—such as by supporting industry regulation.