

ARTICLE



Mediated commemoration, affect alienation, and why we are not all Charlie: solidarity symbols as vehicles for stance-taking

Anu A. Harju

University of Helsinki

Abstract

Public mourning and collective displays of solidarity after terrorist violence are established cultural practices that bring people together at times of tragedy and loss. While it remains common to gather at the site of tragedy, to construct temporary memorials of candles and flowers in memory of the victims and to come together as community, mediated practices of commemoration have become equally important. Sharing solidarity symbols facilitating connective participation is one of the most prevalent and visible ways of joining in public mourning in digital spaces. One of the most popular solidarity symbols to date is #JeSuisCharlie, created after the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, 2015. It has since inspired numerous renditions, including #JeSuisMuslim that emerged after the Christchurch mosque attacks in March, 2019.

This media-ethnographic study focuses on solidarity symbols circulating on Twitter after four terrorist attacks: Paris in January, 2015, and again in November, Beirut in November, 2015, and Christchurch in March, 2019. The study draws on Appraisal analysis to examine the interpersonal dimension of solidarity symbols, specifically, how stance as interpersonal orientation is constructed in solidarity symbols. When the normative reading of solidarity symbols as vehicles for alignment and solidarity is interrupted, they are experienced as alienating or excluding. Approaching solidarity symbols as vehicles for evaluative practices of stance-taking, the paper explores how solidarity symbols function, first, as bonding icons able to construct affective alignment and a sense of community, and second, how these bonding icons construct the reader as aligned with specific ideology, contributing

simultaneously to community-building and alienation, where not sharing the dominant frame of mourning manifests as contestation.

The findings reveal, first, how solidarity symbols have the capacity to serve as *templates of affect* for subsequent tokens; in addition to the iterations replicating the function and form of popular solidarity symbols (like #JeSuisCharlie), there is also a transmission of affect and stance. Second, as individual commemorative acts are always embedded in wider socio-cultural imagination, and therefore cannot escape significations regarding grievability of life, solidarity symbols contribute to *affect alienation* and not only affective communion. Third, as circulation of solidarity symbols contributes to the visual representation of “us” with an implicit presence of the Other, solidarity symbols can be viewed as *struggles for recognition*. Solidarity symbols operate within wider regimes of visibility where issues of recognition speak to issues of grievability. It is therefore important to consider the ways in which the meanings embedded in solidarity symbols are constructed and what these meanings are.

Keywords: mediated violence, commemoration, public mourning, stance, affect, affect alienation, digital media, Twitter

Introduction

I am not Charlie, I am Ahmed the dead cop. Charlie ridiculed my faith and culture and I died defending his right to do so. #JeSuisAhmed

Dyab Abou Jahjah on Twitter¹ 8th January, 2015

Within hours of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris on Wednesday, January 7th, 2015, the solidarity symbol #JeSuisCharlie was born. The offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo were attacked around 11.30 local time, and as the news spread, Joachim Roncin, the artistic director at the Paris magazine Stylist, sent out a tweet² at 13:52 that read “Je Suis Charlie”, typeset mimicking the Charlie Hebdo logo. The black and white message went viral instantly, gaining 2,1 million retweets³ by the end of

¹ <https://twitter.com/aboujahjah/status/553169081424420864?lang=en>

² https://twitter.com/joachimroncin/status/552794930725539840?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

³ <https://twitter.com/TwitterFrance/status/552966270866706434>

the day. By Friday evening, over 5 million tweets containing the hashtag had been shared, and #JeSuisCharlie became one of the most popular news-related hashtags⁴ in Twitter history.

The slogan #JeSuisCharlie soon became the symbol of unity and mediated solidarity, seemingly embodying the feelings of citizens standing united as ‘the nation mourns’ (Ahmed 2014). Not only did affective publics (Papacharissi 2014) eagerly adopt the slogan, thereby contributing to its dissemination and virality, the value-laden practice of sharing and circulating the token also greatly added to its commemorative and symbolic value. At first, the slogan seemed to encompass the feelings of a nation in pain; however, it soon became evident that what was communicated by the seemingly inclusive slogan expressing solidarity and grief was in fact experienced by many as alienating (Giglietto and Lee 2017; Arceneaux 2018), also in terms of citizenship (see Payne 2016). As #JeSuisCharlie was rapidly circulating in the hybrid media environment (Sumiala, Valaskivi, Tikka and Huhtamäki 2018), another solidarity symbol emerged signifying counter-discourses and differential alignment, and that was #JeSuisAhmed. However, #JeSuisAhmed never quite reached the same level of circulation as #JeSuisCharlie, being considerably less viral on Twitter (Ibid.).

While it is not uncommon for solidarity symbols to emerge in the mediated public spaces after terrorist violence, #JeSuisCharlie soon became an iconic slogan that has since served as a linguistic and symbolic resource for numerous appropriations and renditions. As a cultural practice, public remembering harbours significations regarding grievability of life (Butler 2006) as some lives are publicly commemorated while others are not. Acts of remembering are often embedded in mundane material practices like placing flowers and candles at the site of tragedy that come to constitute temporary memorials (Doss 2008); in the digital realm, mediated shows of solidarity and expressions of mourning often take the form of creating and sharing multimodal

⁴ <https://money.cnn.com/2015/01/09/technology/social/jesuischarlie-hashtag-twitter/>

slogans as symbols of solidarity (Collins 2004) or other digital artefacts (e.g. memorial videos or webshrines) that in their materiality facilitate practices of remembering.

As memorials more generally, digital commemorative artefacts are also open to multiple interpretations and a wide array of affective attachments (e.g. Harju 2015, 2016). Some were critical of the meanings carried by #JeSuisCharlie; Todd (2015, 18) argues that rather than indicating universal citizenship felt across France, the wide mobilisation of #JeSuisCharlie as a symbol of solidarity points to an emblematic demonstration of false consciousness among the French, further noting how #JeSuisCharlie does not indicate or equal unified solidarity. While many expressed they felt the Charlie Hebdo attack to be an attack against freedom of speech, yet others noted how they could not align with what Charlie Hebdo represented, for some this meant blasphemy and cultural denigration of the Other.

Thus, not only #JeSuisAhmed, but the more explicit #JeNeSuisPasCharlie followed as explicit attempts to widen the array of voices regarding public mourning as well as the range of possible affiliations than what was possible with #JeSuisCharlie alone. To examine the communicative and affective power of solidarity symbols, to illustrate their global and viral nature as well as their contextual adaptability and intertextual character, this study focuses on specific hashtags borne out of expressions of solidarity at the time of public mourning after terrorist violence in Paris, Beirut and Christchurch.

Paris was subject to yet another terrorist attack later that year when on November 13th three co-ordinated attacks made Paris the locus of the worst terrorist attack in Europe in a decade. The attacks gave rise to new solidarity symbols, and we saw #PrayForParis that, like #JeSuisCharlie, would serve as a template for slogans such as #PrayForLebanon and #PrayForChristchurch, among many others. The communicative and affective dimension of solidarity symbols relies on intertextuality and cultural knowledge(s); for example, the Beirut bombings in 2015 saw the slogan #JeSuisCharlie transform into the less known #AdelTermos (co-occurring with

#JeSuisAdelTermos) to remember the man the locals hailed a hero after he died tackling a suicide bomber, saving the lives of others.

Although solidarity symbols are fluid and adaptable, and therefore prone to appropriation, not all renditions are taken up by the public. As pointed out by Ismail and Mishra (2019), cultural proximity still persists regarding media coverage of terrorist violence, and the same is true for the uptake and spread of solidarity symbols. Following in the footsteps of the many amalgamations of #JeSuisCharlie, the slogan #JeSuisMuslim emerged and went viral after the Christchurch mosque attacks in March, 2019. Inherently dialogic, solidarity symbols not only position those they speak to, they also form chains of significations with what was before and what is yet to come: thus, to understand #JeSuisMuslim, we must first understand #JeSuisCharlie.

This digital media ethnographic study (see Sumiala and Tikka *in press*; see also e.g. Coleman 2010; Hine 2015; Postill and Pink 2012; Markham 2017) focuses on specific hashtags used in public mourning after the four events of terrorist violence in Paris, Beirut, and Christchurch. As commemorative hashtags circulated the digital media environment, some solidarity symbols were able to generate a sense of affinity and belonging, constituting an essential part of the varied online practices of collective mourning, with the most popular symbols appearing offline, too. The ethnographic approach to mediated solidarity enables not only witnessing the creation, development and circulation of both existing and emergent solidarity symbols in the immediate aftermath of violent events, but also detecting which ones stir the most controversy (Sumiala and Harju 2019).

Digital media ethnography is here combined with a discourse analytical perspective, Appraisal analysis (Martin and While 2005; Martin and Rose 2003) which emphasises the role of language practices in constructing social realities. So while ethnography allows us to see how solidarity symbols are essential in practices of public mourning and how they become bonding icons (Martin and Stenglin 2007; Stenglin 2009) able to construct communities of affect, Appraisal helps examine the discursive ways in which

solidarity symbols construct attitudinal, affective, and ideological alignment through interpersonal meaning. To better examine the processes of affiliation and alienation, I approach solidarity symbols from the perspective of stance, an interpersonal dimension of meaning-making integral to everyday life.

