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Solidarism and the Struggle Against Environmental Racism

Abstract: Margaret Kohn has argued that *fin-de-siècle* French Solidarists such as Alfred Fouillée developed a ‘third way’ between capitalism and socialism which can be updated to provide a powerful justification for welfare state institutions and public-goods provision. But how would a renewed Solidarism respond to demands for environmental justice, and the struggle against environmental racism, which have emerged in the past 50 years, mostly in Women of Color-led social movements? Distinguishing three elements of environmental justice and pinpointing the logic of expendability at the core of environmental racism, the current article shows that Solidarism has valuable theoretic resources to challenge environmental injustice, but that, as a compromise between dominant sectors, Solidarism has more difficulty confronting environmental racism in particular. After discussing the classical Solidarists’ divergent responses to feminism and Social Darwinism, the paper concludes by suggesting that a (political) solidarity-*with* out-groups is an essential complement to the (social) solidarity across dominant sectors of the state, which characterizes Solidarism.

Keywords: *solidarity; solidarism; environmental racism; environmental justice; social movements*

Introduction

In a series of recent articles, Margaret Kohn has reintroduced many political theorists to the late-19th and early-20th century French Solidarists (2016a; 2016b; 2020). Following leading intellectuals such as Alfred Fouillée and Émile Durkheim, the Solidarists rose in prominence as republican defenders of a ‘third way’ between capital and labor as the main contending sectors of society, and so between, respectively, laissez-faire capitalism and socialism as the leading ideologies. By the time the Solidarist former Prime Minister Léon Bourgeois published his pamphlet *Solidarisme*, this doctrine was considered the ‘official social philosophy’ of the Third Republic (Kohn, 2016a: 605).

Kohn shows that Solidarism retains its critical bite as a theory of social justice against today’s ascendant neoliberalism. It does so through a moralized political economy that views each person as entitled to a fair return for their labor, and views wealth as collectively produced rather than principally the work of private enterprise. Together these commitments justify returning the products of collective effort to those who produced them. This political economy then

dovetails with a forward-looking commitment to our shared fate, which justifies the provision of public goods and prevention of excessive stratification. These twin moral commitments, founded in nondomination and moral equality, ground a theory of state action that goes beyond liberal visions of the state as handmaiden of the market or as a mere backstop for resolving collective action problems, yet without asking the state to orient itself against capital. Capital serves an important social function, but it does so by building on public goods, and it can continue to be a valuable contributor if all who contribute get a fair return.

Notwithstanding this quite compelling portrait, Kohn confronts without fully resolving an objection to Solidarism, namely, that it is an overly statist ideology. This concern has two prongs. First, its solutions to market depredations rely on state interventions that displace individual initiative and even individual rights, such that capitalist domination is just replaced by state domination: meet the new boss, same as the old boss. Kohn responds that Solidarism does not prioritize state intervention, but state support for the civil society organizations that bring each person belonging, mutuality, social capital, and respect, plus relief in their hour of need (2016a: 616). The image that emerges is of a structured common life where individuals' most important relationships are horizontal rather than vertical. This commitment to subsidiarity – higher-level agencies defer to lower-level ones in serving public aims – limits the growth and power of the state. And, if only aspirationally, Solidarism could support measures such as the partial transfer of capital to organized collectives such as unions and cooperatives, enabling a 'property-owning democracy' rather than a capitalist welfare state.

The second prong of the Statism objection, however, seems more challenging. That is, not that the state qua government sector will be too interventionist, but that the *raison d'être* of the Solidarist state is to foster and maintain the solidarity of the leading sectors that make up the polity, and that consequently the 'public interest' – the interest of the 'we' who are all in this together – will come to be identified with the intersection or overlap of these leading sectors' interests. As a 'third way' ideology, Solidarism may be forced to subordinate moral equality, nondomination, and public goods production to the paramount goal of maintaining this intersectoral compromise. For instance, the overlapping core of labor and capital as leading sectors might include a vision of France as a unitary industrialized nation, indispensable to the broader European project and global order, and, at least in the late 19th century, decidedly patriarchal in character. Consequently, the lodestar of Solidarism would be the interests

of the polity so understood, rather than the emancipation of individuals whose interests this compromise ignores or steps on. In effect, notwithstanding its republican bona fides on the level of theory, Solidarism's effort to articulate a unifying vision of the polity leaves it vulnerable to the limitations of extant interests – interests that are bound to be in important respects conservative, simply because they are the dominant sectors of society. The subsidiarity which allayed the first prong of the statism objection does not help much here, for civil society formations tend to be dominated by avatars of these leading sectors: prominent businessmen, clergy, and so on.

