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Moral solidarity as a news value: Rendering marginalized communities and enduring social injustice newsworthy

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Abstract

Solidarity is a longstanding, though seldom acknowledged, news value in coverage of marginalized communities. As a principled commitment to social justice, solidarity as a news value helps account for news stories that deviate from elite focus and individualistic framing, which have been regularly critiqued in scholarship on dominant news values. This article contributes a grounded framework for locating and analyzing types of solidarity that operate as news values in reporting on marginalized communities. Through qualitative textual analysis of articles published as part of the 2016 San Francisco Homeless Project, this study finds that news values of intragroup solidarity, civic solidarity, political solidarity, and moral solidarity unevenly arise in coverage of local homelessness, and each have implications for whose perspectives are rendered newsworthy. The majority of stories that exhibit solidarity as a news value are aligned with either civic solidarity or political solidarity, which means they maintain focus on the city and critique the structure of the housing market but do not necessarily move journalists toward more inclusive sourcing of people experiencing homelessness. In contrast, intragroup solidarity stories offer a grounded narrative of "we take care of us," and moral solidarity stories amplify a narrative of "let us live – here's what we need from you." These stories represent the perspectives of people subjected to enduring social injustice. Moral solidarity offers the strongest value for journalism that represents marginalized communities because it renders people whose dignity is denigrated by current systemic arrangements newsworthy and amplifies their urgent appeals for concrete changes.

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Solidarity became a watchword across the United States in 2020. For example, during protests against racial injustice beginning in June 2020, people in the United States were inundated with messages from organizations, corporations, and leaders declaring solidarity with Black Lives Matter. At the same time, a reckoning in newsrooms began as many reporters and former reporters argued that newsroom leadership displayed a troubling lack of solidarity with journalists of color and communities of color their publications claimed to serve (Farhi and Ellison, 2020). In the first six months of 2020, national news venues had invoked different senses of solidarity in the context of the covid-19 pandemic: on March 14, 2020, *The New York Times* published an opinion editorial on the looming covid-19 crisis titled, "We Need Social Solidarity, Not Just Social Distancing" (Klinenberg, 2020). Soon after, *The New Yorker* responded to calls for "solidarity not charity" with a piece called "What Mutual Aid Can Do During a Pandemic: A Radical Practice is Suddenly Getting Mainstream Attention" (Tolentino, 2020). Despite occasional glimmers of change, newsworthiness judgments in dominant outlets have largely persisted in emphasizing classic news values, such as drama, novelty, celebrity, and elite involvement (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016), at the expense of accounting for marginalized communities' lived experiences and immediate needs (Bonilla-Silva, 2020) – even while publicly pledging solidarity. What does solidarity mean in the context of journalism that represents marginalized communities, and how does solidarity manifest as a news value in stories? Predating the pandemic, the 2016 San Francisco (SF) Homeless Project offers a case of how journalists render marginalized communities newsworthy through logics of solidarity. This study finds that four types of solidarity arose in the SF Homeless Project as news values. The most instructive (and infrequent) of these is moral solidarity because it renders people whose dignity is denigrated by current systemic arrangements newsworthy and amplifies their appeals for concrete and immediate change.

News values are latent organizing structures that shape what news organizations judge as newsworthy (Hall, 1973). Much of the literature on news values begins with a descriptive account of the guideposts journalists and editors use to judge newsworthiness based on textual analysis, and ends with a call for news to expand beyond elite myopia. Galtung and Ruge (1965) offer a taxonomy of twelve factors including "reference to elite people" (p. 70) and find that "the more the event concerns elite people, the more probable that it will become a news item" (p. 68). As a result, marginalized communities' needs and lived experiences end up outside of classic calculations of newsworthiness. Galtung and Ruge recommend "more coverage of non-elite people" and "more reports from culturally distant zones" (p. 84–85), which I argue are achieved through solidarity as a news value.

In the 55 years since Galtung and Ruge's study, elite overemphasis has remained a consistent thread of critique across studies of news values in dominant media. For

example, Harcup and O'Neill (2001, 2016) established a set of news values including power elite, celebrity, surprise, bad news, good news, and magnitude. Gans (2004) provided a catalog of "enduring news values" including rugged individualism, moderatism, and order in his study of major newsrooms' disproportionate reliance on "Knowns" over "Unknowns" (p. 42). Gitlin (1980) similarly addressed news values through a critique of conservatism and anti-protest rhetoric in news coverage, and Hall (1973, 1978) argued against dominant journalism's latent valorization of a conservative social order that normalizes the subjugation of minorities. On the other hand, journalism outside of dominant venues, often written by and for members of marginalized communities, has regularly used an alternative set of news values including solidarity, social cohesion, and community-building in the traditions of the Black press, ethnic press, and social movement journals (Awad, 2011; Ostertag, 2006; Williams Fayne, 2021). The focus of this study is on journalism on marginalized communities published in news outlets that were not founded to serve these communities, which is especially relevant at a time when a growing range of news outlets are increasingly focused on marginalization (Arbel, 2020; Bomey, 2020) – often with mixed results. The SF Homeless Project provides a useful example of how coverage of marginalized communities manifests in generalist, local media outlets, due to the Project's widespread participation from more than 70 news outlets.