Rather than assume universal solidarity, this article takes as its point of departure the many faces of solidarity symbols, their affective and evaluative constitution that, through stance orientation, position individuals either as included or excluded subjects. The findings show that contestation and struggles for recognition often work on a subtle level, implicitly present in the recontextualised appropriations of solidarity symbols while the more explicit contestation is either in the form or in the delivery, recoverable in co(n)textual elements and framing.

Mediated commemoration as connective affective practice

Remembering and commemorating the dead are important cultural practices articulated in various rituals, online and offline. Material culture specific to death rituals plays an important part in anchoring meanings, but also in mediating and harbouring emotions (Doss, 2008). The same applies online where solidarity symbols function as material artefacts central to performing commemorative rituals, such as public mourning in the immediate aftermath of violent events. While hashtags in the everyday communication on Twitter function as keywords linking conversations or indeed as search terms (Zappavigna 2015), at times of sudden tragedy some hashtags acquire an additional function of expressing or enhancing solidarity (Nikunen 2019); they become solidarity symbols (Collins 2004) with community-building capacity.

Collective responses to mediated violence tend to follow a familiar pattern despite the sudden and unexpected nature of terrorist attacks. Collins (2004, 53) observes that solidarity rituals have four distinct stages that are played out in the emotional aftermath of an attack: first, the initial shock, which is soon followed by a shift toward “establishing standardized displays of solidarity symbols”, which simultaneously marks

a transition from the personal to something that is public and shared. Next comes what Collins calls a solidarity plateau, during which time displays of solidarity are dwindling. The fourth and final stage is a gradual return to normal life. This article is mainly interested in the second stage where solidarity symbols are created and established as part of ritualistic responses to loss and tragedy, and when remembering becomes a public and collective activity.

Solidarity symbols are often borne on Twitter and other digital media platforms (e.g. Instagram), and as highly visible and extremely viral artefacts they are quick to traverse platforms as well as appearing in offline spaces. This is compounded with the news reporting practice of circulating tweets as part of a breaking story, paving the way for solidarity symbols to quickly make their way to common consciousness. Twitter, then, might best be approached as “an imperfect indicator of the public” (Parry 2019, 229), a digital space where ‘ad hoc’ publics (Bruns and Burgess 2015) are easily and quickly formed. Although solidarity symbols offer an easy conduit for affective participation, it is the sense of affinity and empathy toward distant others that make solidarity possible in the first place. People tend to empathise more with similar others, perceptions of similarity being largely influenced by the media. Yet, media coverage is itself plagued with cultural proximity; a recent study by Ismail and Mishra (2019), for example, shows that the Beirut attack of 2015 was considerably less covered than the Paris attacks that took place the following day. In this way, media institutions have the power to either heighten or mute our awareness of, and accordingly, our empathy or dismissal toward the suffering of others.

Emerging organically, solidarity symbols tend to be specific to the attack and hence highly situated. After the January attack in Paris in 2015, #JeSuisCharlie soon became part of a common repertoire for shared feelings of grief, facilitating emotional alignment and a sense of belonging in particular digital affect cultures (Döveling, Harju, and Sommer 2018). Although specific to the Charlie Hebdo attack, #JeSuisCharlie has since proven how solidarity symbols are extremely durable and adaptable as the slogan

has since been appropriated and re-contextualised in the context of numerous other terrorist attacks. Different hashtags emerging in the wake of terrorist attacks gain traction in different measures, depending largely on their ideational content (that which is being mourned) where the evaluative and affective orientation needs to be read against the socio-historical and political context of the specific setting. For example, #JeSuisAdelTermos that emerged after the Beirut bombings in 2015 never quite entered wider circulation and remained largely a nation-specific symbol of solidarity among the Lebanese people, its lack of uptake explained to some extent by the relative invisibility of the attack itself in the Western media which, at the time, was dominated by the Paris attacks of November, 2015. Consequently, media coverage shapes our perception of what kinds of solidarity symbols can be imagined possible when public collective mourning is typically directed on lives deemed publicly grievable (Butler 2006).

Solidarity symbols differ from the more informative and descriptive hashtags in their ability to invite to community. The more informative and more general hashtags #ParisAttacks or #BeirutBombings function to locate the acts of violence and bind online conversation together under a specific thematic category, but their affective dimension is less condensed than in #JeSuisCharlie, for example. Hashtags focussing on individual lives lost foreground unique aspects of the tragedy in question (e.g. #JeSuisAhmed, #AdelTermos, #49lives) and are in this way more affectively loaded. The same applies to solidarity symbols referencing groups of people, like #JeSuisJuif and #JeSuisMuslim that elicit feelings of communal belonging. Not limited to community-building solidarity symbols, the range of hashtags appearing in the context of mediated violence also include more critical ones, like #JeNeSuisPasCharlie, #DontForgetBeirut, or #TerrorismHasNoReligion, yet others carry a more socially oriented message, like #UnitedAgainstIslamophobia and #TheyAreUs with appeals to peace and unity, like #PeaceForParis and #NewZealandStrong. Different types of hashtags typically co-occur (Krutrök and Lindgren 2018), serving different social and communicative functions.

Practices of mediated mourning go hand in hand with mediated shows of solidarity. For Nikunen (2019, 3), the term ‘media solidarity’ encompasses the many ways in which “media may enhance, express, evoke and materialize solidarity”, being tightly linked to recognising the possibility of disagreement and difference. In line with this thinking, the next section examines solidarity symbols from the perspective of community building where solidarity symbols become bonding icons able to generate various stance positions and diverging affective attachments.

Solidarity symbols as bonding icons and iconisation of affect

The hybrid media environment is increasingly characterised by flows of images that affectively connect distant others. Solidarity symbols, often image-text combinations, are widely used to mobilise affective publics (Papacharissi 2014) that connect or disconnect around emotional issues and in that capacity, they can be conceptualised as *bonding icons* (Stenglin 2009), or ‘bondicons’ (Martin and Stenglin 2007). Bonding icons are symbolic icons involved in constructing a shared attitudinal disposition: bonding, then, is “the investiture of attitude in activity, the resonance of attitude with events and things (abstract or concrete)” (Martin and White 2005: 211), how individuals align around resonant issues to communicate the various kinds of affinity and affiliation they might share with others.

Due to their capacity to gather people around shared issues or sentiment, bondicons are said to have a *rallying capacity* (e.g. the peace symbol, flags, songs), exemplified by the mass solidarity towards Paris 2015 expressed by the wide circulation of the many commemorative hashtags. Some bondicons also possess a *privileging function* (Stenglin 2009) where the icon indicates shared meanings by intertextual means by referencing people, places and values. As an example of this, an appropriation of the iconic #JeSuisCharlie resurfaces in the context of the mosque attacks in Christchurch in March, 2019 as #JeSuisMuslim: the recontextualised symbol retains the commemorative function of the original with reference to the Charlie Hebdo attack

while privileging the affective dimension, focusing public remembering toward the victims of the mosque attack. At the same time, the new rendition is able to question the differential evaluation of life in death by drawing on the meaning potential residing in #JeSuisCharlie that includes the notions of value, recognition, and grievability that allow solidarity and remembering of a certain kind of subject.

Solidarity symbols have a unique capacity to condense values and privilege meanings and are thus not free from ideological underpinnings which inevitably renders solidarity symbols inclusive of some and exclusive of others. The ideological orientation (e.g. Payne 2016; see also Sumiala 2013) inherent in these communicative tokens aligns those participating with the specific ideological imagination. Forming a chain of significations, even individual commemorative acts are always embedded in wider socio-cultural imagination (Valaskivi and Sumiala 2014; Sumiala and Harju 2019). With bondicons, where the signification process is one of iconisation of affect (Martin 2012), the ideological framing may be blurred due to the affective being foregrounded. During the iconisation process, the ideational meaning of an event or entity is faded into the background and its affective value to the members of a group is foregrounded; in other words, ideational meaning (the representation of social reality) is faded in favour of highlighting value (Martin 2012).

Much like idioms that lose their literal meaning, solidarity symbols come to mean primarily affectively. Mediated affective practices gain much of their communicative power from iconisation process where it no longer is about what happened *per se*; the process of iconisation highlights the emotional importance of the token as symbolic of unity instead of the ideational meaning (Martin 2004), and unity generated by bondicons is thus formed around shared dispositions (Martin and Stenglin 2007) as the interpersonal and affective meanings of the bondicon supersede its ideational meaning. In sum, strong positive or negative charging, condensation of meaning, and interpersonal focus (Wignell, Tan, and O'Halloran 2017) are the three essential features of bonding icons. Taking the interpersonal level of meaning seriously and how

it plays out in processes of bonding, the next section examines solidarity symbols from the perspective of stance, an interpersonal orientation used to express affiliation.