If this concern is on the right track, it raises the worry that Solidarism's critical bite is more like a nibble. Its teeth seem big from an early-21st century perspective, amidst the rubble of the postwar 'social contract' that bound capital to labor. From where we sit, wresting even a little power back from capital does indeed seem like a major goal. But – again like other 'third way' ideologies – Solidarism may not be up to the challenge of realizing nondomination if doing so would destabilize the intersectoral compromise that is its *raison d'être*.

To assess the strength of this objection, and hence of Solidarism as an emancipatory doctrine of nondomination, I want to consider its resources for engaging issues that fundamentally challenge the shared core of commitments that unify dominant sectors. The struggle for environmental justice (EJ), and particularly against environmental racism, provides a powerful test case. This is for three reasons. First, in direct contrast to Solidarism, not just the practice but the theory of EJ has developed in deep conversation with, and in response to the work of, front-line activists, particularly Women of Color. EJ theorists understand themselves to be answerable to EJ activists to a degree that remains uncommon among normative political theories. Second, EJ has not sought to be a unifying 'third way' between capital and labor, but to fundamentally challenge the contempt and racism of a capital-labor-government nexus that dumps waste on people and places that are coded as 'expendable,' and which buys the allegiance of white workers by rewarding them with benefits expropriated from nonwhite populations (Fraser, 2018; Gilio-Whitaker, 2019; Tuck and Yang, 2012). EJ forces us not just to blunt the excesses of the market, but to address public bads and wrongs when the state deliberately victimizes people to grease the wheels of capital accumulation.

And third, any theory of justice requires not only an account of the *currency* of justice – that is, the package of rights and welfare to which each agent is entitled – but also of the *subjects* of justice, that is, who are the agents whose rights and welfare the state is required to protect and promote. But theorists of environ-

mental racism have shown that a big part of the latter problem is that the range of subjects of justice is contested. It's not just that some people are not receiving enough things, it's that some people are *perceived as* things; it's not just that some people suffer environmental blight, it's that some people are *perceived as* environmental blight. A final test of Solidarism will thus be whether it can take a sufficient interest in those who – for reasons of state or because of pure animus – are constructed as a problem to be managed and even disposed of. For all these reasons, then, environmental justice and environmental racism pose important challenges for Solidarism.

The current paper assesses Solidarism against this challenge. I begin by explicating environmental justice and environmental racism. Much scholarly work on environmental justice boils it down to three overlapping and mutually supportive core elements: *distributive*, *participatory*, and *spatial* justice. To the extent that environmental racism is simply environmental injustice that disproportionately victimizes racialized groups, these criteria of environmental justice will suffice. But environmental racism runs deeper, and the struggle against it requires not just the three elements of environmental justice, but a positive repudiation of the assumption that anyone is expendable and an affirmation of the coequal status of each as a subject of justice.

I then present the intellectual and political outlines of Solidarism, relying on Kohn's work, contrasting it for expository purposes with the resources available in liberal Luck Egalitarianism. Solidarism is a form of Neo-republicanism, and as such, it has a political economy that understands systems and structures, not just transactions and choices. Further, it cashes out its concern for each person in terms of nondomination. The contrast with Luck Egalitarianism plays up these features and hence presents Solidarism in its best light for responding to environmental racism. The next section then discusses whether and how Solidarism captures the three aspects of environmental justice, and the final section grapples with environmental racism from a Solidarist perspective. Addressing the French Solidarists' engagement with gender, race, and eugenics, I find that Solidarism does not by itself guarantee a dedicated defense of indispensability and affirmation of the equal status of each. For this I suggest we need an additional drive toward solidarity in precisely the sense that intersectoral compromises miss: a solidarity that *expands* the range of subjects of justice, of people with a stake in the intersectoral compromise, by siding with those who struggle against expendability both within a polity and beyond its borders.

Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism: Core Concepts

Emerging in the 1980s in the US, ‘environmental justice’ (EJ) brought together activists, scholars, and community and religious organizations to fight against dumping and degradation that fell disproportionately and without consultation on People of Color. Notwithstanding this reference to ‘disproportion,’ however, EJ has always been a challenge for liberal philosophers because neither the activists whose work has defined the concept nor most scholars working in this area tend to accept the distributive paradigm. From their perspective, injustice is at least as much about contempt, ignorance, misrepresentation, and exclusion as it is about maldistribution (see, e.g., Gilio-Whitaker, 2019; Schlosberg, 2007; Shrader-Frechette, 2000; Waldron, 2020). While maldistribution is an effect of these other attitudes and practices, it is neither their cause nor their most outrageous aspect. Indeed, in the canonical statement produced by the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (1991), the environmental justice agenda consisted of seventeen points *not a single one of which* focused on distribution; to the contrary, if we find ourselves spreading the damage around, fairly or unfairly, we are already doing injustice.¹ Instead, the core of environmental injustice is the disharmony with natural systems evidenced in the production of environmental damage in the first place, where such disharmony is suffused with manifest contempt for, and lack of recognition of the interests of, People of Color and Indigenous peoples.