The SF Homeless Project was the first large-scale, decentralized journalistic collaboration on homelessness, and inspired similar efforts in other cities, such as Washington, DC (DC Homeless Crisis, 2020) and Seattle, Washington (Hanscom, 2016). The decentralization of the Project distinguished it from cross-newsroom collaborations that release a shared series of stories that reporters from different newsrooms develop together. Editors who led the Project said that they recognized local newsrooms would be less willing to participate if leadership were directive (particularly if that leadership came from outside their home institution). The sole requirement of the Project, according to an editor interviewed as part of this study, was to cover Bay Area homelessness on June 29, 2016.

Arguably, the open-endedness of the Project created prime conditions for a wide breadth of stories, news values, and techniques in a media day that included more than 70 news outlets and was uncoordinated by design. Yet just as the proliferation of news outlets across digital, television, radio, and print does not guarantee a diversity of content, the 325 stories published as part of the original Project largely orbited on similar narrative axes consistent with classic news values of rugged individualism and power elite responses to homelessness. As I illustrate in the following analysis, however, a subset of 64 stories diverged from traditional tropes to showcase different types of solidarity as news values. Drawing on distinctions between different types of solidarity originally theorized in political philosophy including Black and feminist theory (Bayertz, 1999; Fraser, 1986; Habermas, 1990; Laitinen and Pessi, 2015; Näsström, 2011; Rehg, 1994; Scholz, 2008; Shelby, 2002; Young, 2000), I develop a grounded framework of four different types of solidarity that are relevant to understanding journalism on marginalized communities. This framework includes: intragroup solidarity ("we take care of us"), civic solidarity ("we live together"), political solidarity ("we must transform structural injustice"), and moral solidarity ("here's what we need from you").

The research questions guiding this study are: (1) how do different types of solidarity delineated in political philosophy (including intragroup, civic, political, and moral solidarity) apply to journalism on marginalized communities? (2) what types of solidarity do stories published as part of the SF Homeless Project display as news values, and how often do stories with these news values appear? (3) what is the significance of the specific types of solidarity that journalists use to render people experiencing homelessness newsworthy?

Through qualitative textual analysis, I find that across the entire SF Homeless Project, only 1.54% of stories displayed a news value of moral solidarity. Eight percent of stories displayed a news value of political solidarity, 8.62% displayed a news value of civic solidarity, and 1.54% of stories displayed a news value of intragroup solidarity. In other words, solidarity appeared in approximately one-fifth of the Project, and even the most frequent application of a specific type of solidarity appeared in less than 10% of stories across the Project. That said, this minority of stories enriched coverage by rendering marginalized people's perspectives, experiences, and struggles newsworthy – and challenged dominant news values.

Discussing solidarity in journalism often raises questions about the line between journalism and advocacy journalism. This article intentionally does not utilize a distinction between journalism and advocacy journalism because journalism is never a depoliticized endeavor, despite its mythology of objectivity and neutrality (critiqued in Hall 1997; Ettema and Glasser, 1998; Nagle, 2020). If solidarity news values constitute advocacy journalism for marginalized groups, then dominant elite-focused news values arguably constitute advocacy journalism for elites' interests in maintaining hierarchies and systemic conditions that preserve their status. News values are not blunt endorsements, though, and instead offer a procedural logic for how journalists decide what to report. The latent criteria they use to do so is the focus of this article.

This article begins with an explication of solidarity as a news value, and specifies four types of solidarity drawn from political theory that are applicable to US journalism on marginalized communities (with key aspects of each type summarized in Table 1). Then, I present a qualitative textual analysis of the SF Homeless Project that applies these definitions to analyze how stories published as part of the Project display news values of intragroup, civic, political, or moral solidarity. I conclude by arguing that moral solidarity offers a practical and vital news value for journalism because, unlike other forms of solidarity that may represent structural issues and grassroots efforts without accounting for immediate unmet and unseen needs, moral solidarity renders marginalized communities' urgent and concrete appeals for restoring their basic dignity newsworthy.

