

# Solidarity in Journalism

*How Ethical Reporting Fights for Social Justice*

**Anita Varma**

Conventional journalistic norms discourage reporters from taking sides. They are supposed to remain neutral, impartial, and objective. Yet there is also a long tradition in journalism, dating back to the 1800s, that pursues truth by practicing solidarity for social justice.

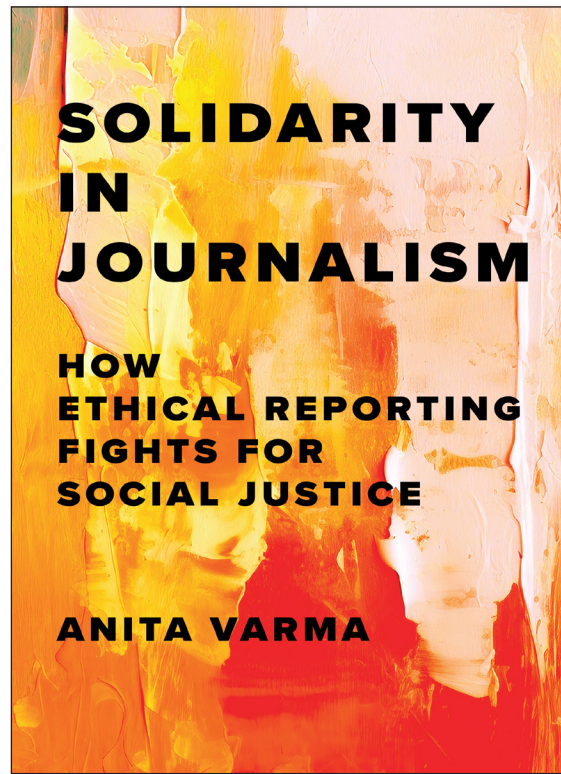
Anita Varma offers a bold defense of reporting for social justice, showing what journalistic solidarity looks like in principle and in practice. She argues that solidarity is a longstanding yet unacknowledged journalistic norm that fosters truthful reporting when people's basic dignity is at stake. Ethical journalism incorporates solidarity throughout the reporting process: deciding what is newsworthy, whom to include, how to approach them, what questions to ask, how to structure stories, and how to assess impact. Varma illustrates these practices through case studies of local and national reporting on homelessness, housing instability, and the cost of living.

Based on analysis of published journalism, in-depth interviews with journalists, and public engagement with people who aim to make journalism better, *Solidarity in Journalism* demonstrates how reporting can help society's most vulnerable. Amid intense debate over the role of the media, this book makes an urgent case for solidarity in journalism as crucial for representing and addressing social division.



**ANITA VARMA** is an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Media at the University of Texas at Austin. She also leads the Solidarity Journalism Initiative at the Center for Media Engagement, where she is a senior faculty research associate.

\$30.00 / £25.00 paperback · 978-0-231-21547-3  
\$120.00 / £100.00 hardcover · 978-0-231-21546-6  
\$29.99 / £25.00 ebook/pdf · 978-0-231-56560-8  
\$29.99 / £25.00 ebook/epub · 978-0-231-56083-2  
APRIL 2026 272 pages



"An essential read for academics and journalists, *Solidarity in Journalism* argues that ethical journalism is rooted in a commitment to basic dignity for everyone. The book provides a road map for how journalists can better understand and share the lived experiences of marginalized people."

—Brian Ekdale,

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Iowa

"Through comprehensive analyses of newsroom practices, Anita Varma demonstrates that solidarity is in fact the ethical, practical, and longstanding journalistic commitment to social justice that such established notions as objectivity and detachment regularly fail to deliver. The lens of solidarity places human dignity—as opposed to any notion of partisanship—in the journalist's toolbox."

—Kathleen McElroy,

School of Journalism and Media, The University of Texas at Austin

"Anita Varma has written a groundbreaking text that will change how we think about and teach journalism. She shows that solidarity in journalism is not a buzzword but a rigorous tradition with a deep history—and it is also the future of ethical reporting."

—Lewis Raven Wallace, author of *The View from Somewhere: Undoing the Myth of Journalistic Objectivity*



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