Scholarly uptake over the decades has in some respects generalized this concept, allowing it to be applied worldwide and studied systematically. Speaking generally, we may see running through this work several hallmarks of environmental (in)justice. Standardly, these conceptions encompass *distributive*, *participatory*, and *spatial* elements. Environmental injustice includes the distributive components of *greater burdens*, *worse outcomes*, and *lesser remedies*, the participatory components of *exclusion from and marginalization in decision-making* and *lack of political power*, and the spatial components of *negative impacts on individual and community well-being* and *displacement of benefits from burdens* (see e.g., Waldron, 2020: 1).

However, this systematicity and generalizability may have been purchased at the cost of the essential notion of *expendability*. Though it has departed from

¹ See First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (1991). The same website sharply contrasts ‘environmental justice’ and ‘environmental equity,’ where the latter is characterized as an attempt to co-opt the former by distorting it into a distributive notion.

a narrow distributive paradigm, much EJ scholarship still focuses on the *currency* of justice: the things we have legitimate claims upon or interests in, such that justice is about how to treat us justly with respect to those things. But there is a prior question for theories of justice, namely, that of the *subjects* of justice: *whose* claims and interests must be considered if justice is to be done. For example, famously, utilitarians are concerned for ‘all sentient creation,’ whereas Kantians worry only about rational agents.

If anything distinguishes environmental *racism* from ‘mere’ environmental injustice, it is this problem of subjecthood. Environmental justice presupposes that we have agreement on what counts as a ‘locally undesirable land use’ (LULU), an environmental harm or risk, and so on. Racial disparities then come in as evidence that these harms and risks are unjustly imposed and distributed. But in her landmark study of the confluence of environmental racism and mobility in the United States, Dorceta Taylor (2014) demonstrates that agreement on what counts as a LULU is precisely what we lack; under White supremacy, *Black residency* if not *Black freedom* is conceptualized as an environmental harm or risk. The ‘toxic communities’ of her title are not just the environments in which Black people live, they are the Black people themselves, in the view of the White supremacist polity. This is epitomized in the phenomenon of ‘racializing blight’ – where the mere fact that African Americans live in a neighborhood is taken as sufficient evidence that it is a ghetto, a slum, or blighted. Discussing the work of W.E. Pritchett, she writes,

‘The term “blight” was used to describe the perceived negative impacts of some residents of city neighborhoods. [Pritchett] argues that the diagnosis of “urban decline” was used to justify the removal of large numbers of Blacks and other minorities from neighborhoods. Poor whites were also displaced in urban renewal projects’ (Taylor, 2014: 230. Emphasis in original).

Environmental racism, then, is not just racial disparities in pollution exposure, it is the White supremacist view *that Black residents are pollution*. Charles Mills (2001) refers to this as the problem of ‘Black Trash.’ In the racialized polity, Mills argues,

blacks [*sic*] are not part of the ‘we’ who are facing the environmental problem of what to do with our refuse. Rather, there is a sense in which blacks *themselves* are an environmental problem, which ‘we’ full humans (that is, the white population) have to deal with (Mills, 2001: 84. Emphasis in original).

David Naguib Pellow (2016) diagnoses here a logic of ‘expendability,’ which

ensnares not just Black and Indigenous peoples but incarcerated and disabled people, elderly people, and LGBTQ populations. All the more so does it apply in transnational contexts, where migrants and, by default, all people of the Global South are treated by the Global North as utterly expendable, their deaths nothing more than a public relations problem, if even that. Pellow argues that the essential norm moving forward should thus be an ethic of ‘indispensability’ (2016: 230-32).