Solidarity as a news value

Solidarity is a longstanding, yet largely unacknowledged, news value in US journalism. Defined as a principled commitment to social justice, "when social justice is defined as dignity for everyone in a society" (Varma, 2020: 1706), solidarity posits what Kurt Bayertz (1999) calls "positive obligations to act" (p. 4). These obligations are especially applicable to journalism that does not solely react to events, but also proactively calls attention to ongoing social justice issues. Solidarity that spans different communities within a heterogeneous society (like the United States) rests on what

Table 1. Solidarities as news values.

	Intragroup solidarity	Civic solidarity	Political solidarity	Moral solidarity
Solidarity based on	Shared membership in a group	Shared location	Shared commitment to address an unjust issue	Shared obligation to heed marginalized people's calls for change
Power located in	Marginalized community	Local municipality	Structure (e.g.: capitalism, racism, patriarchy)	Marginalized community and local institutions
Newsworthiness	Existence of a marginalized community experiencing injustice that stands together and seeks to collectively self-determine	Injustice is happening to neighbors	Injustice can end through structural critique and eventual transformation	Marginalized people are calling for immediate, concrete changes to restore basic dignity
News narrative	"We take care of us"	"We live together"	"We must transform structural injustice"	"Let us live – here's what we need from you"
Examples	Mutual aid as an alternative to awaiting public support, community care models as alternatives to policing	Flattening the curve in covid-19 to protect fellow residents, rebuilding after a natural disaster in a region when neighbors have lost their homes	Gun control advocacy, fighting voter suppression, dismantling white supremacy in public institutions	Consensus among communities who have experienced police brutality that police presence needs to end, consensus among essential workers in covid-19 that they need immediate access to masks

Jeffrey Alexander (2006) characterizes as "respect out of principle, not experience" (p. 4). Rather than requiring shared identity, the basis for solidarity in US journalism is often a shared commitment to dignity for everyone.

Despite a dominant mythology of news as perennially "objective," "neutral," and "detached" (critiqued in Ettema and Glasser, 1998; Schudson, 1978; Waisbord, 2018),

US newspapers dating back to the early 1800s have been a venue for social cohesion and a range of types of solidarity, including political party solidarity in the era of a party-controlled press (Kaplan, 2006). Reporting on abolition of slavery, child labor, tenement conditions, mental asylums (Grenier, 1960; Streitmatter, 2015), and the women's suffrage movement[1] (Lumsden, 2000; Ostertag, 2006) are just a few of many early cases when, based on their coverage, US journalists used solidarity as a news value – though journalists in dominant outlets rarely acknowledged they were doing so.

The Civil Rights Movement is an often-cited example of a time when newspapers across Northern states participated in amplifying movement demands from outside of dedicated movement journals due to the stakes of basic human dignity (Alexander, 2006: 316–356). However, dominant US journalism's participation in Civil Rights solidarity was limited and narrowly focused on racism in the South. As Morgan (2006) explains, "As protestors' grievances shifted from the blatant racism of the South to national institutions steeped in legitimizing ideology, their grievances invariably were minimized" (p. 149; related critique in Gray, 1997).

Contemporary examples of solidarity as a news value include stories of family separation at the US-Mexico border under the Trump administration, coverage of the continued endangerment of incarcerated people in prisons with covid-19 outbreaks, and regular reports on Black voter suppression in Southern states in the months leading up to the 2020 US elections. In each case, news coverage has included stories that move away from dominant news values of elitism and individualism, and toward solidarity with marginalized communities. Consistent with Morgan's (2006) argument, though, this coverage seldom calls for radical change to abolish institutions and practices that create the conditions for these issues to endure. This points to the need to specify what types of solidarity operate in journalism on marginalized communities, and to critically examine their respective limitations. The most applicable types of solidarity to journalism on enduring social injustice include intragroup solidarity, civic solidarity (also known as social solidarity), political solidarity, and moral solidarity.

Intragroup, civic, political, and moral solidarity applied to journalism

Intragroup solidarity is a commitment to justice for fellow members of a community based on shared identity and history (Shelby, 2002: 236–239; Scholz, 2008: 21–22; Laitinen and Pessi, 2015: 8). Tommie Shelby (2002) defines intragroup solidarity as having four aspects: "a set of individuals *identify* with each other, are jointly *committed* to certain values or goals, are *loyal* to the group and its members, and *trust* one another" (emphasis added, p. 239). Shelby stipulates that the criteria of identification is not based on biological essentialism, and instead may be "based on a shared...heritage (whether real or imagined)...[and] may also be the fact that group members believe themselves to share a similar plight or some significant, perhaps life-shaping, experience" which motivates collective action (p. 237). The organizing phrase "by us and for us" alludes to the logic of intragroup solidarity, as does "we take care of us" (Alamo-Pastrana and Hoynes, 2020; Barbour, 2020; Park and McDaniel, 2020). Both phrases position collective self-determination and care as crucial to justice, since it offers a way for marginalized communities to extricate themselves from subjugating power relations – even in the absence of broader structural change.