Solidarity symbols as mediators of stance-taking

One of the discursive processes that construe affiliation (see Zappavigna and Martin 2017) on the interpersonal level is called stance (Du Bois 2007; Alba-Juez and Thompson 2014), which is as much a social act as it is a linguistic one (Du Bois, 2007). Stance-taking is integral in everyday interaction; it is a practice that positions both the reader and writer towards the content but also to each other. In this paper, I conceptualise solidarity symbols as vehicles for evaluative practices of stance-taking. The triangular constitution of stance (see Fig. 1) allows us to examine the evaluative dimension of commemorative acts; thus, we are better able to see how, on the one hand, solidarity symbols encourage social bonding, constructing alliances and affiliation through shared interpersonal attitude, yet on the other hand contribute to affect alienation and distancing. Thus, *stance is what positions the speaker by way of evaluative orientation towards an object* (Du Bois 2007), which, regarding solidarity symbols, means that the bonding icon is able to generate a sense of community and affinity based on shared attitudinal resonance toward the object of evaluation.

For Du Bois (2007, 163), the act of taking a stance involves the stancetaker 1) evaluating an object, 2) positioning a subject (usually the self; can be the other), and 3) aligning with other subjects. Conceptualising stance as a ‘stance triangle’ depicting “the minimum structure of stance as dialogic action”, Du Bois (2007, 174) explains that although the stance triangle (see Fig. 1 below) depicts joint evaluative orientation toward the object (the self and the other sharing similar orientation toward the object, for example #JeSuisCharlie solidarity symbol), both “convergence and divergence of evaluative alignment are equally at home in the dialogic engagement of co-participant”. This process explains how the antagonistic relational positioning (i.e. affect alienation) regarding solidarity symbols comes to be; as stance is an act taking place in dialogic

interaction, it is shaped by the co-actions of others (ibid.). Through stance, we can investigate the divergent positions evoked by solidary symbols and interrogate the meanings residing under the pretext of assumed unified solidarity. Stance thus illuminates the ways in which #JeSuisCharlie at the same time evokes affiliation and alienation depending on how the audience reacts to the unmarked stance of the bondicon.

Stance can thus be used as a vehicle for conveying relational orientation in the form of alignment, for expressing identificational orientation and positioning, as well as ideological orientation, that is, orientation in the sociocultural field (Thurlow and Jaworski 2011).

Thinking in terms of stance-taking it is easy to see how solidarity symbols function in a dialogic fashion; not only do they exist in a dialogical relation to those who adopt, use and circulate them, solidarity symbols also exist in a socio-historical, political, as well as symbolic relation to other solidarity symbols that came before them (and again to those yet to be borne): the numerous appropriations and renditions are testament to the dialogicity of solidarity symbols. The dialogic nature of stance shows up in how it evokes dialogue between the constructor or message with the reader, activating the reader's own assessments relative to the attitudinal position construed in the text or a symbol (Martin and White 2005): the reader either accepts or rejects the positioning, resulting in either affinity (alignment) or alienation (disalignment).

Contextual factors affect the interpretation of the dialogic dimension of evaluation (Alba-Juez and Thompson 2014). Solidarity symbols have as unmarked reading the attitudinal disposition of positive evaluation with amplified affect, which, in their capacity as bonding icons, is able to generate a sense of community and solidarity.

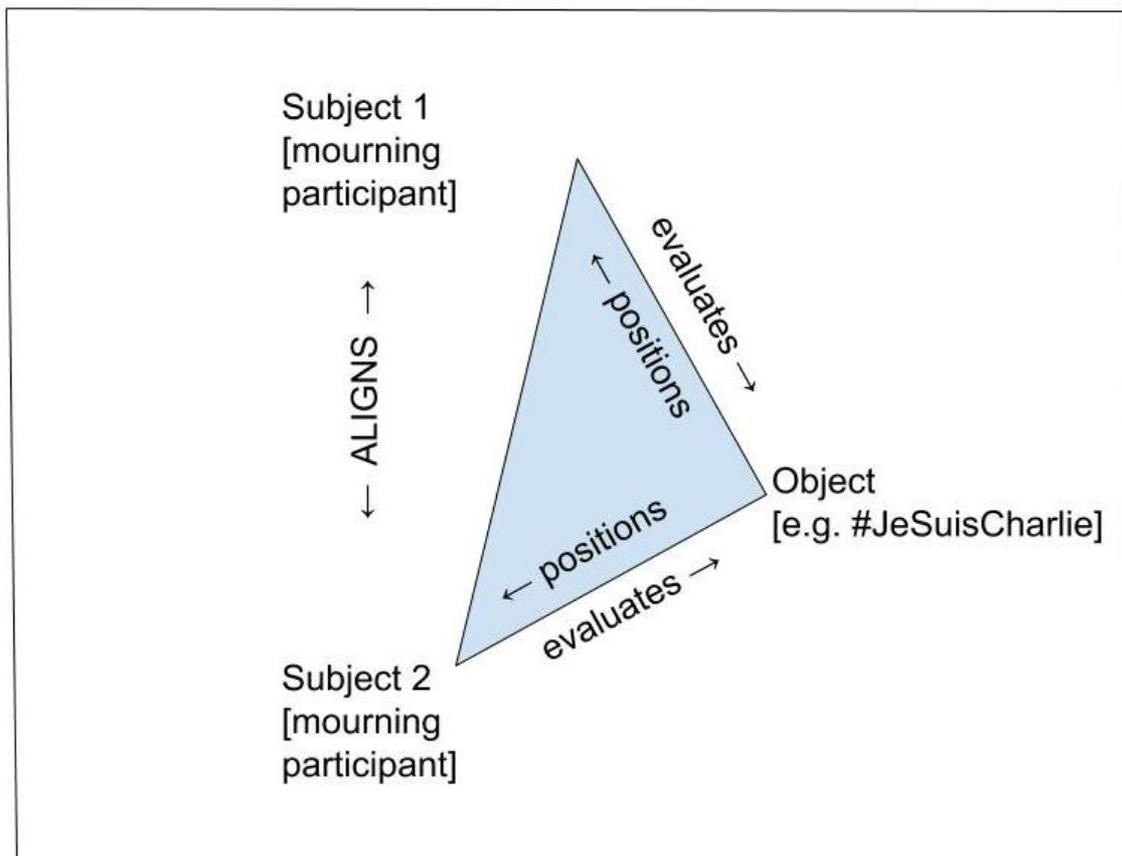


Figure 1. Stance triangle (Du Bois 2007), adapted.

As evaluative orientation, stance allows disagreement and therefore does not assume affiliation. Interaction typically involves stance-negotiation where reader/hearer attempts to assess the attitudinal stance and evaluative orientation of the speaker/writer. Likewise, the different ways evaluation residing in commemorative practices is interpreted can be witnessed as stance-negotiation: stance plays a crucial part in all commemorative practices as it signals where we do, or do not stand. Like public commemoration, stance, too, has the capacity to assign value (Du Bois 2007); thus the evaluation of the object of commemoration can be either positive or negative in orientation.

Non-commemoration, opting out, or subverting hegemonic commemorative practices belongs to the repertoire of relational, identificational and ideological positioning. Those circulating #JeNeSuisPasCharlie wished to make visible the exclusionary politics

of remembering embodied in #JeSuisCharlie, but simultaneously they challenge the dominant framing of the attack as an attack on freedom of speech, contesting also the assumption that everyone would agree and align with this interpretation (Giglietto and Lee 2017). Public mourning regularly evokes dissonance and dissensus; #PrayForParis generated questions regarding who prays for Beirut when the eyes of the world were on Paris, generating hashtags like #DontForgetBeirut.

Material and methods

This section will first present the empirical material collected from Twitter. Material was collected using digital media ethnography, and the selected hashtags and solidarity symbols were then analysed employing the tools offered by Appraisal analysis; each method will be explained in the next section.

Empirical material

The empirical material of the study consists of hashtags that spontaneously and almost immediately became established solidarity symbols in their specific contexts of terrorist violence. The solidarity symbols examined were chosen based on Twitter ethnographies of four cases: the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, 2015; the Beirut attack, 2015; the Paris attacks, 2015 (one day after the Beirut attack); and the Christchurch mosque attacks, 2019 (see Table 1). The solidarity symbols chosen for closer examination are #JeSuisCharlie, #JeSuisAhmed, and #JeNeSuisPasCharlie; #AdelTermos and #PrayForBeirut; #PrayForParis and #PeaceForParis; and finally, #JeSuisMuslim and #helloworld, respectively.