Crucially for our purposes, environmental racism is perpetrated not by a few villains but by the allied corporate-government-labor-civil society nexus that constitutes the White supremacist polity. This will (quite literally) color any efforts that well-meaning officials or even ‘socially responsible’ businesses might undertake to lessen disadvantage and shore up the basic human rights of People of Color. A strong civil society is likely to exacerbate the problem, because it will be white people’s mutual-aid organizations and unions that will turn themselves into the shock troops of White supremacy when challenged (Blee, 2008; Wolfinger, 2015). Indeed, even efforts to secure environmental justice become part of the problem. For if Black people are constructed as pollution, then White people will have the cover of ‘environmental justice’ when they seek spatial ‘justice’ by limiting their own exposure to Black people and preventing Black residents from moving to their neighborhoods, shopping in their malls, and going to school with their children (Dillon & Oreskes, 2019). Procedural environmental justice will empower White communities and neighborhoods to object to inclusionary zoning and to maintain restrictive covenants. Even well-meaning integrators will speak in terms of the distribution of this burden across neighborhoods (see, e.g., Rothstein, 2017: 202-206). Environmental justice practices, so understood, would risk driving environmental racism rather than remedying it. Thus, the affirmation of equal subjecthood and indispensability is paramount. In the next sections, relying on the work of Margaret Kohn, I investigate whether and how Solidarism might meet this challenge.

Solidarism

As part of her broader project of updating the work of the French Solidarists, Kohn applies the Solidarist account of the common good to the allocation of public space such as parks (2016b: 446-52). Kohn starts from a dispute between Silicon Valley neoliberals and legacy-resident Latino youth in Mission Playground, located in a fast-gentrifying area of San Francisco. This ‘synecdochal conflict,’ which encapsulates in its specificity the essential features of a broader social conflict, went viral in the summer of 2014. In it, Kohn explains, we see the neoliberals asserting their rights under a new fee-based reservation

system to use the playground at the designated time, while the Latino youth insisted that their longstanding pick-up soccer game should not be displaced even though they could not afford permits.

Kohn shows that the justificatory resources of liberalism fall flat here. Where the neoliberals can justify the permit system with a vision of government as an agency that regulates conflicts over scarce resources, the displaced youth can justify deference to legacy uses on grounds of protecting the vulnerable, longstanding occupancy, and their desire to maintain a toehold in a place where property values threaten to drive them away altogether. The synecdochal conflict encapsulates all three aspects of environmental justice – distributive, participatory, and spatial. To overcome this conflict, Kohn suggests, we need a better account of the social good and of the state's role in promoting it.

That account, she argues, is provided by Solidarism. Solidarists appreciate the wealth-generating effects of capitalist markets but argue that markets maldistribute the product of labor, treating the owner's contribution of assets as responsible for all the value that accrues to a product, remunerating workers' contribution only with what they can command on the market, and ignoring the role of natural, social, and inherited infrastructure in making possible the value that the owner reaps. Owners make choices that the market rewards, but these choices are lucrative only against a backdrop of fortunate or lucky circumstances that the owners cannot claim credit for. And yet market outcomes reward them for both choices and luck. For instance, suppose an entrepreneur identifies a niche in making a new product. Using the products of government-funded research, she locates her factory near a logistics hub and hires employees to do the work. In doing so she takes advantage of other people's expenditures, including the cost of educating the workers, the sponsoring of research, the construction of the logistics infrastructure, and so on. It is thanks to her good fortune that others invested in these things that her choice becomes possible and lucrative. There is nothing wrong with taking advantage of these conditions: that's what they're there for. But nor should the entrepreneur then suppose that her eventual profits reflect only her own prowess on the market. Rather, her profit is built by incurring a debt – the 'unearned increment' – which by rights should be repaid to maintain the production of the social goods that make entrepreneurial success possible (Kohn, 2016: 606).

This unearned increment reflects the owner's capacity to benefit disproportionately from *third parties'* inputs. But receipt of third-party benefits in turn enables the owner to take a disproportionate share of the *employees'* inputs specifically. This is because receipt of the unearned increment gives the owner

bargaining power in the form of unequal exit potential. As the owner meets workers in the labor market, she typically has more choice over whom to hire than they have over whom to work for. The owner's capacity to drop any job applicant in favor of another empowers the owner to set a wage rate in 'take-it-or-leave-it' fashion. Owners are therefore to some degree 'price-makers,' not 'price-takers,' in the labor market, which violates a core economic assumption of liberal justifications of the market. In this way, the labor market is skewed in the owner's favor, and this advantage snowballs (Goodin, 2023). This skewing – call it the 'exploited increment' – is a second way that market relations give owners benefits they did not earn. Again, from a Solidarist perspective there is nothing wrong with receiving unearned benefits. It is not a basis for condemning the owner. But the fact that the benefits are unearned undermines the owner's moral claim on them. They are social goods serving a social purpose, rather than private goods for each to use as they please.