In journalism, intragroup solidarity becomes newsworthy when members of a community coordinate direct efforts aligned with taking care of each other, which counters elite-dependency narratives. For example, coverage of mutual aid in predominantly Latinx communities affected by covid-19 (particularly in the absence of government aid) is an example of intragroup solidarity (Matthew, 2020). Intragroup solidarity as a news value renders cohesion and collective power newsworthy, in contrast to "rugged individualism" (Gans, 2004: 50–51) and the power elite (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001: 279).

Expanding the scope of the collective from shared identity to shared geography, civic solidarity emphasizes situated obligations to neighbors who are often strangers in the US, with a call to care about fellow residents (Laitinen and Pessi, 2015: 9). Bayertz (1999) defines civic solidarity as "the inner cement holding together a society" (p. 9), and Scholz (2008) characterizes civic solidarity in terms of citizens' obligations to each other "by virtue of their membership in a...state [which] means that one can expect certain protections from all others" (p. 27). The basis for solidarity becomes the fact that, in Iris Marion Young's (2000) words, "people live together" (p. 222). Young explains that "distant strangers often need to care about and co-operate with each other enough to respond to local circumstances and problems" (p. 223). Civic solidarity as a news value shifts attention from elites and celebrities to what affects everyone in a location, such as a city, region, or nation.[2] Stories with civic solidarity as a news value invoke and prioritize shared geography as the basis for concern about marginalization, and render the activities and efforts of city workers, local advocates, and nonprofit organizations that provide services to marginalized communities newsworthy.

Like civic solidarity, political solidarity involves a shared commitment without a requisite of shared heritage or linked future, but bases this commitment at the level of a structural issue rather than at the level of co-location (Scholz, 2008). Scholz defines political solidarity as "responding to a particular situation of injustice, oppression, social vulnerability, or tyranny" (p. 51). Political solidarity movements "organize around a... concrete purpose" and "a commitment to a cause" (p. 54). Scholz stipulates that political solidarity is distinct from intragroup solidarity, since commitments in political solidarity do not rest on "sharing a common history of oppression" (p. 34). Instead, political solidarity rests on a shared "interpretation of the past and the present and...a vision for the future" (p. 34). Gun violence, for example, is an issue where people often enact solidarity due to an issue-based conviction that guns anywhere denigrate people's dignity. The 2018 March for Our Lives included students who survived school shootings, communities affected by gun violence outside of schools, and thousands of allies with no direct experience of gun violence who called for structural gun control (Laughland and Bennett, 2018). Political solidarity renders organized movements newsworthy, as well as organizations and individuals who demand structural change on behalf of people directly impacted by injustice. In contrast to both political solidarity and civic solidarity, however, moral solidarity does not refract demands through organizations or movements, and instead renders marginalized communities' direct appeals newsworthy.

Moral solidarity focuses on the concrete needs of people who appeal for change due to systemic conditions they cannot change on their own or through intragroup support (Laitinen and Pessi, 2015: 8; Habermas, 1993: 15). Positing a "tie which binds all of us human beings into one big moral community," (Bayertz, 1999: 5), moral solidarity calls for "responses to other humans *in need* based on our shared humanity"

(Scholz, 2008: 42). Moral solidarity means supporting "the all-subjected principle," which holds that "those subject to rules should also be their authors" (Näsström, 2011: 121). In other words, as Nancy Fraser (1986) argues, "all those who are subject to a given governance structure have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it" (p. 65).[3] Calling specific attention to the context of people who are struggling because they are subjected to unjust policies they cannot change on their own (Näsström, 2011), moral solidarity places an onus on comparatively privileged people to heed "the painful experiences and the irreparable suffering of those who have been humiliated, insulted, injured, and brutalized" (Habermas, 1993: 15).

Moral solidarity as a news value arises in stories that represent marginalized people "as subjects of justice" (Fraser, 1986: 65) – in contrast to dominant news values' elitist tendency of representing marginalized people as objects to be controlled through policies they have no say in constructing. With a news value of moral solidarity, journalism becomes a venue for amplifying possible paths for recourse against injustice that are grounded in marginalized people's lived experiences and specific appeals for change, based on knowing their shared needs best. As the following empirical analysis shows, moral solidarity, political solidarity, civic solidarity, and intragroup solidarity all arose (unevenly) in the SF Homeless Project, which shaped whose perspectives, needs, and remedies were rendered newsworthy.