The material was collected from Twitter with the knowledge that solidarity symbols circulate the hybrid media environment, circulation being one of the selection criteria. The selection of hashtags was based on media-ethnographic observation, and based on the emergence and circulation of hashtags by the public, hashtags that became what

could be called solidarity symbols judged from how they were used were chosen. Thus, although the material analysed in this study consists of only a handful of linguistic, multimodal tokens, the cultural, political and contextual information gathered during the ethnographic phase relating to these communicative devices as well as communicative practices is invaluable. This is particularly crucial regarding solidarity symbols that tend to be short and concise image-text combinations that call for culturally specific knowledge that as stand-alone items remain superficial. Thus, deeper knowledge of the context of situation gained during ethnographic observation is essential to understanding the complexities of the relational scenarios solidarity symbols emerge in and generate that involve not only socio-historical and cultural knowledge, but also insight of the implied ideological and political aspects.

Table 1. The selected cases of terrorist violence.

Date	Location	Place(s) of attack	Number of victims	Method of violence	Examples of solidarity symbols
7.1. 2015	Paris, France	Charlie Hebdo newspaper office	12 killed, 11 injured	Mass shooting	#JeSuisCharlie #JeSuisAhmed #JeNeSuisPasCharlie #CharlieHebdoAttack
12.11. 2015	Beirut, Lebanon	Commercial district in the Bourj el-Barajneh suburb	89 killed, 239 injured	Suicide bombs	#AdelTermos #DontForgetBeirut #PrayForLebanon #JeSuisBeyrouth #JeNeSuisPasCharlie #BeirutBombing
13.11. 2015	Paris, France	State de France football stadium; Bataclan theatre;	130 killed (90 at Bataclan), 413 injured	Suicide bombs, mass shooting	#PrayForParis #PeaceForParis #JeSuisParis #PrayForTheWorld #ParisAttacks
15.3. 2019	Christchurch, New Zealand	Al Noor Mosque; Linwood Islamic Center	51 killed, 49 injured	Mass shooting	#PrayForChristchurch #JeSuisMuslim #helloworld #49lives #50lives #51lives

Context of study: four cases of terrorist violence

The cases were selected based on their cultural and political impact as well as due to the temporal aspects that are of significance in terms of visibility of public mourning. In 2015, France suffered two massive terrorist attacks the same year, with the Charlie Hebdo attack being sensational in many ways (see Sumiala, Valaskivi, Tikka and Huhtamäki 2018), whereas the attack in Beirut not only took place one day before the November attacks in Paris, it was also the worst violent attack since the Lebanese Civil War. In terms of public commemoration and the outpouring of solidarity, these cases are interesting not only in temporal terms, but also because of their different cultural and geographic location. All the three attacks were carried out by ISIS, whereas the fourth attack, the Christchurch mosque attacks in March, 2019, were carried out by a far-right, white supremacist. In New Zealand, the Christchurch attack was the first act of violence officially characterised as an act of terrorism, while the November 2015 attacks in Paris were the worst in Europe in a decade. All four cases are significant in terms of public, mediated mourning and the politics of remembering, each unique in their own way.

Digital media ethnography: sustained engagement and collection of material

Digitality is an essential element of solidarity symbols from birth to dissemination and reception, and to understand their meaning, it is important to observe how they are used in the context of their creation. Digital media ethnography (Sumiala and Tikka *in print*; Coleman 2010; Hine 2015; Markham 2017) is revealing of the complexity and diversity of social interaction online, which makes it highly suitable for the study of solidarity symbols, combined here with the discourse analytical method, Appraisal analysis.

Digital ethnography naturally differs from traditional ethnography in the fluidity of ‘the field’; in digital spaces, the boundaries of ‘ethnographic space’ are relational and discursive rather than fixed and clearly demarcated. Thus, thinking in terms of

movement, flow, and process (Markham 2013) is more useful, describing also how the researcher moves between digital media sites in following the circulated content that often contains intersecting media material. Ethnographic places, then, are products of digital media ethnographies (Postill and Pink 2012) with intersecting online and offline realms illustrating the embeddedness of digital technologies in everyday life (Hine 2015). Solidarity symbols are often viewed and shared via mobile phones while the user is carrying out her daily activities. As digital media allows distant participation and connectivity, an ethnographic approach is well suited for researching mediated sociality as it allows collection of rich and varied empirical material.

Selection of empirical material is more focused as it draws on a more comprehensive view of the cultural practices gained during observation. Ethnographic participation in digital spaces ranges from immersion in online communities to observing community practices (Markham 2017), where observation can be viewed as a form of sustained engagement (Markham 2013); such a non-invasive, embodied practice was also used in this study. All four terrorist attacks were closely observed for a week to see what kinds of organic solidarity symbols emerge, how these circulate, how they develop and alter, and what kinds of counter-discourses they invite. Ethnographies focused on Twitter, but due to linkages and embeddedness of different media material observation was not limited to Twitter alone. Although the solidarity symbols discussed in this paper are hashtags, in their capacity as bonding icons they are not merely hashtags in the purely informative sense, but rather multimodal constructions where the image-text relations together construe meaning and construct stance. Based on what was observed over the days that followed the attacks the hashtags most relevant for this study were selected, and the ethnographic observation of cultural knowledge was used in their interpretation along with Appraisal analysis.

Appraisal analysis: discourse analytic tools for examination of stance

The social world and meanings therein are constructed through discourse emerging in interaction. To examine the interpersonal dimension (Hunston and Thompson 2000) of solidarity symbols and how they function as bonding icons (Martin and Stenglin 2007; Stenglin 2009), the study draws on Appraisal analysis (Martin and White 2005; Martin and Rose 2003), an interpersonal perspective on discourse (Martin 2000). The discourse analytical tools offered by Appraisal allow a more detailed examination of “the resources of evaluation and intersubjective positioning” (Martin and White 2005, 161), making it an ideal method for analysing solidarity symbols as a form of remembering as well as interpersonal stance-taking (see Martin 2004).

Based on systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday 1993[1975]; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), Appraisal also views language as a resource for simultaneously realising meaning in three different ways, these being the textual, ideational, and interpersonal levels of meaning (Eggins 2004; Thompson 2013). While the textual level focuses on how the text is organised, the ideational level examines how experience and social reality are presented. The interpersonal level of meaning relates to the enactment of social relationships and the stance toward content and audience: of the three levels of meaning, Appraisal analysis focuses on the interpersonal dimension of language use. Stance, too, is a form of affective positioning emerging from the interpersonal dimension. Appraisal allows us to focus on resources for evaluation in language as well as image to examine how this pertains to the stance of the writer, the reader and the text.

The Appraisal system is conceptually divided into Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation where Attitude forms the main system, with Engagement sourcing attitude and Graduation modifying and amplifying the attitudinal stance. The dimension of Attitude is further categorised into three evaluative resources of Affect (emotional responses), Judgement (moral evaluation of behaviour), and Appreciation (valuing things), all of which can be either positive or negative (Martin 2000). All three

resources are able to generate communities of feeling, and thus the stance adopted also varies along the three dimensions (Martin and White 2005).

Interpersonal and ideational meaning form couplings, meaning that the ideational content is appraised and evaluated in the enactment of interpersonal relationships. The composition of these couplings varies. To illustrate, the ideational content of #JeSuisCharlie (i.e. standing in solidarity with that which “Charlie” represents) is interpersonally appraised in positive terms (the writer has a positive stance towards both the content and its audience; see also Fig. 1 on stance triangle), and the evocation of sentiment of the public (i.e. subject 2 in Fig. 1) is one of affiliation. This exemplifies how Attitude is interpersonal meaning toward ideation (Martin 2004; see also Harju 2016).

Regarding solidarity symbols, the unmarked coupling (i.e. the congruent reading) regarding interpersonal stance and attitude toward the ideation, the content (e.g. commemoration of victims), is positive Affect. In counter-discourses, as evidenced by #JeNeSuisPasCharlie, the interpersonal evaluation is one of negative judgement. Both function as invitation to community, however, different ideation invites different affiliation.

From #JeSuisCharlie to #JeSuisMuslim

Solidarity symbols as templates of affect

Solidarity symbols have a remarkable capacity for flexible replication and offer a rich source for mimesis with each iteration adding new layers of meaning. Ethnographic observation reveals different contextual (online and offline) uses and varying co-texts that, varying framing the solidarity symbol, alter its original meanings while retaining its function. Condensed affect is in the form of the symbol transmitted over to new iterations of the old. What this means is that the interpersonal dimension (hyper-charged with positive Affect) carries over and invests the new solidarity symbols with

affective meanings that resonate with the earlier ones, forming chains of significations. In the context of commemoration and solidarity symbols, two of the most popular templates of affect both originate in 2015; the January attack in Paris gave birth to #JeSuisCharlie while the November attack to #PrayForParis. The token #JeSuisCharlie is one of the most prominent solidarity symbols of recent years to have emerged in the context of terrorist violence measured both by its immediate circulation and the range of bondicons it has since inspired.