The justification of social welfare provision, then, need not lean heavily on a theory of justice, but can appeal to a hard-nosed analysis of the source of wealth, taking for granted the owners' preferred norms of rewarding savvy choices. The economic analysis of solidarism supports returning to the public and to the working class these products of circumstance – the unearned increment and the exploited increment – whose initial availability to the owner does in fact serve a social purpose but ceases to do so if the owner is permitted to hold onto them in perpetuity.

It would, however, be a mistake to see Solidarism as *simply* a theory of distributive fairness; it has spatial and participatory implications. As Kohn emphasizes, Solidarist public intellectuals such as Bourgeois were not mere social democrats but committed republicans. As such, they justified social-democratic measures such as wealth redistribution in terms of *non-domination*, for instance by supporting civil society – small-scale mutual aid and cooperatives – so that state provision did not generate 'the benign despotism of a paternalistic but powerful centralized state' (Kohn 2016a: 618).

These points offer a useful contrast with egalitarian liberalism. Where the liberal sees the state as an agency for overcoming collective action problems and providing goods that we want but could not secure on our own, the republican solidarist sees the state as having both a larger and a smaller role. Its larger role lies in its responsibility to non-neutrally identify and help us secure goods even if we might not always choose them; its smaller role lies in not simply providing those goods but enabling us to provide them for ourselves. This ethos is especially evident when we are discussing, not the privately owned products of mar-

ket relationships, but the public spaces that make up our shared world. These public spaces are the product of government regulation, the natural environment, and countless laborers and planners over the course of generations, but they must also be maintained and cared about by everyday citizens and, especially, civil society organizations. If we inherit goods of this type, we are then ‘*obliged* to cultivate the common world that we inherit’ (Kohn, 2016b: 450).

This initial contrast points to a second relevant difference between Solidarism and liberalism. Whereas liberals normally strive to be neutral across at least a broad range of conceptions of the good, Solidarists must not only take an affirmative stance on the social good, but their account of the good must also be pluralistic. To view market outcomes as *takings*, and to repair them through redistribution, Solidarists need to impute a social value to inputs and contributions. Exchange value is not the full story of the social good. Moreover, this theory of value must be pluralistic, both because there is a variety of modes of contribution, and because some goods are nonfungible and hence takings must be repaid roughly in kind. To this end, Kohn explains the Solidarist case for the provision of public parks (2020: 1109). Parks compensate workers for their loss of access to nature. From a liberal perspective, repayment in kind is normally suboptimal, because it imposes a conception of the good on individuals who might otherwise prefer to spend their repayment on something other than, say, access to nature. Liberals might still provide goods in-kind in the event of a collective action problem – i.e., if individuals’ inability to coordinate frustrates their preference for a park. But the principle at work here for liberals is efficiency, not in-kind provision or respect for nonfungible public goods. Worse, if the majority would not choose a park even given the ability to coordinate, then the liberal state would shun the paternalism or minoritarianism implicit in imposing the park on people. For Solidarists to choose the park, then, they must appeal to a pluralistic theory of the social good. Similarly for housing; although it is possible to move one’s residence, and it is obviously possible to treat one’s residence as a commodity, homes are much more than that. Hence EJ activists and scholars emphasize that being bought out and relocated due to irremediable environmental blight is itself a spatial injustice, as it breaks up communities and social networks (Gilio-Whittaker, 2019).

Solidarism, then, offers a political economy of shared production, which rejects liberal fantasies of individual achievement; a pluralistic conception of the good; and an affirmative duty to repay one’s debts and positively contribute to the public goods and other circumstances that enable collective flourishing through individual success. Each of these elements departs in important respects from

liberalism; together, they give Solidarism a powerful framework for challenging not only distributive but spatial and participatory injustice. Solidarism is thus promising as a driver of concern for environmental justice. In the next sections I shall argue that Solidarism does indeed have resources to address the three elements of environmental justice, but that the most powerful challenge – that of environmental racism and the racist constriction of the scope of subjects of justice – poses a distinctive challenge requiring additional resources.

Environmental Justice and the Diversity of Bads

The Solidarists' political economy grounded in nondomination gives them important resources for all three faces of environmental justice. First, recall that *distributive* environmental justice seeks to correct greater burdens, worse outcomes, and lesser remedies. Because Solidarism is initially articulated in distributive terms, these three tenets of distributive environmental justice straightforwardly map onto the compensatory conception. Burdens reflect contributions to the social product and hence ought to be repaid; disparate outcomes and remedies would be a sign that these debts remained outstanding.