Methods

This study is part of a larger body of research that includes textual analysis of 325 stories published as part of the 2016 San Francisco Homeless Project, as well as twelve in-depth interviews[4] with editors, reporters, and columnists (Varma, 2020). On the day of the Project (June 29, 2016), I conducted in-person and digital observation of the live journalism events and social media activity using the hashtag #SFHomelessProject. Since there was no comprehensive aggregation of articles published as part of the Project or a full list of participating news outlets, I manually collected stories on June 29 by: 1) going to news aggregators such as SFGate.com where some stories were posted throughout the day, 2) going to individual news sites based on indication that the outlet was participating in the Project as a signatory of the "Letter to the City," and 3) following #SFHomelessProject and @bayareahomeless on Twitter as well as Facebook, where some news outlets posted stories on homelessness using the hashtag who were not formal signatories of the "Letter to the City." In the days leading up to the Project, I also collected metajournalistic discourse about the aims of the Project by manually searching Google News and Twitter, and viewing local news organizations' Twitter and Facebook posts announcing the upcoming "media day" (for examples, see Fuller, 2016; Wang 2016).

Solidarity stories analyzed in this study are a subset of the 325 stories that were published as part of the Project. Stories in this subset were hand-coded based on: community framing rather than individual anchoring, accounts of constraints that prevent people from exiting homelessness, and representing marginalized people's lived experiences beyond strictly emotional testimonials or bureaucratic assessments (Varma, 2020). Sixty-four stories (19.69%) in the Project satisfied these criteria. The present study closely analyzes

Table 2. Proportions of solidarities in San Francisco Homeless Project.

Type of solidarity	Number of articles	Percentage of articles within solidarity stories category	Percentage of articles across entire SF Homeless Project
Intragroup	5	7.81%	1.54%
Civic	28	43.75%	8.62%
Political	26	40.63%	8.00%
Moral	5	7.81%	1.54%

these 64 stories to identify the type of solidarity each story displays as a news value. Following Harcup & O'Neill (2016), "deciding which news values were present in any particular story involved a close reading of the text, consideration of the content and an evaluation of the context" (p. 7). This study takes into account that "analysis of published outputs cannot tell us everything about journalism, of course, but it can tell us something. Most obviously, it can tell us *what* has been selected for publication as news" (p. 6).

Solidarities in the SF Homeless Project

Intragroup, civic, political, and moral solidarity all arose in the SF Homeless Project as news values. Within the subset of 64 articles that displayed solidarity, 7.81% of stories displayed a news value of intragroup solidarity, 43.75% of stories displayed a news value of civic solidarity, 40.63% of stories displayed a news value of political solidarity, and 7.81% of stories displayed a news value of moral solidarity (see Table 1 for coding scheme, Table 2 for proportions). The following section illustrates how each type of solidarity manifested in stories published as part of the Project to render responses and experiences of homelessness newsworthy.

Intragroup solidarity: Newsworthiness of collective care within marginalized communities

Intragroup solidarity stories focus on efforts "by us and for us." For example, "Bay Area Low-Income and Homeless Residents Push to Build Own Housing" (Challet, 2016) illustrates intragroup solidarity as a news value. Characterized by a co-founder of the initiative as "a poor people-led solution to homelessness," the article emphasizes that people experiencing homelessness and housing instability involved in the effort are not asking housed people for help or handouts – and instead seek to take care of themselves and each other. The kicker quote from the same co-founder says, "We as poor people need to self-determine our own futures." Aligned with the logic of "we take care of us" (Barbour, 2020; Park and McDaniel, 2020) and Shelby's (2002) definition including identification, commitment, loyalty, and trust (p. 239), intragroup solidarity as a news value renders stories about communities standing together based on shared lived experience and surviving together newsworthy. In contrast to the lone wanderer trope of

homeless “hobos” (Blasi, 1994), intragroup solidarity represents a community of people experiencing housing instability acting together to improve conditions for themselves.

