The advocacy, agency and competency of women activists participating in the Australian environmental movement

By
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B.A. (Hons)

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

_______ YMaleta ________________________________
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Abbreviations

Bar: Barrister’s court

CALD: Culturally And Linguistically Diverse backgrounds

CO₂: Carbon dioxide

EEO: Equal Employment Opportunity

eNGO: Environmentalist Nongovernmental Organisation

ENSM: Environmentalist New Social Movement

GGCA: Global Gender and Climate Alliance

glocal: global and local

INGOs: International Nongovernmental Organisations

LFP: Labour-Force Participation

LGAs: Local Government Authorities

NGO: Nongovernmental Organisation

NSM: New Social Movement

OAM: Order of Australia, Medal of

PAR: Participatory Action Research

TNCs: Transnational Companies
Abstract

This feminist sociocultural thesis links theory to practice in its exploration of the gendered roles and work-based identities of women activists participating in the Australian environmental movement. Drawing upon 31 interviews from my qualitative analysis with women working in grassroots organisations, eNGOs, Greens parties, and academia, I investigate participants’ agency and competency and their ambitions for environmental reforms. Three major areas of intellectual context are women’s activism, gender performativity, and agency and competency in environmental advocacy. I argue that gender is an active performance, in how women’s experiences are informed by social relations of power and the negotiation of masculinity and femininity (Butler 1990, 2006; Phillips & Knowles 2012).

Feminist, ecofeminist and social/environmental movement studies contextualise the struggles and achievements of women, and such theory provides a lens to my empirical analysis. My goal is to investigate the extent to which the women in my research recognise the patriarchal control of their organisations and also the social elites in governance and industry (Plumwood 1997; Leahy 2003; Cockburn 2012). Gender barriers, in the form of the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings, entail challenges for women’s status in the workplace (Mellor 1997; Connell 2009; Mellor 2009, 2012). Within a social hierarchy, the agency and competency of my participants is evidenced through their negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as strategies of resistance and accommodation towards male power and labels.

My qualitative findings reveal contradictions and insights. Women identify with emphasized and resistant forms of femininity. Core insights from my data-driven analysis are ‘the boys club’, token women and maternal identity in environmental activism. A contradiction was that some participants reject feminist labels, yet gender differences were found across the results. My accounts further illustrate that activism, age and culture can be more of a barrier than gender. This thesis adds knowledge to areas of feminism, qualitative studies and movement scholarship. Thus, my research highlights the activist strategies of women environmentalists across paid and unpaid sectors, and pinpoints feminist and environmental issues that link theory to practice.

Keywords: feminist/ecofeminist, grassroots, professional, ‘boys club’, token women, maternal ‘nurturing’ identity
Introduction and Overview to Thesis

Introduction

This feminist sociocultural qualitative constructivist thesis explores the agency and competency of Australian women salaried and voluntary activists participating in grassroots organisations, eNGOs, Greens parties, and academia. I argue that women perform gender in their active negotiation of masculinity and femininity. This involves performances of resistant and emphasized femininities. I develop the theoretical position that women experience gender as a barrier and an enabler. Feminist, ecofeminist and social movement theory, along with a specific feminist lens on my empirical results, support this position. In relation to theory and practice, a complex gendered culture of work, influenced by dominant notions of masculinity and male values, entails a barrier towards full female participation in the workforce. A masculinist culture is evidenced through gender differences along with women’s struggle to achieve work/life balances. This is evidenced by the women recognise masculinist elites in their organisations and in governance and industry. In my results, data-driven insights into ‘the boys club’ and women as token members on climate panels illustrates a sexual division of labour and glass ceilings in place.

Although women encounter labels of female incompetency, they demonstrate merit and prowess. In turn, their agency and competency challenges the patriarchal control of organisations, and also the dominance of social elites in industry. Participants’ empowerment relates to the way gender is an active process of doing masculinity and femininity. I argue that when women exercise power and resist labels, they are also challenging male power and masculinist practices. Women’s agency and competency therefore represents a threat to ruling elites and dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity. Further, women environmentalists are participating in an organisational context and through their working roles, they are also contributing to the women’s and environmental movements. However, I am aware of reproducing labels and stereotypes. I consider that women who join the environmental movement may be influenced by feminism yet my participant’s may not solely define themselves by gender.

As there is no previous research on women’s agency and competency in either the salaried or the grassroots capacities of environmental activism: this research addresses this gap and makes a valid contribution to both feminism and
environmentalism. This thesis presents a claim to truth, and is not necessarily ‘the truth’ per say. In relation to my interview accounts, this thesis provides evidence to what activists are doing and what they claim is the truth. I have accumulated evidence on how women participants’ see their activist practice in relation to gender, and these examples contextualise the focus of my thesis. Hence, my claim to knowledge is articulated through the views of these women activists in light of their experiences in everyday as well as organisational contexts.

**Background to study**

**How important is the issue of the environment?**

The Australian environmental movement, in particular the Climate-Sustainability movement, is a topic of intellectual significance in relation to the numerous professional and grassroots advocacy organisations advocating social change and environmental justice. Markedly, the social and natural world is in a dire state due to human induced climate changes as well as natural and man-made disasters that have catastrophic impacts on human and nonhuman species (Caldicott 1996, 2006, 2009; Healey 2009a & b; Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009; Irwin 2010). In Australia, wild bushfires, extreme temperatures, flood epidemics and cyclones, indicate that human beings are vulnerable yet also responsible for their immediate environment (Shiva 1993, 2005, 2008; Maleta 2009; Spratt & Sutton 2009). Such incidents occur globally, and ‘we’ hu(mans) are located in an advantageous position to respond to it. A global to local activist engagement is therefore required. As an academic environmental activist, I endeavour to identify the gendered and environmentalist experiences of participants within everyday life contexts, and to consider what is being addressed and what is yet to be addressed.

**Why is gender relevant to this debate?**

Women around the world play a strong leadership role within the politics of gender and the environment, especially in grassroots action groups (Warren 1999; MacGregor 2001; Glazebrook 2005; Alston 2011). However, research and policies indicate gender gaps (MacGregor 2010, 2014). Surveys show that women and men perceive social and environmental risks differently, and that women are disproportionately under-represented in executive leadership positions (Spitzner
For example, women view market-based international climate policies less positively than men. Spitzner notes that women are under-represented in all political and economic decision-making bodies (2009:220). Research shows that decisions in the policy arena are designed in a totally man-made way (Spitzner 2009:223).

For example, Spitzner contends that the UN Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol make no reference to international agreements on social justice and the empowerment of women (2009: 220). Within glocal contexts, women are under-represented in all political and economic decision-making bodies (Spitzner 2009: 220). The corporate sector ‘directed largely by suited men in the global North and their followers in the global South, spend billions on public moneys on ‘cooperation’ and on public relations, mystifying politicians and communities alike as to the science of climate change’ (Spitzner 2009: 225). Spitzner argues that policies must recognise gender as a structural hierarchy and acknowledge the differing situations of women and men- their needs, opportunities and goals (2009: 225). Further, a monitoring system is needed at national and international levels to ensure a universal integration of the gender perspective (Spitzner 2009:226).

Addressing gender gaps in climate policy and everyday life

In regard to gender gaps, the 2007 IPCC Fourth Assessment report on Climate Change identified the gendered aspects of vulnerability and adaptive capacity. Empirical research has shown that experiences of climate change are experienced differently along the lines of age, ethnicity, class, religion and gender (Cutter 1995; Denton 2002; Enarson 2002; cited in Climate Change 2007, IPCC Fourth Assessment report). Climate change therefore has gender-specific implications in terms of vulnerability and adaptive capacity (Dankelman 2002). Gender differences reflect wider patterns of structural gender inequality. This suggests that women are worse off than men in relation to being able to cope effectively in their domestic environs when a climate-related disaster occurs. However, a prospective shift in policy towards more proactive capacity building can help reduce inequality (Climate Change 2007, IPCC Fourth Assessment report). Yet, I contend that glocal climate policy is male-centric, whereby women, the poor and ethnic minorities are marginalised. Hence, a gender differentiated responsibility is yet to be realised.
Leading international organisational bodies that aim to address gender inequality as well as climate reforms are GenderCC, Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). These organisations include salaried and voluntary women members advocating gender and environmental justice. For example, GenderCC is a climate justice global network of women activists and experts working for gender and climate justice. GenderCC adheres to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (GenderCC homepage, 2013). The GGCA aims to integrate a gender perspective into policy and decision-making to ensure international mandates and legal instruments on gender equality are implemented (GGCA homepage, 2013). In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) provides a framework to strengthen support to Member States in developing health risk assessments and climate policy interventions that are beneficial to women (WHO, Gender, 2013). Overarching organisational bodies, like GenderCC and WHO, play a significant role in addressing policy reforms on gender and climate issues in diverse glocal contexts.

A personal account of environmental activism

This project is strengthened by my grassroots and professional activism in the environmental movement. I am a member of grassroots and professional environmental organisations. Academic organisational membership includes the Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ), Ecology Society of Australia (ESA) and the Sustainability Collective at the University of Western Sydney. Ecofeminist organisation membership includes 1 Million Women network and the Women Environmental Network of Australia (WENA). Grassroots organisation membership includes Parramatta Climate Change Action Network (CAN) and Climate Action Network Australia (CANA), of which ParraCAN is affiliated. As a ParraCAN volunteer, campaigns include lobbying the government and educating the community to take action on climate change. Notably, I adopt a peaceful approach in my climate change activism.

Research context

My previous research with Australian women voluntary rural firefighters identified their agency and competency through a coordinated strategy of teamwork,
camaraderie and responsibility, which protected both the firefighters and the community (Maleta 2009:292). Although women struggled with labels of incompetency, the automation of equipment and their demonstrated prowess enabled women to perform a ‘traditional male role’. The voluntary nature of the work enabled women to appropriate this role, which accounts for their rising numbers in rural firefighting (Maleta 2009). Nonetheless, the urban fire services is largely still male dominated (Metz 2004; Beatson & McLennan 2005; McLennan 2007). In my current research, agency and competency may be strengthened by the collective strategic engagement of women and men towards combating environmental degradation. Nonetheless, women’s experiences may still be complicated by a masculinist culture and gender differences, which are also found to be prevalent in regional contexts (Poiner 1990; Teather 1992; Poiner 1993; Alston 2003, 2006; Pilgeram 2007; Maleta 2009).

This study is supported by feminist, ecofeminist, sociological and social/environment movement literature. Diverse theoretical interpretations and case studies review women’s actual contribution to formal acknowledgement in the workplace/movement. A sociocultural perspective draws upon social relations of power and cultural representations of gender in the workplace/movement. A gendered culture of work, in the form of a traditional social hierarchy, informed by masculinist notions of power and patriarchy, may position activists in a complex position to exercise agency and competency. The performance of resistant femininities and the doing of gender are therefore complicated by structures of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy. Within a social hierarchy, I argue that a complex masculinist culture of work presents challenges for female empowerment as well as subjective engagement.

Feminists have analysed the way social relations of power and cultural assumptions of gender influence the experiences of women in traditional masculine occupations (Cockburn 1988; Walby 1990; Young & Hurlic 2007; Walby 2011, 2013). The workplace/movement has been assessed as masculinist in particular reflecting the dominance of men and male norms. The literature draws upon historical and contemporary challenges faced by women advocates within a traditional social hierarchy. I argue that the sexual division of labour and glass ceiling along with assumptions of female incompetency, have contributed to women’s differentiation and marginalisation in paid work. Gender differences relate
to dichotomous categories of men/women, masculinity/femininity, dominant/subordinate, paid/unpaid and power/resistance. Gender is perceived to be a barrier and an enabler to activist engagement.

Ecofeminists have extended this critique to consider the dual subordination of women and the environment within dominant/subordinate gender dichotomies and social hierarchies (Mellor 1997; Plumwood 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003; Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009; Plumwood 2009, 2008; Mellor 2012). In turn, ecofeminism suggests a link between the concepts of feminism, environmentalism and social/environmental movements. Ecofeminism is useful in this study for it helps to explain the complex gendered power relations women experience in their organisations and as participant’s in the movement. An (eco)feminist critique enables me to consider the extent to which the connection between women and nature comes from their shared history of oppression within a social hierarchy. In support, environmental movement theory provide a context to women’s grassroots and professional roles in their organisations and across the movement.

As a climate academic activist, I intend to consider the disparity between feminist ideology and political processes, such as climate and gender policy. On a global scale, I contend that there is a gender gap within climate change policy (Spitzner 2009:223-24; Alston 2011). On this point, Alston explains that the social consequences of climate change/variability events in Australia have been extensively documented and indicate significant gender differences (2011: 62). Further research is needed to inform policy on the social fall-out of climate change and lack of water. Gender-sensitive social policy is also required to provide a safety net that protects people seriously impacted by these events and allows them to adapt in more positive and sustainable ways (Alston 2011: 67). In a gender lens, Spitzner similarly argues that technological innovation does not enact distributive justice, but follows the established social hierarchy of gender and class by directing profits towards middle class men and leaving women with traditional ‘clean up’ roles (2009:224). In addition, the actual production of climate problems are an effect of decisions in the global, affluent North versus the developing global South (Spitzner 2009:218). It has been suggested that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol could be used proactively to promote gender equality by facilitating women’s access to renewable technologies on a global level (Spitzner 2009:218).
Research gap/problem

My research goal is to consider the centrality or lack of a central feminist agenda in glocal environmentalist organisations (Epstein 1993; Wapner 1995; Mellor 1997; Culley & Angelique 2003; Spitzner 2009; Mellor 2012). One research gap is the lack of a central feminist agenda in the general literature on the environmental movement. Ecofeminists’ argue that women are present in the green movement, but sex/gender issues are not central to the male-stream green political agenda (1992, cited in Mellor 1997:127-28). Mellor explored women’s involvement in Green politics with a case study of the German Green party (die Grünen) (1997:127-28). The party exemplified the problems women encounter in juggling their dual roles as politician and homemaker, hence a work/life conflict (Mellor 1997:128).

Women have made an amazing contribution to grassroots and professional advocacy campaigns, especially as voluntary activists; however, their contribution has not always received the formal recognition that it deserves (Mellor 1997; Plumwood 1997; Mellor 2002, 2007; Plumwood 2008, 2009; Mellor 2012). Notably, women have rigorously pursued social change agendas within environmental and feminist activist campaigns. In a glocal context, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) identified five key grassroots movements/groups led by women: The Green Belt Movement; The Women's Environmental and Development Organization (WEDO); Tzu-Chi; The Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ); The Women's Environmental Network (WEN). These organisations tackle different environmental problems yet similarly work for positive change in in order to achieve the combined goal of liberation for women and the environment ‘WEDO, 2007’.

Glocal research shows that women are over-represented in the grassroots movement and dually under-represented in salaried positions within eNGOs (Mellor 1997:127-28; Rankin & Gale 2003; Khatibi & Indira 2011; Attanapola et al. 2013). Male dominance in eNGOs is, therefore, a challenge to female inclusion. International eNGOs, such as Greenpeace, were praised for radical activist campaigns, while the organisational structure was interpreted as patriarchal an hierarchical through its over-representation with men in executive positions (Eyerman & Jamison 1989; Newell 2000). Greenpeace bears the stamp of David McTaggart, a former businessman and chairman of the U.K. based Board who used his experience to help transform Greenpeace International into an organisational
weapon during the late 1980s (Eyerman and Jamison 1989:104). Eyerman and Jamison point out that Greenpeace International is organised like a multinational corporation, with a five-man board of directors answering to a general council made up of individuals representing the seventeen national offices (1989:105).

More recently, in, 2009, Kumi Naidoo became Executive Director of Greenpeace International (Greenpeace International Management Structure, 2014). He currently heads the main office in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The Senior Management Team comprises Directors in charge of certain areas of daily operations: Programme Director and Deputy Programme Director; Fundraising Director; Communications Director; Global Development Director; Organisation Support Director; Operations Director. Hence, the Greenpeace executive is organised as a hierarchy whereby gender is also an issue. Statistics additionally reveal a slightly disproportionate representation of men in the executive Board of Directors, with 4 males and 3 females (Greenpeace International Annual Report, 2012). However, in the Greenpeace Australia Pacific head office, the executive staff has a significantly higher representation of men, with 7 males and 3 females (Greenpeace Australia Pacific Staff, 2014). Further, these statistics reveal that although women have achieved a number of senior executive posts in Greenpeace, men still dominate the Board and the managerial leadership structure within glocal contexts. Ecofeminists also attempted to identify the gap of women’s actual to recorded contribution in glocal grassroots and generalist environmental movements.

Ecofeminists attempted to identify the gap between women’s actual and recorded contribution in the grassroots and generalist environmentalist movements. Brown and Ferguson pinpointed high female participation levels within toxic waste grassroots activism, yet there is a lack of supporting gender research concerning the diverse strategies of women towards toxic hazards in public and private domains (1995:145-46). Further, there have been significant studies on female voluntary participation in the grassroots movement; however, it was difficult to source literature on women salaried environmentalists. The collective activism of women has been integral to the grassroots movement, yet the connection between feminist ideology and movement identity is ambiguous. My research fills this gap.

My goal is to assess the voluntary and professional participation of women activists in the Australian environmental movement. I consider that women participate in higher numbers than men in voluntary campaigns, and that glass
ceilings have hindered women’s capacity to achieve senior managerial posts within conservative eNGOs and Parliament. Rankin and Gale’s qualitative study on Australian anti-nuclear women activists opposing a second nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights, Sydney, during the conservative Howard-led Liberal-coalition era, investigated the gap in the participation of women to men in their paid and unpaid roles (2003:145-46). They found that volunteer women dominated the grassroots campaign. Hence, women were the core local grassroots activist campaigners, whereas men, in comparatively smaller numbers, tended to be employees of environmental movement organisations. This finding parallels the U.S. experience, where women have formed the core of local action campaigns against toxic industries (2003:145-46).

The dual notion of gender as a barrier and an enabler to activist engagement guides my study. Gender is a barrier because women activists have historically endured exclusion, oppression and sexism, in the form of the sexual division of labour, which has prevented them from fully participating in paid work. Gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency have contributed to women’s stigmatisation in the domestic homemaker role. Nonetheless, homemakers are also environmental activists, as women have played a key role in challenging authorities in grassroots campaigns (Barry 2008; Unger 2008). Gender may be perceived to be an enabler because women activists may learn from experiences of marginalisation, and in grassroots and professional capacities, they may resist male power.

In support, Culley and Angelique’s analysis of long-term Three Mile Island activists, over a course of twenty years, found that gender was perceived to be both a barrier and a facilitator to activism, even after twenty years of activism (2003:445-48). Qualitative interviews focussed on the activists’ perceived transformations over time based on their gendered and everyday experiences. They also found that women led the grassroots antinuclear U.S. movement. Moreover, there was a lack of supporting feminist literature on perceived sociocultural changes associated with long-term anti-nuclear efforts (2003:445-46).

**Purpose of this study**

This thesis aims to detail the activism of Australian women advocates within paid and unpaid contexts, and to contribute a claim to knowledge to both the Environmentalist and Women’s Movements. The empirical findings support or
contrast with the theory and also present insights and new knowledge. A feminist study of the agency and competency of women environmentalist activists in the Australian workplace/movement, in a paid and unpaid capacity, has not been researched. The terms workplace/movement are referred to simultaneously in this study to signify that women are participating in an organisational context and through their working roles, they are also contributing to social and environmental movements. My participatory accounts should provide up-to-date findings for a topic in need of analysis. This study aims to link theory to practice by drawing upon academic literature and interview survey material. The thesis uses empirical data, primarily interviews, to inform theory. In relation to a constructivist position which recognises multiple claims to truth, I consider that women activists may identify with feminist issues but may not identify strictly as feminists.

According to MacGregor (2001), a methodological issue of significance to ecofeminist researchers who study grassroots activism, is the interpretation and presentation of women's 'lived experience as truth'. There are problems associated with taking women's lived experience to be an unmediated path to the truth: ‘we may fail to see that these experiences are filtered through and situated in specific contexts, ideas, and interpretations, as are the theorists’ (MacGregor 2001: 34). One group of women's experiences does not explain all of the factors that contribute to the complex problems of gender inequality or environmental degradation. It is questionable whether lived experience will provide sufficient insight into geopolitical, economic, and cultural problems like war or climate change. Unlike Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, MacGregor contends that it does not follow that because women have personal experiences of caring for children or tending the earth they therefore know how to solve the global ecological crisis. The problem of environmental unsustainability is best considered in conjunction with other kinds of knowledges besides and in addition to the everyday lived experience of women, and those knowledges include theoretical, scientific, and policy analyses.

Macgregor (2001) considers Jean Grimshaw's analysis of the relationships between experience, reality and theory in which she questions how feminists have typically viewed women's experience. Grimshaw is critical of feminists who assume, rather naively in her view, that ‘female experience simply needs 'naming,' and that it is always 'valid' - a final court of appeal - and that experience should be contrasted not just with particular theories but with the notion of theory in general’ (cited in
Lorraine Code is also wary of the tendency of some feminists to take women's experiences as uncontestable truth. She argues for a more tentative approach to ‘reality’ and ‘experience’, one that does justice to the ‘variegated nature of female experience’ and the many ways it intersects with male experience. Such an approach must contribute to the development of theories (not just ‘realities’), that enable an analysis of domination on a grand scale. My research results should contribute new knowledge and findings to the interdisciplinary fields of gender and work studies, sociology and social change, cultural studies, ecofeminism and environmental justice, Australian and political studies, as well as social movement scholarship. Ecofeminist scholarship was at its peak in the nineties and studies of social movements were prevalent in the late sixties to eighties (Freeman 1973; Taylor 1989; Maddison 2004). My research additionally suggest ways to unite women environmentalists from diverse work contexts, particularly within the public and third sectors. In addition, industry experts and policy makers may learn from my findings and respect the contribution of women environmentalists in future reforms.

**Intellectual context and Research Questions**

My three major areas of intellectual context are women’s activism, gender performativity, and, women’s agency and competency in environmental advocacy.

The research has six overarching questions with supporting sub-questions that are considered in the literature review and then in the qualitative analysis of my interviews:

1. How do women activists in the environmental movement experience their activism?  
   In what way, are their experiences influenced by issues of gender and feminism?  
   To what extent, are the work roles and activist agendas of participants informed by gendered power relations?

2. How do women activists demonstrate their agency in the environmental movement?  
   Do they participate in strategies of resistance, challenge and protest or accommodation?
How do women advocate social change and environmental justice?

(3) How do women activists demonstrate their competency in the environmental movement?
How do women perform their roles? How is gender a performance? In what way, do women recognise hegemonic masculinity? How do women negotiate emphasized and resistant forms of femininity?

(4) What are the barriers and enablers impacting the experiences of women?
Are these gender-specific or gender-neutral?

(5) What does this research suggest about a feminist agenda? How can the environmental movement better engage the skills and attributes of women activists?

(6) What do women environmental activists have in common? Are there commonalities or differences in backgrounds, experiences and motivations?

Overview of Chapters
Chapter One to Eight. Theoretical to Empirical chapters

Literature chapters (one to three)

Chapter one presents an overview of the debates within ecofeminism and theories of patriarchy, and also presents an interpretation of women’s activism in environmental organisations and movements. I assess the way patriarchy is recognised and resisted within ecofeminism in relation to intersections of masculinity/femininity, power, domination/subordination, equity/equality and sex/gender issues in the movement. This chapter highlights the activism of women in voluntary and professional contexts, including, the grassroots, academia, eNGOs and Greens politics.

Chapter two explores a masculinist culture of work in how women perform gender roles, negotiate masculinity and femininity and experience gender differences within their organisations. I continue my investigation of the patriarchal control of organisations and the dominance of masculinist social elites in governance and
industry. My objective is to investigate a masculine to feminine binary in order to articulate the relevance of a gendered cultural paradigm within organisations. I address the way women experience gender barriers and marginalisation through the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings within the environmental movement.

**Chapter three** constitutes agency and competency in the context of environmental activism, and demonstrates that these terms are located in a complex gendered culture of work (Cockburn 1988; Mellor 2009, 2012). My contention is that women should engage in active and passive strategies towards environmental reform and social change, but this does not mean dismantling hierarchy in its entirety- but challenging masculinist forms of power, such as privilege, from within these parameters. Also, peaceful approaches are the solution. Hopefully, more flatter and inclusive organisational structures as well as gender diversity will eventuate.

**Chapter four** demonstrates the methodological and method-based approach of the study. The paradigm of this sociological study is supported by a constructivist sociocultural feminist qualitative approach. The method is sample-based interview research. In regard to demographics, of the 31 participants, 10 are members of the Greens party, 10 work in eNGOs, 7 in grassroots organisations, and 4 are academic activists. A sociological profile is is supported by 3 appendices: Biographies and Sociological Snapshots, Sample of Interview questions and a Recruitment flyer.

**Empirical chapters (five to seven)**

**Chapter five** outlines the gendered roles and work-based identities of Australian women environmental activists and focusses on their exercise of agency and competency. My interviews provide a context to the parallel theory chapter, and one of my core areas of intellectual context: women’s agency and competency in environmental activism. The core themes of this chapter include: the egalitarian ethos of women activists’; activism as anti-hierarchy; a maternal/caring position in relation to activists’ motivation; and, a pro-caring ethic.

**Chapter six** assesses the way women recognise a gendered elite in the context of politics and environmental organisations. This is evidenced by women’s experiences of ‘the boys club’, men’s leadership styles and gender barriers. Men’s
style of leadership is perceived by some participants’ to be dominating and competitive, especially in Parliament. Also, this chapter builds on my discussion of women’s resistance to hierarchy and patriarchy, and shows that in contrast to men, women tend to adopt egalitarian approaches.

Chapter seven considers maternal identity and the role of mother within professional and grassroots contexts of Australian environmental advocacy. I articulate the way participant’s connect their femininity to their activism. Some accounts reflect essentialist views, and others show a resistance to emphasized forms of femininity. Contradictions were found when some participant’s identify with essentialist views of gender, but then resist the notion of a maternal ethos within environmentalism.

Chapter eight presents a conclusion to the thesis. My contention is that women’s agency and competency has identified insights and knowledge in the fields of feminism, qualitative methodologies and the Australian environmental movement. Participants’ activist engagement is contextualised by a further in-depth analysis of thematic insights: undermining essentialist interpretations of agency and competency; labels of female incompetency, activism, age and culture; intersections of feminism in the Women’s and Environmental Movements; and, gender performativity and resistant femininities.
Chapter One- An insight to ecofeminism, patriarchal practices and women’s activism within environmental organisations

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the debates within ecofeminism and theories of patriarchy, and presents an interpretation of women’s activism in environmental organisations and movements. I assess the way patriarchy is recognised and resisted within ecofeminism in relation to intersections of masculinity/femininity, power, domination/subordination, equity/equality and sex/gender issues in the environmental movement. As a feminist researcher, an ecofeminist interpretation of patriarchy provides a sociocultural context to my study of women’s activism in environmental organisations. This chapter is situated in the context of Environmentalist New Social Movements (ENSM)s. A review of the ecofeminist literature highlights women’s power struggle within masculinist contexts. Key theorists in this chapter are Plumwood, Gaard, Mellor, Warren, Salleh, Cuomo, Glazebrook, Macgregor, Cudworth, Buckingham-Hatfield and Spitzner. Like Plumwood (1993, 1997) and Warren (1990), I consider the connection between women and nature as an instrument of oppression and a ‘relic of patriarchy’ informed by a ‘logic of domination’. As a constructivist feminist, I argue that these structures continue to place women in a position of marginalisation, yet these structures should be resisted by women activists rather than necessarily dismantled.