#JeSuisCharlie, particularly, exemplifies how affect sticks (Ahmed 2004), not only to figures or subjects but also to objects, and how certain solidarity symbols become saturated with affect, and how this meaning-making dimension becomes durable, enduring the many adaptations from #JeSuisAhmed to #JeSuisMuslim. The first-person stance, “I am Charlie”, positions those circulating the token as standing with Charlie, speaking expressly to sentiments of solidarity and standing united, a stance that is replicated in subsequent iterations; yet, it is exactly the reference to Charlie that proved contentious. With global adoption and cross-platform circulation, the meanings attached to Charlie expanded: many saw Charlie as a synonym for freedom of speech, but because of the magazine’s contentious style, not everyone felt aligned with Charlie Hebdo, asking instead questions regarding the limits of freedom of speech.

Appropriations are more likely to happen to tokens that have achieved global recognition, like #JeSuisCharlie, than the more locally relevant and specific ones pointing to the importance of an acquired level of semiotic capital which is easy to harness for subsequent purposes. After the Christchurch mosque attacks, 2019, #JeSuisMuslim entered circulation. Although already before Christchurch there had been mosque attacks in Western countries, this was the first time #JeSuisMuslim gained prominence. After the Islamic Cultural Centre attack in Quebec in January, 2017, where six people were killed, the solidarity symbols were different in both their ideational focus and interpersonal stance from those that emerged after Christchurch. While the Christchurch attack was unique in channelling solidarity specifically towards

the Muslim community, in Quebec, #RememberJan29 became the prominent symbol, signifying the date of the attack, resonating with the established 9/11 token.

Expressions of solidarity in relation to the Quebec mosque shooting were accompanied by critical voices that noted the limited subjectivity offered by the popular #JeSuisCharlie, manifest also in the explicit lack of appropriation of the token in commemoration of the Quebec shooting victims. Criticism mainly concerned the implied hierarchy of lives where some are worth remembering and grieving while others are not. While Twitter users raised the issue asking “Where is #JeSuisMuslim”, yet another noted:

After Alexis Bissonnette walked into a mosque and fatally shot 6 worshippers, the world didn't cry #JeSuisMuslim or #JeSuisQuebecCity. [tweet dated 4.2.2017]

Being excluded from the affective transmission of solidarity offered by the iterative repertoire of appropriations of #JeSuisCharlie is telling of the affective power established symbols have, which is tightly linked to representative power and to the notion of whose lives are grieved and made visible. Thus, solidarity symbols offer templates of affect for easy replication of solidarity, but they also assign value in doing so; solidarity symbols operate within wider regimes of visibility and to be included in the chain of significations means inclusion also in terms of grievability.

There are yet other recent bondicons that have the capacity to become affect templates. The hashtag #helloworld emerged as a novel solidarity symbol deeply anchored in the Christchurch attack with explicit reference to the events in the first mosque: as the perpetrator entered the building, he was welcomed with the words “Hello, brother”. It is intimate and unassuming, and rooted in a real encounter we only know of because of the now banned video the shooter shared of the attack. These words have a unique resonance as they were articulated to the shooter by his first victim. The bondicon #helloworld thus carries the welcoming stance of Haji-Daoud

Nabi who uttered these words: now, #hellobrother extends beyond these words and mediates the notions of tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

In many ways, #hellobrother is a unique symbol of solidarity in the ever-expanding repertoire of commemorative symbols for victims of terrorism. The ideational content already differs greatly from other solidarity symbols, these words having been uttered by one of the victims, in contrast to commemorative slogans usually being crafted by those left behind. Similarly, the interpersonal stance in #hellobrother remains one of openness, infused with positive Affect, whereas the other multimodal tokens are drafted by someone observing the event unfold from the outside and have shades of mourning and witnessing in them. #hellobrother soon established itself as a strong bonding icon as the slogan continued to spread from online to offline spaces in viral circulation. These added layers build on the original ideation while retaining the interpersonal stance of accepting co-presence. The flexibility of usage of this particular bondicon, which now extend well beyond practices of commemoration, also highlight the affective constitution of the symbol and the mechanisms of affective transmission of interpersonal stance.

The connective practice of sharing contributes to the many meanings of solidarity symbols by way of a cumulative effect, which again enhance their circulability, adaptability, and meaning-making potential. In this process, they become bonding icons that resonate on an emotional level, producing pockets of affinity. However, the dialogic nature of solidarity symbols may also contribute to affect alienation when the mode of relating is one of disalignment.

Affect alienation and contestation as stance-negotiation

Stance, as a discursive act, is simultaneously a social, value-assigning act as it positions the reader while valuing the ideational content. Positioning also occurs inter-subjectively between participants and here lie the seeds for both consensus and dissensus. Discourses on commemoration reveal a spectrum of positive and negative

Affect (emotional responses), and as well as positive and negative Judgement (moral evaluation of behaviour). When discussing solidarity symbols, it is crucial to consider the mediating role of emotion in the global flows of affective participation. The differential reading of affectively charged bondicons can to some extent be explained by cultural intelligibility of affect (see Ahmed 2004), however, stance shapes the emotional reading of the content as well to those communicating it (e.g. Gales 2011) as readers interpret what is being said against their own background, knowledge and experience. In this way solidarity symbols evoke a wide range of emotional alignment as some identify with the subject position constructed by the symbol while others do not.

The unmarked evaluation-ideation coupling of commemorative symbols contain inscribed (i.e. explicitly stated) positive Affect whereas not participating in the dominant commemorative performances tends to be predicated on invoked evaluation, typically negative Judgement. This may be a simple matter of framing (the use of co-occurring hashtags, for example), or critique may manifest as new, alternative solidarity symbols that emerge alongside the existing ones, aiming to widen the scope of recognition and commemoration.

Silent disalignment easily goes unnoticed; it is not often that discordant voices are expressed as explicitly as in #JeNeSuisPasCharlie, I am not Charlie. The murder of the French police officer, Ahmed Merabet, killed by the perpetrators in the middle of the street, elicited a flood of public mourning in Paris and elsewhere. Remembering Merabet, who was also Muslim, #JeSuisAhmed foreground diversity, also in terms of citizenship. As the footage of Ahmed Merabet's murder circulated in the media, #JeSuisAhmed was taken up as an expression of solidarity that included Muslims as victims of terrorist violence, emphasising the undifferentiated violence of terrorists as well as highlighting the exclusionary aspects of #JeSuisCharlie. While a degree of negotiation regarding stance is always present, the parameters of inclusion are nevertheless embedded in the symbolic content of solidarity symbols; the ideational

focus of #JeSuisCharlie unavoidably included the tone of the magazine which many felt was insulting and blasphemous (Todd 2015). With #JeSuisAhmed, as opposed to “Charlie”, connected mourners and citizens alike were able to participate in the public mourning of the Charlie Hebdo attack while taking a stance toward that which was being remembered and what French citizenship looks like.

The alternative bondicon, #JeSuisAhmed, offered a more inclusive and diverse frame of who counts as a grievable subject in the context of terrorism; furthermore, not only standing in opposition to #JeSuisCharlie but also standing next to it, #JeSuisAhmed diversified the figure of the victim of terrorism, critiquing the widespread idea that ISIS only kills Western, non-Muslim people, a notion that denies Muslim victims’ recognition as grievable subjects. The simultaneous emergence of #JeSuisAhmed and #JeSuisCharlie establishes the former as representative of counter-publics where #JeSuisAhmed highlights the potential affect alienation generated by the latter.

I am not Charlie, I am Ahmed the dead cop. Charlie ridiculed my faith and culture and I died defending his right to do so. #JeSuisAhmed
[tweet dated 8.1.2015]

Here, #JeSuisAhmed can be seen as a vehicle for expressing what Payne (2016) calls purposeful affect alienation. The stance adopted is oppositional to the dominant frame of participating through identification with Charlie Hebdo and acts as a form of critique. Furthermore, #JeSuisAhmed allowed active participation in the discursive decoupling of the Islam-terrorism link spread by Islamophobic discourses (e.g. Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez 2016; Awan 2014) where the position allocated for Muslim subjects is as perpetrators. As observed by Payne (2016, 3) there was a question whether the circulation of #JeSuisCharlie implied “identification with a universalist frame of citizenship which contributes to the erasure of some forms of social difference”. In this way, #JeNeSuisPasCharlie explicitly disagrees with the point of

identification offered by #JeSuisCharlie, and together with #JeSuisAhmed, contributing also to diversifying the figure of the French citizen.

From the perspective of Appraisal, stance variation like this can be explored in terms of variance in the combination of Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. Struggles over meaning manifest as stance negotiation as different social actors create novel discursive avenues for commemoration. Further, the Paris attacks in January 2015 underline the importance of the socio-cultural and political context in interpreting solidarity symbols as they emerge, particularly regarding interpreting those that are adopted and enter wider circulation. Stance-negotiation can also be detected in discourses explicitly taking a stance against mediated shows of solidarity; like any hashtag, bondicons can become subject to hijacking and harnessed for the purposes of opposing agendas. For example, co-occurring with anti-immigration slogans, like #CloseTheBorders, solidarity symbols (e.g. #PrayForTurku) can become charged with hatred (Sumiala and Harju 2019). So, while the affective foregrounding remains, the communicator's stance orientation alters the original meanings.