Similarly, “‘We Have a Right to Live Here’: Stories from San Francisco’s Evicted” (Hotchkiss, 2016) represents four people who have been evicted and who credit supportive intragroup networks for their survival. Calling attention to how lower-income people are each other’s support system, the article represents a person who has survived “debilitating cellulitis” while living unhoused. This person praises fellow homeless people for his care – not healthcare workers or charitable volunteers. The story explains, “It was other homeless people who took care of him. ‘The humanity that homeless people show each other, they taught me so much,’ he says.” This intragroup solidarity story represents people who are loyal and committed to one another (aligned with Shelby, 2002: 239) due to the shared context of being evicted. In contrast, civic solidarity stories published as part of the Project expand the scope of solidarity to shared geography.

Civic solidarity: Newsworthiness of neighbors in need

News narratives in the Project that display civic solidarity as a news value emphasize geolocations, such as San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, the Bay Area, the South Bay, the East Bay, neighborhoods within these cities and regions, and the state of California. Rather than a call for concern for people in far-flung and often remote places (analyzed in Chouliaraki, 2013), civic solidarity stories in the Project focus on local readers’ backyards to ground a commitment to social justice in this shared geography.

For example, “Improvements planned for ‘abysmally low’ University support of homeless students” (Lannin, 2016) represents the situation of San Francisco State University students living unhoused and lacking access to emergency housing or funding. The story starts with the dean of students validating the need for new plans to help students experiencing housing and food instability: “We’re in the infancy stages of trying to get our program up and going,” [Dean] Begley said. “This is absolutely necessary. It really is. And I’m glad to be part of it.” The rest of the story emphasizes that the obligation to house students is based on their geographic membership in a local university – not a more general stance that, for instance, housing is a human right (which arose in political solidarity stories, discussed in the following section).

Stories that display civic solidarity as a news value also narrate the history of homelessness in the Bay Area starting with the 1982 recession (Pershan, 2016; Talbot, 2016), and situate homelessness as a local issue. Countering a narrative of increased homelessness as the product of “outsiders” coming to California to seek support and favorable weather conditions, “Berkeley seeks to house those most in need at The Hub” (Raguso, 2016) focuses on nonprofit service providers who trace the rise in homelessness in Berkeley due to local residents losing their homes:

> It’s not that Berkeley has become more of a magnet for homeless individuals from other places, [client services provider] Leyden said. It’s primarily that more people in this community have become vulnerable to losing their homes or fallen victim to bouts of homelessness [. . .] Many of the people the city has been working with through The Hub have been in the area for years.

What becomes newsworthy is not an invasion narrative of outsiders seeking free services, but that fellow residents are forced to leave their homes and live unhoused. The basis for civic solidarity is people living in the same region, which these stories suggest brings with it an obligation to care about the housing needs of their neighbors.

Political solidarity: Addressing housing injustice with structural remedies

Moving away from local civic discourses of unhoused neighbors as "fellow San Franciscans," political solidarity stories represent homelessness as a matter for structural, economic critique. Rather than focusing on co-location or collective survival efforts led by unhoused people, political solidarity renders the rise in homelessness across the country and world newsworthy. Political solidarity stories treat local homelessness as a human rights issue, and as a symptom of a larger ailment most often identified as late capitalism – which these stories argue must be transformed due to its consequences for the cost of living, employment precarity, and eroding social support. These stories appeared in the Project as analysis, features, and commentary.

For example, "Why are so many people homeless in SF?" (Redmond, 2016) examines the housing market's for-profit structure that produces and worsens homelessness. In the piece, the journalist proposes a program analogous to the Affordable Care Act for health care, which he calls "AffordableSF." The program "would start with the notion that housing, like health care, is a human right, that it should not be based on ability to pay, and that any system that doesn't cover everyone isn't a success." Despite calling for large-scale structural changes prioritizing people's dignity over the ruthlessness of the market, this story does not directly quote or present the views of people who are living unhoused. Instead, political solidarity manifests through the content of the proposal for structural change.

The near-parity of civic solidarity and political solidarity in the Project (43.75% and 40.63% respectively, of solidarity stories) is both surprising and arguably encouraging when juxtaposed with past critiques of journalism (particularly local journalism) as parochial and insufficiently attentive to structural causes (Iyengar, 1990). At the same time, a major limitation of political solidarity stories in the Project is that they do not necessarily link systemic critiques to immediate needs voiced from within marginalized communities. Moral solidarity in the Project, on the other hand, is grounded in marginalized people's lived experiences and shifts the "we" from political solidarity's systemic logic of "we who live in a capitalist society," civic solidarity's local logic of "we who live in this region," and intragroup solidarity's "we take care of us" to "we who live unhoused and have urgent shared needs that you can help meet."