The ecofeminist theory and research in this section provides context to my research objectives in addressing the sociocultural intersection of patriarchy within ecofeminism. My goal is to interpret the intersection of masculinity and femininity through patriarchal and hierarchical representations. I aim to assess whether organisations are patriarchal, and if women experience equity or marginalisation. An understanding of patriarchy enables me to consider whether masculinist elites and masculinity is a barrier for my participants. I investigate the extent to which women’s understanding of patriarchy is influenced by hierarchical aspects as well as complex gendered power relations. In addition, I aim to assess whether sex/gender issues are central to the environmental movement. My goal is to interpret the way women accommodate or resist dominant masculinist cultural ideals. I investigate
whether hierarchical and patriarchal practices hinder women’s agency and competency along with their pursuit of social change and environmental justice. A focus on the intersection of masculinity and femininity as well as organisational structures of patriarchy and hierarchy is relayed through reviews on grassroots action, academic activism, eNGOs and Green politics.

This chapter is organised into four parts:

(Part 1) Hierarchy, patriarchy and power in the environmental movement;
(Part 2) An ecofeminist critique of patriarchy and dualism;
(Part 3) Grassroots action and Women’s activism in Environmental Movements; and
(Part 4) Academic environmental activism, eNGOs and Green politics.

Part 1. Hierarchy, patriarchy and power in the environmental movement

I consider that a traditional social hierarchy represents the superior position of men/masculinities and the opposing position of women/femininities and the natural world/environment (Plumwood 1997; Salleh 1997; Plumwood 2001, 2008, 2009; Salleh 2009; Canavan et al. 2010). This places women activists in a challenging position. Supporting (eco)feminist and sociological critiques reveal power-based challenges impacting women environmentalists within hierarchical and patriarchal organisations. In the environmental movement, grassroots organisations endorse collaborative and non-hierarchical structures whereas eNGOs are susceptible to hierarchy and patriarchy as well as valuing employees over activists (Eyerman & Jamison 1989; Rankin & Gale 2003; Hall et al. 2009). In general, environmental vocations may be esteemed as more inclusive of women than traditional occupations dominated by men. However, when women reformers engage in diverse sector negotiations, they are faced with an ‘androcentric’ and masculine approach that can be hostile to social change and environmental justice policy (MacGregor 2006; Hutchings & Matthews 2008; Smith & Pangsapa 2008). Hence, patriarchal and hierarchical cultures remain a challenge for women activists pursing green agendas (Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009).

In similarity to Plumwood (1993, 1997) and Warren (1990, 1997), I argue that the connection between women and nature is an instrument of oppression within social hierarchies as well as being a ‘relic of patriarchy’ informed by a ‘logic of
domination’. However, I add that such structures continue to position women in a position of marginalisation and exclusion. As a constructivist sociologist, my position is that these structures should be resisted by women activists rather than necessarily dismantled.

A patriarch is traditionally a male figure, who has a degree of influence and power within a social hierarchy (Walby 1990, 2013). Patriarchy represents masculinist cultures and practices that have dominated public and private life (Hartmann 2002; Von Werlhof 2007; Sharp et al. 2008; Turner 2011). Within a social hierarchy, women are located within and against dominant forces; they are not on the sideline, rather they are negotiating their roles (MacLeod 1992; Leahy 2003; Klandermans 2005; Spitzner 2009). Yet women’s jobs and statuses may be conditioned by their complex location within a hierarchy informed by male privilege. Patriarchy explains why men managers, in a traditional position of authority in an organisation, have maintained their dominance in the workplace hierarchy by marginalising women (Isla 2009; Walby 2011). Hence, patriarchy relates to women’s struggle with ruling class masculinity in their organisations, and also with dominant social elites in governance and industry. But it would be simplistic to view women as oppressed. Rather, I view women as skilled environmentalists whose agency and competency is transforming elitist corporate hierarchies.

In this section, I consider the principal (eco)feminist argument that patriarchy is the ‘systematic, structural and unjustified domination of women by men’ (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:34). At the heart of patriarchy is the maintenance and justification of male privilege and power. Patriarchy consists of institutions and behaviours, which accord privilege (status, value, prestige) and power to the male gender (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:34). Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) explains that status oriented institutions and behaviours consist of a sexist conceptual framework, which sustains them. Further, ecofeminists criticise the way the male/men/masculine is valued against the female/women/feminine (Mellor 1997:5). Ecological feminism believes that the patriarchal nature of Western society is to blame for the dominance of women by men and of nature by society, especially through capitalism. Additionally, Gaard’s (2011) review of rejecting essentialism acknowledged Shiva’s capitalist critique of the colonial and patriarchal ‘development’ of non-Western countries. Moreover, patriarchy is a conceptual idea: ‘not all men dominate, and not all women are dominated, to the same degree’ (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:34).
Nonetheless, male power is a defining feature of patriarchy, and continues to be relevant to current organisational analyses, I claim. Consequently, the power of elite men underpins women’s struggle for equity and status.

A research goal is to explore the extent to which women environmentalists recognise and resist patriarchy in their environmental organisations, and the way patriarchy is informed by gendered power relations. An argument is that male power relates to female marginalisation, and that men’s arrogance is a barrier to women’s inclusion. I consider that men’s power may prevent women from initiating environmental reforms, as well as achieving equity and empowerment. Despite gender barriers, women advocate for environmental issues while demonstrating their competency and agency. I consider the way women resist or accommodate to hierarchical and masculinist expectations in their roles.

Despite masculinist power structures within the hierarchy of nature and society, women have demonstrated resilience as activists pursuing change. According to Mellor, most ecofeminists follow radical feminism in identifying patriarchy, particularly western patriarchy, as the main source of ecological destruction (1997:5). Plumwood adds that for women, ‘the real task of liberation is not equal participation or absorption into a masculine culture, but rather subversion, resistance and replacement’ (1997:30). A radical feminist approach then rejects masculine ideals (Plumwood 1997:30). I contend that women’s capacity to achieve equity is defined by their resistance to patriarchy and hierarchy, especially when these structures hinder their activist agendas. A dualistic connection has made it difficult for women advocates to achieve reform within public debates. My aim is to explore the way these concepts intersect with participants’ negotiation of masculinity and femininity.

Patriarchy has contributed to the domination of women and nature, by placing them in the category of ‘the outsider’ (Sydee & Beder 2009). In the environmental movement, patriarchy is a challenge to women’s exercise of agency and competency, for men often dominate decisions affecting the social and natural world (Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009). Ecofeminists link the domination of nature and environmental degradation to the subordination of women activists pertaining to their dual struggle within a social hierarchy (Plumwood 1997, 2002; Mallory 2006; Plumwood 2006, 2008). I review the way women and the natural world are conceptualised as ‘the outsider’ in work contexts. Overall, ecofeminists argue that patriarchy must be
replaced with an egalitarian form of social organisation or governance in which men and women have equal power and status (Epstein 1993:145).

Traditionally, social institutions that practice patriarchy and hierarchy have endorsed the values and roles of men. This is evident in the sexual division of labour and the glass ceiling effect, which has contributed to the reproduction of a masculinist power-based privilege model versus meritocracy model. Eyerman and Jamison (1989) assessed Greenpeace International to be patriarchal and dominated by a male Board. Also, they identified a difference in the recruitment of employees and volunteers, in how employees were targeted for their expertise. This suggests that men operate in a powerful capacity, with the potential to affect the way volunteers and staff operate along with reforms on the environment.

Within large eNGOs, the sexual division of labour and the glass ceiling effect are underpinned by women’s dominance in clerical rather than managerial posts (Mellor 1997, 2002, 2009). A glass ceiling effect captures women’s struggle to achieve executive and leadership positions within organisations characterised by cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy (Connell 2009). Both sex segregation and glass ceilings entail dualist dichotomies that impact women’s capacity to exercise agency and competency. Perceived norms pertaining to the appropriate role of men and women perpetuates women’s under-representation in skilled positions. Therefore, women’s dominance in grassroots environmental volunteerism reflects the uneven hierarchical structure of the environmental movement (Mellor 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003; MacGregor 2006). Furthermore, Mellor contends that patriarchy is not a system of power, but a system of balance (1997:130).

**Gendered power relations within the environmental movement**

The power relations within the sexual division of labour relate to historic definitions of male patriarchy along with systems of domination and oppression. My aim is to interpret the social relations of power and cultural representations of gender within theories of patriarchy and ecofeminism in order to articulate participant’s agency and competency. I contend that women experience power as a barrier and enabler. A potential barrier of patriarchal practices is the perpetuation of hierarchy rather than flat inclusive structures. An enabler is through women’s negotiation of masculinity/femininity and power relations. Power is traditionally construed as
masculinist; however, I argue that women actively engage with power relations and also demonstrate skill and prowess in their work, which, in turn, shows their agency and competency. Nevertheless, this power is relational and therefore complex.

I argue that women do not have a special connection to nature; although, this is problematic when participants’ mention culture/ethnicity and maternalism/nurturing ethic as informing their activism. Concerning the ‘Woman-Nature Connection’, Plumwood (1997) assesses whether this theory is outdated and oppressive. The dominant tradition of men as reason and women as nature have had the effect of confirming masculine power, Plumwood explains (1997:20). Plumwood concludes that the idea of a feminine connection with nature appears regressive and insulting (1997:20). Feminists link the traditional connection between women and nature as an instrument of oppression, ‘a relic of patriarchy’ (Plumwood 1997:20-21). Because western culture has conceived humanity through the dominant identity of the master, and has empowered qualities of life to be masculine; thus, it has evolved as ‘hierarchical, aggressive and destructive of nature’ (Plumwood 1997:30).

Within a social hierarchy, men and masculinities have been associated with higher levels of agency and competency than women/femininities/nature. This is because masculinity is associated with the power to make change and demonstrate authority; however, this does not account for women activists’ prowess in advocating social change and challenging hierarchical structures. Parsons argues that men understand action through having ‘an impact, causing a change and making things happen’, whereby men’s accomplishments become the measure of a man’s worth (2001:99). A dualist critique is located in women’s action to activate nurture and care in their roles. In this is a difference of power, primarily understood as men’s power to influence changes, and women’s willingness to cooperate and receive this ‘male power’ (Parsons 2001:99). However, I argue that women are resilient and have the power to resist dominant masculinist structures.

In support, Cuomo’s (2011) study of vulnerability and responsibility identified the agency and resilience of marginalised groups through strategies of resistance within climate movements. Cuomo elaborates that ‘emphasizing vulnerability tends to obfuscate the agency, knowledge, and resilience of members of disempowered or marginalised groups’ (2011: 695). Those who are categorically in harm’s way are ethical agents and community members with individual and collective capacities, despite the fact that they may be entitled to resources for
dealing with the impacts of problems created by wealthy corporations and societies. Alternatives to discourses of vulnerability are therefore emerging from indigenous, anti-globalisation, feminist, and youth movements for climate justice. These movements point out that many communities are in vulnerable positions because they uphold ecological values that have not been engulfed by global capitalism, recognising marginal status in fossil-fuel cultures to be a sign of wisdom and resilience rather than weakness (Cuomo 2011: 695). Many ecofeminists identify globalisation as an outgrowth of capitalism, as the locus of the current social and environmental crises (Sydee & Beder 2009:248).

The agency and competency of women activists is demonstrated by skills and knowledge; however, intersections of hegemonic masculinity and dualist gender dichotomies complicate their engagement. Dualism is a conceptual term that explains uneven gender relations, in how women may participate in the same environs to men, but that there is a binary opposition that prevents full female inclusion (Plumwood 1997, 2002; Turner 2008; Sydee & Beder 2009). Ecofeminists extend a critique of hegemony to consider the dual subordination of women and the environment within social hierarchies (Krauss 1993; Rankin & Gale 2003; Spitzner 2009). In relation to hegemony, ecofeminist accounts explain the women activists’ struggle to achieve empowered gender identities (Stein 2004; Mallory 2006; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009). Hence, women are positioned in an ambiguous context within environmental activism due to complex and overarching power relations that continue to privilege men as well as the male gender (Stein 2004, cited in Barry 2008:26).

Within ecofeminist analyses, insights to agency and competency are thus complicated by binary dualisms, whereby the masculine and feminine is oppositional; nonetheless, women activists resist dominant power structures. Both ‘woman’ and ‘nature’ fall in the same side in the dualism set. They are subordinated as: ‘the other and each must be addressed in order to address the others’ (Sydee & Beder 2009:249-50). Notably, the ecological crises cannot be changed without challenging patriarchy. In this way, ecofeminist strategies seek to break apart these dualisms, in order to (re)create a society of reciprocity without hierarchy. All systems of domination, including racism and classism, should be overcome as they stem from the same logic of domination (Sydee & Beder 2009:250). Thus, activism entails a resistance strategy challenging patriarchal forms of male domination.
Mallory defines ecofeminism within complex power relations, yet feminist activist resistance is feasible:

…eco-feminism is a theoretical position and a political movement that examines environmental problems through the lens of gender, revealing the myriad ways that the oppression of women and the exploitation of the earth are conjoined and mutually-reinforcing. Most in the environmental community, particularly those in academic settings acknowledge this much about ecofeminism (2006:35-36).

As an activist strategy, ecofeminism is therefore a theoretical position and a political movement that is academic and practical in its conception and application. It is practiced in professional and grassroots contexts encompassing public and private spheres. For Godfrey, ecofeminism, like feminism, entails a social movement of women committed to profound personal and political change (2005:35-40). Culley and Angelique’s study of Three Mile Island activists’ had found that women challenged and redefined the political power structure when possibilities for social change seemed dismal (2003:445-48, ibid 2010). Their personal (private) transformation was associated with their increased political (public) involvement, which empowered their agency within anti-nuclear activism. Thus, women activists challenge power structures, and achieve empowerment as agents of environmental justice and change.

Part 2. An ecofeminist critique of patriarchy and dualism

An ecofeminist interpretation of dualism and patriarchy enables me to focus on the intersection of masculinity and femininity. Evidently, patriarchy encompasses gendered dualisms in everyday life and organisations. Traditionally, the masculine/scientific/rational is valued over the feminine/domesticated/irrational. I assess the way women recognise and resist gender dualisms. Key theorists include Plumwood, Salleh, Gaard, Cudworth, Mellor and Buckingham-Hatfield. The core account is based on Plumwood’s (1993, 1997, 2006, 2009) dualist critique of patriarchy. I focus on dualist intersections within patriarchy, agency, dominance, culture, hierarchy, identity, sex/gender issues and the human and nonhuman.

As a feminist, I consider how a women/nature dichotomy relates to a shared history of oppression in a traditional social hierarchy (Plumwood 1997, 2002, 2006). One goal is to investigate the dualistic construction of masculine and feminine
identities. Dualisms foreground the complexity of constructing an empowered feminist identity within environmental activism. Dualism is the process by which contrasting concepts (e.g. masculine and feminine identities) are formed by domination and subordination, and constructed as oppositional and exclusive (Plumwood 1997:31). In society, men are defined as active, women as passive; men are intellectual, women are intuitive; men are inexpressive, women are emotional; men are strong, women are weak; men are dominant, women are submissive (Plumwood 1997:31-32). The concepts of masculinity and femininity force both men and women to overdevelop their capacities (Jaager 1983:316; Plumwood 1997:31-32). I assess the way unequal experiences are evidenced within dichotomies of masculinity/femininity, dominant/subordinate, paid/unpaid and power/resistance (Salleh 1997, 2003, 2009).

An aim of my study is to investigate whether sex/gender issues are central to the environmental movement. Ecofeminists contend that women may be present in the green movement, but sex/gender issues are not central to the (malestream) green political agenda (Mellor 1992c; cited in ibid 1997:127). Women’s input into green thinking is being ghettoized into ecofeminism, rather than at its core. The ecological basis of ecofeminist thinking demands a rejection of perspectives that accords all 'agency' to human society and culture. This is problematic for feminists who have sought to reject a biological construction of sex difference in favour of a sociocultural constructivist view of sex and gender (Mellor 1997:7). Moreover, ecofeminists assess the biological and ecological processes surrounding women’s oppression (Mellor 1997:7). Notably, not all women are empathic, nurturant and cooperative. Women do not necessarily treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother (Plumwood 1997:9). The simple fact of being female does not guarantee an affinity with an ecological consciousness (Plumwood 1997:10-11).

The key to a critical ecological feminism critique is linking women’s past and present oppression, as generated by the nature/culture dualism (Plumwood 1997:39). As a political movement, it represents women’s willingness to move towards an active positioning of themselves with nature, and against a destructive and dualising form of culture. The program of a critical ecological feminism oriented to the critique of dualism claims to be a third wave or stage of feminism moving beyond conventional feminist theory. It conflicts with other feminisms by making an account of the connection to nature central. It rejects approaches to women’s liberation that
endorse or fails to challenge the dualistic definition of women and nature and/or the inferior status of nature (Plumwood 1997:39).

A critical ecological feminism enables researchers to understand structures of power and domination embedded in such dualisms (Plumwood 1997:40). An anti-dualist ecological feminism is viable as it reflects women’s other struggles with repression, alienation and domination (Plumwood 1997:40). Moreover, an environmental movement that does not address equity can be accused of being ‘eco-fascist’, where nature is valued more than social groups (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:34). Without addressing ecological concerns, the dominant society is likely to increase the damage to nature (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:33).

**Dualism and the intersection of masculinity and femininity**

My objective is to explore the way women environmentalists experience gender differences and misogyny, and how this relates to theories of domination and patriarchy. Within ecofeminism, Glazebrook elaborated that the modern logic of science and technology is both a logic of domination and androcentric - if not misogynist (2005: 80). Ecofeminists reject the absorption of women into this male mould, which is perceived as yielding ‘a culture of misogyny and death’ (Plumwood 1997:30). Within Climate campaigns, Cuomo drew upon ecofeminist analyses of the ‘masculinism, misogyny, racism, and anthropocentrism behind the cultures that have enabled such eco-destructive forms’ of progress’ (2011: 690). Hence, misogyny encompasses women’s struggle with a masculinist culture as well as progress.

I aim to assess the way om which women experience gender differences, and how this relates to their negotiation of masculinity and femininity. Feminists, like de Beauvoir, fear that drawing attention to gender differences will play into men’s hands, reinforcing the standard repressive move (Salleh 1997:12-13). Gender differences are paramount within most ecofeminist discussions. A patriarchal conceptual framework: ‘takes traditionally male-identified beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions as the only, or the standard, or the superior ones’ (Warren 1987: 6, cited in Glazebrook 2005: 81-82). Rather Warren recommends the principle of diversity, an eco-logical principle, sourced from the science of ecology (Glazebrook 2005: 81-82). Consequently, principles of diversity may help to reduce gendered dualisms in relation to scientific assumptions of women’s agency and competency.
Gaard’s study of women, water and energy within environmental organisations reviewed Plumwood’s *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) dualist critique of patriarchy and hierarchy (2001: 158). Plumwood describes the oppression of humans and nature as ‘stemming not from a single system, such as patriarchy, capitalism, or anthropocentrism- but from a system of interlocking, oppressive structures based on hierarchical dualisms that lie at the heart of Western culture’ (1993, cited in Gaard 2001: 158). As Plumwood explained: ‘dualisms result from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other’ (1993: 41, Gaard 2001: 158). Examining forms of oppression, particularly the intersections of race, gender, and colonialism, Plumwood showed how ‘by means of dualism, the colonised are appropriated, incorporated, into the selfhood and culture of the master, which forms their identity’ (1993: 41-42, Gaard 2001: 158).

Exemplifying these dualisms are contrasting pairs, where the privileged self of Western culture is constructed in opposition to the devalued other of nature: self/other; culture/nature; reason/nature; male/female; human/nature (nonhuman); public/private (Plumwood 1993, cited in Gaard 2001: 158-59). In Plumwood’s patriarchal critique, she contends that women should accept it (naturalism) or reject it (and endorse the dominant mastery model) (1997:36). This suggests degrees of resistance and accommodation within activist frameworks. Further, both men and women should challenge the dualised conception of human identity so this is ‘continuous with, not alien, from nature’ (Plumwood 1997:36). Hence, the dualised conception of the feminine and nature as inert would be challenged.

In regard to dualism, Plumwood argues that to be defined as ‘nature’ is to be viewed as ‘passive, as non-agent and non-subject’ (Plumwood 1997:4). As dualised nature, conceived as: ‘inert, passive, non-subjects’, women’s experience is dual in that there is the suffering body deprived of agency and the external rational agent (Plumwood 1997:38). It is only when women are conceived as free agents with respect to their bodies and as full agents in their reproductive activity that a dualistic split is avoided (Plumwood 1997:38-39). The logic of dualism yields a common conceptual framework which structures oppression (Plumwood 1997:3). The category of nature is a field of ‘multiple exclusion and control, of non-humans and various groups of humans’ (Plumwood 1997:4). Thus, racism, colonialism and sexism have drawn conceptual strength from casting sexual differences as closer to the animal, with the body lacking rationality (Plumwood 1997:5). The complex
cultural identity of the master formed in the context of class, race and gender domination remains the contentious issue.

Moreover, in an interview with Salleh, Canavan et al.’s investigation of embodied materialism in action found dualist gender and environmentalist themes: masculine/feminine, history/ nature, progress/regress and biblical representations:

The Biblical creation myth puts Eve in with the serpent, while Adam stands with civilization and a transcendent father-god. So too, during the European witch burnings, women were accused of bestiality. This said, the traditional concept of woman is hybrid. Sometimes she is constructed as the Madonna (tamed by patriarchal mores), and sometimes as whore (filthy nature). But each of these femininities is an object of resourcing by men (2010:185).

Salleh’s argument contributes to Butler’s (1990) interpretation of locating the ‘I’ through the emancipation of the body, material agency and trans-corporeal representations (Canavan et al. 2010:185). For Salleh, the woman=nature metaphor draws attention to the theft of women’s reproductive labours, and an appropriation of time and energy that may be quantified as ‘embodied debt’. (Canavan et al. 2010:186). In addition, Salleh contemplated that women environmental activists are locked in a ‘dualist double bind, with no escape’ (1997:13). Salleh’s (1997) critique of the ‘man/woman=nature equation’ explores the intersection of masculine and feminine with corporeal representations. She argued that feminine bodies are split off and positioned as ‘dirt, Nature, resource, colonised by masculine energies and sublimated through economics, science..’ (Salleh 1997:53). Overall, ecofeminism has detected an overwhelmingly masculine presence in the concept of reason (Plumwood 1997:5). Hence, several sources of conjecture encompass the repression of life process entailed in this Man/Woman=Nature equation.

Thus far, Plumwood’s case-studies (1997, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2009) offer a useful account of dualism within gendered power structures (also see chapter 3). Like Plumwood (1993, 1997) and Warren (1990), I argue that the connection between women and nature is an instrument of oppression within hierarchies and is a relic of patriarchy. However, I add that such structures continue to position women in a position of marginalisation and exclusion. These structures should be resisted by women activists rather than necessarily dismantled. Plumwood explains that the logic of dualism yields a common conceptual framework which structures different categories of oppression. Plumwood explained that a system of oppressive structures based on ‘hierarchical dualisms lie at the heart of Western culture’ (1993, Gaard
Hierarchical dualisms are manifested politically and psychologically through a gender reason/nature dualism that concentrates the intersection of privilege in terms of race/class/gender/species/sexuality (Plumwood 1993, cited in Gaard 2001).

Ecofeminists advocate a non-hierarchical relationship with nature, which may improve race/class/gender relations. Merchant advocates a partnership ethic whereby men and women enjoy a non-hierarchical relationship with nature (1996; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:39). Also, Plumwood aims to ‘do away’ with the dualistic thinking for ‘it is not liberating for women to equate themselves with the male side’ (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:39). Plumwood therefore acknowledges this gender inequity within dualism, which suggests that there are negotiation strategies for women activists: they can accommodate or resist dominant norms.

Consequently, Plumwood’s studies suggest that gender dichotomies represent a barrier to women’s capacity to act as agents of change. Traditionally, women are ‘the environment’; they provide the conditions against which men’s achievement takes place, but this does not count as achievement (Plumwood 1997:22). Being ‘active’ is associated with masculinity and being ‘passive’ is associated with femininity. The ‘inferiorisation of human qualities associated with nature and women’ underpin women’s negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as their capacity to exercise agency and competency (Plumwood 1997:21).

Plumwood (2006) additionally addresses political legitimacy in regard to the concept of nature as well as the political epistemology of agency denial. The concept of the human has a male bias because the male/female and human/nature dualisms are intertwined. She argues that the Western problematic of death is where the essential self is a ‘disembodied spirit- poses a false choice of continuity, even eternity, in the realm of the spirit, versus the reductive materialist concept of death as the complete ending of the story of the material, embodied self’ (2008:325). What is at issue is not the distinctions between women/men and human/nature but their dualistic construction; however women have the power to resist such binaries (Plumwood 1997:33). In particular, the fact of being female does not guarantee an affinity with an ecological consciousness. Further, activist resistance towards gender binaries and male/female dichotomous representations should undermine perceptions and labels.
Theories of domination/subordination within patriarchy

Ecofeminism has contributed to both an activist struggle and to theorising links between women’s oppression and the domination of nature (Plumwood 1997:1). In order to provide a research context, I explore the relevance of gendered domination/subordination and how such dualisms relate to patriarchal organisational structures. Thus far, ecofeminists have explored theories of domination/subordination within patriarchy, in how men/masculine is in a position of dominance and women/feminine of subordination. According to Mellor (1997), in a patriarchal society, the failure to recognise the needs of means that the values of men dominate organisations (Mellor 1997:128). Ecofeminists stress male domination ‘per se’ and maleness as the cause of ecological destruction and oppressive behaviour (Mellor 1997:6).

Evidently, the masculinity of the dominant model is evidenced within patriarchal structures. This critique claims that the dominant forms of western culture have been constructed through control, exclusion and devaluation of the feminine as well as of the natural (Plumwood 1997:30). In a recognition of problematic dominant theories, Plumwood argues that the associated activist strategy may be viewed as one of uncritical equality, ‘demanding equal admittance for women to a sphere marked out for elite males and to dominant institutions’ (1997:26). Plumwood contends that women should join elite men in science and technology, from which they have been excluded (Plumwood 1997:27-28).

