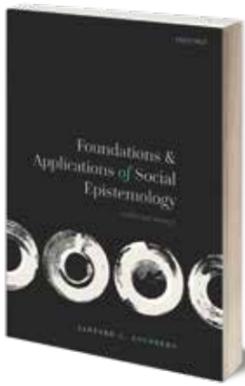


EXCLUSIVE



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That case is very convincing for the type of news that usually comes out easily, like, if there is a flood. But what if there is a motivation — or we can guess that there is a motivation — to suppress the news?

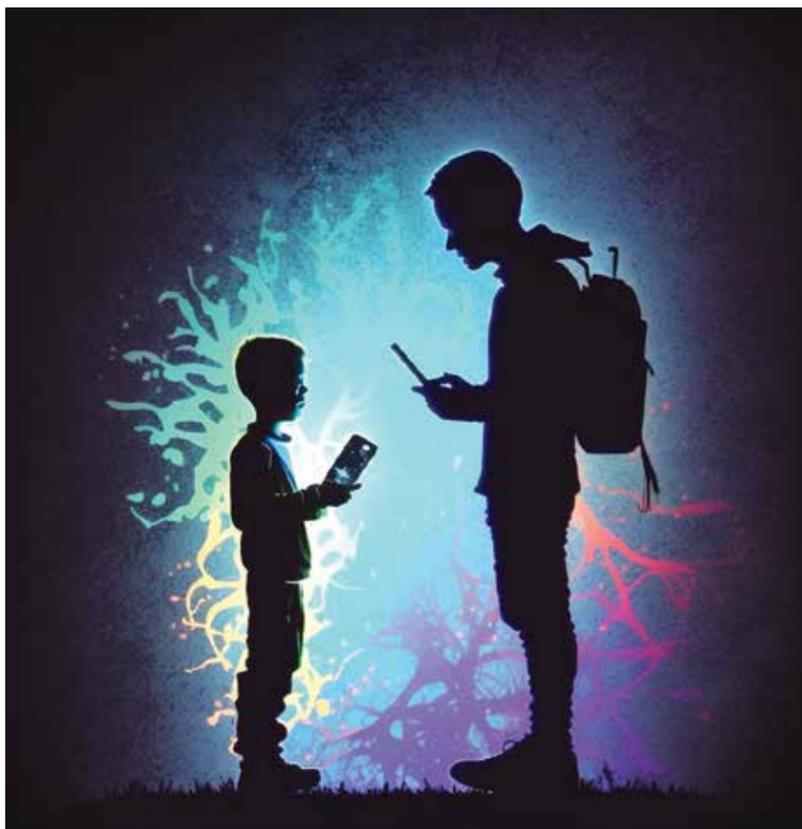
Absolutely right. So, I published an op-ed a little while back in the Chicago Tribune. I tried to give an example on the left and an example on the right for my argument because I didn't want this to come across as partisan. I think it actually happens on both sides.

There was a very, very interesting piece that was written by Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times about four years ago where he pointed out that the title of the paper was the most important news that you haven't heard. And he pointed out that global poverty rates have actually been dropping in the past two decades, and it's something that when you talk to your progressive friends, they might not know. They might actually think global poverty is getting worse. But according to Nicholas Kristof and according to the economist that he was relying on, it's actually been getting much better.

He hypothesized — and I think he's right — that the reason that many readers of The New York Times don't know about it is that we are in a bubble of progressive newspapers. It's not that they suppressed it. The best case is that they didn't suppress it. They just didn't take an interest in it. So, there was a

case on the left where if somebody had said to me just out of the blue, "Hey, you know global poverty rates have been dropping," I might have doubted them on the basis of, "Well, if that were true, then surely the New York Times would have reported it." And on the right, there was a really interesting study about Fox. Fox News had a weather station called Fox Weather. Apparently, I'm going to say they were suppressing it. They were suppressing a lot of information having to do with global warming. So, if all you did was following Fox Weather, you probably would come away with a misimpression that the case for global warming is either non-existent or much weaker than it actually is.

I had another interview with a Canadian scholar, Graham Riches, almost six months ago. He has several books on hunger. The title of two of his books, published 20 years apart, were 'First World Hunger' and 'First World Hunger Revisited'. In



the introduction to the second book, he said that it may come to you as a surprise that, putting aside the malnutrition, the lack of choice, and everything else, there is hunger, rough and brutal hunger, in the First World. Many people are surprised by that. That's a kind of public suppression, which is different from explicit suppression by the state not to publish that news.

It's a nice point. I don't know the proper term for it, but I understand what you're getting at. It's not suppression. It's just a lack of interest. You're in a position to tell me whether this is correct, but my guess is that if the newspapers think about doing anything like that at all, they will ask themselves, "Would our readers be interested in this? Would they regard it as newsworthy?" And if the answer is no, they won't write on it. But more often than not, they probably don't even think to ask the question.

So, it's not explicit suppression, but it is, as it were, an absence of news. And this

is where I think my kind of reasoning can lead you into trouble if the conditions that I pointed out aren't satisfied.

Let's suppose that an avid advocate of conspiracy theories is sitting across from you, and he brings up the same point. He'll note that someone or some institution has been hiding that information. What would be your response?

It's the way that I would respond to conspiracy theories generally. It's to think that there's an actual conspiracy, a hiding campaign. If you imagine the number of things you need to assume, and then you just think about, for example, standard cases of trying to keep an upcoming surprise party actually a surprise from the person and how difficult that is, you'll see how unreasonable it would be to make all of these assumptions that the conspiracy theorist would have to make.

But I would acknowledge if this is what the conspiracy theorist is saying, at least this much is true. This is the point

Northwestern University scholar Sanford C. Goldberg: To be informed citizens, we have to diversify our news sources

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