Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw • Senthan Selvarajah
Editors

Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding

Critical and Global Perspectives

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Foreword by Steven Youngblood

For those who study and teach media and peacebuilding, *Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives* is like a package under the tree at Christmas. And it's not a package with underwear and socks, but is instead the shiny toy that you've been impatiently seeking for many years.

As a teacher and practitioner of peace journalism, I've had to piece together lectures on contemporary issues that tie together theory and practice. With this book, I now have timely, relevant chapters that will provide a solid foundation for these lectures. Many valuable discussions are expertly framed inside this book. For example, how do journalists cover human rights abuses in IDP camps? How can media be re-designed in humanitarian interventions? How can exiled journalists be effective change agents? Can human rights journalism be practiced in China? The answers to these questions, and many more, are adroitly addressed by internationally-recognized experts in peacebuilding and media such as Jake Lynch, Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob, Stuart Allan, and Ibrahim Seaga Shaw.

While each chapter is laudable, I am especially enthused about Chaps. 4 and 7. Chapter 4 discusses media and what author Matthew Charles calls Colombia's "after war." In the introduction to the chapter, he discusses how war is framed through an international journalism/parachute reporting lens. As an alternative, he discusses journalism which "extends beyond neutrality and detachment of bearing witness… towards advocacy and involved participation." Charles also presents the interesting, and potentially controversial, concept of "journalism as

resistance," and the notion of journalism "defined by balance and accuracy, and not by impartiality or neutrality." Peace journalism critics always begin their critiques with objectivity. Charles' presentations in this chapter will help me as an instructor frame discourse about objectivity, and crucially, give these discussions the nuance that they previously lacked.

In Chap. 7, Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob also expounds on the theme of objectivity. His chapter is titled "Communitarianism, Ethics and the Burden of Journalistic Objectivity: Reflections of 'Peace Journalists' Covering the Boko Haram Insurgency." Jacob argues for "an ethical makeover of journalism practice, particularly in crises states and areas of limited statehood." His discussion of the communitarian ethics of peace journalism is especially useful. Jacob writes, "If information, peace, humanitarian aid and social justice are the key desires of audiences in crisis societies, the peace journalist should be driven by communitarian values that privilege stories that help to meet the needs and desires of the society covered." He goes on to present fascinating data from reporters covering Boko Haram who attended a two-day peace journalism workshop. These findings will prove invaluable for journalists covering insurgencies, and professors and students studying the challenges inherent in such coverage.

Taken as a whole, *Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives* is indeed a gift to journalists, students, and academics alike who seek enlightenment about these timely, critical issues surrounding media and peace.

Parkville, USA Steven Youngblood

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Ibrahim Seaga Shaw
Senthan Selvarajah

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