Also ecofeminists have criticised the dominant culture of patriarchy within global capitalism. Sydee and Beder argue that the characteristic of capitalism is its patriarchal nature, ‘as the ecological crisis and the subjugation of women are symptoms of the same illness’ (2009:249). In fact these forms of crisis and subjugation are perpetuated through patriarchal structures within global capitalism. Concerning the dominant culture in the system of nature, Plumwood compares contemporary global capitalism to that of Aristotle's recognition of women's integral role in human reproduction (2009: 119). In a patriarchal analysis of agents of history/nature, Salleh adds that the basic premise of ecofeminist political analysis is that ecological crisis is the inevitable effect of a Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture- this is built on the domination of nature, and domination of women ‘as nature’ (1997:12-13).
Glazebrook acknowledges the principles of domination in the research of de Beauvoir - who first saw that in the logic of patriarchy, both women and nature appear as ‘the other’ (1952: 144, cited in 2005: 80). Notably, d’ Eaubonne coined the term ‘l’eco-féminisme’ in 1974 to express the idea that the oppression of women and the exploitation of natural resources are grounded in the same logic: ‘the logic of the phallic order’ (Glazebrook 2005: 80). Ruether points out that this logic determines society according to principles of domination and argued that ‘there can be no liberation for [women] and no solution to ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination’ (1975: 204, cited in Glazebrook 2005: 80). Her goal was the transfiguration of society from values of possession, conquest and accumulation to those of reciprocity, harmony and interdependence (Glazebrook 2005: 80). Additionally, Warren argues that modernity is underwritten by a patriarchal logic of domination, and proposes a ‘transformative feminism’ that makes ‘a central place for values (e.g., care, friendship, diversity)’ (1987, 19; cited in Glazebrook 2005: 80). Hence, ecofeminists like de Beauvoir, Ruether and Warren identify the oppressive logic of domination within modernity as patriarchal, and conclude with alternative of gynocentric logics (Glazebrook 2005: 80).

The dualistic construction of nature as ‘female’ and as ‘the other to maleness’, in turn, relates to the logic of scientific methodology as phallic. Warren argues that a patriarchal conceptual framework, of which Glazebrook refers to as ‘phallic logic’, generates normative dualisms (male/female, human/nonhuman) in which the terms are exclusive and oppositional. This gives rise to a logic of domination, a value-hierarchy in which one disjunct is privileged as superior ‘to the other’ (2005: 80-81). Bacon’s taxonomy of experimentation aligns nature and women; nature is female to Bacon, other to his maleness, and his program is to ‘conquer nature in action’ (1980: 16, Glazebrook 2005: 81). Glazebrook concludes that scientific methodology is phallic due to ‘the othering of the female’, for it operates by fatherly authority rather than maternal nurturance. It takes metaphors from the male sphere of warfare, rather than the female sphere of child-care. This logic is phallic because the epistemology is androcentric, and it does not allow nature to speak freely (Glazebrook 2005: 81).

Gaard (2011) reviews the way in which Warren’s (1990) ‘logic of domination’ has evolved in postmodern and poststructuralist critiques. In the 1990s,
this feminist analysis shifted from exploring associations among the objects of oppression to addressing the structure of oppression through the ‘logic of domination’ (Warren 1990) and Plumwood’s (1993) ‘master model’ (Gaard 2011: 31-32). While ecofeminist works like Warren’s *Ecofeminism* (1997), Plumwood’s *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) and Salleh’s *Ecofeminism as Politics* (1997) and *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice* (2009) use a materialist feminist approach to explore the oppression of women and nature—postmodern feminism focuses on human categories rather than the environment. Hence, a poststructuralist approach is preferred because this integrates human and nonhuman capacities.

As women and nature have been subjugated by a masculinist society, through this dual domination, women, are in an advantageous position to speak out for nature: ‘[women’s] social roles are less able to distance themselves from nature and who experience discrimination because of their socially ascribed caring role, are able to share with nature a feeling of being dominated. This entitles women to speak up for nature’ (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:37). Despite women’s dual experience of domination, they are located in a position to resist by ‘speaking up for nature’ as activists and as women agents of change.

In order to achieve organisational change, some ecofeminists advocate an eco-centric approach for corporations while criticising the 'logic of patriarchy' based on cross-cutting dualisms. Phillips argues that the rationalist responses of most corporations to multiple ecological crises are characteristic of a 'logic of patriarchy', based on cross-cutting dualisms that support the subordination of nature and oppressed groups (2014: 443). She adds that dualisms such as culture/nature, reason/body justify corporate denial or the appropriation of the feminine, the maternal as well as nature. In relation to Cixous, Phillips suggests that a subversive approach utilising embodied, poetic writing could inspire corporations ‘to value feeling and organic embeddedness and encourage a more ecocentric engagement with the world’ (2014: 443). Ecofeminist principles, aligned to ‘a more ecocentric engagement’, therefore, have the potential to challenge hierarchy and ruling elites.

**Human/nature dualism**

Plumwood (2009) assessed the hyperbolised opposition between humans and the non-human order as human/nature dualism is an ancient western-based cultural formation that sees the ‘essentially human as part of a radically separate order of
reason, mind, or consciousness, set apart from the lower order that comprises the body, the woman, the animal and the pre-human’ (Plumwood 2009: 118). Human/nature dualism conceives the human as not only superior to but as different from the non-human. The human essence is not the ecologically-embodied ‘animal’ side of self, but the higher disembodied element of mind, reason, culture and soul. The other side is the reduction of nature that is part of the dualist formation. The idea of nature as dead matter, to which some separate driver has to add life, organization, intelligence and design, is part of human/nature dualism (Plumwood 2009: 118).

Cudworth and Hobden (2013) claimed that it is possible to conceive agency beyond ‘the human’. Drawing upon Archer’s discussions of agency, they articulated affective agency as the way the ‘human world overlaps with non-human systems, animate and inanimate, which can influence and radically change, the structures of the human world’ (Cudworth & Hobden 2013: 447). Human institutions and social practices have remade the world. Privileged groups of humans exercise power over the lives of human and non-human animals as well as non-human life-worlds. Hence, Cudworth and Hobden conclude that if the definition of agency is the potential to alter structures, then this exists beyond the human (2013: 447).

Concerning human/nonhuman dualisms along with agentic formations, Cudworth (2011) argues that the social is not exclusively human and that species should be understood as a complex system of social domination, which is co-constituted within intra-human social dominations. The understanding of species as a social system of relations is exemplified through three case studies: the eating of animals as food, the rearing of animals in industrial agriculture and the keeping of animals as companions (Cudworth 2011: 173). Cudworth draws upon the theoretical traditions of critical theorising in sociology to argue that ‘the social is not, and has never been, exclusively human; and to suggest that species should be understood as a form of social domination’ (2011: 173). She makes the case that human domination, understood as a complex system of social relations, means that ‘we must pay attention to different degrees of domination of non-human animal species’. In this social system of human domination, non-human animals have limited agency. Cudworth points out that the broad notion of agency within animal studies is inadequate for an analysis of social relations (2011: 178). Consequently, the capacity to identify with human and nonhuman dualisms enables me to acknowledge that ‘we’
are similarly located in a binary struggle and that ‘our’ agency is determined by a complex system of social domination.

**Part 3. Grassroots action and Women’s activism in Environmental Movements**

Contemporary grassroots campaigns and ecofeminist movements are part of the Environmentalist New Social Movement (ENSM). ENSM is a term that has been appropriated here in order to locate environmental movements within the New Social Movement (NSM) category (Doyle 2005:3). Notably, the Australian environmental movement may be categorised as a sub-set of the Environmentalist New Social Movement (ENSM) or New Social Movement (NSM). The organisational categories in this thesis include: grassroots, professional, volunteer/voluntary, salaried, employee, paid and unpaid, eNGOs, Greens parties and academic activism/institutions. Grassroots represents volunteer and unpaid campaigns, and professional represents salaried employees and paid campaigns. Generally, an activist is a volunteer and an advocate is an employee, although there is some crossover when women identify as activists or advocates. The terms activism and advocacy, refer to women participating in their organisations and manoeuvring across movements.

Within voluntary and professional contexts, I argue that the practice of a grassroots participatory democratic activist strategy unifies the social change and environmental justice goals of its diverse actors within paid and unpaid contexts (Shiva 2005, 2008; Smith & Pangsapa 2008). Research suggests that volunteers and employees share commonalities in their work relations and ideological worldviews, yet differ in engagement (Faber 2008; Rainey 2008; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009). The grassroots movement is largely composed of voluntary women activists, such as concerned mothers and individuals (Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Brueckner & Ross 2010); nevertheless, women employees of eNGOs, politics and academia, have contributed to its development (Mellor 1997, 2012).

It is worthwhile to note ideological and practical differences to the way salaried and voluntary advocates engage within environmental organisations. For example, NGOs constitute salaried staff and volunteers, whereas grassroots
organisations are largely composed of volunteers (MacGregor 2006; Pedersen 2009; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009). Voluntary activists may have different motivations in comparison to salaried environmentalists, with the latter perhaps more focussed on policy advocacy (Clements 2008; Spitzner 2009). This does not mean that a volunteer cares more about the movement, but rather conveys a difference around access to knowledge and communication. After all, employees often work on environmental issues during the weekend on an unpaid basis (Probert 2005; Pocock 2003; Baxter 2000; Barry 2008; Unger 2008). Overall, social change and environmental justice ambitions unify the goals of its diverse actors.

The activism of women in grassroots advocacy exemplifies their integral role as ethical and responsible citizens advocating within the social and natural world (Shiva 2008; Westra 2005; Shiva & Moser 1995). They are agents of social change and environmental justice whose activism links human and nonhuman dimensions (Horton 2006; MacGregor 2006; Mellor 2009; Spratt & Sutton 2009). The idea of being an ‘environmental activist’ involves performing grassroots ecological democracy in everyday life and formal contexts, such as initiating community campaigns or lobbying politicians and industry bodies to policy reform (Bell 2008; Clements 2008; Faber 2008; Gerulis-Darcy 2010). In relation to Faber’s conceptualisation of ecological democracy and the crisis of nature, the reinvigoration of an active environmental citizenship involves a dedication to three principles: ‘grassroots democracy and inclusiveness; social and economic justice; finally, sustainability and environmental protection’ (2008:263). These pillars of ecological democracy envision a more just and ecologically sound society. Ecological participatory democracy, thus far, is a strategy adopted by volunteer, eNGO, political and academic activists pursuing social change and environmental justice agendas in professional and everyday contexts (Shiva 2005, 2008).

Feminist movements, in general, have been reviewed to be in a state of abeyance in that tactics are static or have hibernated (Taylor 1989; Maddison 2004; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLellan 2009). However, the role of the woman activist citizen advocating social and environmental responsibility speaks against the perception that feminist activism is weak (Rankin & Gale 2003; Davidson 2004; Faber 2008; Smith 2008). However, advocacy is largely defined by one’s worldview for change and justice in the glocal village, in how activists often think global and act
local (Shiva 1993, 2005, 2008; Arvanitakis 2009, Shephard & Corbin-Mark 2009). In turn, political identity is defined by cultural ties rather than citizenship (Eder 1996b). Individual citizens occupy numerous places in society and share collective identities, while differing from others (Klandermans 2005:156-57). Further, grassroots organisations enable concerned citizens to exercise democratic citizenship and to challenge dominant power structures, hence the masculinist status quo (Eder 1996a & b).

**Ecofeminist movements**

Ecofeminist or women-led environmental movements represent the ecological and feminist agenda of activists. These movements are feminist because women are engaging and challenging masculinist political platforms. In such platforms, women actors demonstrate agency and competency and also engage in social change and environmental justice objectives. In ideological terms, ecofeminist movements peaked in the 1990s and were initiated by women from diverse social backgrounds, ranging from housewives organising against pollution to academics writing in universities (Salleh 1997; Godfrey 2005). The ecofeminist politics of the 1990s reflects the struggle of a female dissident protest voice for change. The competency of women grassroots activists is often underestimated by those in power within governance and industry (McPhillips 2002). My goal is to highlight the areas of work where women are represented or endure struggle (Mellor 1997, 2009).

Statistics reveal a disproportionate gender representation within environmentalism. Greenpeace International is organised as a hierarchy where gender is an issue. Statistics reveal a disproportionate representation of men in the Board of Directors, with 4 males and 3 females (Greenpeace International Annual Report, 2012). In Greenpeace Australia Pacific, the executive has a higher gender representation, with 7 males and 3 females (Greenpeace Australia Pacific Staff, 2014). These statistics reveal that although women have achieved senior executive posts in Greenpeace, men still dominate the Board and the managerial leadership structure.

Within masculinist cultural contexts, supporting research suggests that women’s movement between unpaid and paid forms of work is evidence of their exploitation by a patriarchal economy (Spitzner 2009:220). Nonetheless, women
have been active in social change campaigns. Some key European women-led eNGO networks are: ENERGIA, GENANET, LIFE and WECF (2009:220). Critically, the UN Climate Change Convention makes no reference to international agreements on social and gender (in)justices. Decisions in policy are male-centric, which is why women endure political marginalisation (Spitzner 2009:220). Masculinist practices impact upon women’s social justice agendas and potential empowerment. Although there are doubts that a glocal ecofeminist movement is currently active, women activists play a leading role in advocacy, and often embrace feminist and environmental objectives (Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Salleh 2009; Burn 2011; Ussher 2011).

**Protest movements**

Protest movements are a characteristic of ecofeminist movements and other environmental movements. The feminist and environmental agenda of activists is performed in grassroots protest movements, whose participants’ adopt a radical or conservative strategy (Maddison & Scalmer 2006; Onyx et al. 2010; Erickson 2011). A radical approach involves direct political action, such as mass protests (Maddison 2004). Within glocal contexts, protest marches signify grassroots participatory engagement, where the feminist voice for change strengthens an environmental goal (Horton 2006; Clements 2008; Burn 2011; Brown 2011; Schlembach 2011). The protest events surrounding the Copenhagen Conference (2009) suggest that climate-gender justice rights still need to be addressed within the broader politics of gender and the environment (IPCC Fourth Assessment report, Climate Change 2007; Salleh 2011).

Ecofeminist tactics advocating peace are performed in historic grassroots protest initiatives like women’s legal challenge to giant nuclear corporations in the U.S. and tree-hugging protests against loggers in India (Salleh 1997:17). Drawing upon historic events, in 1981 on Hiroshima day, 50,000 women participated in a leadership peace march (Salleh 1997:21). More recently, Cockburn (2012a) identified the political and gender dynamics of peace movements. She found that men’s power in social elites was a barrier to women activists’ goals of peace. Nonetheless, women resisted patriarchal structures and ruling elites in their activism. Within Third Wave Women’s Movement in war-torn countries, Cockburn (2000) articulated women’s struggle to exercise empowered gender identities. Despite
obstacles, feminist activists resist gender as well as climate injustices within glocal environs.

In Australia, women have played a bold leadership role in famous peace and anti-war protest campaigns (Rankin & Gale 2003; Doyle 2000, 2005; Maddison 2006). In 1983, a nationally organised protest event, supported by Indigenous men and women, against the U.S. reconnaissance station at Pine Gap, was held in the Northern Territory (Salleh 1997:22). The Pine Gap protest demonstrated the anti-war-toxic waste goals of urban and Indigenous activists, whose campaigners constituted a strong women-led grassroots contingent. Concerning the Australian female protest voice, Women Against Rape in War represented another facet of the global insurgent movement, advocating the destructiveness of a capitalist patriarchal system (Salleh 1997:22). Salleh (2003, 2009) argues that capitalism and patriarchy are barriers affecting feminist activism. Yet women resist dominant masculinist structures through social change campaigns, which highlights their agency and competency. Protest movements thus show that women challenge injustices through resistant grassroots strategies.

**Climate Change-Sustainability Movements and Women’s campaign leadership**

The activism of women in climate change campaigning ranges from community collectives to parliamentary debates (Caldicott 2009; Isla 2009; Kuletz 2009; Alston 2011). In Australia, many women activists’ adopt robust tactics and vocal strategies to address climate and sustainability reforms (Alston 2011; Salleh 2009, 2010, 2011; Wilson et al. 2010). Urban activists have been vocal in closing mines in regional areas, and have experienced support or criticism from local residents (Ahern & Hendryx 2008; Tyree & Greenleaf 2009; Connor 2009). Some key grassroots climate organisations in Australia are Climate Action Network Australia (CANA), 350.org Australia, 100% Renewable Energy, Beyond Zero Emissions and Australian Youth Climate Coalition Getup! (CANA Member Organisations, 2013).

A key player in the Climate grassroots movement is CANA because they coordinate between diverse environmentalist organisations and negotiate for social change by practicing advocacy strategies within civil society (CANA, Who are we? 2014). CANA is a network of over 70 Australian non-government groups working for action on climate change. It is the Australian arm of Climate Action Network
International (CANA homepage, 2014). Notably, CANA has a high female membership where women play a leadership role as voluntary activists in the field and professional advocates in its offices (CANA, Annual Report, 2010-11; CANA People & Contacts, 2014). For example, the current International Coordinator is a woman (Logistics and CANA Representation, 2014). Activist tactics include: conducting surveys at stalls, promoting local climate action; organising conferences; designing petitions to present to politicians and Public Relations campaigns; hosting meetings; emailing members and maintaining home page plus online mediums (CANA homepage, 2014). Grassroots action thus involves diverse sector collaboration and the utilisation of targeted skills and mediums.

In Australia, some key women-led climate online campaigns are 1 Million Women and the Women’s Environmental Network of Australia (WENA) (1 Million Women, 2014; WENA, 2014). In these organisations, participants’ are encouraged to communicate online and to engage in grassroots events. 1 Million Women is an online campaign ‘composed of daughters, mothers, sisters and grandmothers, committed to protecting our climate, our communities and our future, and leading change for the better’ (1 Million Women Campaign, 2014). The goal is to inspire ‘1 million Australian women to take practical action on climate change by cutting 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide CO₂’ (1 Million Women Campaign, 2014). WENA is a non-profit organisation that amplifies women’s voice for the environment (WENA, 2014). It has a website and Facebook page. Organisational strategies are of a grassroots and academic focus. WENA believes that ‘the twin goals of gender equality and environmental are not only compatible but essential for the success of each other’ (WENA, 2013). In regard to agency, these social change campaigns focus on empowering women to be active in climate debates. Women activists’ competency is therefore demonstrated by web literacy and skills in technical apparatuses, and by taking part in grassroots strategies that have a glocal focus.

Technical competence is relevant to women’s participation in the Third Wave Women’s as well as environmental movements. The Third Wave Women’s movement formulated in the early 1990s with evolving notions of female empowerment (Garrison 2000; Havemann 2000; Keller 2012). It is still an active movement (Cockburn 2000; Lotz 2003; Maddison 2004). In feminist analyses, women were viewed as incompetent in ‘skilled male’ jobs like engineering, firefighting and IT (Game & Pringle 1983; Cockburn 1988, 1991; Miller 2004;
Maleta 2009; Childs 2006). However, the technical literacy of anti-toxic grassroots activists is challenging patriarchal structures whilst illuminating women’s agency and competency (McPhillips 2002; Maddison 2004; Culley & Angelique 2010).

Before the age of the Internet, much paid work was office based and separated from the domestic front (Merithew 2004; Gustavsson 2005; Kwan & Trautner 2009; Keller 2012). The Internet challenges patriarchal structures and a traditional social hierarchy. As a tool, it empowers women to work from home and achieve a work/life balance. It enables women activists to communicate on a glocal scale. Online climate campaigns thus demonstrate the value of web literacy as part of the diverse strategy of new environmental movements.

In relation to web literacy, the Internet is an important communicational tool for activists, and exemplifies how movements are finding new alternative types of expression (Havemann 2000; Merithew 2004; Keller 2012; Yoder et al. 2011). Havemann found that the agency of indigenous peoples was strengthened by their capacity to appropriate the Internet for their campaigns whilst challenging histories of racism (2000:18-23). Calhoun adds that the Internet was successfully used by local environmental activists to access information about polluting manufacturers and to wage campaigns against corporations (1998:380-82). These examples suggests that web literacy and global communications empower activists, which may contribute to addressing social change and justice within world-wide movements.

In glocal contexts, some key women-led grassroots and professional climate bodies are GenderCC, Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). These organisations host online sites, and organise grassroots campaigns in glocal contexts. Participants include volunteers and employees working in non-profit organisations, eNGOs, politics and academia. GenderCC is a climate justice global network of women activists and experts working for gender and climate justice. It adheres to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to ensure that climate policies at global and regional levels are gender responsive (GenderCC homepage, 2014). GGCA develops practical tools and methodologies to facilitate gender into policy (GGCA homepage, 2014). Policy reform thus far reflects the professional and grassroots advocacy of women in glocal contexts.

The Australian Climate and Sustainability Movements reflect gender-specificity, whereby women negotiate femininity and masculinity while challenging
patriarchy and hierarchy within their activism. Women’s potential agency and empowerment within the Australian Climate-Sustainability Movement has been reviewed by Alston (2011), who, in turn, identifies correlations between social impacts, gender and climate change. In regard to the lack of formal attention on gendered impacts within climate change, Alston argues that what is being lost is the incorporation of local understandings of the environment and of local people as ‘active, positive change agents’ (2011:67). Rather Alston advocates a rights-based framework, with sensitivity to gender to be applied to climate discussions (Alston 2011:54). She stresses the importance of addressing gender and the environment in the same debate, which is lacking glocal research. (2011:67-68). A lack of gender awareness is a factor in Australia’s lack of preparedness for social outcomes from ongoing climate events. Thus, local research should inform policy. Gender-sensitive social policy should provide a safety net that protects people impacted by these events and enables them to adapt in more sustainable ways (Alston 2011:67-68). The incorporation of women into decision-making about climate change is essential in that the rallying cry for feminists who launched GenderCC at Bali was: ‘No climate justice without gender justice’ (Terry 2009:15, cited in Alston 2011:68). Hence, Alston confirms that the politics of gender and the environment cannot be separated from glocal debates. Thus, women’s participation is integral to all climate-sustainability discussions.

A traditional social hierarchy represents an obstacle for women-led social change reforms pursuing sustainable rather than resource-based approaches. On this point, responses to declining water in Australia have been what Terry (2009:6) describes as stereotypically ‘masculine’, and more reliant on technological solutions and economic measures than community interests (Alston 2011:61). Alston examined the way water has become commodified and noted two gender issues. One is the dominance of men on decision-making bodies that focus on the economic value of water (Alston & Mason 2008). The other is a limited focus on the social value of water (Nathan 2007), whereby women’s concerns are comparatively neglected (Alston 2011:61). Additionally, decision-making has changed due to: ‘the declining political power of farmers, the increasing power of other key players, a lack of focus on the social, and a dominance of decision-making by men whom often lack local knowledge’ (Alston 2011:67). As such, potential gendered consequences are that men are more likely to have access to economic resources, and to control the
way water is used and distributed (Alston 2011:61). Further, women should play a
decisive role in regional politics, which has the potential to transform patriarchal
practices plus future social and climate policy.

Supporting reviews, thus far, highlight class and gender issues in glocal
climate movements. In an analysis of climate policies, Spitzner (2009) highlights
women’s campaign actions, but also acknowledges gender gaps. Surveys suggest that
women and men perceive social and environmental risks differently (Spitzner
2009:218-19). In a Northern European context, women tend to be more critical of
market-based international climate policies (Spitzner 2009:218-19). Additionally,
women reject the use of nuclear power and technology. European women are
demanding sustainable public transport and decentralised social infrastructures.
Spitzner adds that the ‘failure of the UN framework Convention on Climate Change
to assess gendered impacts of climate change is one thing; the lack of gender analysis
of climate change is another…’ (2009:223). The lack of government expenditure on
transport infrastructure means that vulnerable groups are disadvantaged; however, a
gender lens on policy reform may bring about progressive social change. The Clean
Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol could facilitate women’s
access to renewable technologies (Spitzner 2009:223-24). However, technological
innovation benefits middle class men, and reproduces a traditional social hierarchy
that privileges dominant elites:

...however, technological innovation does not enact distributive justice, but
follows the established social hierarchy of gender and class by directing
profits towards middle class men and leaving women with traditional ‘clean
up’ roles. In short: the dominant debate on so-called ‘common’ climate policy
is nonsensical. Rational dialogue is undercut by the dominant social norms of
competitive masculinity, with its attendant over-valuation of technologies,
markets, and large-scale projects (Spitzner 2009:224).

A complex class-based social hierarchy that reproduces dominant notions of
‘competitive masculinity’ underpins women’s struggle for ‘distributive climate and
gender justice’. Corporate domination is an obstacle impacting global gender and
environmental justice. The corporate sector, as reviewed by Spitzner (2009), is
directed by suited men in the global North who spend billions on public moneys on
‘cooperation’ and public relations in order to mystify politicians and communities as
to ‘the science’ of climate change (226). In order to achieve a multilateral climate
policy, women citizens need funds for participation in climate negotiations (227).
Although Spitzner criticised the masculinisation of the climate regime, she identifies professional and grassroots women success in advocating gender justice within global climate policies (2009:225). Spitzner adds that women must be involved in all negotiations, such as gender experts in energy, transport and agriculture (225). Policies and programs should recognise gender as a structural hierarchy and identify the differing situations and needs of women (225). New guidelines should elicit gender-sensitive national reporting schemes for the Climate Change Convention. Spitzner sums up that a monitoring system at glocal levels should ensure universal integration of the gender perspective (2009:226). Despite gender and organisational barriers towards policy reform, grassroots and professional women continue to advocate social change plus gender climate justice.

**Anti-Toxic Waste and Anti-Nuclear movements**

The agency and competency of Australian women grassroots activists has been demonstrated in Anti-Toxic Waste-Anti-Nuclear movements. The Lucas Heights Reactor campaign is an important Australian anti-nuclear-toxic waste movement (Salleh 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003; Doyle 2005). The campaign was dominated by locals living near the reactor in the Sutherland suburb of Sydney (Doyle 2005:13). In N.S.W., activists supported by international eNGOs, like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, focussed on shutting down the reactor and preventing the building of a new reactor (Doyle 2005:13). Many residents expressed a loss of control over forces governing their lives and an inability to contribute in the face of oppressive institutions. Studies have shown that the loss of a sense of political agency is common in democracies based on individualism (Rankin & Gale 2003:149). Rankin and Gale argue that despite the loss of political agency experienced by Lucas Heights campaigners though conservative anti-activist Liberal Howard era policies, Australian activists initiated local strategies that challenged authorities and industry (2003:149).

According to Rankin and Gale, since the 1980s, the majority of activists opposing the Lucas Heights nuclear plant have been women, which parallels the U.S. movement against toxic industries (2003:145-46). For example, many Sutherland women, including mothers, participated in collective action groups, such as People Against a Nuclear Reactor (PANR) (Rankin & Gale 2003:146). PANR members also
included dads, doctors, scientists and teachers. A gender mix of volunteers and professionals shows a diversity in commitment (Rankin & Gale 2003:146).

Grassroots anti-nuclear campaigns led by women have been advocated in regional Australia, whereby studies highlight women activists’ agency and competency. McPhillips (2002) case-study illuminated the skills, acquired knowledge and heroic attributes of women anti-toxic waste grassroots activists in regional N.S.W. campaigns. She also identified gender differences in the representation of volunteers and professionals in the Australian environmental movement. McPhillips argues that the gendered nature of the public and private spheres suggests that ‘men have generally borne the brunt of anti-toxic waste contamination in the workplace and women have borne the brunt of the same contamination in the home’ (2002:xix). Also, professionals tend to be men and activists to be women, which sets up an inequity around access to information and knowledge (2002:xx). Many activists were concerned mothers who became involved when the health of their communities and children was threatened (xxi). Ann and Don Watt’s story of trying to diagnose the cause of their children’s illness led them into conflict with medical professionals, who, because they were unable to diagnose the exact problem, blamed Ann for being a bad mother (2002:xx). Other studies contemplate that mothering a sick child motivates anti-toxic waste activists’ (Brown & Ferguson 1995). Evidently, mothers incorporate nurturing identities and Public Relations strategies in order to gain public awareness of toxic issues. McPhillips study therefore shows that a nurturing ethic influences mother’s activism, and that their agency and competency undermines as labels of incompetency as well as the dominance of masculinist elites.