Solidarity symbols as struggles for recognition

Two days after the Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015, Paris witnessed an attack linked to the Charlie Hebdo one, this time against the Jewish community; to commemorate the victims, #JeSuisJuif (I am Jewish) appeared, yet never gained wide circulation. Some criticised the official body for paying more attention to the Charlie Hebdo attack and the journalists who were killed than the subsequent attacks and the deaths that followed, including Clarissa Jean-Philippe, a trainee policewoman. Although commemorated on Twitter, as well as by the state later on, no solidarity symbol commemorating Clarissa Jean-Philippe ever emerged like #JeSuisAhmed for Ahmed Merabet did. As noted by Sumiala, Valaskivi, Tikka and Huhtamäki (2018), Merabet was the ideal victim while also being a Muslim hero. Here are numerous factors that affect circulability of solidarity symbols, media coverage (including footage shared by

perpetrators) playing a big part. The death of Clarissa Jean-Philippe was mostly noted under #JeSuisCharlie, although it is debatable if this was a fitting framing in terms other than informative and temporal contextualisation.

Later the same year, in November, Paris suffered yet another terrorist attack, one day after a terrorist attack had shaken Beirut. The overwhelming amount of solidarity for Paris highlighted the lack of solidarity for Beirut, as the attacks happened only one day apart, raising the question “what about Beirut”, and #DontForgetBeirut was coined to highlight the discrepancy in attention and to remind the world that terror is not exclusive to the West. One of the prominent solidarity symbols for Paris was #PrayForParis. The bondicon’s privileging function (Stenglin, 2009) of featuring the Eiffel Tower construed a limited scope of mourning with the explicit text-image combination geolocating the ideation even more. While the primary function of bondicons is to construct affiliation, they are also divisive: the restricted nature of the object of appraisal made #PrayForParis exclusive, particularly against the backdrop of the Beirut bombings a day before:

I dropped all of my close friends in 2015 when Beirut was bombed and I lost contact with my dad and they changed their profile pics to #PrayForParis and didn't ask me once if my father was found alive.
[tweet dated 23.3.2018]

Although in Beirut the attack was the worst since the civil war, no #PrayForBeirut really took off (although it did occur). One solidarity symbol that did gain more traction was #AdelTermos, commemorating the man who tackled one of the suicide bombers at the scene, saving many lives while sacrificing his own. Adel Termos became a local hero and the face of the attack. In the aftermath of the Beirut attack, many criticised the media (as well as the West more generally) as being Euro-centric:

All too soon forgotten hero #AdelTermos or #beirutbombing overshadowed by #ParisAttacks [tweet dated 18.11.2015]

The voices of criticism were not restricted to Lebanon, but were heard across the Western media landscape. Indeed, an arc of grievability can be traced in the many ways the figure of a victim is constructed, and who are constructed as included or excluded in public commemorative acts. The bondicons #JeSuisAhmed and #AdelTermos illustrate this issue in the context where #JeSuisCharlie highlights the priority of the Western subject as the grievable victim in the context of terrorism.

Solidarity symbols are highly intertextual and depend on other tokens for their meaning: [I am] #AdelTermos references and builds on the existing #JeSuisCharlie. However, #AdelTermos did not attain the same level of circulation as #JeSuisAhmed despite the two men sharing a similar death defending others. One reason is the lack of uptake of the token outside Lebanon, in contrast to #JeSuisCharlie that spread around the world within hours, coupled with the fact that the media coverage on the Beirut bombings paled in comparison to that of Paris (e.g. Ismail and Mishra 2019), which was likely to contribute to the dissemination of the symbolic material.

Commemoration needs to be situated in wider socio-political discourses that extend beyond the immediate context. Thus, public remembering of Adel Termos in Beirut needs to be contextualised differently from the acts of remembering relating to Ahmed Merabet in Paris as they not only resonate with different publics, but also tie in with very different historical contexts. However, commemoration is evaluative, and the inter-relatedness of explicit and implicit forms of evaluation is crucial as these two sources of stance have a cumulative effect, exemplified by the Beirut remembrance and its intertextual reliance on the Paris commemoration (despite Paris attacks taking place after Beirut). As recognition is tied to the politics of remembering and the politics of visibility, the hyper visibility of Paris emphasised the invisibility of Beirut, pointing at the same time to bias in media coverage. Also, while #AdelTermos surfaced soon after the attacks (modelled after #JeSuisCharlie from January), the #PrayForBeirut token only appeared after the Paris attacks (despite Beirut happening first), thus mimicking #PrayForParis that gained instant circulation. In this way the more widely circulated

bondicons offer a template of affect that new renditions draw on, even if the temporal order, like in this case, is the reverse. The iteration #PrayForBeirut conveys specific meanings, and not least, it links the Beirut bombings to the chain of attacks shaking Europe.

The solidarity symbols #PrayForParis and #PrayForBeirut also co-occurred which is typical of violent attacks taking place within days of each other. The same contextualisation occurred with #PrayForTurku and #PrayForBarcelona in August, 2017, when the Turku stabbings (see Sumiala and Harju 2019) took place just one day after the one in Barcelona. The November attacks in Paris also generated #PeaceForParis where we see the linguistic token move away from religious practice still present in #PrayForParis, emphasis thus shifting to pledges of peace. The artwork in #PeaceForParis depicts the Eiffel Tower morphed into the peace symbol: this is a good example of an iconisation process. Ideationally Paris is in the text-image relations construed as the locus of tragedy and object of solidarity, yet the interpersonal orientation is aimed at evocation of affect. Bondicons are efficient vehicles for interpersonal stance-taking as they embody an attitudinal disposition which construes the reader (or the sharer of the token) as one sharing the subject position and attitudinal alignment present as default in the symbol. There is thus a normative element to bondicons where the assumed position is one of affect inclusion.

In March, 2019, two mosque attacks shocked Christchurch, a first act of violence labelled a terrorist attack in New Zealand. Solidarity symbols like #JeSuisChristchurch soon emerged. What made responses to the Christchurch attack unique was that, on the very same day, the solidarity symbol #JeSuisMuslim started circulating. However, accusations of Western hypocrisy still resonated as Twitter users made comments on how some lives “deserve a hashtag while others don’t”. The fragility of the solidarity symbol #JeSuisMuslim is revealed by comments lamenting either the delay of its emergence or the apparent lack of uptake by non-Muslim mourners who were eager to stand in solidarity with Paris:

Where are those who said #JeSuisCharlie? Or Muslim blood has different color than others? #jesuisMuslim [tweet dated 15.3.2019]

As a linguistic token, #JeSuisMuslim not only intertextually alludes to #JeSuisCharlie in its form and function, it makes explicit that the lives lost in the attack were those of Muslim worshippers. It calls for solidarity outside the hegemonic Western frame of victimhood by underlining the reversal of the often-assumed roles of victim-perpetrator in the context of terrorist violence, thereby widening the scope of victimhood to include those usually only included in the category of perpetrators. Resonating with this role reversal, questions were raised as to the global possibility of #JeSuisMuslim as a token of solidarity for victims of terrorist violence:

If #JeSuisCharlie was possible why not #JeSuisMuslim? Aren't the life's of Muslims equal? [tweet dated 20.3.2019]

The token was initially mostly shared by fellow Muslims, although non-Muslim mourners globally joined. Similarly, in Paris, #JeSuisAhmed emerged as counter-discourse to commemorate the Muslim policeman Ahmed Merabet who was killed, but also to explicitly challenge #JeSuisCharlie. In this way, #JeSuisAhmed and #JeSuisMuslim both speak to increasing diversity in the repertoire of public remembering. The bondicon #JeSuisMuslim continues in this path of making visible the range of victims of terrorism, and although the two attacks in Paris and Christchurch were motivated by different ideologies, the victimhood is shared even if not always reflected in the solidarity symbols that go viral.

The bondicon #JeSuisMuslim allows us to see how affective practices of commemoration produce “affect aliens” (see Payne 2016), those not sharing the sense of belonging within the dominant frame of mourning (see also Todd 2015). The emergence of new renditions is illustrative of the need for more contextualised and situated solidarity symbols, but also of struggles for recognition. #JeSuisMuslim

constructs new meanings of remembrance and unity at times of terror. More all-inclusive tokens have lately emerged, for example #TheyAreUs or #JeSuisHuman, although these are yet to go viral.

Discussion

There is no escaping the fact that bondicons align participants with a specific ideological orientation as well as generate affective communion and therefore cannot escape significations regarding grievability of life (Butler 2006). This study has critically assessed solidarity symbols as vehicles for public mourning from the perspective of stance (Du Bois 2007; Alba-Juez and Thompson 2014) arguing that solidarity symbols mediate evaluative positioning, dialogically evoking a responsive positioning from the audience. As a form of affective and interpersonal positioning, stance comes with an inherent evaluative dimension; yet, as solidarity symbols are affectively multi-directional, they construe complex interpersonal dynamics. Because stance affords a range of possible alignments achieved by drawing on multiple discursive resources and embodied practices, the concept of stance provides a useful conceptual lens with which to examine solidarity symbols as vehicles for evaluative positioning. Although the normalised interpersonal orientation carried by solidarity symbols is one of mourning and remembering, alternative readings are always-already embedded.