Moral solidarity: Concrete appeals from "All Subjected" for immediate change

In the Project, appeals in moral solidarity stories are (1) urgent, (2) immediately actionable, and (3) represented as indicative of at least a partial consensus among those subjected to dehumanizing conditions – rather than individualized requests or top-down

visions for change that originate from outside experts. Two examples of stories that display moral solidarity as a news value include "Property of San Francisco Homeless Routinely Disappeared by City" (Waxmann, 2016), and "Some San Jose residents turn to RVs for affordable housing" (Gary, 2016). These stories render appeals to end governing rules that effectively criminalize unhoused people's existence in the local social order (critiqued in Waldron, 1991) newsworthy.

In "Property of San Francisco Homeless Routinely Disappeared by City," marginalized people call for accountability from public officials whose current policies are worsening their already-desperate conditions. As one person whose property was confiscated is quoted as saying, "'To anybody looking at it from the outside, maybe it's just junk. But...[my belongings are] what's helped me to be able to eat every day.'" The story continues by representing the frustrating, time-consuming, and ultimately fruitless experience of attempting to recover property from the city:

> Some of the homeless people who have taken on the trek said that they "waited hours to be helped," only to leave empty-handed. "[The storage facility worker] said, 'I don't recall seeing your things'...I lost everything I had because of it."
>
> "This is the second time I've come here and I haven't seen one stitch of my belongings...They are not taking accountability."

Although the story also includes quotes from Public Works spokespeople and supervisors, it primarily focuses on unhoused people who experience property confiscation rather than balancing justifications from people who support and enforce this policy. Moral solidarity stories amplify marginalized people's calls for accountability and change to city policies, in contrast to primarily amplifying officials who enforce and may attempt to justify policies that make survival more difficult. These stories render marginalized people's self-articulated and urgent needs newsworthy – instead of starting with allies' or outside representatives' views on priorities.

Similarly, "Some San Jose residents turn to RVs for affordable housing" begins with people who are living in recreational vehicles (RVs) parked on residential streets and parking lots (which, based on local ordinances, means they are living unhoused). At the time of the Project, housed residents had raised complaints about RVs parking on residential streets and claimed they created unsafe conditions for housed children nearby. Both RV residents quoted in this story, though, are parents who work but can no longer afford traditional housing. The first resident speaks about the broader landscape and structural causes of the trend of more people living in RVs:

> "What's happening all over the country is between the housing crisis and the mortgage thing and just low incomes that we've got, many people were middle class before but can't afford rent," said Jess Jessop, who lives in an RV parked in the Mountain View neighborhood.

The second resident in the story affirms Jessop's point, as a member of a family who can no longer afford an apartment:

> Inocente Saldivar, his wife and two kids were priced out of the rental market a year ago when their rent hit $2,700 a month for a one bedroom. Now, he pays $600 a month plus gas to live in an RV. That means his 13-year-old daughter can remain enrolled in the Mountain View school district. "The rents are like $3,000," he said. [...] "It's too expensive. My family has everything here" in the RV.

The concrete appeal in the story is to permit people to park their RVs and stay in the area, which would permit their work and school access to continue. The story also acknowledges that affordable housing is the long-term solution, but emphasizes that people living in RVs are presently advocating for their ability to stay as a pressing and attainable need. Disputing claims that parking RVs should not be allowed as a stopgap for permanent housing and is disruptive for housed families in the same neighborhood, Jessop makes the case that in the absence of affordable housing, people living in RVs "doesn't have to be a problem. It can be a hand up." Saldivar adds that RV dwellers "have one fingernail trying to hang on to the American dream and pull themselves up...If we give them half a chance they'll all get off the street." RV residents' consensus diverges from dominant local narratives about RVs as dangerous and a poor standard of living, which stands to reason since these dominant narratives focus on elite views of RVs rather than incorporating the insight of RV residents' lived experiences.

Both stories report that hundreds of local people experience the conditions under discussion. Being able to keep or recover one's possessions, and being able to park an RV in a safe part of the city admittedly do not resolve homelessness and housing instability, yet they do satisfy a minimal – and time-sensitive – standard of heeding marginalized people's call for changes to conditions that disrespect their intrinsic humanity and worsen suffering. Moral solidarity stories represent marginalized people's specific needs and make it clear that their appeals are for changes they cannot enact on their own since they are not directly empowered to change the policies and ordinances they are required to follow, and had no say in creating them (critiqued in Näsström, 2011). With moral solidarity as a news value, journalism offers a public service of conveying and amplifying marginalized communities' shared needs to those with greater privilege and power to support arrangements aligned with upholding everyone's dignity.