McPhillips adds that many activists have had a passionate involvement with Green politics for many years, working full-time for leading environmental organisations (2002:xxi-xxii). Experiences have improved participants’ knowledge, skills and confidence. Some became involved when an incident of contamination brought their attention to acts of negligence (xxii). A perception in the political realm is that activists do not have professional qualifications, which accounts for why they are under-estimated (xxii). Yet activists learn about toxins through experiences and become knowledgeable on how to remediate them. Conclusively, McPhillips (2002) esteems activists who do this work without payment and at the expense of their personal lives as heroic; their action stands as a model of commitment to social and
environmental justice (xxii). Further, they are on the cutting edge of new forms of social activism, and are prophets in an age of re-evaluated scientific and industrial heritage (xxii). Such findings undermine stereotypes of the ‘female’, ‘grassroots’ and ‘expert’, whereby women advocates have struggled for recognition within contexts dominated by men scientists and politicians.

Practical knowledge is an important strategy of engagement for grassroots activists’. According to Maddison and Scalmer (2006), practical knowledge is drawn from experience, and differs from theoretical knowledge. It is local and intuitive and ‘lies in the ability to know when, rather than in the content of the rules’ (Maddison & Scalmer 2006: 43). It is a mode of acting and reasoning, which links practice to theory. Maddison and Scalmer interpret the attributes of practical knowledge in regard to: local and partisan; social; intuitive and relates to experience; experimental; adaptive, the skills of campaigning shift constantly; narrative and activists’ stories; further, reflective and requires deep thought (2006:46-52).

The practical knowledge and skills of women within grassroots activism shows competency whilst undermining labels (McPhillips 2002; Maddison 2004; Maddison & Scalmer 2006; Yoder et al. 2011). Although it is not necessary to be an expert in order to understand the science, environmental competency is shown by the practical knowledge of women within their roles. Skill acquisition is necessary though to negotiate with decision-makers and inspire change. Industry bodies and authorities sometimes use negative perceptions about mothers to discredit activist’s claims, as ‘housewife data’ is not real ‘expert’ science (Brown & Ferguson 1995:161). Brown and Ferguson (1995) claimed that the view of women as ‘hysterical housewives’ is an example of historical oppression used to ‘psychopathologize’ women. Traditionally, technical competency and expertise has been associated with men but the competency of women within the grassroots undermines such assumptions (Cockburn 1988, 2000; Maleta 2009; Culley & Angelique 2010; Salleh 2011).

**Part 4. Academic environmental activism, eNGOs and Green politics**

This section discusses the grassroots and professional engagement of women advocates pursing gender and environmental justice in glocal spheres of academic
engagement. Some leading Australian professional environmental membership bodies that have an academic outlook include The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) and the Ecology Society of Australia (EIANZ, 2014; ESA, 2014). I consider the way the agency and competency of women academic activists is located in collective events, protests and individual efforts. This shows how volunteer and salaried women are engaging with the environmental justice debate. It should be pointed out that environment action by women have not always been perceived to be ecofeminist actions, in that women do not have to label themselves as ecofeminist in order to experience complex intersections of gender and the environment (Barry 2008; Duncan 2010; Kemp 2011; Ussher 2011; Yoder et al. 2011).

In regard to feminist academic competence, an important book by ecofeminist Merchant (1989), *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, highlighted that women were competent advocates of change and progress (Salleh 1997:20). The text focused on an action strategy that challenged gendered dualisms that have prevented women’s equal participation and environmental progress (Merchant 1994, 1996; Hutchings & Matthews 2008). This was explored in Plumwood’s (1993, 1997) critique of gender dualism and the environment (earlier sections). In 1986, sociological activist Mies published *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, the first substantial socialist ecofeminist analytical evaluation of high-tech progress (Salleh 1997:23). Ecofeminist academic activist, Shiva contributed to this literary discussion through critical reviews of gender and biotechnology (1993; Shiva & Moser 1995). By the close of the decade, ecofeminists had strengthened their assessment of the transnational structure of oppression- a ‘New World Order’ of the Global North and Global South in which the ‘so called’ advanced North depends on the resources and labour of an ‘undeveloped Other’ or South (Salleh 1997:24-25).

Significant ecofeminist actions have been successfully advocated in Australian and international academic institutions. The 1990s was a decade in which ecofeminist research and advocacy was firmly established within glocal academic activism (Shiva 1993; Shiva & Moser 1995; Godfrey 2005; Mallory 2006; Moore 2008). Diverse approaches towards ecofeminism were strengthened through robust ecofeminist actions that integrated feminist and ecological strategies (Mellor 1997; Plumwood 1997; Leahy 2003; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009, 2010). Women’s agency
and competency was located in their ecofeminist actions within glocal discourses. In Australia, during the 1990s, Sydney ecofeminists lobbied a Federal government inquiry into genetically modified organisms (Salleh 1997:25). Australian ecofeminists also offered a community course on Women, Science and Society (Salleh 1997:25). Within university discourses, ecological academics set up a small quarterly, entitled *Ecofeminist Actions* (Salleh 1997:25). The University of Western Sydney also has a Social Ecology undergraduate program with ecofeminist components, although now this part of a Masters Coursework program (UWS Social Ecology degree, 2014).

During the 1990s, ecofeminist academic and community activism was prolific in the U.S. North America had significant branches of ecofeminism that sought to engage the activism of women within professional and grassroots contexts (Merchant 1994, 1996; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Eckersley 2001; Daly 2006). Markedly, the following case-study by Salleh (1997) illuminates significant ecofeminist actions with a strong academic focus. In the U.S., by the early 90s the following networks were operating: Feminists to Save the Earth; Church Women United; Feminist Resources on Energy and Ecology; Women for Environmental Health (demonstrating in Wall Street); Women against Nuclear Development (WAND); Spinsters opposed to Nuclear Genocide (SONG) (Salleh 1997:20). Moreover, ecofeminism was coming under attack from social ecology and branches of eco-socialism, as in the journal, *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* (Salleh 1997). In Canada, during the 90’s, the Women and Environments, Education and Development Foundation (WEED), campaigned on the ecological and health impacts of the chlorine industry (Salleh 1997:26). In 1991, the New York branch of the Women, Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) hosted a Women’s Congress for a Healthy Planet in Miami (26). By 1994, international ecofeminist meetings were growing: Women, Politics and Environmental Action organised by a woman activist from Moscow University; Women and Agriculture in Melbourne; Science, Students and Sustainability at Sydney’s Macquarie University (28). Salleh concluded that ecofeminism is about engendering a discourse where not only nature is a subject to be emancipated, but women and men are too (1997:29). Hence, the agency and competency of academic activists has been demonstrated in ecofeminist movements.

In the global academic activist literature, Shiva (2005) writes about academic activism in the context of grassroots participatory democracy. Her academic activism
encompasses the practices of grassroots and professional strategies of engagement on a glocal level. Shiva describes herself as an earth citizen/activist working to shape an earth democracy, who has strived to combine knowledge with activism so to connect the local to the global (2005:145). The strategy of Earth Democracy allows the emergence of living economies, living democracy and living cultures, while taking back power from corporations and markets. For example, Shiva illustrates the transformative power of grassroots democratic engagement and justice equity in everyday discourses and civil society with a focus on seed, food and water:

I have chosen to dedicate my energies to realizing Earth Democracy in spheres vital to survival. That is why I focus on seed, food, and water. Through Earth Democracy in action we are reclaiming the freedoms and rights of all people and all beings. Through everyday actions on everyday issues, we are creating living economies, living democracies, and living cultures. Diversity, alliances, cooperation, and persistence are our strengths. Service, support, and solidarity are our means. Justice, human freedom, dignity, and ecological survival are our ends. We are reclaiming a world precariously on the edge. We take action not with arrogance and certainty, but with humility and uncertainty. It is our giving that counts- not our success. But in selfless giving, we have victories. And through everyday actions, we reweave the web of life (2005:145).

Thus far, women’s agency and competency has been explored by academic strategies practiced in institutions, which are strengthened by grassroots participatory democracy engagement. Critically, the actionist strategies practiced within professional and grassroots academic activism demonstrate that environmental and women’s movements are not in a state of abeyance (Taylor 1989; Maddison 2004; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLellan 2009). Comparatively, women around the world demonstrate concern, as employees or volunteers aspiring towards gender climate justice. The Third Wave Women’s Movement is contextualised by the feminist strategies of women leaders in academic institutions. This is evidenced through their skill and challenge towards the patriarchal control of their organisations and dominant masculinist elites (Salleh 1997; Settles et al. 2006; Ramsay & Letherby 2006; Kirshner 2007). Feminist academic activism is shown by the collective political mobilisation of women student leaders and their organisational strategies towards rejecting patriarchy and corporate power (Maddison 2004). Hence, women academic activists are actively negotiating gendered power relations, which is revitalising both the Women’s and Environmental Movements.
The structure and strategies of eNGOs and Green politics

As this chapter considers the roles of women advocates within third sector organisations and Green politics, it is necessary to consider the different ideologies of political parties and activist-based movements. Global social movements are usually characterised by a democratic and decentralised form of organisation, which mobilises individuals throughout the world around a particular global issue (Hawkins 2006, 2014). Because they are global organisations, they seek to influence governments and global institutions, rather than to form political parties. Both Germany and Australia have a Greens Party, but they should not be confused with global movements such as Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace International. Hawkins makes an important ideological and structural distinction between national ‘Green’ parties and eNGOs within global movements:

Global social movements are usually characterised by a democratic and decentralised form of organisation, which mobilises individuals from throughout the world around a particular global issue...Under some circumstances, the concern of the global movement may be taken up by a national group, which forms a national political party and seeks governmental representation. Hence, both Germany and Australia have a Green Party, but they should not be confused with global movements such as Friends of the Earth, formed in 1969, or Greenpeace International. Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace remain committed to environmental concerns, while Green political parties necessarily have had to broaden their policy base (2006:213-14).

Green activists may be considered as being non-party members of a political group, for they participate in political spheres while being members of grassroots groups (Doyle 2000, 2005; Carter 2007). Grassroots activists are also ‘political’ activists who participate in the politics of the environment, particularly by challenging and resisting mainstream policy. In order to challenge the status quo and bring about changes, one may need to operate across diverse contexts (Doyle 2005). Networks of green activists have been incorporated into the political structures which many believe have been the cause of environmental degradation (Doyle 2005:18-19). Some Greens maintain an antagonistic opposition to institutions of state and corporate power; while others have moved inside these structures and are attempting to change agendas from within them (Doyle 2005:19).

Although social movements are mostly non-institutional, elements engage in party politics, especially the global North (Doyle 2005:19). The environment
movement associated with the German Green’s party shared power with the German Socialist Democrats. In the U.S., the Green movement is led by business pursuing free-market ‘environmental solutions’ (Doyle 2005:20). In many countries, a debate as to how much environmental change can be achieved within structures chiefly created for profit: corporations. In the U.S., there are groups opposed to free-market processes, yet they are less visible (2005:20). Overall, environmental movements are diverse and shaped by subservient traditions, sub-groupings and networks that can counter with the interests of powerful groups (Doyle 2005:20).

Feminist activists align themselves to particular intellectual traditions: radical, liberal or conservative approaches (Plumwood 1997; Salleh 1997; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000). Ecofeminists consider that such approaches enable activists to address the dual oppression of women in systems of patriarchy and capitalism (Warren 1990; Shiva 1995; Salleh 1997; Mellor 2009). Moreover, women may accommodate or resist to masculinist and hierarchical expectations as members of an organisation or as activists’. Furthermore, essentialist and constructivist approaches to ecofeminist activism are therefore adopted in the movement.

Collective mobilisation is a strategy practiced by activists across green politics (Eder 1996b:150-51). The collective mobilisation of participants is reflected in the treatment of ecological problems (Eder 1996b:150). The forms of action are politically mobilised and involve citizens’ active participation in the political system with an ‘alternative’ interpretation of the rules of the game. Such groups represent radicalism through an ‘alternative’ public opinion; this contrasts with mass public opinion more common in the lower classes. It competes with the elitist ruling political culture. It is above all the ecological movement that contains diverse protest and makes a new type of pressure group within the political system (Eder 1996b:150-51).

Environmental nongovernmental organisations (eNGOs) have been sites for Australian women advocates to engage their skills and agendas towards social and environmental justice. Topical social change eNGOs are Oxfam, Wilderness Society, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Wapner 1995; Westra 2005; Clements 2008; Connor 2009; Arvanitakis 2009). Other eNGOs perhaps more conservative in approach are the Australian Conservation Foundation and The Climate Institute (Doyle 2005, 2008). A focus on eNGOs provides a sociopolitical context to the
organisational experiences of my participants. Greenpeace may be praised for a strong radical stand in their activist campaigns while the organisational structure may be criticised as patriarchal in its representation with men in dominant positions of power in the workplace hierarchy (Eyerman & Jamison 1989, 1991; Newell 2000; Connell 2005; Clements 2008; Connor 2009). Nevertheless, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Oxfam, have played a defining role in reforming workplaces and public life towards a green ethic (Havemann 2000; Rankin & Gale 2003; Horton 2006).

The structure of eNGOs and movements is articulated by the way knowledge informs the cosmological, technological and organisational structure of its cognitive praxis. The dimensions of cognitive praxis are relayed by Eyerman and Jamison’s translation of the ‘knowledge constituting interests’ that Habermas discussed in the 1960s (Habermas 1972, cited in Eyerman & Jamison 1991:68). In relation to Habermas’s evolutionary theory of NSM’s, Eyerman and Jamison (1991) transformed the epistemological categories into operational categories of knowledge interests that are central to the historical project of social movements. They investigated the cosmological, technological and organisational knowledge interests within contemporary environmental movements. It is firstly through its cosmology or its worldview that a social movement articulates its historical meaning. The cosmological dimension is found in movement documents, books, articles, etc. It can be reconstructed from existing materials. The technological dimension is a translation or operationalisation of Habermas’s technical-practical interest. The aim here is to locate technological knowledge within movements in order to identify technological issues (Eyerman & Jamison 1991:68-69). The third dimension is the organisational, and operationalises the third knowledge constituting interest of Habermas- the communicative interest (Eyerman & Jamison 1991:69). For example, Greenpeace’s organisational dimension and its identity are based on the way it organises the production and dissemination of knowledge (Eyerman & Jamison 1989). Therefore knowledge informs the dimensions, identities and social makeup of movements and corresponding organisational structures within environmentalism.

In order to understand knowledge and meaning-making, it is useful to consider the internal structure of a leading international eNGO and its activist movement strategy. In a case-study of Greenpeace, Eyerman and Jamison (1989) explored the ‘organisational weapon’ in relation to cognitive praxis to demonstrate
how environmental movements have become more organisational in focus. Greenpeace is a supreme example of what resource mobilisation theorists call a social movement: ‘a collection of rational actors maximizing their interests by mobilizing their resources in goal-directed activity’ (Eyerman & Jamison 1989:103). For an activist organisation, political strategy is part of a meaning-making knowledge system in which ‘non-political’ organisations like Greenpeace makes sense of itself and the world it operates within (Eyerman & Jamison 1989:102). Ideology and worldview therefore guide the organisational strategy of eNGOs.

Greenpeace advocates that modern societies have reached the limits of growth and resource consumption has reached dangerous proportions, whereby there is a need for a radical social change (1989:109-114). Saving the environment involves preventing corporations from dumping wastes in the seas to fighting for endangered species. Hence, Greenpeace views itself as a one-interest organisation, whereby environmental protection is guided by an internal strategy and field action. (Eyerman & Jamison 1989:115).

Gender, politics and the environment

In Australia, the political arena is largely masculinist in terms of gender and power relations; nevertheless, the situation is much more complex. The fact that the Hon. Kevin Rudd was re-appointed by the Labour caucus to the Australian Prime Ministerial position on 26 June 2013, suggests that the public is not ready for a woman Prime Minister (Greer 2010; Summers 2012; Sheehan 2013). Prior to Julia Gillard’s leadership demise, as the first female Prime Minister of Australia; her misogyny speech addressed in Federal Parliament had articulated her struggle with a masculinist culture and boys’ club (Misogyny speech, 2012; Summers 2012). Gender was, therefore, a factor in Gillard’s political struggle and eventual Federal leadership demise (Gillard’s resignation speech, 2013; Hall 2013; Murphy 2013). In the Federal election of 2007, Greer (2010) believed that Gillard was targeted by the media because she was a woman and because of her 'deliberate' childlessness, clothes, morals and looks, rather than for her competencies. Greer (1999) and other theorists argue that when women enter politics or masculinist arenas, some adopt masculine approaches, in that they behave or act like men (Butler 1990; Cockburn 1988; MacGregor 2006; Connell 2009). For example, the former Tory Prime Minister of the U.K., the late Dame Margaret Thatcher, was perceived to be manlier than her
Although Gillard did not represent Labor in the 2013 election, as Prime Minister, she challenged masculinist behaviours, such as ‘the boys club’ in Parliament. However, the election of the conservative Liberal Coalition in 2013 to Federal Parliament, and their concurrent demolition of the Carbon Tax, shows that environmental activists endure many obstacles (Connor 2014).

Within the politics of gender and the environment, the Australian Greens, like other Green parties around the world, have policies that are driven by equity, respect and fairness. Measures focus on ecological sustainability, social justice, peace and non-violence, gender equity and grassroots democracy (Australian Greens Policy, 2014). The Australian Greens advocate progressive legislation targeting the social and natural world, such as a carbon tax that targets industrial polluters (Armstrong 2010; Australian Greens, 2014). By targeting social elites, there should be less of a financial impact on the average consumer or battler on the peripheries of society.

Historically, the Australian Greens was formed by activists from social and environmental movements, and gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s (Carter 2007:89). As a national party, the Australian Greens did not form until 1992 although the NSW state party started in the 1980s, which parallels the growth of Green parties in North-West Europe, such as Die Grünen (The German Greens) and others in Belgium, Switzerland and Finland (Mellor 1997; Carter 2007:89).

In actual fact, Tasmania and New Zealand formed the first green parties in 1972 (Carter 2007:88). Notably, New Zealand may be esteemed for endorsing green legislation, such as the NZ emission trading scheme, enacted in July 2010 (Emissions Trading Scheme, 2014). According to political Greens theorist, Carter, New Zealand boasts probably the most successful non-European green party, with six MPs elected in 2005 (2007:90). He adds that the delay of a national green party in Australia had hampered Greens progress. Yet in the successful ‘Greenslide’ Federal election of 2007 where Labor secured Parliamentary power, the Greens also acquired significant seats on the Parliamentary Senate (Stott-Despoja 2010). The Australian Greens is, therefore, a political contender.

In regard to the politics of gender and the environment, the Greens advocate the equality and engagement of women in all spheres of public and private life, such as equal pay (Australian Greens Policy, Women 2014, Sexuality & Gender Identity 2014). I contend that Greens politics is compatible to ecofeminist positions (Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009); however, ecofeminists argue that
leftist Green politics is patriarchal (MacGregor 2006). In turn, the Greens challenge traditional discourses of patriarchy, hierarchy and power. Their focus is on grassroots democratic engagement and consensus building rather than a top-down decision-making process. The party recognises Australia's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Australian Greens Policy, Women 2014).

The Greens are a progressive party of highly educated, knowledgeable and skilled individuals aspiring towards social and environmental equity, with a high female representation in glocal contexts (Carter 2001, 2007:97). The Greens have promoted competent women to influential positions in Australian politics. In particular, there are currently seven woman Greens Senators in Federal Parliament: Christine Milne (the leader of the party), Rachel Siewert, Sarah Hanson-Young, Larissa Waters, Lee Rhiannon, Penny Wright, and Janet Rice (Australian Greens Representatives, 2014). Moreover, Britain boasted the first green party in Europe, yet the party struggled with electoral successes, until recently (Carter 2007:104). In the U.K. 2010 elections, the Greens leader, Caroline Lucas, the Westminster MP for Brighton Pavilion, won the party’s first parliamentary seat (Caroline Lucas, MEP 2010), which is set against an uneasy backdrop of conservative Tories. As a demographic, Greens are skilled and articulate women and men with a high proportion possessing tertiary qualifications and working in the professions, along with a progressive outlook for sociopolitical change:

Die Grünen has always drawn a disproportionately large share of support, around 50 percent, from students and white-collar workers; conversely, it attracts relatively few older voters and blue collar workers. Greens are well educated... Green party activists have an even more distinctive socio-economic profile. A 1990 survey of the U.K. Green Party reported that the typical member ‘is 41...has a university degree in an arts or social science subject (but not engineering, business or law), is an owner-occupier, and works as a professional in the public sector, most likely in education’ (Rüdig et al. 1991:30 cited in Carter 2007:97).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an insight to ecofeminism, patriarchy and women’s activism within environmental organisations. The supporting studies and literature review provides evidence to my investigation of a complex gendered culture of work,
influenced by dominant notions of masculinity, within environmentalism. I argued that patriarchal practices consist of dualist structures, where the idea of ‘the woman’ is often juxtaposed to that of ‘the man’. This is complicated when ‘the environment’ or nature is traditionally aligned to femininity/women. Patriarchy was defined by masculinist elites and hierarchical practices, in how notions of ‘a boys club’ underpin female politicians struggle for acceptance in Parliament. Hence, women’s potential empowerment is threatened by men’s dominance in hierarchical organisations and leadership. Also, I assessed the intersection of patriarchy within ecofeminist critiques, while focussing on the negotiation of masculinity and femininity and agentic formations. This enables me to consider whether women experience issues of (in)equity in their organisations and to identify the intersection of masculine and feminine paradigms. Further, I argued that patriarchy represents a complex gendered culture of work whereby what is perceived to be masculine encompasses women’s struggle to achieve equity, social mobility and status.

Additionally, this chapter provides a sociocultural context to my interview data with women working in eNGOs, grassroots organisations, academia and politics. The environmental competency of women activists was demonstrated by professional training and practical knowledge. A strategy uniting voluntary and salaried advocates pursuing social change was grassroots participatory action. Although Greens politicians practice grassroots democracy, they struggle to implement reforms in a masculinist Parliament. Further, the activism of women in climate campaigns ranged from community protest events to academic publications. The protest events surrounding the Copenhagen Conference (2009) suggest that climate reform and gender justice are pressing issues. Ecofeminist or women-led movements, therefore, present the ecological and feminist agenda of women activists arguing for change.

Evidently, women negotiate masculine and feminine advocacy approaches, whereby gender is an active process of doing. Nevertheless, women experience gender and organisational barriers along with enablers affecting their work relations with men and social engagement. In relation to Spitzner (2009), women ‘justice’ activists resist a social hierarchy that is defined by ‘competitive masculinity’. Hence, women exercise their power through resistance and ecofeminist actions towards men’s competitive and hierarchical approach to leadership. Nonetheless, a masculinist culture of work, informed by ruling power-centric elites in organisations
and across industries, is an ongoing barrier for women advocates’ inclusion. However, women are proactive agents of change whose activism is destabilising the dominant gendered power relations within hierarchical organisational elites. I conclude that the Women’s and Environmental Movements are being revitalised by women’s individual and collectivist actions towards change, which speaks against perceptions that movements are in a state of abeyance. This chapter has, therefore, provided intellectual context to the activism of women in environmental movements. My contention is that women adopt resistant and emphasized femininities in their environmental activism. This is explored further in the next chapter and also empirical chapters. The review shows women’s power-based struggle in a masculinist culture- although supporting theory on gender performativity in relation to agency and competency is explored further in chapter 2.
Chapter Two- Capturing a masculinist culture of work and gender performativity

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore a masculinist culture of work in how women perform gender roles, negotiate masculinity and femininity and experience gender differences within their organisations. I continue my investigation of the patriarchal control of organisations and the dominance of social elites in governance and industry. My contention is that gender barriers hinder women’s capacity to exercise their agency and competency. In a constructivist approach, I consider the diverse viewpoints of materialist and idealist (eco)feminists in order to construct masculinity/femininity through gendered performances within activism. My objective is to investigate a masculine to feminine binary in order to articulate the relevance of a gendered cultural paradigm within organisational contexts. I consider that women experience gender barriers and marginalisation through the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings within the environmental movement (Mallory 2006; Mellor 2007, 2009). The performativity of gender is illustrated by the negotiation of masculinity and femininity within complex gendered power structures, where women strive for empowerment in locating the ‘I’ in their identity and social change ambitions (Butler 1990, 2004, 2006). I consider the way emotion is a constructivist versus essentialist construct. Within social contexts, I assess performances of masculinity and femininity as well as women’s negotiation of gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency, activism and age.

Evidently, a feminist challenge to agency and competency is the dualist construction of man/woman, masculinity/femininity and science/nature, whereby men are associated with higher levels of agency and competency (Plumwood 1997, 2001, 2006; Meynell 2009). My contention is that gender dichotomies represent women activists’ struggle for subjective empowerment in environmentalist organisations (Salleh 1997, 2003; Leonard 2005; Connell 2009; Salleh 2009). However, studies show that women resist gender barriers and, in turn, demonstrate their agency and competency.

This chapter is organised into four parts:

(Part 1) A gendered culture within organisations and everyday life;
(Part 2) The sexual division of labour and gender barriers;
Part 3. Hegemonic masculinity and labelling dynamics within activism; and
Part 4. The performativity of gender and activism as a ‘process of doing’.

Part 1. A gendered culture of work.

Constructivism versus essentialism within (eco)feminist discourses

Within (eco)feminist critiques, agency and competency entail a historical
definition whereby the masculine and feminine have been differentiated as dualist
dichotomies, whereby the former is more agentic and competent (Salleh 1997;
MacGregor 2006; Canavan et al. 2010). In relation to agency and competency, I
review the dualist and unfair representation of women, and their comparative binary
location within gendered power structures. As a constructivist feminist, I argue that
this gender dichotomy exists because of prevailing structures of patriarchy and
hierarchy; yet women have the power to resist this. I perceive gender to be a
sociocultural construction where ‘male’ and ‘female’ behaviours have been
constructed as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in society and everyday life contexts
(Leahy 2003; Bell 2008). I argue that gender is a learned experience in that it is not
essentialist or innate (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Mellor 2007, 2009, 2012). My aim
is to investigate whether women endure gender differences and barriers in
masculinist organisations, and how this impacts on their agency and competency

Gender is a process of socialisation that occurs in early childhood and
continues throughout individuals’ lives (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Young &
Hurlic 2007; Burn 2011). The conventional explanation of gender is ‘that it is a
social construction organised around biological sex. Individuals are born male or
female, but they acquire over time a gender identity, that is what it means to be male
or female’ (Gregson et al. 1997:53, cited in Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:3). This
implies two relationships: between the genders and between gender and society
(Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:3). Through entrenched socialised patterns, girls and
boys are educated towards appropriate ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ behaviours and
how they should act (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:3; Jacobs 2004). Hence, roles and
competencies have been differentiated within public and private hierarchies. Thus
far, people are gendered into masculine and feminine beings through cultural
processes. In turn, their response to their social, cultural and political environment is
gender-specific. If there is a deviation from something that does not conform to the norm, then a male is labelled ‘effeminate’ and a woman, ‘butch’ (Cockburn 1988:231).