Participatory and spatial environmental justice may pose greater challenges to the compensatory conception. First, participation is not something that is taken away or that is produced and then maldistributed. To be sure, the expansion of economic and governance systems to encompass millions of people leaves each of us, *qua* voter, with only the tiniest blip of political influence, and makes it difficult for anyone except those with significant resources or antecedent backing to gain a seat at any table of significance. However, this is not a *worsening* from any reasonable baseline, since most people never had power, and the expansion of society to encompass millions and a highly varied division of labor is in many other respects a public good, so cannot easily be characterized as a taking. This is where Solidarism's neo-republican core is particularly helpful. The reason to insist on participatory environmental justice is to prevent domination. Without granting the right people a seat at the table and a voice in the deliberations, not only is our water poisoned, our air polluted, our lives blighted and foreshortened, but the people who make the decisions that lie behind these outcomes do so in corner offices, accountable only to investors, or with backroom handshakes and campaign contributions. Then, the victims' testimony is devalued and ignored, so remedying these problems requires them to make plaintive appeals for help from credentialed experts living outside the community. The basic needs attainment of citizens is subject to the whims and horse-trading of a small number of elite decision makers who see numbers rather than people. Thus, the republican core of a Solidarist ethos supports participatory environmental justice on grounds of non-domination.

Non-domination also dovetails with spatial justice and the empowerment of located civil society organizations. Environmental burdens often limit mobility because, for instance, no one is willing to buy a house in a polluted area, so it becomes impossible to sell. Declining property values and assets undercut locally owned business and reduce commerce in the neighborhood, causing damage to ripple outwards and further reduce the market desirability of real estate in the area. This downward spiral reduces residents' capacity to marshal media and communication resources to make their case to the broader public. Even when local media still exist and actually have an environmental reporter to cover the story, most often the news staff does not look like the affected community, the journalists are uncomfortable walking the neighborhood and meeting people, and they often commit testimonial injustices by being overly skeptical of the claims of residents and overly solicitous of responses from perpetrators and officials (Jackson, 2017). Domination ensues. Solidarism speaks directly to this problem.

Because it is a theory of political economy and not just individual-level disadvantage, we can adduce further Solidarist resources for spatial justice. Recall that, for the Solidarist, the division of labor is the principal public good that generates shared prosperity, and the division of labor is a collective achievement underwritten by the state. A division of labor is not just a division across *persons* – the butcher, the baker, the brewer, all trucking in the same market. Rather, a modern division of labor necessarily entails the *siting* of factors of production – hydraulic infrastructure, mills, farms, mines, industrial facilities, residences, schools, hospitals, waste processing and disposal, recreational facilities, and so on. And the reproduction of the workforce requires that *times* be set aside and facilities built for investment in children and families, for restoration of health and psychological well-being, and for the success of mutual aid and collective self-help organizations. The division of labor is thus not just about social organization, but about *spatiotemporal* organization. Insofar as this spatiotemporal organization consumes the space of our shared world and the labor time of members of our society, it should do so in a way that is fair to all and does not drive the concentration of capital or power. However, markets and the economic policies that underpin them tend to promote just this sort of concentration. Repairing the spatiotemporal division of capital and labor can be justified by reference to the compensatory logic of Solidarism (Kohn, 2016a: 612).

Environmental Racism and the Solidarist Track Record

Solidarism sees the state as mediating between labor and capital without decisively taking either side. It does so in part by promoting mutual aid organizations, so that state action is required more to enable social arrangements than to intervene in them (Kohn, 2016: 618). In the context of environmental racism, however, this solution generates a new problem.

Recall that the hard core of environmental racism is the expendability of racialized populations and their construction as the pollution to be fairly distributed rather than as subjects of justice. Though the state may in fact be neutral between labor and capital, then, this neutrality fosters those sectors' domination of nonwhite Others. Mutual-aid agencies may then be even worse: racially restrictive in who can join their neighborhood associations, their health-insurance and utility cooperatives, and so on. Whether unofficially or through their government, dominant White interests may make whole regions or countries off-limits or 'beyond the pale' for Black, Indigenous, and other racialized out-groups (Oppenheimer et al., 2016; Tougaloo, 2022). Systematic exclusion and discrimination in all spheres of the social world – government, market, and civil society – compel racialized out-groups to create their own versions of these spheres, but sharply limit their capacity to do so. And when the racialized out-group is successful, against all odds, in building a base of power or wealth, the dominant group often resorts to violence (e.g., Lee, 2021). To be sure, in the abstract, Solidarist theory would repudiate such basic violations of nondomination. But this ignores a practical dilemma: Solidarism's paramount goal of unifying the leading sectors of society leads it toward silence about or complicity with these sectors' mutual oppression of out groups; and the mechanism for avoiding the statism objection is to practice a subsidiarity that empowers civil society organizations that themselves practice racist oppression. To rein in civil society is to reassert the dominating state. To challenge the labor-capital compromise is to set up Solidarism as a third contending party rather than as the peacemaker between them.