The paper has shed light on the ways in which solidarity symbols function as bonding icons; as bondicons, solidarity symbols are crucial in enabling a sense of community by structuring commemorative practices, by transmission of affects, and by constructing affiliation and attitudinal alignment. Moreover, solidarity symbols that do become bondicons can also function as what I have here called *a template of affect*. The more enduring solidarity symbols have acquired symbolic and semiotic capital in addition to the condensation of affect, and coupled with the ease with which they lend both their function and form to subsequent solidarity symbols, there is also a transferral of affect as well as stance. Affect templates anchor certain affects as part of their constitution,

and give to subsequent symbols a recognizable form. Thus, due to the original composition and context of creation, the affects embedded in #hellobrother and #JeSuisCharlie, for example, are different as are their interpersonal orientation (stance). The juxtaposition of #JeSuisCharlie with #JeSuisMuslim in part also questions the very positioning that made #JeSuisCharlie so pervasive. It shows how the position of a grievable subject embedded in #JeSuisCharlie is not open to everyone and we are not all Charlie. However, it also illustrates how, as templates of affect, popular solidarity symbols have the capacity to generate rapid transmission of connective solidarity.

Public remembering constructs life as valuable and thereby grievable. As Butler (2006) has argued, grievability is linked to the political recognition of people as legitimately vulnerable; people not recognised as vulnerable in life are unlikely to be recognised or mourned in death. The differential evaluation of life is reflected in practices of commemoration and public mourning, linked to the problematics of mediated solidarity and issues of recognition. This study contributes to the view, that despite the emphasis by traditional media on constructing a sense of unified solidarity as the dominant mode of participation after terrorist violence, other modes of participating should not be ignored. Moreover, not participating may be read as silent resistance against the dominant emotional landscape.

It is important to note that the discursive and emotional alignment engendered by violent events is not restricted to solidarity (see e.g. Sumiala and Tikka 2011), but the more sinister spheres of digitally mediated emotional landscapes include collectives fuelled by ideologies embracing xenophobia, white supremacy, or Islamophobia. After the Christchurch mosque attacks, affiliations formed among those sharing a sense of affinity with the perpetrator and the ideology he espoused, and digital sites (like message boards 4chan and 8chan) offered spaces for affective unity. The emergent solidarity symbols, like #JeSuisMuslim or #NewZealandStrong, did not speak to this audience or include them as aligned subjects; instead, they created their own code of

inclusion and what quickly became their bonding icon was the video of the attack shared by the perpetrator. In the process of iconisation of affect, the fervour and affect the video managed to elicit became foregrounded.

In a similar vein, after the Paris attacks the token #jesuiskouachi (Kouachi brothers carried out the Charlie Hebdo attack) was circulating, speaking to specific affective networks. The hashtag reached a trending status for a brief while (Schafer, Truc, Badouard, Castex, and Musiani 2019), exemplifying how bonding icons produce complex affective attachments and how solidarity and public mourning are not the only modes of participating in violent events. Highlighting the ways in which the relational, ideological, and evaluative constitution of solidarity symbols position people, this paper has shed light on the complex nature of mediated solidarity as an affective practice of stance-taking. The mourning participant is suspended in a matrix of shifting relational alignments situated in the wider socio-cultural and geopolitical conditions, not all of which are explicit in shows of public commemoration.

Symbolic material often circulates simultaneously in online and offline spaces, building discursive links as they infiltrate different social spaces in new forms. Traversing different digital platforms, #JeSuisCharlie emerged initially on Twitter before finding its way to other digital media platforms, and later on to offline spaces as street art and graffiti (Bazin 2019), and so did commemorations for Ahmed Merabet and Clarissa Jean-Philippe. Similarly, #helloworld quickly spread from online to offline spaces and it has since been adopted as a token of tolerance and inclusion. This illustrates the power of bondicons, highlighting virality, durability, and adaptability as key characteristics of successful solidarity symbols where virality is not limited to digital spaces.

Biographical note:

Anu A. Harju, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences (Media and Communication Research), University of Helsinki. Her latest research focuses on violence and the media,

specifically practices of public commemoration and the politics of remembering. Her latest publications include Sumiala, J. & Harju, A. A. (2019) “No More Apologies”: Violence as a Trigger for Public Controversy over Islam in the Digital Public Sphere. *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, and Döveling, K. Harju, A.A. & Sommer, D. (2018) From Mediatized Emotion to Digital Affect Cultures: New Technologies and Global Flows of Emotion, published in *Social Media + Society*. She is currently co-editing a thematic issue on the intersections between media and violence, and one of her current collaborative projects looks into crowdfunding funerals and commodification of memory.

Contact: anu.a.harju@helsinki.fi

References

- Aguilera-Carnerero, Carmen and Abdul Halik Azeez. 2016. “Islamonausea, not Islamophobia’: The many faces of cyber hate speech.” *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research* 9(1): 21–40.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. “Affective economies.” *Social Text* 22 (2): 117–139.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The cultural politics of emotion*. Second edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Alba-Juez, Laura and Geoff Thompson. 2014. “The many faces and phases of evaluation.” In *Evaluation in Context*, edited by Geoff Thompson, and Laura Alba-Juez, 3–23. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Arceneaux, Phillip. 2018. “The Public Interest Behind #JeSuisCharlie and #JeSuisAhmed/ Social Media and Hashtag Virality as Mechanisms for Western Cultural Imperialism.” *Journal of Public Interest Communications* 2(1).
- Awan, Imran. 2014. “Islamophobia and Twitter: A Typology of Online Hate Against Muslims on Social Media.” *Policy and Internet* 6(2): 133–150.
- Bazin, Maëlle. 2019. “From tweets to graffiti: ‘I am Charlie’ as a ‘writing event’”. *Media, War & Conflict* 12(2): 171–186.
- Bruns, Axel, and Jean Burgess. 2015. “Twitter Hashtags from Ad Hoc to Calculated Publics.” In *Hashtag publics: the power and politics of discursive networks*, edited by Nathan Rambukkana, 13–28. New York: Peter Lang.

Butler, Judith. 2006. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso.

Coleman, Gabriella E. 2010. "Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39(1): 487-505.

Collins, Randall. 2004. "Rituals of solidarity and security in the wake of terrorist attack." *Sociological Theory* 22: 54-87.

Doss, Erika. 2008. *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Du Bois, John W. 2007. "The stance triangle." In *Stancetaking in Discourse*, edited by Robert Englebretson, 139-182. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Accessed January, 2018: http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/faculty/dubois/DuBois_2007_Stance_Triangle_M.pdf

Döveling, Katrin, Anu A. Harju, and Denise Sommer. 2018. "From Mediatized Emotion to Digital Affect Cultures: New Technologies and Global Flows of Emotion." *Social Media + Society*, 4(1). doi: 10.1177/2056305117743141

Eggins, Suzanne. 2004. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Second edition. New York: Continuum.

Gales, Tammy. 2011. "Identifying interpersonal stance in threatening discourse: An appraisal analysis." *Discourse Studies* 13(1): 27-46.

Giglietto, Fabio, and Yenn Lee. 2017. "A Hashtag Worth a Thousand Words: Discursive Strategies Around #JeNeSuisPasCharlie After the 2015 Charlie Hebdo Shooting." *Social Media + Society* 3(1): 1-15.

Halliday, Michael A. K. 1993[1975]. "Language as Social Semiotic." In *The Discourse Studies Reader: main currents in theory and analysis*, edited by Johannes Angermüller, Dominique Maingueneau, and Ruth Wodak, 262-271. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Halliday, Michael A. K. and Christian Matthiessen. 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Third edition. London: Hodder Arnold.

Harju, Anu A. 2015. "Socially Shared Mourning: Construction and Consumption of Collective Memory." *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21(1-2): 123-145.