The dualist representation of women in masculinist occupations is evident by practices of sex-segregation. Gendered power relations influence the way women negotiate agency and competency. My contention is that there are plural masculinities and femininities. Women may adopt resistant or emphasized femininities in their response to men and masculinist norms (Connell 1995; Leahy 2003; Connell 2005). In turn, this shows an alignment with constructivist or essentialist approaches. Moreover, feminist postmodernism entails a space for different voices in emphasising that people cannot assume agency for others (Jacobs 2004:11-12). Feminist poststructuralism emphasises not just one position; it advocates a diversity approach (Jacobs 2004:14-15).

Feminists eager to defend women’s equal rational capacities argued that any differences science might find between men and women’s bodies were not relevant to their agentic capacities (Meynell 2009:6). In the second wave of feminism, biological sex was distinguished from social gender. That women bear children is a biological fact, that women are under-represented in physics, is a social fact about gender (Meynell 2009:6-7). Hence, the idea that women could be rational agents prompted serious discussion of agency in the context of women’s lives and traditional roles (Meynell 2009:7). Feminists considered epistemology and ethics from the perspective of women’s interests and labour, concerning gender in the acquisition of knowledge (Meynell 2009:7). This produced new understandings of the self and agency that radically departed from traditional concepts.

Perceived assumptions of agency and competency relate to gender differences at work (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Alcoff 2003; Smith & Lyons 2006; Smith 2009). Gender stereotypes about male and female competence help to explain why women are under-represented in certain jobs (Game & Pringle 1983; Cockburn 1988; McPhillips 2002; Peterson 2007). Masculinities have been located in biological or essentialist critiques; from a social scientific perspective, masculinities are defined by the power among men and that of men and women (Leahy 2003; Young & Hurlic 2007). In contrast to essentialism, masculinities arise from the social contexts in which men live, from their positions in organisations and in the context of socially available discourses about gender. The agency and competency of women advocates
may be identified by their skills and capacity to challenge traditional power structures that privilege men in positions of power.

In the ecofeminist debate, there are two main versions of ecofeminism, the essentialist and constructivist position (Leahy 2003:106). As a feminist researcher of women environmental activists, I identify with a constructivist position, and also acknowledge the insight provided by ecofeminist and social movement theory to provide a context to my participants. The constructivist approach sees gender as a social construct, in how women’s relationship to nature is constructed in social contexts (Leahy 2003:106-7). Leahy’s theory is influenced by poststructuralism and Connell’s mapping of gender theory (2003:109). According to Connell, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is ‘the maintenance of practices that institutionalise men's dominance over women,’ (1987:183). In turn, emphasized femininity is defined around compliance with this subordination’ to patriarchy (Leahy 2003). Leahy’s (2003) results identified a ‘resistant femininity’, in contrast to emphasized femininity, arguing that a reverse discourse towards hierarchy is possible. The purpose of the ecofeminist project is therefore to link ecology to feminism and turn this discourse against patriarchy, in a type of ‘resistant femininity’ (Leahy 2003:109). Moreover, a resistant femininity entails challenge towards hegemonic masculinity and is an activist platform to challenge the patriarchal control of organisations and masculinist social elites.

Ecofeminists have considered the theoretical assumptions associated with dualist interpretations of maternalism and essentialism within environmental activism. Moore (2008), for example, presents a case-study of an eco/feminist peace camp at Clayoquot Sound in 1993, and points out that many readings of eco/feminism have reduced maternalism to essentialism (Moore 2008: 282). In this process, essentialism has been invoked to disavow feminist peace activism and eco/feminist activism. Rather Moore aims to understand ecofeminist activism beyond essentialism. Overall, Moore understand this peace camp, not as a quaint throwback to the activism of the 1970s and 1980s, but as a site through which the future of eco/feminist politics can be re-imagined (Moore 2008: 282).

Mortimer-Sandilands (2008) agrees with Moore’s interpretation of the Clayoquot Sound peace camp in that such activist moments are more complex than the charges of maternalism and essentialism. She suggests that an understanding of
the wider gender politics of the region and other ecofeminist problematiques would enrich ecofeminist activism analyses (2008: 305). These ecofeminist analyses of peace camps demonstrate that the category of ‘essentialism’ limits the potential to understand the wider matrix of power relations within gender politics. Hence, a more encompassing social imaginary is feasible in order to pinpoint agency and competency within environmental activism.

**Part 2. The sexual division of labour and gender dichotomies**

In chapter one, I articulated the gendered power relations of the sexual division of labour in the environmental movement in relation to historic definitions of patriarchy along with domination and oppression. In relation to gender dichotomies, (eco)feminist and sociological literature focusses on: one’s gender location in a social hierarchy; privilege versus meritocracy; the glass ceiling effect; and, emotion. In order to address gender gaps, examples of an (eco)feminist challenge to the sexual division of labour are presented. Also, I pinpoint the sexual division of labour in relation to organisational characteristics and practices while focussing on the intersection of masculinity and femininity. Overall, I contend that the sexual division of labour is defined by practices that are hierarchical rather than flat and inclusive. It is also characterised by patriarchal structures and cultures, whereby ruling class masculinity informs entrenched leadership structures as well as social interactions at work. Additionally, I argue that women experience gender barriers within a masculinist culture of work where male privilege and forms of sexism entail their struggle with marginalisation as well as equity and social mobility. Nonetheless, I contend that women employees are agentic and competent in their work-based roles, and such competence is transforming traditional structures that value men and male norms.

**One’s gender location in a social hierarchy**

Within a traditional social hierarchy, the sexual division of labour relates to dichotomous categories of the masculine/feminine and dominance/subordination within public and private spheres. Traditionally, public spheres encompass paid work while private spheres represent separated domesticated arenas, such as unpaid work
that is usually performed by women, although monitored by men (Von Werlhof 2007). Moreover, the hierarchical structure of the sexual division of labour, with men on the top and women on the bottom, must be eliminated if the latter are to achieve equity (Hartmann 2002:97-98). Complex social relations of power within patriarchy capture the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of women’s subordination (Walby 1990:2). Additionally, Walby critiques the patriarchal bias of mainstream social science in favour of improved feminist research advocacy methods (1990:16-17). Sex-segregation is also shown through gender differences whereby women (and men) endure different roles and representation at work. Further, my contention is that gender differences are perpetuated by a sexual division of labour and a masculinist culture where masculinity holds a degree of privilege and status.

In a traditional social hierarchy, uneven social relations of power and cultural representations of masculinity/femininity are barriers to women’s status, social mobility and capital, and hence, their overall inclusion (Leonard 1997; Leonard & Onyx 2003; Leonard 2005; Yerkes 2010; McDonald 2011). As a constructivist feminist, I do not assume that women are subordinated in paid work. Nonetheless, they face challenges, especially when men dominate decision-making positions. Organisational structures, in terms of hierarchy, patriarchy and power, reflect the different occupations of men and women, which is evidenced by sex-segregation and glass ceilings (Sharp et al. 2008; Storvik & Schöne 2008; Connell 2009; Guillaume & Pochic 2009; Bendl & Schmidt 2010).

Using data from OECD countries, Walby (2012) investigated gender and class inequalities in employment and welfare provision, and found that varieties of modernity should include a gender dimension and not presume that this is reducible to class (Walby 2012:391). Walby (2011) investigated whether a knowledge society and economy is gendered. Using data from a U.K. Labour Survey, she found that the more centred on technology and fixed capital, the more masculine, whereas the more centred on human capital, the more gender balanced an organisation is (2011:27-29). Occupational hierarchies are narrowed to women’s advantage, while differences in work temporalities are narrowed to men’s advantage. The knowledge economy hence provides better conditions for women, whereby gender gaps are narrower than the overall economy.

Thus far, the sexual division of labour encompasses women’s experience with gender differences through entrenched masculine practices and gender norms. Such
norms and ideals reinforce masculine dominance, especially in management positions (Cockburn 1991). However, environmental organisations may be esteemed as more inclusive of women than traditional masculine occupations, such as engineering, I.T. and urban firefighting (Cockburn 1983, 1988; Maleta 2009). However, when women environmental reformers engage in diverse sector negotiations, they are faced with an ‘androcentric’ masculinist approach that is hostile to social change and environmental justice (MacGregor 2006; Hutchings & Matthews 2008; Smith & Pangapasa 2008). Hence, patriarchal and hierarchical cultures remains a challenge for women activists pursing green agendas (Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009).

The exercise of agency and the demonstration of competence is influenced by one’s gender location in this hierarchy. Underlying the sexual division of labour are two factors in the labour processes. The first is that ‘both people and occupations are gendered’, and the second is that ‘workplaces tend to be hierarchically structured’, with different grades, while ‘work processes are subject to continual redefinition, sub-division and fragmentation’ (Cockburn 1988:231-55). The sexual division of labour is informed by assumptions of competence, where men have been over-represented in skilled positions of authority, such as politicians (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Connell 2009; Cockburn 2012b). Such distinctions continue to influence women’s agency and competency in the workplace. Overall, feminists have assessed that male privilege is a remnant of patriarchy. However, patriarchy continues to inform women’s experiences of a masculinist culture of work.

Privilege versus meritocracy

I consider that male privilege is a remnant of patriarchy; but that male privilege and patriarchy continue to present women with challenges within organisational hierarchies. Male privilege is an ongoing obstacle for women’s inclusion and equity within work sites and movements, especially in politics (Stienstra 2000; Witz 2002). I contend that male privilege relates to women’s struggle with the patriarchal control of organisations, and also dominate social elites in governance and industry. Gardiner elaborates that women insisted that the enemy was not individual men, but patriarchy as a system, whereby men as a group were advantaged by sexism and male privilege (1995:6). Again privilege relates to the binary location of human actors within dualist social structures (Gardiner 1995:10).
In regard to male privilege, Castilla’s (2008) research on gender, race and meritocracy acknowledges a research gap on organisational inequality by investigating merit-based reward systems in shaping gender and racial disparities in wages and promotions. The author tests propositions isolating processes of performance-reward bias, where women and minorities receive less compensation than White men with equal scores. Empirical evidence establishes the existence of bias and confirms that gender, race and nationality differences affect salary growth after performance ratings are considered. This finding demonstrates a challenge faced by employers who adopt merit-based practices. Although policies are adopted in the hope of ensuring meritocracy, policies with limited transparency and accountability can increase bias and reduce equity at work.

The problems women face, such as privilege versus meritocracy, may be understood in terms of masculinity, identity and power (Segal 2007:246-47). Segal adds that men’s engagement in ‘skilled’ work is central to the social construction of masculinity, and women’s presence has always been a threat to men’s gender identity (2007:248). Phillips and Taylor (1980) argued that ‘skill’ was from the outset ‘saturated with sexual bias’, and part of ‘men’s struggles to maintain their wage, status and identity within the workplace’ (Segal 2007:249). Critically, this is not to say that women are not skilled agents, but rather the social value or social capital has changed through cultural processes of feminisation. This interpretation helps to explain assumptions surrounding ‘women’s work’. Perceptions of skill and role appropriateness are barriers to gender equity; yet, women exhibit prowess, which undermines labels and power dynamics.

The glass ceiling effect

A characteristic or example of the sexual division of labour is the glass ceiling effect, as with women’s under-representation in CEO positions (Connell 2009). Also, glass ceilings encompass masculinist structures and cultures of ruling class masculinity, whereby normative views of men as decision makers undermines women’s potential for mobility. I argue that current entrenched glass ceilings contextualise a complex masculinist culture of work that continue to present challenges for women’s equity and status within leadership. A glass ceiling entails women’s struggle with meritocracy and the recognition of competence. This effect is a continuing gender issue relaying women’s experience of marginalisation in the
workplace (Guillaume & Pochic 2009; Bendl & Schmidt 2010). Overall, I contend that glass ceilings represent a gender barrier within patriarchal contexts, which is why women are still under-represented in ‘traditional’ masculine occupations (Miller 2004; Connell 2009).

In the environmental movement, the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings are underpinned by men’s dominance in executive positions within international eNGOs (Mellor 1997, 2002, 2009; Greenpeace International Annual Report, 2012, Greenpeace Australia Pacific Staff, 2014). A glass ceiling effect entails the struggle of women to achieve executive and leadership positions within organisations characterised by cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy (Connell 2009). Both the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings entail dualist dichotomies that impact women’s agency and competency. Perceived norms pertaining to the appropriate role of men and women perpetuates sex-segregation and the latter’s under-representation in skilled positions. The sexual hierarchies of the workplace and the gendered dualism of skill are also located by the interaction between capitalist accumulation and men’s need to maintain their dominance. To a certain extent, glass ceilings are practiced within environmentalism in that women struggle to achieve managerial posts in eNGOs yet dominate grassroots volunteerism (Mellor 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003; MacGregor 2006). Hence, women struggle to engage in empowered workplace practices and do not receive due acknowledgement for their competencies.

In an analysis of organisational hierarchies, Connell argued that women have risen in middle management within large transnational corporations, although remain only 2 percent of representation at CEO level in the U.S.A. (2009:117-18). This is referred to as the ‘glass ceiling’ effect (Connell 2009:117-18), in how women are prevented from achieving senior managerial roles due to entrenched norms that continually advantage men in power. Although Norway implemented gender equity policies to encourage diversity within corporations, the efforts of inclusion have yet to be seen, Connell argues. Overall, Connell (2009) identified glass ceilings and gender barriers: ‘inadequate educational background; prejudice and bias of men in power; career paths that divert women from promotions; poor anti-discrimination enforcement; inadequate information about the problem; inadequate publicity; and fear of loss among “White men in middle management”’ (2009:117-18).
Additionally, glass ceilings have been identified in masculinist cultures in regard to the boys’ club and old boys’ network, where ruling class hegemonic masculinity is practiced. The glass ceiling effect in relation to the boys’ club was described by Gregory (2009) in the advertising industry, Beatson and McLennan (2005) in firefighting, Wantland (2005) in fraternity campuses, and Smith and Crimes (2007) in U.K. Tourism. Although Penner and Toro (2007) criticised ‘a boys club’ in small business entrepreneurship; this was decreasing due to women’s rise in management. Such examples confirm that women’s recognition of a masculinist culture of work underpins their struggle for power as well as agency and competency. Next, I develop this notion of empowerment with an insight to women’s resistance to hegemonic structures and gendered dualisms.

**Emotion**

Emotion is arguably a feminine sociocultural construct in its alignment to women rather than men. In historic contexts, agency and competency have been reviewed as gender-specific along with specific masculine and feminine dichotomies. In Western Judeo-Christian society, dominant male characteristics include assertiveness, dominance, competitiveness, aggression and logic, which are typical of hegemonic masculinity (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:2-4). Female characteristics include compassion, cooperation and emotion, which are typical of emphasized femininity. These characteristics are not isolated; they are defined in relation to each other (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000:4). Because gender is socially constituted, the idea of an agentic competent woman is challenging.

Parsons argues that women and men have inherited a dualism that locates women with material, physical and emotional capacities, and men with spiritual, mental and rational, hence differentiated male and female competencies, which reiterates assumptions of gendered rationality (2001:98). This dual structure disempowers women from their full realisation, as it privileges the location of man (Parsons 2001: 98-99). In addition, embodiment and emotions have been critiqued in relation to agentic formations. The growth in feminist theory in the 1970s was accompanied by a growth in the theory of emotions (Meynell 2009: 8-9). Historically, emotions were viewed as irrational, crucially embodied and feminine. Many theorists are esteeming emotions to agency, which play a crucial role in good judgement. Concerning embodied relations, by engaging the body, in its physical and
political context, not merely as the tool of the agent, but the site of agency, the authors reveal the importance of integrating the concepts of agency and embodiment and understanding them crucially in relation to each other (Meynell 2009: 18).

Within a traditional social hierarchy, ecofeminists argue that there is a systematic domination over both women and nature, underpinned by a conceptual set of dualisms: man/woman, mind/body, reason/emotion, human/nature and active/passive (Sydee & Beder 2009:249). The importance lies in the assumption that one element is justifiably superior to the other. The feminist analysis of masculinity is, therefore, located in the way women are defined as ‘the outsider’ (Pilcher & Whelehan 2004:83). In society, men are defined as active, women as passive; men as intellectual, women as intuitive; men as inexpressive, women as emotional; men as strong, women as weak; men as dominant, women as submissive (Plumwood 1997:33). Such dualisms account for the ambiguity in constructing empowered feminine subjectivities. Moreover, Connell’s research on Australian men’s environmental activism found that organic ideologies were not counter-sexist; but that the emphasis on personal growth undermines the defensive style of hegemonic masculinity, especially with its control over emotions (2005:128). Thus, emotion is evidenced through men’s and women’s experiences rather than solely the latter.

Supporting studies consider emotion in regard to skill and labels of masculinity and femininity. Payne’s (2009) investigation of emotional labour and skill opens up a critical discussion around the idea of emotional labour as skilled work. Some commentators suggested that many front-line service jobs, traditionally thought of as low skilled in terms of their technical aspects, may actually constitute skilled work, since they require their holders to perform skilled emotional labour in dealing with customers (Payne 2009:348-50). In addition, Peel et al. summarized the themes raised on the ‘lived experience’ of masculinity as a performance in regard to findings on emotion in a Monash University symposium (2007:247). Ainsworth (2012) evaluated the performance of gender in terms of language, power and the legal construction of liability within American evidence rules. Ainsworth (2012) concludes that gender-specific coded language sustains gendered hierarchies of legal power. Further, the capacity to be agentic and competent is complicated by gendered binaries prevalent in forms of sex-segregation and glass ceilings.
Addressing gender gaps: An (eco)feminist challenge to the sexual division of labour

Ecofeminist studies have documented the struggle of women around the world with the sexual division of labour and gender differentiation. Mies (1986) study on patriarchy, examined colonisation and ‘housewifization’ concerning the international division of labour and the role that women played as the cheapest consumers. In addition, Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1997) argued for an alternative to the global market system by calling for a new economic politics based on a subsistence perspective in terms of empowerment, based on people’s strength and cooperation. Here, I consider the way women environmental activists resist sex-segregation. An insight to women’s agency and competency shows their resilience but that women continue to experience gender barriers.

An ecofeminist contention is that green left-wing politics has failed to make an egalitarian society or indeed gender equity (Mellor 1993; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1997, Mellor 2002, MacGregor 2006, Mellor 2009, 2012). Mellor (1993) advocated ‘a new vision’ that challenges patriarchy and hierarchy through an ecofeminist lens towards green Socialism. I argue that leftist Green politics in Australia as with The Australian Greens party, led by female leader Christine Milne, advocates both gender and environmental (in)justice issues, and therefore address issues of gender (in)equity (Australian Greens policy, 2014). Historically, the Australian Greens as well as other Greens parties in the world, have strong polices on gender (Carter 2007); however, some leftist political parties do not fully address gender or indeed environmental justice issues in their policy agendas. In place of the socialist masculine challenge to capitalism are justice movements: women’s struggles against patriarchy, African-American struggles against racism, anti-imperialist struggles in the South, and the green campaign for the planet. Mellor advocates breaking the boundaries of economistic thinking in order to achieve a sustainable and egalitarian alternative future that endorses feminism within green socialism (Mellor 1993:36-37). Further, eco-socialism of a feminist persuasion is a viable option.

A key theme from the literature is that a gendered division of labour is a barrier towards women’s environmental activism; however, women demonstrate knowledge and prowess, which undermines power structures whilst accentuating their agency and competency. Within anti-nuclear movements, such as the Three
Mile Island (TMI) campaign (chapter 1), women activists demonstrate merit and knowledge as well as agency and competency. Such findings undermine gender-specific labels and stereotypes:

Women’s participation in broad-focused social movements has often reflected society’s gendered division of labour. Generally, men occupy the formal leadership positions and devise strategies, while women perform organizational tasks, doing what Thorne (1975, 181) called the ‘shitwork’. This perpetuates the commonly held stereotype that men perform activities of production, while women perform those of reproduction...At the local level, women are leading many grassroots efforts. Over time, women’s participation evolves from ‘female-based’ tasks to male-based duties (Culley & Angelique 2003:445).

Drawing upon Culley and Angelique’s qualitative analysis, participants’ narratives reflected themes of gender, the ‘particular’ and the ‘everyday’ as well as personal and political transformations. The two core themes were: Division of labour and the Particular and the Everyday (2003:451-8). The data reveals that gender stereotypes along with labels of incompetency are being perpetuated; but this does not account for the fact that women are ‘leading many grassroots efforts’. However, women recounted that gender was used against them. For example, ‘Being treated like a lady or Gender as a barrier’ was a challenge, but did not hinder overall participation (Culley & Angelique 2003:452). Half of the activists recalled negative reactions, such as meetings, where women were condescendingly told, ‘go home and bake your cookies’ (Culley & Angelique 2003:452). Despite this ‘male’ resistance, women overcame gender barriers through technological knowledge, negotiation skills and grassroots strategies (Culley & Angelique 2003:458). Conclusively, women’s agency and competency is demonstrated by skills and knowledge, which is transforming local narratives within activism. Complex gender power structures are being undermined through proven prowess.

I argue that women are over-represented in grassroots organisations and their actual contribution to the environmental movement has not always been given the formal recognition it deserves (Mellor 1997; Plumwood 1997; Mellor 2002, 2012). In relation to gender differences, I compare women’s paid and unpaid roles in light of gaps. Markedly, the sexual division of labour is evidenced through female over-representation in volunteerism. There have been reputable studies on female grassroots volunteerism; yet, it was difficult to source literature on salaried environmentalists. Rankin and Gale’s study on anti-nuclear women activists
opposing a second nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights during the conservative Howard-led Liberal era, identified a compelling gender gap in participation:

Since the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of activists opposing the nuclear plant have been women. This parallels the U.S. experience, where women have formed the core of campaigns against toxic industries. The men who have become involved in the campaign, with few exceptions, have been employees of environmental movement organizations (2003:145-46).

In regard to a gender gap, Mellor’s research found that volunteer women environmentalists dominate grassroots groups, whereas salaried women dominate clerical rather than managerial positions within eNGOs (1997:127-28). In relation to Seager (1993), Mellor argues that women provide much of the grassroots support for environmental campaigns on a local and unpaid level, but fall away when organisations become more formal and bureaucratic (1997:127). When involvement becomes more demanding, such as, salaried, time and distance, then men take control. In similarity, Teverson’s (1991) British study of the employment structures of Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature and Friends of the Earth, identified high participation by women in clerical posts, but a more reduced level in management (Mellor 1997:127). Women who had achieved senior posts struggled to juggle their domestic roles, hence the complex split of gender roles within public and private domains. Furthermore, the movement, like other social structures and cultural ideologies, is defined by masculinist elites, which places women activists in a complex position. Issues of gender are assumed to be unproblematic; however, findings suggest otherwise (Mellor 1997; Culley & Angelique 2003; Rankin & Gale 2003; Macgregor 2006; Isla 2009; Mellor 2009, 2012).

A goal is to address the extent to which women are present in the green movement, but sex/gender issues are not central to the male-stream green political agenda (Mellor 1992, 1997:127-28). Mellor investigated the relationship between feminism and the green movement in a study of the German Greens (Die Grünen) (1997:127-28). The German Greens were committed to a feminist program and entered Federal Parliament in 1983 with a female leader, Petra Kelly. The party argued that women should play an equal role in political and economic social life. The goal was to have a fifty percent female representation, but this was difficult to achieve due to their domestic pressures. Hence, the party exemplified the problems
women face when engaging within existing power structures and manoeuvring between public and private spheres (Mellor 1997:128).

In support, MacGregor (2006) argues that the emerging green discourse of ‘environmental citizenship’ suffers from its lack of attention to gender relations (MacGregor 2006: 101-2). There is a lack of emphasis on barriers to women’s equal participation in public life as well as inclusive issues. A key problem in political theory is assumption of generic model of citizenship masks realities of gender and other forms of inequality while depending on a division of labour that fees citizens to participate in the public domain (MacGregor 2006: 102). The general feminist consensus is that masculinist biases and patriarchal dualisms, together with the related exclusion of women from the public sphere, have shaped the practice of citizenship (MacGregor 2006: 103). Insights to gender differences and marginalisation inform my investigation of a masculinist culture of work. In my empirical chapters, I also investigate the way women experience gender differences, glass ceilings and the sexual division of labour within environmental activism.

Part 3. Hegemonic masculinity and labelling dynamics within activism

This section considers the way women perform gender and negotiate resistant and emphasized forms of femininity within organisations. I consider the differences between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. I also argue that women resist and accommodate masculinity and femininity in their roles. In turn, women’s prowess undermines gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency (Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010). To a certain extent, a masculinist culture presents women advocates with challenges as they struggle to negotiate social change and environmental justice agendas. Conservative notions of power, patriarchy and hierarchy may be viewed in light of hegemony. Hegemonic masculinity and the struggle of women within masculinist power-based hierarchies have been articulated by Connell. In the contemporary gender order, hegemonic masculinity is a dominant or normative masculinity that men are supposed to exhibit at work and everyday life (Connell 1995:77, 2002:105-6; Howson 2006:59-62; Connell 2009:117). Core attributes include physical and mental strength, technical skill, courage, mastery,
heterosexuality, independence, rationality, and group solidarity (Donaldson 1993; Connell 2005, 2009:75; Donaldson 2009). This type of masculinity is supposedly associated with accentuated agency and competency. Connell argues that hegemony is shaped by social tensions between men and men against women, where women are doubly marginalised, hence their lower position in the social hierarchy:

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women...hegemonic masculinity embodies a ‘currently accepted’ strategy. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony. The dominance of any group of men may be challenged by women. Hegemony, then, is a historically mobile relation (1995:77).

Drawing upon Connell’s interpretation, hegemony is shaped by mobile and changing power relations, in that women may adopt empowering strategies of resistance that undermines structures of dominance and experiences of subordination (1995:77). This demonstrates the problem of legitimising patriarchy. Additionally, Mansbridge (2005) evaluated hegemonic ideology within activist structures and argued for the independent effects on social change of the internal logic of formal justice. Institutionally, oppositional ideas that challenge the legitimacy of a hegemonic system emerge in ‘safe spaces’ whereby subordinate groups challenge gendered power relations (Mansbridge 2005:335). The power of this logic spreads through ‘organized activist’ variation and ‘everyday activist’ selection processes (Mansbridge 2005:335). When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, then the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded (Connell 1995:77, 2002; Donaldson 2007, 2009). Resistance to ‘male power’ is thus feasible.

Accommodation and resistance to hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity

Hegemonic masculinity has been associated with ‘machismo’ and ‘macho’ men, whereas emphasized femininity have been associated with ‘passive’ and ‘conforming’ women. Hegemonic masculinity helps to explain men’s continuing dominance in traditional masculine occupations. Emphasized femininity is defined around women’s subordination and compliance within dominant masculinist
structures of patriarchy (Leahy 2003). This suggests that women are expected to conform to masculinist and hierarchical expectations rather than resist (Connell 1995). My contention is that women identify with resistant or emphasized forms of femininity. In traditional manual work contexts, men have been perceived to be the stronger ones, hence, their over-representation in ‘dirty’, ‘noisy’ and ‘dangerous’ work (Eveline 1998:92-93). Nevertheless, by urban standards, rural women have continuously performed ‘heavy’, ‘dirty’ and ‘noisy’ work in their daily roles (Poiner 1990, 1993; Eveline 1998:92-93; Alston 2003, 2006). The prowess of women though undermines representations of femininities as passive, subservient or non-physical.