Here it is instructive to consider how the Solidarists responded to two indicative social challenges in the Third Republic. As the 19th century drew to a close, French feminists gained power in demanding rights to work on equal terms, legal and economic protection for mothers and children, and more. Karen Offen indicates that feminist ideas gained so much traction that they 'gave rise to a vitriolic antifeminism that forced men (especially those in political power) to take a position on the woman question' (1984: 661). Antifeminists lined up behind 'nation' or Church. There was little risk that Solidarists would ally with antife-

minists. But what politics did republican men who were sympathetic to feminism adopt? Offen shows that they found themselves forced to choose between ‘integral’ feminism – a liberal feminism of thoroughgoing equal opportunity – and ‘familial’ feminism, which offered

a biologically differentiated, family-centered vision of male-female complementarity [...] a sexual division of labor in both society and the family [...], and a positive concept of women’s special nature, or womanliness [...] Familial feminist[s] aimed not to overthrow the economic basis of patriarchy but to reorganize the existing society to the greater advantage of women (Offen, 1984: 654).

In theory, the Solidarist case for integral feminism is straightforward. The family is a civil-society organization that helps realize both associative goods for its members and public goods such as hygiene, care labor, life satisfaction, and reproduction. Men’s seizure of the associative goods, such as the family’s jointly produced income and property, as well as women’s emotional and caring labor, is then a microcosm of capital’s self-enrichment through seizure of public goods and of workers’ industrial labor. The moral equality of all, not to mention the bedrock value of freedom as nondomination, entails that each member of the household should receive their fair share of the jointly produced benefits.

But it was not to be: Solidarists’ egalitarianism bumped up against the crisis of declining population growth and the fear that France was falling behind Germany and England (Offen, 1984: 649-52). The goal of maintaining French cultural and military strength seemed to unify labor and capital – not least among those who hoped to export republicanism – and keeping up with Germany and England in population seemed necessary for that. Pro-natalism was the answer, and encouraging women to leave work, marry, and reproduce seemed to be the mechanism of pro-natalism. So the Solidarists repudiated ‘integral’ feminism in favor of a tightly circumscribed ‘familial feminism’ on which moral equality was filtered through an account of ‘natural’ differences, where the ‘natural’ role of women was to be mothers and wives (Offen, 1984: 654). Fouillée wrote, ‘What was decided among the prehistoric protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament’ (Fouillée, 1893, cited in Offen, 1984: 667). Consequently, as Offen explains, Solidarists’

touchstone, one that had a long history in republican thought on the woman question, was “equality in difference.” They were willing to consider women as moral equals but could not accept members of either sex acting as individuals, in disregard of their functional context in the nation, which in this case

was defined in terms of organic biology and the family (Offen, 1984: 665; see also Offen, 1986).

For the Solidarists, then, the patriarchal conception of the state unified capital and labor and hence trumped moral equality. They turned their backs on the feminists whom they should have allied with, and on the egalitarian commitments that should have followed from their republicanism. In doing so, they aided conservative efforts to shape the family in a patriarchal direction. They did this not due to an embrace of patriarchy for its own sake, but because of a conception of state interests that arguably viewed the state as the property of its (white) *men*, its aspirations tied to military prowess and hence requiring a larger (white) population, which in turn required families to instrumentalize women for reproductive purposes.² All that was left was to negotiate the terms of women's instrumentalization.

To be fair, the Solidarists seem to have acquitted themselves better in another ideological and political struggle of the time, namely, opposition to Social Darwinism, eugenics, and race science. Jennifer Michael Hecht explains how, at the dawn of the 20th century, proponents of right-wing 'anthroposociology' used not-yet-debunked pseudo-scientific methods such as craniometry to push the doctrine of national 'racial' differences in support of eugenics and eventual extermination (1999: 6). The apparently scientific methods of anthroposociology initially wrong-footed the Solidarists, because they wanted their politics to be grounded in social science. Anthroposociology forced a choice. As Hecht (1999) explains, the Solidarists seem to have chosen right: their opposition to Social Darwinism and race science impelled them, over time, to *repudiate* appeals to nature as a foundation for their political commitments. Hence, a decade after his appeal to the supposed patriarchy of the 'prehistoric protozoa,' Fouillée rejected scientific laws as a foundation for society. Instead, he held, '[t]he real law of human societies ... is not natural selection and the struggle for life, but rational choice and cooperation for life' (Fouillée, 1903, quoted in Hecht, 1999: 13). The Solidarist philosopher Célestin Bouglé added, 'in declaring men [sic] to be equal, we deliver a judgment not on the way that nature made them, but on the way that society must treat them' (Bouglé, 1897, quoted in Hecht, 1999: 15).