Moral solidarity does not, however, replace elite overemphasis with exclusive focus on marginalized communities. Instead, stories that display moral solidarity centralize (subjected) marginalized communities, and also include those affected such as housed residents, local officials, and nonprofit organizations. With moral solidarity as a news value, officials become newsworthy when they stand with marginalized communities by acknowledging and acting on their appeals for change. For instance, in the RV story, the mayor is quoted as saying, "We understand that there are *problems for both the neighbors and the vehicle dwellers* and we're trying to be sensitive to the needs of both groups." Instead of privileging housed residents over vehicle dwellers, the mayor places the onus on local government to act on their obligations to both social groups. Moral solidarity begins with "all subjected" and then zooms out to represent "all affected," such that the breadth of sourcing expands compared to elite-focused news.

Moral solidarity as a news value for a new era of journalism

What news values would help usher in a new era of journalism that renders those most affected by injustice and least empowered newsworthy, rather than maintaining disproportionate public focus on those least affected and most empowered? Solidarity provides a starting point. Although all four types of solidarity discussed in this study take strides beyond narrow elitism, moral solidarity offers the strongest value for journalism on marginalization. Moral solidarity as a news value designates marginalized people's own articulations of priorities and needs as newsworthy, in contrast to focusing on organizations and officials who may attempt to speak on behalf of marginalized people. As Black feminist Mikki Kendall (2020) has argued, people speaking on behalf of marginalized communities should not be mistaken for hearing directly from people with insight into their own lived conditions that create urgency for change. Moral solidarity renders newsworthy a narrative of "let us live – here's what we need from you" as a grave appeal for comparatively privileged people to not only notice but to act on their obligations to marginalized people.

The presence of solidarity in 19.69% of stories published as part of the Project was likely fostered by widespread agreement among journalists and news audiences that homelessness is unjust. One editor of a participating publication remarked when interviewed that homelessness was a uniquely unifying topic for the Project. The same editor said that police brutality and climate change would not have attracted similar widespread participation due to their comparative divisiveness. An area for future research is to examine the extent to which solidarity wanes or disappears in coverage of issues that are low on what Kilgo and Harlow (2019) have called the "hierarchy of social struggle" and lack broad public consensus, such as racial injustice.

Within the solidarity category of stories in the Project, both moral and intragroup solidarity were relatively rare (7.81% of stories each) compared to civic and political solidarity (43.75% and 40.63% of stories respectively). Civic solidarity and political solidarity stories in the Project represented commitments to social justice, but often did so by relying on nonprofit service workers and advocates who were once-removed from direct experience with the injustice at hand. While intragroup solidarity offers valuable grounded insight into how communities take care of themselves, moral solidarity as a news value offers a wider contribution for journalism in a heterogeneous and fragmented society. Moral solidarity moves toward radical inclusivity in the service of representing specific appeals for immediate social change to address systemic indignity from within communities experiencing these indignities.

Moral solidarity as a news value shifts newsworthiness criteria away from a calculus of officials amplifying rules and regulations, policymakers and advocates asking for support, and ineffectual elites making misguided statements. Instead, moral solidarity in journalism treats concrete appeals from within marginalized communities as newsworthy, particularly when these appeals are grounded in lived experiences shared across people enduring the same conditions. Given that many people in the United States live in unjust conditions that will not end overnight, heeding their calls for immediate changes to uphold even a modicum of dignity ought to be unequivocally newsworthy, alongside parallel calls for systemic change. As dominant news outlets begin to rethink

their often-pejorative judgments of "advocacy" or "activist" traditions of representing marginalization, moral solidarity as a news value would help ensure that the resulting stories fulfill their recuperative aims. Moral solidarity becoming a dominant news value would foster journalism that illuminates our moral obligations to each other – starting with our obligations to people whose basic dignity is at stake.

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Notes

1. Social movement journalism and solidarity journalism may overlap but are not necessarily synonymous, because movements that develop their own journalism include efforts that perpetuate exclusion and injustice. Solidarity as a news value is specifically focused on rendering calls for human dignity newsworthy, which is the opposite of perpetuating injustice (Varma, 2020).
2. Spurious or "parasitical" (Scholz, 2008: 18) appropriations of the logic of civic solidarity may include xenophobic or nationalistic calls for exclusion, but fall outside the conceptual bounds of solidarity as a commitment to everyone's dignity.
3. Näsström (2011) explains that the all-subjected principle arises in movements against policies created without representation in the process of creating them (such as universal suffrage, minority representation in governing bodies, and "no taxation without representation," p. 119).
4. In-depth interviews were conducted after receiving Institutional Review Board approval. All interviews were voluntary, uncompensated, and recorded. Interviews took place via phone as well as in-person and were later transcribed using Rev.com.

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