In regard to hegemonic masculinity, Stobbe (2005) explored the relationship between machismo and power processes at a conceptual and empirical level, in how machismo is linked to masculinity and power and represents a set of hegemonic masculinities. Machismo represents four images of the dominant ideal of Argentine manhood: authoritarian, breadwinner, virility and chivalry image[s] (Stobbe 2005:121-23). Machismo and power processes are thus intertwined; both sexes routinely reproduce the male standard. Further, power is being challenged by men and women working across occupations once defined to be male or female work (Inoue et al. 2006).

Poynting and Donaldson (2005) reviewed bullying practices in regard to ruling-class masculinity, as an example of hegemonic masculinity established in boarding schools. Events in an elite boarding school college in Sydney had initially prompted public discussions about ‘bullying’ as important practices making ruling-class men (Poynting & Donaldson 2005:325). Empirical research identified key themes: loneliness, bonding in groups demanding allegiance, attachment to tradition, subjection to hierarchy and progress, group ridiculing, severe sanctions against difference, brutal bodily discipline, and competitive individualism (Poynting & Donaldson 2005:344-46). Thus far, brutalisation and ‘hardening’ are essential to these processes and are characteristic of ruling-class masculinity.

In a study of performativity in female entrepreneurship, Phillips and Knowles (2012) develop Butler’s (1990, 1999, 2008) theories on gender by evaluating the ‘masculinisation’ of entrepreneurs within hegemonic fiction (2012:418). In their study of novels, Chocolat, The Shipping News and Back When We Were Grownups, they found that the gender identity of the business owner is predominantly masculine in that entrepreneurship is seen as a form of masculinity (Phillips & Knowles...
The role of the entrepreneur, whose proactive and aggressive qualities were culturally assigned to men, whereas women entrepreneurs were often rendered invisible, subordinate or deficient. The gendered sub-texts of entrepreneurship therefore reproduce masculinity as preferred normative values, while presenting it as gender neutral. Lewis (2006) demonstrated that women entrepreneurs are often gender blind or conceal the gender nature of entrepreneurship by identifying with its masculine norms (Phillips & Knowles 2012:418-19). Thus, I contend that dominant representations of hegemonic masculinity contrast with emphasized femininity. A barrier to the negotiation of empowered versions of femininity, such as resistant femininity, within entrepreneurship is the way women managers are expected to conform or accommodate to ruling masculinist elites. Despite this expectation, women owners resist labels and show prowess and agency in their work.

Miller’s empirical Canadian study of frontier masculinity in the Alberta oil industry drew upon the resistance of women engineers towards hegemonic masculinity (Miller 2004:47). The primary processes which structure the masculinity of the industry include: everyday interactions which exclude women; beliefs specific to the dominant occupation of engineering which reinforce gender divisions; finally, a consciousness derived from the powerful symbols of the frontier myth and the romanticized cowboy hero. In this cultural web of masculinities, the strategies that the women developed to thrive, were double-edged and also reinforced the masculine system, resulting in short-term individual gains and a long-term failure to change the masculine values of the industry (Miller 2004:47). This shows that women do not evidently resist hegemonic masculinity and may accommodate or conform to masculinist norms. Hence, in a critical note, the behaviours and actions of women, can inevitably help to reproduce embedded masculinist cultures and practices.

**A resistance to hegemonic masculinity within environmental activism**

My goal is to consider the transformative power of hegemony, in how women may resist assumptions of women’s place within ruling masculinist elites by constructing a new and powerful hegemonic activist identity. I consider how women resist traditional gender roles, and the way in which an empowered feminist activist movement identity unfolds. Sources demonstrate the way female competence is reworking the traditional representation of hegemonic attributes with men and masculinity in social contexts.
In the Australian environmental movement, Connell identified the resistance of men activists to traditional practices of hegemonic masculinity in favour of a feminist ideology (2005:120). Most of the men first encountered feminism in the counter-culture or in environmental activist groups (2005:128). For participant, Barry Ryan, environmental politics produced the key encounter with feminist practice where Barry learned the term ‘sexism’, in which he understood men’s personal attitudes towards women (Connell 2005:129). In response to feminism, Barry endeavoured to adopt more supportive attitudes towards women and criticise men’s attitudes. In turn, the environmental movement posed a challenge to hegemonic masculinity through its own ethos and organisational practices. Comparatively, these men were criticised as ‘soft’, ‘unmanly’ and ‘feminine’ by the dominant order.

Drawing upon interviews with men green activists, four movement themes symbolised an alternative to hegemonic norms: a practice of ideology of equality; an emphasis on ‘collectivity’ and solidarity; a practice and ideology of personal growth; and, an ideology of organic wholeness (Connell 2005:127-28). Overall, Connell argues that these themes of Green politics and culture challenge hegemonic masculinity (2005:128). Dominance is contested by the commitment to equality and participatory democracy. Competitive individualism is contested by collective ways of working. Organic ideologies are not necessarily counter-sexist; but the emphasis on personal growth tends to undermine the defensive style of hegemonic masculinity, especially its tight control over emotions. Connell sums up that the environmental movement is fertile ground for a politics of masculinity (2005:128). In summary, men’s green activism reworked dominant masculinity through its counter-culture, radicalism and opposition to hierarchy and authoritarianism (Connell 2005:120).

Additionally, Stoddart and Tindall’s (2011) ecofeminist study examined hegemonic masculinity through environmental movement participation in Canada, in 1998-2007. They assessed two waves of interviews with environmental movement members concerning participants' interpretations of gender and environmental politics (Stoddart & Tindall 2011: 342). Four claims emerged. First, their results support the notion that there is an affinity between environmental politics and feminism. Second, despite critiques of ecomaternalism and the dual subjugation of nature and women within ecofeminism, these discourses are useful interpretive resources for research participants. Third, while ecomaternalism is a recurrent theme, it is declining in importance as a discursive resource. Finally, notions of hegemonic
masculinity are becoming more salient as an interpretive framework. While the first two claims emphasise continuity in participants’ interpretive framework, the latter findings describe shifts in participants’ understandings of gender and environmental politics (Stoddart & Tindall 2011: 342). In summary, the examples of Connell (2005) and Stoddart & Tindall (2011) addressed degrees of resistance and accommodation to gender norms as well as practices of hegemonic masculinity.

Negotiating labels and stereotypes associated with gender, age and the environment

Hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity are evidenced by the way women activists negotiate labels associated with gender, age and the environment. I consider the way women activists identify with emphasized and resistant forms of femininity. Studies validate that women resist gender stereotypes, yet identify as activists and environmentalists. A label represents an issue or experience associated with tags, stereotypes and perceptions; it entails a social and subjective reckoning. Participants’ may identify with or dispute labels (Duncan 2010). Feminists have debated the label of women as ‘incompetent’ or less skilled in male vocations (Cockburn 1988; Maddison 2004; Barry 2008; Salleh 2009; Ussher et al. 2011), although the competence of women activists, in my research, is articulated by their resistance and/or accommodation of labels. Studies additionally support this position.

Barry (2008) identified the responses of women activists to labels of ‘feminist’ and ‘environmentalist’ in an analysis of the U.S. Coal River Mountain Watch. Interviews examined: why women become involved in grassroots activism, how they labelled their work, how their activism benefited the community, and why women constituted a majority of activists (Barry 2008:30). Despite resistance from coal workers, women focussed on community preservation and organised campaigns advocating sustainable jobs. They identified as activists or environmentalists whilst rejecting gender-specific labels:

While the women of the Coal River Mountain Watch are not fighting distinctly feminist issues, they are engaged in important grassroots, environmental justice activism that aims to protect their families and save their communities from extinction. None of the activists I spoke with labelled their work as ‘feminist’. In fact, members categorised themselves as simply activists or environmentalists (Barry 2008:30).
Analyses have reviewed the intersection of age with labels; however, there is a lack of scholarship on labels of age and gender in environmental activism. Duncan (2010) measured feminist self-labelling and activism in a sample of 667 women (Generation X vs. Baby Boomers) riding buses to the ‘March on Washington for Reproductive Rights’. Duncan (2010) found that Baby Boomers were more likely to identify as feminists as they were young adults during the Women’s Liberation Movement. Comparatively, Generation Xers came of age during the 1980s, when there was a strong anti-feminist backlash. When the age gap was not a factor, Generation Xers were found to be the more politically active group. Accordingly, age can act as a barrier or an enabler, but when generational divides are eroded, young and older women share commonalities in their activism.

Women activists support or contest labels of feminism. Zucker’s research found that women embrace feminist principles but rejected labels, ‘I’m not a feminist, but...’, in which, as a precursor to aligning herself with any particular feminist principle, a woman rejects the identity of feminist (2004:423–424). Zucker identified two components to feminist identification: holding feminist beliefs and accepting the label feminist. However, the ‘egalitarian’ women endorsed egalitarian gender beliefs but rejected the feminist label; yet this is contradictory because women commented on gender discrimination.

Moreover, Blackstone’s (2004) study on activism and the politics of volunteering in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation identified contradictory insights to labelling. In the interviews, women volunteers resisted the ‘activist’ label while participating in activities that resemble activism (Blackstone 2004). The belief that actions are activist or non-activist is a dichotomy that is socially constructed in their gendered and political experiences. Feminists debated whether to ascribe the label ‘feminist’ to activists who reject this label. Nonetheless, what the Komen women describe as non-political, actually borders on activism (Blackstone 2004). Hence, women are disputing labels but this does not downplay the relevance of gender.

Maddison’s (2004) research on young activists in the Australian women’s movement examined collective identity and their response to the feminist label. In relation to Whittier (1995:15), in the process of constructing a collective identity, challenging groups adopt labels for themselves, and develop interpretive frameworks- a political consciousness through which members understand the world.
Collective identities exist as far as people agree upon, enact, argue over and internalise them; group definitions have no life of their own and they are constantly changing rather than static (Maddison 2004:236). Further, a collectivist politicised identity is influenced by a worldview of ‘insiders and outsiders’, in which feminists are negotiating labels in contexts where group definitions are resistant to change (Connell 1995; Maddison 2004:236).

Yoder et al.’s (2011) investigation of sex roles considered the link between labelling and activism. Using an internet survey of 220 American mid-western college women, the researchers evaluated the impact of feminist self-labelling with feminist beliefs, pertaining to women's well-being and egalitarianism within their activism (2011:9-10). Self-labelling was defined as a binary declaration of being a feminist or not, which was related to increased feminist activism above and beyond the impact of feminist beliefs. Further, self-labelling, unlike feminist beliefs, was not related to well-being or egalitarianism. Such findings confirm the exclusive importance of self-labelling for feminist action (Yoder et al. 2011:16-18). Consequently, the struggle with stereotypes is a common theme identified across the literature. Across these studies, gender stereotypes and labelling dynamics locate the female power struggle towards agency and competency within social hierarchies. The following section considers how gender as a performance relates to agency and competency within complex social structures.

Part 4. The performativity of gender and activism as a ‘process of doing’

My understanding of gender as a performance is located in a sociocultural-constructivist-activist approach, which considers the way women environmentalists construct their gender roles and work-based identities. The performance of gender in lieu of ‘gender performativity’ strictly speaking, has been critiqued by notable sociocultural theorists, such as Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Erving Goffman. Originally, Butler has appropriated Derrida’s theory of performativity, and altered it with a distinct feminist angle of interpretation (Loizidou 2007: 35-39). Notably, American sociologist Goffman’s famous text, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) had previously to Butler considered the performance of masculinity and femininity as a ‘process of doing’ in everyday life in
relation to a frame analysis with specific gendered representations in imagery, subjectivity and identity. The social constructionism of Goffman’s analysis precedes core themes in Butler’s celebrated Gender Trouble (1990). There are commonalities in the claim that both sex and gender are cultural and in their link with identity (Smith 2006: 94). Goffman also saw a connection between the kinds of acts that people put on in their daily life and theatrical performances. In social interaction, like in theatrical performance, “actors” (individuals) are on stage in front of the audiences whereby they are engaging in acts and subjective forms of expression.


In order to provide a theoretical framework to ‘gender as a performance’, I draw upon Butler’s famous text, *Gender Trouble* ([1990] 1999, 2006, 2007), which questioned traditional understandings of gender and performativity. For Butler, ‘the performative’ encompasses gender formation and subjective identification in relation to social change agendas. In social contexts, the performative relates to action and doing, which has implications for activist engagement. Performativity is distinct from performance in that gender is ‘a doing’ and thus ‘performative’, hence the innovative Butler conceptualisation of ‘gender performativity’ (Loizidou 2007). Butler adds that the public action of gender has implications for social change (1990, 2006). Butler’s core argument is that the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated, in public and private life. This repetition involves re-experiencing set of meanings, already socially established (Butler 2006:190-91). In emphasising the power of agency in the social world, Butler assesses what happens to ‘agency’ and purposive action pertaining to social change and subjective formation:

How could someone who- as a feminist- would be presumed to hold or commit to an emancipatory project of social change, possibly deconstruct the subject in this way as a political move? What happens to ‘agency’ and purposive action? Butler resolves the paradox rather quickly at the end of *Gender Trouble* by arguing that, within metaphysics of substance, agency is necessarily constrained by identity, whereas in her critical view agency emerges precisely because identity is ‘neither fatally determined nor fully artificial and arbitrary’. In other words, ‘agency’ is not something something ‘I’ have, precisely because ‘I’ is an effect produced by ‘generative political structures rather than naturalised foundations’. Construction is not ‘opposed to agency’ but rather its ‘necessary scene...the very terms in which agency is evidenced by what is said and done, not by what ‘I’ said and did (1999:181-8).
In this account, Butler takes on human subjectivity itself, such as the ‘I’ of identity or the ‘doer behind the deed’, which is a useful insight to feminist agency (Chambers & Carver 2008:44). In Butler’s (1990) definition: ‘constituting the identity it is purported to be’; or in another way, ‘identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ (e.g. feminine and masculine gestures) that are said to be its results (e.g. being a woman/man) (Chambers & Carver 2008:43-44). Butler’s example of a ‘thing’ happens to be ‘woman’, as a gendered category. For her, ‘woman’ is not only a ‘foundational’ category for social practices and individual identity, but also, a ‘naturalised’ one:

Gender is a ‘doing’…though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed… there is no being behind the doing…the deed is everything…there is no gender identity behind the expressions of identity…identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results (Butler 1990:25).

Butler emphasises the performative nature of our acts, not as acts which express or reveal some prior subject identity, but as acts that effect this identity through a performance (Parsons 2001:111-12). This performance is socially and culturally constructed. In retrospect, the ‘I’ in Butler’s theorising locates agency in relation to human action and events of activism in which strategic engagement may have significant implications towards social change and environmental justice. Butler’s theorisation of identity and agency is located within complex power relations whereby agents of change and new opportunities are not constrained nor conditioned by their environs. Rather they are located in an advantageous position, where they can challenge, resist or protest against traditional social relations of power or perhaps hierarchical or patriarchal dimensions that have historically pervaded women’s capacity for empowerment and engagement.

In relation to Butler’s theories of performativity, Phillips and Knowles review of the representation of women small business owners, demonstrated how fiction can challenge and collude in dominant constructions of entrepreneurship, which is generally gendered as masculine (2012:416). They consider Butler’s insight to performativity in regard to gender and sexual desire is applied to women’s identities and their behaviour as entrepreneurs. These novels portray successful business women, who conform to culturally accepted norms of femininity (Phillips & Knowles 2012:416). Whereas women protagonists are outside the norm and
simultaneously positioned as outsiders to the other female characters in the novels (Phillips & Knowles 2012:432). These novels both ‘do’ and ‘undo’ gender and business ownership. Hence, the gendered roles and work-based identities of women entrepreneurs is represented within the dynamic interplay of masculine and feminine discourses. Women’s prowess in business leadership is, therefore, challenging gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency.

Moreover, Butler aims to re-create everyday concepts analytically as a performance that involves actors engaging in forms of acts that reflect corporeal and cultural representations, ‘performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalisation in the context of a body…as a culturally sustainable temporal duration’ (1999a:xiv-xv). The effect of gender is produced through bodily gestures and actions. These various styles constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self (Butler 2006:191-92). For Butler, gender is an act, and all language, speech and acts in everyday life are actually performative (2006:xv-xvi). The doing of gender is repetitive in that it is rehearsed, much like a script. The actors (human beings) make this script a reality by performing these actions. It is a corporeal and intellectual engagement. The practice of gender performativity thus far prevents subjects outside the categories of femininity and masculinity from being culturally intelligible (Loizidou 2007:1).

Gender is therefore a complex interrelated corporeal and cultural representation, posited through the gendered stylisation of the body which is in turn realised in actually within socio-cultural discourses of engagement. In relation to Simone de Beauvoir, gendered bodies are so many ‘style of the flesh’ and women have a history as being labelled as ‘sex objects’ with a particular function in life, which explains why women have been positioned as ‘the other’ in masculinist patriarchal hierarchies (Butler 2006:190). Wittig understands gender as the workings of ‘sex’, where the body becomes a cultural sign as a repeated corporeal project. Gender is therefore viewed as a corporeal style, as an act, which is intentional and performative (Butler 2006:190). Furthermore, Butler contends that although gender is not a fact, the acts of gender create the idea of gender (2006:190).

Women activists negotiate masculine and feminine social interactions and are therefore engaged performers. As gender performativity entails corporeal and cultural representations, this has implications for physical and intellectual engagement. Further, Butler (2006, 2004, 1999, 1990) located the ‘I’ in identity, in
how gender performativity is enacted by ‘doing gender’ and pursing social change. Thus, women’s agency and competency is actualised by strategies of resistance towards gender stereotypes and tags.

The intersection of masculinity/femininity and ‘the female agent’

A great deal of feminist theory and literature has assumed that there is a ‘doer’ behind the deed (Butler 2007: 34). Butler’s argument is that there need not be a ‘doer behind the deed,’ but that the ‘doer’ is constructed in and through the deed (2007: 195). Without an agent, she argues that there can be no agency and hence no potential to initiate a transformation of relations of domination within society (Butler 2007: 34). Her materialist feminist approach shows that the cause or origin of oppression is in fact only the mark imposed by the oppressor; the ‘myth of woman,’ plus its material effects in the appropriated consciousness and bodies of women. Butler criticises the way sex belongs to ‘a natural order’ and is taken as an ‘immediate given,’ a ‘sensible given,’ ‘physical features’. Yet, the idea of ‘a natural order’ is viewed to be a mythic construction, situated in an ‘imaginary formation’ (Butler 2007: 35). As a constructivist feminist, I consider the approaches of materialist and idealist (eco)feminists in order to construct the intersection of masculinity/femininity through gender performances within activism. My objective is to articulate a masculine to feminine binary in order to articulate the relevance of a masculinist cultural paradigm within organisational contexts.

I acknowledge the premise of Butler that ‘genders can be neither true nor false’, in that gender is a sociocultural construct and, in turn, I reject the ‘essentialising’ of sex along with embedded ‘male’ and ‘female’ binaries that hold a biological rather than sociological context (2004: 193). That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender’s performative character (Butler 2004: 192-93). Hence, genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived (Butler 2004: 193).
In what sense, is gender an act?

Within contexts of social transformation, Butler’s (2007) *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* elaborates that gender is an act that requires a performance that is repeated. It is a public action whereby the performance consolidates the identity of the subject. Butler assessed bodily inscriptions and performative subversions in relation to agency and gender identity ‘through a stylized repetition of acts’:

…the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated. This repetition is at once a reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation… gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality (2007: 191).

The above quote demonstrates that gender is constituted through actions that are repeated and involves social as well as bodily interactions. Gender identity is consequently situated in internal and external contexts of recognition. The ‘gendered self’ is construed in contexts ‘in time’, meaning that one’s recognition of identity is relayed through an internal to external awareness of social temporality. The concept of gender identity is therefore not fixed or stable in that one’s recognition of self is changing and mobile- it is constituted through individual actions that are repeated but these also have an external dependency or social locus of time and space. Agency thus depends on actions that are repeated but also pertains to an identification of self with society or one’s social environments. These environs are diverse and susceptible to change, hence the complexity in constructing a specific identity in space and time. The ‘bodily gestures, movements’ identified in Butler’s (2007) critique shows that gender is an evolving process of self and identity whereby one’s physical and intellectual engagement is located in ‘a stylized repetition of acts’. My goal is to interpret gender identity within organisations, and Butler’s emphasis on ‘bodily gestures, movements’ and ‘a stylized repetition of acts’ enables me to showcase the performativity of gender within activism.
Political agency and the power relations within performativity

Butler located agency as a political concept relative to power relations and the theory of performativity. She contends that political agency ‘cannot be isolated from the dynamics of power from which it is wrought’ (Butler 1999, cited in ibid 2007: xxv). Hence, power is relational to agentic formations that encompass social, cultural and political interactions. Butler suggest that social dynamics of power encompass the functionality of agency and political activism. Notably, performativity is a theory of agency and is relational to the social dynamic of power (Butler 1999, cited in ibid 2007: xxv). Agency is generated from different centres of power that have a personal and political constitution (2007: 11). Butler’s emphasis on agency and cultural relations within identity enables me to interpret the sociocultural dynamics of power within activism as well as women’s cultural experience of gender. Butler explains that the source of personal and political agency comes not from the individual, but through the complex cultural exchanges among bodies: ‘identity itself is evershifting, indeed, where identity itself is constructed, disintegrated, and recirculated only within the context of a dynamic field of cultural relations’ (Butler 2007: 11). My aim is to investigate the cultural relations within identity, in how this relation is mobile and changing. Identity is formulated within power-specific political contexts, which, entails a dynamic exchange of cultural relations. Thus, my aim is to consider the social relations of power and cultural representations of masculinity and femininity that constitute the identities of women environmental activists.

In similarity to Butler, my contention is that gender is not static or fixed, nor indeed hegemonic, in that gender identities are continually evolving in the wider matrix of social, cultural and political relations. The process of gender identity is not ‘sense fixed’ in that ‘it is possible to become a being whom neither man nor woman truly describes’ (Butler 2007: 11). In an analysis of masculinity and the performance of crisis, Walsh infers that there are active agents of crisis, and agents in whose interest crisis acts (2010: 1). My contention is that men and women demonstrate masculine and feminine characteristics in their behaviours and actions. Notions of masculinity and femininity are formulated through cultural exchanges, whereby men and women negotiate power in sociopolitical contexts; yet this is not isolated by the specificity of their gender or necessarily as men and women. Both genders perform these characteristics which shows the intersection of masculinity with femininity.
However, power relations continually reflect masculinist paradigms and gender binaries, such as the positioning of women as ‘the other’ to men. Despite gender binaries, Butler outlines the power of plural performativity as a form of social action.

Additionally, Butler’s insight to social movements provides an insight to the actions of ‘the female agent’. Social movements involve the social action of individuals pursing a cause, largely for social change and justice. Within social movements, activists embrace political agency in their exercise of power and also demonstrate competency by engaging in resistant strategies. Social realities are part of Butler’s analysis, and her insight to social movements enables me to contextualise power relations within activism. Walsh acknowledged that Butler’s writing was spurred on by social realities: ‘[I]t was produced not merely from the academy, but from convergent social movements’ (1999, cited in Walsh 2010: 2). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, social realities influenced the growth of the gay movements; Third Wave Feminism; and the growth of masculinity studies as an academic discipline (Walsh 2010: 2). In these social contexts, Butler criticised all claims to gender naturalness by exposing the tenuousness of gender categories (Walsh 2010: 2-3).

**Performativity in the political and social agency**

In Butler’s analysis of ‘Dispossession’ pertaining to ‘the performative in the political’, she identifies with ‘a more radical opening of the future’ through a social form of agency in the form of plural performativity (2013: 157). The ‘radical’ characteristic of plural performativity suggests resistant strategies for activists. Butler explains that plural performativity is demonstrated on the streets through physical and verbal expression. A person’s story or claim is individual and specific to them, yet this is linked with the stories and claims of others (Butler 2013: 157). A collective demand emerges from singular histories that, in turn, become plural, but within this transformation, the personal and singular component is maintained. Within this process, social action as a collection of individuals evolves to a social form of agency or performativity in plurality (Butler 2013: 157). Further, an acknowledgement that the limits of the sovereign subject constitute the precondition of its agency and its action, serves a performative enactment of political engagement. Overall, Butler insists on the performativity of plurality rather than the ontology of plurality within sociopolitical contexts of engagement (Butler 2013: 155). Furthermore, the social form of agency or performativity in plurality enables me to
consider the individual stories of activists but then also how their social action transforms into political agency, with the group advocating social change and justice.

Concerning political agency and justice, Butler (2013) acknowledges the work of Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963) who wrote about the Israeli trial of Nazi SS chief Adolf Eichmann who was, in turn, convicted and executed for war crimes against the Jewish people in 1961-63. What Butler take from Arendt is the notion that there might be forms of political agency, in regard to calls to ‘action’ are ‘plural’ (Butler 2013: 122). One who comes into being through relations with others is ‘located’ in and as the relation itself. The relational aspect of agency demonstrates that action is political and plural but that also that individuals are culpable for their actions. Butler is interested in how Arendt delineates the domain of what is ‘unchosen’ in life and society, since ‘agency’ is conditioned by an unchosen realm. In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, she argues that Eichmann and his Nazi cohorts were mistaken in thinking that they could choose with whom to share the earth: ‘Although we can and do choose with whom to share a bed, a house, or sometimes a neighborhood, we cannot choose with whom to share the earth without engaging in genocide’ (Arendt 1963, cited in Butler 2013: 122). For Arendt, people must accept co-habitions with others or even ‘the other’, and acknowledge that ‘whatever actions we do take must be limited by the norms furnished by this unchosen condition’ (Arendt 1963, cited in Butler 2013: 123). Arendt’s analysis therefore shows that the actions of individual members informs that of the entire collective, whom, in turn, are responsible for their action or indeed ‘criminal’ behaviour as well as consequential punishment. Hence, the endorsement of individual to collective power comes at a cost within informed social realities.

**An insight to Simone de Beauvoir: the social construction of the female agent**

My goal is to articulate the dynamism of gender in how the ‘female agent’ becomes agentic through interactions and engagement. I dispute the idea that women are born agentic or even on the other hand powerless. Women have the power to exercise power and demonstrate their agency and competency; yet historically they have struggled to do this within masculinist power structures, such as, a capitalist patriarchal system. I consider the biological differences of men and women where one’s sex is defined as male or female, but my contention is that genders are constructed through sociocultural processes of interaction and engagement.
However, the existence of a masculine/feminine binary signifies the challenge in constructing an empowering feminist gender identity. In support, Butler acknowledges Beauvoir’s interpretation in *The Second Sex*: ‘one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one’ (2007: 11). For de Beauvoir, ‘gender is “constructed,”…is an agent, a cogito, who somehow takes on or appropriates that gender and could, in principle, take on some other gender’ (Butler 2007: 11). De Beauvoir is clear that ‘one “becomes” a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. Additionally, the compulsion does not come from “sex”’ (Butler 2007: 11). For Butler, there is nothing in de Beauvoir’s account that guarantees that the ‘one’ who becomes a woman is necessarily female.