² A similar story emerges regarding Solidarism on the world stage. Though they spoke occasionally of the rights of Indigenous peoples and minorities, Solidarists nonetheless adhered to the sharp division between a European society of equal States and a colonial relationship to the non-Eurocentric world. See Koskenniemi (2001: 288-91).

In opting for equality and against Social Darwinism, the Solidarists overrode their scientism in the name of social equality. By contrast, in embracing familial feminism, they sacrificed social equality to pseudoscience about protozoan gender roles. What explains this divergence? The Social Darwinists in the former case were a right-wing fifth column; the pro-natalists and familial feminists in the latter case were the mainstream of the republic itself, representing a conception of the state shared by the leading sectors of society. As stewards of that compromise, the Solidarists opted to advance that conception of the state rather than the interests of all its citizens or even of the family conceived as an association of equals.

Environmental racism lies right in the middle of these two kinds of problem, because any ideology that could defend it would inevitably be a right-wing fifth column, while at the same time, environmental racism in practice is so deeply embedded that no effort to uproot it could avoid antagonizing, to some degree, both labor and capital, or challenging the projection of state power beyond its borders. For this reason, Solidarism seems likely to prove a dubious ally in the struggle against environmental racism.

I propose that the Solidarists' crucial failure regarding feminism stems from the same reason that they will be dubious allies in the struggle against environmental racism. It is not that they were 'familial feminists' *per se*, any more than they are 'environmental racists' *on principle*; it's that they sacrificed women's interests in favor of the vision of the state that men had built. They failed a test of *solidarity with* the integral feminists who sought to rearrange the family economy in much the same way that Solidarists sought to rearrange the political economy.

Put otherwise, the problem lies in the sense in which what the Solidarists embraced was an expression of *solidarity*. As has been frequently observed, 'solidarity' comes in many forms, and each form makes distinct demands upon us. Solidarism makes a politics out of what Sally Scholz has called a 'social solidarity': one that holds together a mutually identifying people for a shared purpose (2008). In social solidarity, we, the whole people, affirm that we share our fate and agree that we are 'all in this together.' On its face, social solidarity is a bulwark against too extreme a descent into oppression, because rule by violence and fear seems incompatible with viewing our fates as shared (Scholz, 2007). Instead, it reflects a radical break in the fates of those who exercise violence and those who are on its receiving end. But this is too rosy a picture. Social solidarity is perfectly compatible with injustice and oppression, provided that the major institutions and practices of the society converge on the unjust and oppressive structures, and

particularly if the victims of these injustices are subject to adaptive preferences that normalize their oppression and consequently conscript them into aiding in their own bondage. This is just what we should fear from Solidarism's actual origins as a 'third way.' As Charles Mills warned regarding environmental racism, if the 'we' excludes Black people, then social solidarity will be perfectly compatible with racial oppression; indeed, it will require it. In such an environment, sincere 'egalitarians' will not bat an eyelash at status differences, or still less, raise a finger to repudiate them. Quite the contrary: they might be the strongest advocates of the sharp line between 'we' and 'they.' They express the legitimacy of their demands for recognition and redistribution from a ruling elite by affirming their difference from a racialized out-group.

Social solidarity, even in a republican polity, is therefore not enough for status equality; that requires a *political* solidarity – solidarity with social movements of the oppressed. This is what the Solidarists showed themselves to be lacking regarding the 'woman question.' And it is what a contemporary Solidarism must achieve in order to reject expendability and to join wholeheartedly the opposition to environmental racism.

Failing to be in *political* solidarity *with* the organized oppressed is an occupational hazard of an ideology that sees itself as the steward of a compromise consensus between contending parties. Though solidarism has important theoretic resources – superseding those available to liberalism – for embracing environmental justice, then, it will reliably be able to stand against environmental *racism* only to the extent that it is able to suspend its commitment to compromise among dominant sectors and instead sign onto the project of building a social order that manifests the coequal personhood of each. Although I am partial to a particular account of solidarity-with (see Kolers, 2016), my aim here has not been to enter that debate but to show that Solidarism needs the resources of *some* account or other of political solidarity-with, and the deep-rooted problem of environmental racism shows why.³

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