- Harju, Anu A. 2016. "Imagined Community and Affective Alignment in Steve Jobs Memorial Tributes on YouTube." In *Systemic Functional Linguistics in the Digital Age*, edited by Sheena Gardner and Sian Alsop, 62–80. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing.
- Hine, Christine. 2008. "Virtual Ethnography: Modes, Varieties, Affordances." In *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*, edited by Nigel Fielding, Raymond M. Lee, and Grant Blank, 257–270. London, UK: SAGE. doi: 10.4135/9780857020055
- Hine, Christine. 2015. *Ethnography for the Internet. Embedded, Embodied and Everyday*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hunston, Susan, and Geoff Thompson, eds. 2000. *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ismail, Amani and Smeeta Mishra. 2019. "Configuring terrorism in the age of ISIS: The New York Times' coverage of the 2015 Beirut and Paris attacks." *Global Media and Communication* 15(2): 177–193.
- Krutrök, Moa Eriksson, and Simon Lindgren. 2018. "Continued Contexts of Terror: Analyzing Temporal Patterns of Hashtag Co-Occurrence as Discursive Articulations." *Social Media + Society* 4(4): 1–11.
- Markham, Annette. 2013. "Fieldwork in Social Media: What Would Malinowski Do?" *Journal of Qualitative Communication Research* 2(4): 434–446. doi: 10.1525/qcr.2013.2.4.434.
- Markham, Annette. 2017. "Ethnography in the digital Internet era: from fields to flow, descriptions to interventions." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th edition, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 650–668. London: Sage.
- Martin, James R. 2000. "Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English." In *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*, edited by Susan Hunston and Geoff Thompson, 142–175. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, James R., and David Rose. 2003. *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*. London: Continuum.
- Martin, James R. 2004. "Mourning: How we Get Aligned." *Discourse & Society* 15(2–3): 321–344.
- Martin, James R., and Peter R.R. White. 2005. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin, James R., and Stenglin Maree K. 2007. "Materializing Reconciliation: Negotiating Difference in a Transcolonial Exhibition." In *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*, edited by T. D. Royce and Wendy Bowcher, 215-238. Mahwah; New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

Nikunen, Kaarina. 2019. *Media Solidarities: Emotions, Power and Justice in the Digital Age*. London: Sage.

Papacharissi, Zizi. 2014. *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Payne, Robert. 2016. "Je suis Charlie': Viral circulation and the ambivalence of affective citizenship." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 21(3): 277-292.

Parry, Katy. 2019. "#MoreInCommon: Collective Mourning Practices on Twitter and the Iconization of Jo Cox." In *Visual Political Communication*, edited by Anastasia Venuti, Daniel Jackson, and Darren G. Lilleker, 227-245. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Postill, John, and Sarah Pink. 2012. "Social media ethnography: the digital researcher in a messy web." *Media International Australia* 145: 123-134.

Schafer, Valérie, G ero me Truc, Romain Badouard, Lucien Castex, and Francesca Musiani. 2019. "Paris and Nice terrorist attacks: Exploring Twitter and web archives." *Media, War & Conflict* 12(2): 153-170.

Stenglin, Maree K. 2009. "Space odyssey: towards a social semiotic model of three-dimensional space." *Visual Communication* 8(1): 35-64.

Sumiala, Johanna, and Minttu Tikka. 2011. "Imagining globalised fears: school shooting videos and circulation of violence on YouTube." *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 19(3): 254-267.

Sumiala, Johanna. 2013. *Media and ritual: Death, community and every-day life*. London: Routledge.

Sumiala, Johanna, and Anu A. Harju. 2019. "'No More Apologies': Violence As a Trigger for Public Controversy Over Islam in the Digital Public Sphere." *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 8: 132-152. doi: 10.1163/21659214-00801007

Sumiala, Johanna, Katja Valaskivi, Minttu Tikka, and Jukka Huhtam aki. 2018. *Hybrid Media Events: The Charlie Hebdo Attacks and Global Circulation of Terrorist Violence*. Bingley: Emerald.

Sumiala, Johanna and Minttu Tikka (in print). "Digital ethnography on the move: a proposal." *Journal of Digital Social Research*. <https://www.jdsr.io>

Todd, Emmanuel. 2015. *Who is Charlie?: Xenophobia and the New Middle Class*. Translated by Andrew Brown. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Thompson, Geoff. 2013. *Introducing functional grammar*. Third edition. London: Routledge.

Thurlow, Crispin, and Alex Jaworski. 2011. "Banal Globalization? Embodied Actions and Mediated Practices in Tourists' Online Photo Sharing." In *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*, edited by Crispin Thurlow and Kristine Mroczek, 220–250. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Valaskivi, Katja, and Johanna Sumiala. 2014. "Circulating social imaginaries: theoretical and methodological reflections." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17(3): 229–243.

Wignell, Peter, Sabine Tan, and Kay L. O'Halloran. 2017. "Violent extremism and iconisation: commanding good and forbidding evil?" *Critical Discourse Studies* 14(1): 1–22. doi: 10.1080/17405904.2016.1250652

Zappavigna, Michelle. 2015. "Searchable talk: the linguistic functions of hashtags." *Social Semiotics* 25(3): 274–291. doi: 10.1080/10350330.2014.996948

Zappavigna, Michelle, and James R. Martin. 2017. "#Communing affiliation: Social tagging as a resource for aligning around values in social media." *Discourse, Context & Media* 22: 4–12.

Abstrakti: Medioidut muistamisen tavat, affektiivinen vieraantuminen ja miksi me kaikki emme ole Charlie: solidaarisuussymbolit asennoitumisen vuorovaikutuskäytänteinä

Terrorististen väkivallantekeiden yhteydessä usein nähty julkinen sureminen ja kollektiiviset solidaarisuuden eleet ovat jo vakiintuneet kulttuurisina käytänteinä, jotka tragedian ja menetyksen hetkellä tuovat ihmisiä yhteen. Vaikka tapahtumapaikalle uhrien muistoksi kokoontuminen ja kukista ja kynttilöistä muodostuvien väliaikaisten muistomerkkien ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentaminen on yhä yleistä, medioidut muistamisen tavat ovat muodostuneet yhä merkittävimiksi. Solidaarisuussymbolien jakaminen tuottaa verkon kautta yhdistynyttä osallistumista (connective participation) ja on yksi näkyvimmistä vallitsevista tavoista osallistua jaettuun suremiseen digitaalisissa kanavissa. Yksi aikamme tunnetuimmista solidaarisuussymboleista, #JeSuisCharlie, syntyi tammikuussa 2015 Pariisin Charlie Hebdo -iskujen jälkeen ja on sittemmin

innoittanut useita muunnoksia, uusimpana #JeSuisMuslim, joka syntyi 2019 maaliskuun Christchurchin moskeijaiskujen jälkeen.

Tässä mediaetnografisessa tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan Twitterissä kiertäneitä solidaarisuussymboleja neljän eri terrori-iskun jälkeen: Pariisin iskut tammikuussa 2015 ja saman vuoden marraskuussa, Beirutin isku marraskuussa 2015 sekä Christchurchin isku maaliskuussa 2019. Tutkimuksessa käytetään Appraisal-analyysiä solidaarisuusymbolien interpersonaalisen ulottuvuuden tarkasteluun eli tutkitaan, kuinka asenne (stance) vuorovaikutuksellisenä suuntautumisenä rakentuu solidaarisuussymboleissa. Kun solidaarisuusymbolien normatiivinen tulkinta yhtenäisen linjan ja solidaarisuuden tuottajana häiriintyy, ne koetaan vieraannuttavina tai syrjivinä. Tutkimus lähestyykin solidaarisuusymboleja evaluoivina asennoitumisen (stance-taking) vuorovaikutuskäytänteinä. Se tarkastelee ensinnäkin, kuinka solidaarisuusymbolit toimivat yhteisöä rakentavina ikoneina (bonding icons), jotka tuottavat affektiivista yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta. Toiseksi selvitetään, kuinka lukijan ideologinen asennoituminen rakentuu diskursiivisesti ja tuottaa samanaikaisesti sekä yhteisöllisyyden tunnetta että affektiivista vieraantumista, joka ilmenee hallitsevan suremiskehyksen kiistämisenä.

Tulokset voidaan jakaa kolmeen osaan. Ensiksi, solidaarisuusymbolit voivat toimia ns. affektiivisina muotteina uusille iteraatioille, jolloin suosittujen solidaarisuusymbolien (esim. #JeSuisCharlie) muodon ja funktion lisäksi näihin siirtyy affektiivinen lataus ja vuorovaikutteinen asenne. Toiseksi, koska yksittäiset muistamisen teot ovat aina osa laajempaa sosiokulttuurista kontekstia, ne eivät voi välttyä merkityksiltä, jotka liittyvät ajatukseen suremisen arvoista yksilöistä (grievability), ja tällä tavalla solidaarisuusymbolit tuottavat myös affektiivista vieraantumista eivätkä ainoastaan yhteisöllisyyttä. Kolmanneksi, solidaarisuusymbolien levittäminen osallistuu visuaaliseen ”meidän” rakentamiseen, johon implisiittisesti sisältyy myös toiseuden rakentaminen. Tällä tavalla solidaarisuusymbolit toimivat arenoina tunnustamisen ja näkymisen kamppailussa. Solidaarisuusymbolit operoivat laajempien näkyvyyteen liittyvien, arvottavien järjestelmien (regimes of visibility) osana, jossa tunnustaminen (recognition) liittyy keskeisesti ajatukseen suremisen arvoista yksilöistä. Tämän vuoksi solidaarisuusymbolien merkitysten rakentumisen tarkastelu on yhtä tärkeää kuin se, millaisia merkityksiä niihin liittyy.

Avainsanat: medioitu väkivalta, muistaminen, julkinen sureminen, asenne, affekti, affektiivinen vieraantuminen, digitaalinen media, Twitter