In relation to Butler’s (2007) analysis of de Beauvoir in that ‘one “becomes” a woman’, this suggests the ambiguity of feminine and masculine connotations as well as the fluidity of such associations. One acquires a feminine or masculine identity, which suggests the possibility that both genders can adopt universal traits. Butler appears to suggest that women can adopt masculine attributes and in turn, men can adopt feminine attributes. This is an empowering interpretation because it shows that social agency is defined by one’s actions and capacity to engage in power-based structures. Nonetheless, I contend that a gender binary within an existing social hierarchy shows that men are located in a position of privilege, however, women are not powerless nor entirely dispossessed. Although women have endured sexism and gender discrimination, they are located in a competitive position within a social hierarchy, to challenge traditional injustices.

Markedly, I argue that gender identities are not fixed, and for this reason it is not possible to deny women the power at their disposal. Yet one of my interview participant’s, Maggie (2010), remarked that women are not using the power at their possible to challenge men and their power. In relation to de Beauvoir, Butler points out that the process of becoming a woman or man is not fixed: ‘To be a woman is, then, for… Beauvoir, to become a woman, but because this process is in no sense fixed, it is possible to become a being whom neither man nor woman truly describes’ (Butler 2007: 173). Evidently, feminine and masculine identities are socially and culturally constructed but the specificity of these is fluid and not fixed; both genders can practice female and/or male traits within their social interactions and intellectual engagement.
Also, Beauvoir’s insight to a mind/body dualism enables me to comprehend the positioning of ‘the other’. Although Beauvoir is understood to be calling for the right of women, in effect, to become existential subjects, her position also implies a fundamental critique of the very disembodiment of the abstract masculine epistemological subject (Butler 2007: 16). For Beauvoir, the ‘subject’ within the existential analytic of misogyny is always already masculine, conflated with the universal, differentiating itself from a feminine ‘Other’ outside the universalizing norms of personhood, hopelessly ‘particular,’ embodied, condemned to immanence (Butler 2007: 15-16). Beauvoir proposes that the female body ought to be the situation and instrumentality of women’s freedom, not a limiting essence. Nevertheless, Beauvoir maintains the prevalence of a mind/body dualism, which underpins the rights of women (Butler 2007: 16). Beauvoir contends that the female body is marked within masculinist discourse, whereby the masculine body, in its conflation with the universal, remains unmarked (Butler 2007: 17).

Women’s association with ‘otherness’ is relayed through their bodily reproductive functions. The classical association of femininity with materiality can be traced to etymologies, which link matter with mater and matrix (or the womb) and, hence, with reproduction (Butler 2011: 6). In reproduction, women are said to contribute the matter; men, the form. This matter of femininity demonstrates that the form is masculine and power depends on that viable exchange. Further, I contend that the masculine association with form is problematic because it denies mothers the corporeal empowerment to be recognised as agents of self-determination - that is by giving birth and bearing children. On this point, the empowerment of mothers is through their capacity to exercise this right; however, society needs to acknowledge the validity of this exchange through the feminine exchange of matter and form. Women is therefore matter and form, and not solely one.

The ‘I’ as a point of agency within gender identity and as ‘an effected’ performance

In a review of feminist theory, Butler questions the ‘I’ as a point of agency within gender identity. For Beauvoir, there is an ‘I’ that becomes its gender, but that ‘I’ is associated with its gender - this is a point of agency never fully identifiable with its gender (Butler 2007: 195). That cogito is never fully of the cultural world that it negotiates, Butler critiques (2007: 196). Also Butler criticises the way theories of
feminist identity that elaborate predicates of color, sexuality, ethnicity, and class close with an embarrassed ‘etc.’. These positions fail to situate a ‘subject’ in its social context (Butler 2007: 196).

The question of agency is reformulated as a question of how signification and resignification work (Butler 2007: 197). The rules that govern intelligible identity, those that enable and restrict the intelligible assertion of an ‘I,’ rules that are partially structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, yet operate through repetition (Butler 2007: 198). The subject is constituted, meaning that the subject is a consequence of rule-governed discourses that govern the intelligible invocation of identity. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; ‘agency,’ then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition (Butler 2007: 198). Further, to enter into the repetitive practices of this terrain of signification is not a choice, for the ‘I’ that might enter is always already inside: there is no possibility of agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give those terms the intelligibility that they have (Butler 2007: 202).

The reconceptualization of identity as an effect, that is produced or generated, opens up possibilities of ‘agency’ in lieu of identity categories as foundational and fixed (Butler 2007: 201). Butler contends that the task for feminism is to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by those constructions in order to affirm the possibilities of intervention through practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the possibility of contesting them (Butler 2007: 201). As an effect, Butler explains that gender is performatively produced by regulatory practices of gender coherence (2007: 34). Within the metaphysics of substance, ‘gender proves to be performative- constituting the identity it is purported to be’. In this sense, ‘gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed’ (Butler 2007: 34).

As an effect, gender identity is actualised and questioned by the performance of norms that are cited and repeated within social contexts. Walsh articulated Butler’s Bodies that Matter (2011), who describes performative as ‘that discursive practice which enacts or produces that which it names’ (cited in 2010: 23). Here, gender identity occurs through the citation of social norms rather than a single act or event, where identity is secured as stable through seamless repetition (Walsh 2010:
23). If gender is performatative, then the reality of gender is produced as an effect of the performance (Butler 2007: 218). Although there are norms that govern reality, they are questioned when performativity begins its citational practice. Norms may exist, but they become deterritorialized through the process of citation and repetition. Further, norms may be exposed as non-natural when they take place in a form of embodying that defies normative expectation (Butler 2007: 218).

**Gender binary: Questioning normative views of femininity/masculinity and universal patriarchy**

Within dominant cultural paradigms, Butler unpacks the masculine/feminine binary pertaining to how women are marked as different within identification. Butler questions a ‘specifically feminine’ region: one that is differentiated from the masculine and recognisable in its difference by an unmarked and presumed universality of ‘women?’ (2007: 6) The masculine/feminine binary constitutes not only its exclusive framework of recognition, but also the ‘specificity’ of the feminine, which is: ‘separated off from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that both constitute ‘identity’ and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer’ (Butler 2007: 6). Additionally, Butler’s (2004) questioning of normative views of femininity/masculinity enables me to consider the assumptions associated with gender binaries: ‘To claim that gender is a norm is not the same as saying that there are normative views of femininity and masculinity, even though there clearly are such normative views’ (Butler 2004: 42).

Gender is not exactly what one ‘is’ nor is it precisely what one ‘has.’ Rather, ‘gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes’ (Butler 2004: 42). To assume that gender exclusively means the matrix of the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, undermines the fact that a coherent binary is contingent. It comes at a cost and permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance (Butler 2004: 42).

In summary, Butler’s critique of the prevalence of universal patriarchy also enables me to question the oppression of women within current masculinist cultures as well as experiences of domination and subordination. The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, often accompanies the notion that
the oppression of women has some singular form within the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy and men’s domination in social elites (Butler 2007:5). The notion of a universal patriarchy has been criticised for its failure to account for gender oppression within cultural contexts. Butler argues that universal patriarchy is less credible, but contends that women have been subjected by hegemonic, masculinist cultures (Butler 2007: 5). Although the claim of universal patriarchy no longer enjoys the credibility it once did: ‘the notion of a shared conception of women, as corollary to that framework, is more difficult to displace’ (Butler 2007: 5). Debates consider: ‘is there a commonality among women that preexists their oppression’ and ‘is there a specificity to women’s cultures that is independent of their subordination by hegemonic, masculinist cultures?’ (Butler 2007: 5)

Femininity has been assessed to be a forcible citation of norms. Femininity and masculinity have been constructed through processes of gender regulation rather than choice. In relation to Walsh, Butler describes how the act of naming sex, for example, ‘It’s a girl’, sets in motion a process of ‘girling’ (2010: 24). Femininity is not the product of choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of regulation. Indeed there is no ‘one’ which takes on a gender norm (Walsh 2010: 24). In turn, Butler’s analysis enables me to consider the possibility of a man having a feminine attribute, which useful to my dualist interpretation of masculinity and femininity. Butler questions, ‘on what basis are dispositional sexualities and identities ascribed to individuals, and what meaning can we give to ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ at the outset?’ (2007: 83). She pointed out that if it is possible to speak of a ‘man’ with a masculine attribute, then it is also possible to speak of a ‘man’ with a feminine attribute, whatever that is, but to still maintain the integrity of the gender (2007: 33). But once ‘we’ dispense with the priority of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as abiding substances, then it is no longer possible to subordinate gendered features of an intact gender ontology (Butler 2007: 33).

**Gender performativity within environmental activism**

My goal is to articulate gender as a performance within environmental activism. Literature focusses on: gender and environmental justice issues; Butler’s ‘gender trouble’ concerning resistance and compliance among ‘radical faeries’; community choirs within environmental activism; and the Green Volunteer Network in Singapore. Kurtz’ (2007) study of gender and environmental justice in Louisiana
highlighted the blurring of boundaries within public and private spheres. Scholars have examined the effects of a putative dichotomy between public-as-masculine and private-as-feminine on community activism (Kurtz 2007: 409). In the process of blurring boundaries between gendered spheres of activity, she adds that predominantly women environmental justice activists contend with different gendered contexts. Concepts of performance and performativity shed light on how gendered hierarchies within public and private spheres of activism, both constrained and enabled the protest group's political practice (Kurtz 2007: 409).

In an ethnographical study, Hennen (2004) investigated ‘Fae spirits and gender trouble’ pertaining to their resistance and compliance. Utilizing Burawoy's case method and drawing on the work of Connell and Butler, this research applies some of these ideas to an ethnographic study of the Radical Faeries, a community devoted to undermining traditional masculinity through drag (Hennen 2004: 499). Founded by a gay activist in the 1980s, the group is a site to investigate resistant and compliant gender practices, as well as the prospects for making ‘gender trouble’. Hennen concludes that while the case study produces resistant cultural forms that undermine hegemonic masculinity, it does not produce meaningful ‘gender trouble’ in the Butlerian sense (2004: 499).

In addition, Rickwood (2014) researched community choirs and environmental activism. Although the study was not feminist, gender insights were found. The paper examines environmental activism in the repertoire and performances of the community (Rickwood 2014: 30). It engages with the three aspects of environmental activism and popular music that Pedelty (2012: 7) identified as ‘communication, art and advocacy’. Some community choirs embraced the politics of ethnicity and cultural pluralism of the time, and many of the women’s community choirs declared their feminist agenda (Downie 1996; Rickwood 1997; Smith 2005). Other choirs musically engaged with a range of issues such as labour rights, gay rights and social justice. The repertoire performed was scored, or selected and arranged, to express these various political agendas. At the time, no choir existed that specifically focused on environmental issues although some choirs made environmental comment (Rickwood 2014: 30). This findings indicates the paramount intersection of gender, race and class related issues through a performative expression.
The idea of performative justice was explored in Hobson’s (2006) review of the Green Volunteer Network in Singapore. Although Hobson does not present a feminist analysis, she points out that environmental justice research has expanded beyond its’ original focus to debate injustices at a wide array of sites and scales (2006: 671). Hobson employs a performative rather than rights-based approach to justice and politics (2006: 671). The theorist draws on qualitative research into volunteers’ practices in one Singaporean environmental organisation, and found that volunteers seek to redress the social, political and environmental injustices replete within the spatial politics of Singapore (Hobson 2006: 671). Consequently, social action is a performance where issues of justice and social change emerge along gender and political lines.

Conclusion

I have considered the insights of materialist and idealist (eco)feminists in order to construct the intersection of masculinity/femininity through gendered performances within environmental activism. Such theories inform my feminist approach to social constructivism within organisations. I acknowledge the power of a radical alternative sustainable economy informed by ecofeminist principles; however, I identify with a sustainable economy achieved through organisational and political reforms. Hence, I am not advocating a radical political change or a revolution, for like Phillips (2014), (see chapter 1), I see the value of corporations and organisations incorporating ecofeminist principles of sustainability to their practices. Nonetheless, this involves challenging hierarchy and masculinist power structures currently in place. Social change is thus achievable through passive and active resistance within a complex social hierarchy.

In my empirical chapters, I also consider the extent to which a complex gendered culture of work, influenced by dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity and ruling elites, underpins women activists’ capacity to exercise agency and demonstrate competency. I contend that women’s recognition of gender barriers and dualisms, as with the sexual division of labour, glass ceilings and male privilege, continues to position women with ideological and practical challenges towards their capacity to be agentic. Assumptions still exist that women are less agentic and
competent than men. My research aims to address such assumptions along with entrenched forms of gender bias. Although, women experience gender barriers, they also resist masculinist structures. My position is that women’s active and passive resistance along with their competence is a strategy towards gender diversity, progress and change. Oppressive structures need to be challenged and reworked in order for a cohesive human and nonhuman world to eventuate.

My research objective is to articulate the relevance of a masculinist cultural paradigm and to investigate whether a masculine/feminine binary exists within organisations and movements. I consider whether women experience gender dichotomies and barriers in masculinist contexts, and the extent to which gender differences may affect their agency and competency (Connell 1995, 2005; Donaldson 2007, 2009). I have argued that a feminist research challenge to empowering notions of women’s agency and competency is the dualist construction of man/woman, masculinity/femininity and science/nature, whereby men are associated with higher levels of agency and competency (Plumwood 1997, 2001, 2006; Meynell 2009). Further, I show that the activism of women undermines traditional gender assumptions as well as labels associated with essentialism and female incompetency (Leahy 2003:106-7). Emotion is arguably a feminine construct in its alignment to women, however, I contend that both women and men have emotional capacities. My empirical findings should reveal the way in which gender biases and tags of incompetency are being resisted or accommodated in organisations and movements.

Further, this literature review had illustrated that women negotiate masculinity and femininity within a social hierarchy, in that gender is an active performance. Hence, within social contexts, agency and competency encompass activists’ subjective and practical engagement. This chapter has provided context to my research objective of investigating gender performativity in terms of whether patriarchy, hierarchy and power enhance understandings of social relations within environmental and feminist movement(s). Insights to hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity show women’s accommodation and resistance towards emotional constructs, corporeal embodiment along with stereotypes of gender, age and activism. A masculinist culture of work, in terms of the patriarchal control of organisations and ruling social elites in governance and industry, was evidenced in the sexual division of labour and the glass ceiling effect (Connell 2009). Nevertheless, ruling class hegemonic masculinity is less prevalent within
environmentalism in comparison to traditional masculine occupations like engineering, urban firefighting and forestry (Cockburn 1991, 2000; Sydee & Beder 2009; Salleh 2010). However, a gender gap in female executive positions points out that men are the decision-makers in the politics of gender and the environment (Mellor 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003; Salleh 2009; Spitzner 2009). Moreover, hegemony is mobile and fluid, in that the power that privileges men and masculinities is undergoing challenge though women’s resistance and prowess (Connell 2005, 2009). In relation to Butler (1990, 2006), my contention is that gender performativity is shown by the way activists locate the ‘I’ in their identity by negotiating masculinity/femininity and resisting labels of incompetency through prowess within complex gendered power relations. Further, feminist resistance and accommodation in relation to agency and competency plus negotiations of masculinity/femininity will be explored in chapter 3.
Chapter Three- Considering the theoretical and practical implications of agency and competency in the context of women’s environmental activism

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the way agency and competency are performative and relate to the way women perform gender roles and negotiate hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. This argument is developed in this chapter to consider the way women adopt strategies of resistance, challenge and protest along with accommodation in their exercise of agency and competency. This chapter constitutes agency and competency in the context of environmental activism, and demonstrates that these terms are located in a complex gendered culture of work (Cockburn 1988; Mellor 2009, 2012). My contention is that agency represents an engagement with gendered power relations, and competency represents an engagement with gender and power plus skills and merit within environmental activism. As it is relational, agency is a performative construct entailing women activists’ resistance towards dominant forms of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity (MacLeod 1992; Leahy 2003). I illustrate the way women perform gender by negotiating masculinity and femininity and challenging the patriarchal control of organisations and dominant social elites in governance and industry (Leahy 2003; Plumwood 2008; Hall et al. 2009). My position is that women should engage in active and passive strategies towards environmental reform and social change, but this does not mean dismantling hierarchy in its entirety but challenging masculinist forms of power, such as privilege, from within these parameters. Also, peaceful approaches are the solution. Hopefully, more flatter and inclusive organisational structures as well as gender diversity will eventuate.

Key (eco)feminist and sociologists cited in this chapter are Shiva, Mellor, Plumwood, Hall et al., Mallory, Leahy, Salleh, Godfrey, Barry, Stein, Warren, MacGregor, Gaard, Unger, Culley and Angelique, Macleod, Leonard, Cockburn, Connell, and Baxter. Key events surround women’s activism within eNGOs, grassroots organisations, academia and politics. In Part 5, for example, ecofeminists assess anti-nuclear grassroots campaigns led by mothers, such as the U.S. Three Mile
Island event, and the West Australian Alcoa Wagerup refinery campaign.
Sociological interpretations further underpin mothers’ work/life balance.

This chapter is organised into five parts:

(Part 1) Conceptualising agency as an activist strategy within a social hierarchy;
(Part 2) Competency, agency, empowerment and social change;
(Part 3) Ecofeminist resistance to hegemony, patriarchy and hierarchy;
(Part 4) Environmental justice movements: gender, race and class; and,
(Part 5) The resistance of mothers as activists’ and maternal identity.

Part 1. Conceptualising agency as an activist strategy within a social hierarchy

In feminist critiques, conceptualisations of women and femininities in dualist dichotomies to men and masculinities, explains why men have been associated with higher levels of agency and competency within a traditional social hierarchy (Plumwood 1997; Barnes 2000; Plumwood 2001, 2002, 2006; Young & Hurlic 2007). Thus far, agency is a sociological term that is largely associated with men and higher levels of male agency (Leonard 1997; McNay 2000, 2003; Leonard 2005; Meynell 2009). Comparatively, competency is associated with men, especially in skilled positions of authority within male-dominated occupations (Cockburn 1988; Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre 2008; Caprile & Pascual 2011, Cockburn 2012a). This dualism indicates the complexity of locating women’s agency and competency. Within a gender culture of work, agency and competency have been construed as masculine, which presents a challenge in conceptualising empowering feminist constructions of agency and competency. Technical competence, in particular, has an historic association with male occupations, like engineering, forestry, mining and IT (Game & Pringle 1983; Miller 2004; Lykke 2008; Logan 2009). However, the prowess of women activists in their work challenges ideas of technical competence as a masculinist construct.

The dualist-binary location of masculinity and femininity as oppositional within agentic formations is questioned in my critique, because such dichotomies do not account for the fact that women exercise agency and demonstrate competency as environmental activists. Within social contexts, gender diversity is exemplified in female leadership, especially third sector organisations (Leonard 1997; Leonard &
Onyx 2003; Foster & Meinhard 2005; Leonard 2005). Workplaces have a mix of men and women, although men dominate decision-making in the politics of gender and the environment, as in International eNGOs and Parliament (McPhillips 2002; Rankin & Gale 2003; Mellor 2007, 2009). I point out that women’s exercise of agency and competency challenges ruling elites as well as gendered dichotomies.

**Agency and power relations: ‘women accept, accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest’**

Activist engagement entails resistance and challenge towards a traditional social hierarchy (Mellor 2002; Plumwood 2006, 2008; Arvanitakis 2009; Hall et al. 2009; Mellor 2012). Nonetheless, male power and patriarchal practices represent gender barriers towards women activists’ capacity to exercise agency and competency along with social change and environmental justice. I argue that agency is located in strategies of feminist resistance to dominant power relations and traditional masculinist practices. Resistance strategies involve an active negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as power relations within complex social hierarchies (Macleod 1992; Plumwood 1997; Leahy 2003). Women-led strategies of resistance and challenge subsequently challenge dominant notions of masculinity. Whereas strategies of acceptance and accommodation may suggest that women are ignoring structural relations and dominant power-based masculinist structures (Macleod 1992). Critically, the lack of resistance prevents social change and environmental justice from being realised. It also reproduces dominant notions of masculinity and male norms in social contexts. Such intersections reproduce a male culture of work, whereby dichotomies of power, hierarchy and patriarchy may present women reformists with practical and ideological obstacles.

My goal is to articulate the way women activists practice strategies of accommodation and resistance within a traditional social hierarchy. Agency and competency are therefore understood in relation to feminist resistance, protest and challenge and/or accommodation. I contend that women may adopt resistant femininities in their activist engagement within social contexts. MacLeod’s study on agency and power within a Middle East context, is a useful model to consider the way women experience hegemonic relations and gender resistance (1992:537). MacLeod’s father is Iraqi and her mother is from Maine, U.S.A. In Cairo, women accepted her as both Arabic and American. MacLeod considered the verbs: ‘accept,
accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest in terms of dichotomies of patriarchal power relations’ in her exploration of Cairo women’s use of the veil (1992:533-34, cited in Gardiner 1995:4). She examined their agency and commented on ambiguities at the heart of using veils, which also raised questions about female agency and resistance (1992:537). MacLeod deals with nuances of power by arguing that women are active subjects and subjects of domination:

To continue this effort of detailing the complexities of women’s part in power relations, I argue that women, even as subordinate players, always play an active part that goes beyond the dichotomy of victimization/acceptance, a dichotomy that flattens out a complex and ambiguous agency in which women accept, accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest- sometimes all at the same time. Power relationships should be viewed as an ongoing relationship of struggle, a struggle complicated by women's own contradictory subjectivity and ambiguous purposes (1992:534).

Following on from MacLeod (1992), agency is ultimately power relational, whereby women may experience struggle or empowerment as active subjects and subjects of domination. Despite women’s struggles, the idea of accommodating protest does not imply that they will always be victims, but encourages one to think beyond the dichotomies of victim/actor or passive/powerful, to a way in which consciousness is structured and agency is embodied in power relations (MacLeod 1992:556-57). Agency thus depends on participants’ responses, who have the choice to resist or accommodate power within their activism.

My contention is that women perform gender and negotiate power by adopting these activist strategies (accept, accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest) in their exercise of agency and competency. I have appropriated these tactics (resist, protest and accommodate) in order to investigate participants’ negotiation strategies in environmental activism. I also argue that a complex masculinist culture of work underpins the barriers and enablers affecting women’s roles within environmentalism. Within an Australian democratic context, cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy are susceptible to female resistance in that women have the choice of being active or passive pertaining to their agency and competency.

Within a traditional social hierarchy, for women who accept, accommodate or ignore their roles and situations, particularly when men dominate, they may be considered as experiencing lower levels of agency (MacLeod 1992; Leonard & Onyx 2003; Leonard 2005; Diekman & Goodfriend 2007). For women who resist or
protest, they may be perceived as possessing higher levels of agency because they are challenging a male culture, its environments and associated barriers. What is perceived as representing high or low levels of agency is not always obvious because of ambiguous gender dichotomies (Mellor 2002, 2012). Women have the choice to resist or accommodate to hierarchal and masculinist expectations in their organisations and as they negotiate with social elites in governance and industry.

Agency as a ‘means of producing effects’ and ‘making a difference’ in organisations

Feminist scholars argue that agency relates to an active performance and activist strategy towards social change, represented by varying degrees of high and low levels of engagement in organisational contexts (Leonard & Onyx 2003; Leonard 2005). In particular, agency is defined as, ‘a means of producing effects’ (Macquarie Dictionary 1981:77, cited in Leonard 2005:80). This definition fits closely to the notion of ‘making a difference’ (Leonard 2005:80). The third sector has been characterised as a place where people can ‘make a difference’, exercise ‘choice’, ‘experience social agency’ and strive for ‘social change’ (Leonard 2005:79). In my study, the idea of ‘effects’ and ‘making a difference’ is a platform to consider participants’ social change and justice agendas. Further, ideas surrounding difference are important when considering feminist negotiation strategies in activism.

I also argue that despite gender barriers within patriarchal hierarchies, women have a choice to resist and reject dominant power structures that have historically privileged men. In Leonard’s interview survey in the community sector, agency was related to choice and effect along with senses of belonging or making a difference, ‘Agency, in this questionnaire, is about making a difference in an area of your choice. Agency therefore has two parts: “a deliberate choice” and “being effective”. Agency can be individual or part of belonging to a group’ (Leonard 2005:83). The description of agency in terms of ‘deliberate choice’ and ‘being effective’ for individuals and collectives has implications for broader activist resistance. Supporting literature has identified agency in relation to choice and effect as an activist strategy within organisations (Leonard 1997; Barnes 2000; Loyal & Barnes 2001; Plumwood 2008; Giddens 2009; Meynell 2009). Women’s choice in activism is further defined by whether they resist or accommodate to masculinist expectations.
I contend that women’s capacity to be agentic and competent is defined by their response to the patriarchal control of their organisations and ruling masculinist elites.

Concerning external and internal constraints, Leonard’s (2005) study of agency and social capital within Australian third sector community organisations drew upon the interpretation of Harré (1983, 1984). Harré had considered choice as a strategy of agency and identified three components of an agent: one must have an intention, the relevant knowledge and effective self-command (1984:194). To exercise agency, one must be free of external restraint. One’s position within their social context influences on the type of restraints, the knowledge required to act effectively and the effectiveness of one’s self command (Harré 1984:259-62). In addition, Leonard’s (1997) feminist critique on agency of ‘how people act in this world’ and as ‘a means of producing effects’, is a platform to consider activist strategies in affecting environmental justice. In relation to Bakan, Leonard argues that agency is understood by individual and collective actions plus assertions in paid and unpaid work, although it has advantaged the roles and subjectivities of men:

…agency can be understood as the way in which people act on, or assert themselves on, their world. Common ways that people can express agency are through paid work, voluntary, creative, sporting and political activities, there is an element of self-determined action. Communion refers to a person’s social connectedness...having a place in society. Bakan argued that people need to achieve a balance of agency and communion in their lives. He was particularly concerned that men needed to increase their communion to mitigate their tendency to an excess of agency (1997:823).

The above example of agency in regard to the way ‘people act on, or assert themselves’ and ‘self-determined action’ illustrates that agency is related to making a difference through direct social engagement strategies. As an action and assertion, agency is expressed in terms of glocal reckonings, namely, ‘their world’. Leonard’s (1997) investigation suggests a gendered dualism in how agency is measured by paid and unpaid work, in that men need to increase their communion in order to have a balance of agency. Gender performances indicate that men have lower levels of communion yet have an excess of agency. The reverse was found to be true for women. Agency is thus indeed gender specific.

In relation to agency, the Oppositional Model confirms a dualist representation of masculine and feminine concepts, whereby communion is equated with submissiveness, dependency or femininity (Leonard 1997:828). In addition,
Helgeson (1994) stresses that masculinity and femininity are complex multifaceted constructs that cannot be reduced to agency and communion (cited in Leonard 1997:828). Hence, it appears that conflating or confusing agency and communion with masculinity and femininity is not helpful (Leonard 1997:828-29). Overall, Leonard’s contention is that men need to increase their communion and social connectedness in order for social structures to reflect an equitable gender balance.

However, in Leonard’s analysis, the social perspective turns away from individual differences and back to social change (1997:832). New questions ask how to create social contexts which allows people to exercise sufficient agency and communion. A balance of agency is achievable when the most desirable contexts are those in which agency and communion are mutually enhancing (Leonard 1997:832). Such interpretations of agency provide a platform for activist engagement plus resistance strategies within social activism.

Further, activist groups are perceived to be agentic when members of collectives demonstrate high levels of positive agency in their social change goals. Diekman and Goodfriend’s study questioned whether an emphasis on change, even in the pursuit of positive goals, elicits complex reactions and ambivalence (2007:402-3). They identify a gap through limited research on ambivalence within social change activism. According to Diekman and Goodfriend, activist groups were perceived to be possessing high levels of agency and competency, particularly in relation to social change goals, which disrupt hierarchy and social structures of dominance: ‘…Activist groups are likely to be perceived as agentic because they are causing change, and agentic traits are generally viewed positively...activist groups may gain higher status or power through their efforts...’ (2007:402-3).

Drawing upon the above account, the positive agency of the group is defined by their rigorous activist strategies which, in turn, contribute to flatter and less hierarchical structures. In relation to Diekman and Goodfriend, social dominance theory implies that activist groups that seek to change social structures are likely to evoke negativity from ruling social elites. Being agentic therefore entails a challenge or disruption to the status quo plus positive and negative reactions, which indicates ambivalence (2007:403). Nonetheless, public support should follow if an activists group’s goals are regarded positively (Diekman & Goodfriend 2007:401-2). The research found that the ability of the group- is in their capacity to challenge the social
system and its goals and affects. Further, the results on positive and negative agency signify a gap and a need for research on attitudes towards social change.

Australian studies have measured positive and negative agency as well as social change within advocacy organisations. In particular, Leonard (2005) investigated social agency and social capital affects along with the capacity of individuals to demonstrate merit and career mobility. In the survey results with individuals from non-profit organisations, respondents reported moderate to high levels of agency in the questions (Leonard 2005:91). Respondents were most likely to find agency through responsiveness to local needs, inclusiveness, empowerment or community networking (Leonard 2005:91). Low agency was associated with external issues and the absence of community practices, such as networking (Leonard 2005:92). The results point to the centrality of the organisation for agency, and that social capital is a better predictor of respondents’ sense of agency than demographic attributes, formal roles or the type of work that they do (Leonard 2005:92).

This section has considered the social contexts that give rise to feminist resistance towards a traditional social hierarchy and cultures of masculinity within organisations. Activism in relation to social change and social justice symbolise core resistance strategies to destabilise structures of hierarchy and patriarchy (Leonard 1997, 2005; Diekman & Goodfriend 2007). Agency encompasses affecting change and ‘making a difference’ (Leonard 1997, 2005) as a core activist approach. In addition, choice is an aspect of agency; the capacity to demonstrate choice entails higher levels of agency (Barnes 2000; Plumwood 2008; Giddens 2009; Meynell 2009). Further, agency was evaluated in terms of high and low categories. Higher levels were associated with women resisting a traditional social hierarchy that privileged male norms. Negative agency was identified in contexts where change is not being advocated; however, activist groups acquire positive agency by resisting the status quo, which is more often than not masculine (Leonard 1997, 2005; Diekman & Goodfriend 2007). The next section links agency to competency by analysing female empowerment and social change ambitions practiced within glocal ecofeminist movements and organisations.
Part 2. Competency, agency, empowerment and social change

Gendering of competence and agency

In feminist analyses, competence has been traditionally associated with men/masculinities, which explains why men historically have dominated skilled vocations (Cockburn 1988; McPhillips 2002; Payne 2009; Connell 2009). Principal theorists in this section include Cockburn, Shiva, Mellor, Plumwood, and Hall et al. I consider the diverse social change strategies advocated by these materialist and idealist feminists, but further contend that resistance from within current existing structures should bring about change and progress for women, rather than necessarily a revolution. Hence, I am not advocating an entire demise of current sociopolitical structures, but rather progressive reform, whereby (eco)feminist principles are part of organisational structures and cultures (Phillips 2014).

Cockburn claimed that competence has a historic association with men and technological occupations, such as the mastery of equipment, for to feel technically competent is to feel manly (1988:12). For instance, colour-coded blue/male and pink/female distinctions define sex segregation: ‘Lowly jobs may be pink or blue, and men manage to establish a compensatory advantage for masculinity even here in the ‘heroisms’ of heavy manual labour. Top jobs in any field, however, are blue...’ (Cockburn 1988:235). Women were viewed as technically incompetent in ‘skilled male’ jobs like engineering, firefighting and IT (Miller 2004; Childs 2006; Young & Hurlic 2007). This explains why women/femininities, because of their lesser location in the social hierarchy, endure gender differences and marginalisation.

Feminists have argued that the historic sexual division of labour, the socialisation of male and female competence with men being perceived as more competent and skilled than women, has led to dichotomous categories of men/women, masculinity/femininity, dominant/subordinate, paid/unpaid and power/resistance (Game & Pringle 1983; Probert & Wilson 1993; Crump et al. 2007; Lindsay 2008). Gendered power relations and ‘normative’ gender roles may continue to position women in an ambiguous position, which reinforces the challenge of constructing agency and competency. Thus far, the idea of ‘agentic’ and skilled women activists may be viewed as neither a natural nor a straightforward process (Leonard 1997; Young & Hurlic 2007). In feminist critiques, a challenge for female inclusion is bullying and stereotypes of incompetence in leadership within male
occupations (Simpson & Cohen 2004; Beatson & McLennan 2005; Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Plumwood 2008). However, for many generations, women volunteers have been leaders in the grassroots movement, and positive examples of prowess enables me to undermine the association of leadership with men and hegemonic masculinity (Mallory 2006; Hall et al. 2009; Salleh 2011).

My definition of competence includes the beliefs and agendas of women as competent and agentic environmentalists negotiating their gendered roles and work-based identities. Competence relates to how women environmentalists demonstrate their skills and negotiate social change and environmental justice within paid and unpaid contexts. It also relates to the capacity of women to perform similar jobs to men, but not to act like them (Probert & Wilson 1993; Young & Hurlic 2007; View & Boles 2010). It may be measured by how women respond to hegemonic ideas about leadership, authority, responsibility and professionalism (Connell 2002b; Young & Hurlic 2007; Donaldson 2009). In the literature, I consider female prowess, such as their mastery of technology; nonetheless, findings may indicate the complex association of gender with technology as well as agency and competency.

Pertaining to agency, competency is complicated by feminist struggles in organisations, and this is underpinned by a social change justice-oriented environmental agenda. Further, my empirical data (chapters 5-7) will illustrate what agency and competency entails for participants, and findings should contribute to the existing literature. Although there is a lack of research on gender, work and the environment in relation to agency and competency, my thematic insights will address paramount intersections critical to feminist debates. My conclusive findings will challenge traditional assumptions of gender and competence. Besides, my research goal is to contribute an informed knowledge of women’s professional and grassroots contribution in both the environmental and women’s movements.

Moreover, ecofeminists have considered the connection of feminism and ecology to technical competence so to rethink technology and nature. Shiva and Moser elaborate that technology and nature are intimately connected, which has implications for the construction of the feminine in social contexts (1995:276). Critically, feminist critiques of technology have focused on technology in isolation from natural resources. Feminist approaches to biotechnology rarely address the political ecology of new technologies and biodiversity; they focus on ‘nature’ as the ‘female body’ (Shiva & Moser 1995:276-77). Further, Shiva advocates a social

On the topic of rethinking technology, Shiva’s ecofeminist critique explains that climate change demands must be addressed by reducing CO₂ emissions through social change strategies (2008:3). The age of oil has symbolised a rule of capital and coercive government, non-sustainability, injustices and wars (Shiva 2008:7). However, the age of soil symbolises the age of Gaia, diversity and democracy, justice, sustainability and peace. From the perspective of the planet and the poor, Shiva argues that ‘we’ need to shift from consumptive energy to regenerative energy (2008:5). In rethinking technology and nature, the resistance of women to power structures encompasses a new worldview within glocal climate movements towards change: ‘...resistance to the limitless destructiveness of the industrialised globalised economy is coming precisely from those least responsible for climate change, the women…another paradigm and world view- of power and wealth, of nature and culture’ (Shiva 2008:3).

This account emphasises women’s power and active ‘resistance’ strategies towards vulnerability in climatic catastrophes. Female empowerment is strengthened by social change ambitions that challenge male power, such as ‘the industrialised globalised economy’. Critically, the lack of change or maintenance of the ‘masculine status quo’ is a likely outcome if women accept patriarchal structures. Social change and environmental justice are achievable, therefore, if resistance is part of the debate. By choosing not to ignore hierarchy and patriarchy, this action may destabilise traditional gender norms as well as the inadequate response of those failing to acknowledge important environmental reforms. The next subsection considers social change as a resistant strategy to gendered power relations.

‘Nature should be seen as alive, as having its own agency, its own power and agenda’

As a constructivist feminist, it is useful to interpret the theoretical positions of materialist (Mellor) and idealist (Plumwood) ecofeminists, concerning their critiques of men as agents/reason and women as non-agents/nature. Such diverse insights enable me to contextualise women’s capacity to be agentic and competent as well as resistance or compliance within contexts informed by dominant notions of
masculinity/femininity. These theorists therefore provide a background to women’s resistance strategies within activism.

Mellor’s (1997, 2002, 2009) ecofeminist political model, for example, enables me to consider sustainable rather than resource-based approaches to the environment as well as organisational practices. According to Mellor ‘nature should be seen as alive, as having its own agency, its own power and agenda, in that the natural world like social life is a subject of history’ (1997:146-47). She adds that the ecological basis of ecofeminist thinking demands a rejection of perspectives that accords all ‘agency’ to human society and culture. What is important for an ecofeminist critique is the connection between ecological processes surrounding human society and women’s historic oppression: ‘Feminism is concerned with the way women have been subordinated to men; ecology is concerned that human activity is destroying the viability of the global ecosystem; ecofeminism argues that the two are linked’ (Mellor 2009:251). Women have formed the backbone of socioeconomic systems, although their work has been largely unacknowledged (Mellor 2002:8). Although women have been viewed as inferior to men in most societies, many men have also been oppressed through power-based forms of class, ‘race’ or ethnic discrimination (2002:7). Mellor adds that women dominate each other, which supports Plumwood’s (1997) critique that not all women treat each other like sisters or that the earth is their mother. Hence, both women and men’s capacity to engage is influenced by issues of class, gender and race within a complex social hierarchy.

Mellor’s materialist based approach also enables me to consider women activists’ potential resistance to patriarchal and capitalist structures that currently inform the governing of the environment in glocal contexts. Mellor argues that money is potentially an agent of socially just and ecologically sustainable development (2012:45). A huge market could emerge because of the growing importance of debt as a source of money and also as an agent of economic growth (Mellor 2012:46). In Mellor’s ecofeminist critique of the politics of money, ‘the economy’, is a boundaried system that excludes and marginalises many aspects of human existence and nonhuman nature (Mellor 2009:251). Markedly, Mellor’s ecofeminist economic model potentially has the power to challenge the patriarchal and capitalist control of organisations as well as ruling masculinist elites in governance and business (2002:10). This involves building an economic system
which values women and nature; it requires clear vision, understanding and much political work, beginning in local communities (Mellor 2002:10).

On the topic of ecofeminist economics as a strategy of resistance to patriarchal structures, Mellor points out that ecofeminism has a major contribution to make to our understanding of the current destructive relationship between humanity and nonhuman nature (2002:7). For ecofeminists, the global economy represents a value system that subordinates women and nature and sees itself as superior to subsistence economies. The modern economic system is based on a dualistic hierarchy of values expressed through money/profit and prestige (Mellor 2002:7). Ecofeminist political economy therefore confirms the destructiveness of current economic systems, whereby an alternative sustainable economy is advocated with women playing a central role in this change (Mellor 2002:7-8). I acknowledge the potential power of an alternative sustainable economy informed by ecofeminist principles, but envision such a system through organisational and political endorsement of key ideas, rather than a radical or indeed entire political change of current socioeconomic structures.

The dominant tradition of men as agents/reason and women as non-agents/nature

Plumwood evaluated the way in which ‘nature’ is defined as ‘passive, as non-agent and non-subject’ (Plumwood 1997:4). Additionally, the theorist rejects colonial representations of ‘Terra nullius’, in its failure to recognise prior Indigenous human agency (Plumwood 2006:120). In support to Mellor (2002, 2009, 2012), the backgrounding of women and nature is embedded in the rationality of an economic system (Plumwood 2006:121). This ‘rationality system’ exemplifies dualist structures in which women struggle for recognition. Agency is legitimated through vocabulary that has active and passive connotations. I also point out that agency is legitimated through the passive and active resistance of women activists’ in my research. In terms of active intentionality, agency should be inclusive of humans and nonhumans (Plumwood 2006:124). It is only when ‘women are conceived as free agents and choosers with respect to their bodies, and as full agents in their reproductive activity that this split is avoided’ (Plumwood 1997:38-39). Consequently, women’s capacity for corporeal control sets their course for empowerment and freedom.
In support to Mellor, Plumwood also points out that ‘women have played a major role, largely unacknowledged, in the male-dominated environment movement, in resisting and organising against the assault on nature’ (1997:9-10). Concerning resistance to patriarchy, Plumwood argues that women have the choice of either accepting it or rejecting it (1997:36). She considers the response of liberal and radical feminists towards subversion agendas. Both liberal and radical feminists have criticised male domination as a barrier to women’s agency. Liberal feminism argues for increasing female participation in masculinist occupations, such as science and technology (Plumwood 1997:27-28). Radical feminism argues that it is not just about equal participation but feminist resistance and social change (Plumwood 1997:30).

A liberal approach enables me to contend that women’s subversion and resistance should come from within these structures. I acknowledge that radicals advocate the dismantling of oppressive hierarchical structures that privilege men and oppress women; however, a liberal approach that stresses liberation as an activist strategy, is powerful in its capacity for activists to challenge masculine norms and structures (Plumwood 1997:30-31). Consequently, my position is located in the middle of a liberal-radical approach; I argue that women should participate in higher numbers within masculine occupations; however, they should adopt resistant femininities, and challenge male privilege and hierarchy, and also advocate gender diversity plus progress. They should engage in social change strategies towards environmental reform, but this does not necessarily mean dismantling hierarchy in its entirety- but challenging male power from within these parameters. Hopefully, more flatter and inclusive organisational structures as well as improved gender relations will eventuate.

Community agency, empowerment and social change

My goal is to articulate feminist environmental competence in relation to the way women perform community agency, empowerment and social change. Themes of empowerment, social change and agency were found in the research of Hall et al. (2009). Hall et al. (2009) charts the empowerment and community agency of members of the grassroots group, Climate Action Coogee (CAC), of which Hall was a member (2009:72). Both women and men were members, whereby themes on agency and competency were not gender-specific; nonetheless, women achieved heightened levels of empowerment within their activism. In its early stages, 200
Coogee citizens joined, representing both genders and a range of professions, ages and ethnic backgrounds (Hall et al. 2009:73). In turn, the group represents a diversity of social strata plus grassroots and professional categories.

The use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was a tool to measure whether climate-group initiated legislation, in the form of an inaugural Climate Protection Bill, could stimulate policy action on climate change (Hall et al. 2009:72). By using the PAR method in the Climate Bill project, coparticipants could potentially empower themselves and develop agency in order to bring about policy change (Hall et al. 2009:76). CAC’s application of PAR required reflection on the groups’ practice which was found to increase the coparticipants’ agency in terms of ‘action competence’ and ‘learn[ed] to be active citizens in a democratic society’ (Jensen & Schnack 2006:472). PAR coparticipants’ controlled their research projects and acquired knowledge and skills as ‘an empowering one’ (Gaventa 1991:124). In relation to the climate policy goals and the exercise of agency and power, PAR strategically enabled co-participants to explore options to resolve complex issues:

Our project was based on an issue we wished to resolve in CAC: How could we, as citizens, mobilize to bring about policy change for climate change? The project we resolved to undertake was to write and promote our own piece of climate legislation, an inaugural Climate Protection Bill... research also tested whether PAR processes can assist to professionalize and strengthen community engagement, project ownership, agency and empowerment in social movement campaigns (Hall et al. 2009:72).

In the findings, CAC membership provided a way for individuals to take action in the community, to demonstrate their support collectively and to realize their agency (Hall et al. 2009:73). Agency was described by one member: ‘I wanted to get together with other people who I knew must feel the same way, but were probably feeling disempowered like I was, not knowing what they could do about it, when in fact there was so much we could do- together!’ (Jacquie, CAC, April 2007). Findings have implications for improving the effectiveness of social movement strategies around climate change (Hall & McGee 2007; Hall & Taplin 2007, cited in Hall et al. 2009:72). In her interview analysis, three transformational themes were identified: community agency, ownership of the Bill, and social support through CAC’s Climate Protection Bill (Hall et al. 2009:85). Concerning the second theme, community agency, the success of the U.K.’s Climate Bill was an inspiration: ‘The U.K. Bill was fundamental to CAC’s Bill - it was a model for what was possible’ (Jacquie, CAC,
April 2007, cited in Hall et al. 2009:86). In addition, the lobbying of the Bill deepened an understanding of the political process plus members’ confidence (Hall et al. 2009:87). Further, agency and competency was shown by communication skills in election campaigns:

We maintained our energy and enthusiasm in the project through the foundation of the social support that we mutually provided to each other as we worked on the project. Beyond the election outcome, the skills we have each gained and agency we have developed since joining CAC and writing the Bill have given us the confidence to remain powerful and effective advocates for action on climate change in our community (Hall et al. 2009:88).

As a result, the link between agency and competency within activism is related to the negotiation of empowerment and disempowerment within complex gendered power hierarchies through examples of action strategies and skills. Drawing upon agency and competency in regard to strategies of active empowerment and engagement, Arvanitakis presents a useful definition of social and environmental activism within glocal contexts:

Being active has two important dimensions: empowerment and engagement. Empowerment is about ensuring that you have the skills and knowledge to influence decision-makers and the community. Engagement is about feeling that your efforts to make change are valued... in a globalised and interconnected world, our decisions and actions have a real impact on people’s lives all over the globe... we should all be aware of the many issues facing the world and we should understand how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally (2009:186).

The above account shows that activism entails empowerment and engagement in relation to skills and knowledge as well as ‘making change’ in glocal contexts in order to understand social and environmental issues. Thus, skills and knowledge empower the agency and identity of activist citizens towards positive social change in the pursuit of environmental equity and responsibility. This entails linking the social and natural world towards a common ground approach (Plumwood 2001, 2009; Cockburn 2012a & b). Activist agendas are practiced in patriarchal contexts that may be reluctant to change. Further, community agency, empowerment and social change are themes within glocal movements, where women have played a key leadership role (McPhillips 2002; Rankin & Gale 2003; Macgregor 2006).
Social change continues to characterise social movements (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Doyle 2005; Hawkins 2006). Leahy’s (2008) discussion of global warming acknowledges the reluctance of sociologists to consider the social implications of global warming, and sections of the environmental movement that differentiate on their position towards social change. A key to this debate is the likely costs of re-tooling. This technological and financial question is a prerequisite for understanding its social implications. Nevertheless, if the costs of re-tooling are huge, some drastic social changes are likely.

Cockburn also analysed women’s agency and resilience within social change activism. In relation to Holloway, Cockburn elaborates that individuals are capable of breaking and transforming the system in which ‘we’ live by enacting change (2012b:205-219). Cockburn suggests that Holloway’s representation of ‘gender difference’ and ‘conflictual ethnicities’, as a matter of theatrical ‘masks’, understates the mutual oppression among the ‘we’. If a coherent ‘we’ is forged, capable of undoing capitalism, this entails an active struggle, with women challenging institutional power and the control of material resources (Cockburn 2012b:205-219). This viewpoint contributes to both Mellor’s (2009) and Salleh’s (1997, 2010) attack on patriarchal capitalist structures in favour of sustainable economic models.

Cockburn identifies five key tactics of activist social change campaigns: mass mobilisation; using locality; campaigning; cultural activity; and nonviolent direct action (2012a: 247). Towards a different common sense approach, activists eschewed banners on the street in favour of more engagement. They also distributed information, wrote in the local press or blogged, organised meetings and petitions, maintained a relationship with local parliamentarians, lobbied municipal councils and government departments, and campaigned at the United Nations. Thus, female environmental prowess was demonstrated by a common sense local campaign approach in the form of mass mobilisation and nonviolent direct action.

Thus far, (eco)feminist and movement literature has critiqued technical competence as a masculinist construct through its dualist representations of the masculine/feminine. Although women struggle with labels of incompetency, they resist patriarchal structures of power and wealth within the industrialised global economy in their pursuit of climate reform (Shiva 2008). Female agency and competency is realised by performing skills and leadership in grassroots and professional contexts as well as challenging structures that oppose sustainable
approaches. In addition, community agency was a core theme found to empower grassroots women (and men) activists in their negotiations (Hall et al. 2009). Nonetheless, the politics of gender and the environment was complicated in the negotiation process with parliamentarians. This section has established a framework to investigate agency and competency as well as social change and justice in terms of ecofeminist resistance approaches towards a traditional social hierarchy.

Part 3. Ecofeminist resistance to hegemony, patriarchy and hierarchy

Ecofeminists, like other feminists, argue that masculinist practices, such as patriarchy, may be challenged by activists, in that not all men dominate, and not all women are dominated, therefore strategies of resistance are feasible (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; Mellor 2002; Mallory 2006). Salleh argued that identity is never a fixed or static essence; rather it is continually reforming in the matrix of social relations and hegemonic formations (1997:171-73, cited in Godfrey 2005:46). In the literature, women environmentalists have played a leadership role in the grassroots movement, and their prowess enables me to dispute the traditional association of leadership with hegemonic masculinity. Studies show how women’s contribution is transforming environmentalist workplaces, and that social change is a core strategy of engagement. Significant points of focus in this section are on: Mallory’s (2006) ‘anti-forestry Biscuit defenders’; Leahy’s (2003) emphasized and resistant femininity within Australian environmental activism; Salleh’s (2011) critique of a gender gap in political representation in the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Cockburn’s (2012a) investigation of women’s anti-war activist resistance in the Greenham Common Peace camp; and, Godfrey’s (2005) appraisal of Diane Wilson’s leadership against polluter, Union Carbide.

Ecofeminist literature draws upon the way radical activists have challenged hegemonic masculinity, as part of a large power-based struggle against corporations and governments in the forestry movement (Mallory 2006:32). Women forestry activists, in the pursuit of radical social change, were described as ‘The Biscuit defenders’, and actively resisted the hegemonic power of the multinational corporate logging industry and the larger economic and political policies that promoted
deforestation (2006:32). I consider this group to be an explicitly feminist and middle-class radical group. Some of my other groups discussed in this section are from working class background, and do not necessarily identify as feminist. Mallory explains that an ecofeminist interpretation exposes the ways certain groups, especially men, Whites, class-privileged elites maintain their superior hierarchical status through the subordination of women and the natural world. Radical female activists in the deforestation resistance movement questioned the masculinist or hegemonic values of the dominant culture outside of the radical ecological movements. They exposed and challenged gender discrimination, sexism and exclusion within their own activist communities (Mallory 2006:39-40). Furthermore, this study shows that within the context of deep ecology, trans-gender activists experience marginalisation.

Strategies of resistance towards hegemonic masculinity in terms of hierarchy, sexism and dominant discourses include: engaging in a collective dialogue, workshops, conferences, and role-playing to explore the ways in which forms of oppression unfolded. A central strategy was the organisation of ‘Women and Transgender Action Camps’ in order to challenge hierarchy, discrimination, exploitation, and domination (Mallory 2006:39-40). These forest defense actions served at least three purposes. The first was to challenge and provide an alternative to perceptions that forest defense was ‘masculine’ work, and to teach women the skills to engage in direct action to prevent logging. The second was to alter the sexual division of labour within forest defense communities. The third action aimed to establish activist spaces free of the risk of sexual assault. This study is evidence that women can develop successful strategies that counter forms of exclusion (Mallory 2006:39-40).

In an example of anti-toxic waste activism, women environmental justice advocates challenged the political and economic power structure (Brown & Ferguson 1995:147). The majority of women were from working class or ethnic minority groups. Brown and Ferguson identified high female participation in toxic waste activism, although there is a lack of research concerning the strategies of women towards toxic hazards (1995:145-46). Prior to beginning their activist careers, most women had centred their lives in the domestic sphere (Brown & Ferguson 1995:159-60). However, the everyday experiences of toxic waste pollution and the acquisition of formal knowledge, empowered women to challenge the authorities (Brown & Ferguson 1995:146-47). Their approach to the political realm crossed the boundaries
between the traditional female private domain and the male public world of politics and policy. The process of coming to understand themselves as 'knowers' was an important means by which women activists empowered notions of self and acted as forces for social change (Brown & Ferguson 1995:154).

Within environmental activism, power, patriarchy and hierarchy are being actively resisted and accommodated by women in their roles. Ecofeminist approaches that challenge and resist patriarchal values of domination, exploitation and control in favour of more life-sustaining values of ‘feminine’ nurturance, care and reciprocity-values have been suggested as an alternative to masculinist approaches (Mallory 2006:35). Plumwood has critiqued the dualist, scientific assumption that women are essentially empathic, nurturing and co-operative, and argues that not all women treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother (1997:9). Within the dualist power-based logic of hierarchy and patriarchy, concepts of masculinity/femininity and domination/subordination are constructed as oppositional, whereby the feminine consciousness is essentially related to nature (Plumwood 1997:31-32).

Female activist resistance to patriarchy is evidenced through a resistant femininity that questions a traditional social hierarchy. Leahy’s (2003) study on the emphasized and resistant femininities of Australian women environmental activists is a platform to extend the argument that women resist or accommodate their roles. In relation to ‘hegemonic masculinity’, Connell refers to ‘emphasized femininity’ as ‘a femininity defined around compliance with this subordination’ to patriarchy (1987:183, cited in Leahy 2003:109). Leahy adds that women’s closeness to nature has historically been created as ‘emphasized femininity’, which does not embody social power. The ecofeminist project therefore turns this discourse against patriarchy, in a type of ‘resistant femininity’ (Leahy 2003:109). In Leahy’s (2003) analysis, several interviewees fitted the ecofeminist strategy, confirming that a reverse discourse toward patriarchal power is feasible. Ecofeminist viewpoints were endorsed by participants’ committed to environmental politics (Leahy 2003:122). Leahy also found that environmental activists were sometimes labelled as fanatics (Leahy 2003:110). This finding confirms that Australian women, like other women, struggle with activist labels and the patriarchal control of their groups. I add that ruling social elites in governance and industry presents barriers for women activists. Despite barriers, the participants’ in Leahy’s (2003) study, responded by adopting a
resistant femininity. Leahy concludes that more research is required to integrate this ecofeminist ‘resistant’ strategy in the movement, and to also comprehend people’s relationship to environmental issues (2003:122). This is where my research fills gap.

Furthermore, a resistant femininity, enables me to locate women activists’ resistance to masculinist practices and to also consider the way they negotiate their roles within gendered power structures. Women have the choice to adopt accommodation or acceptance that reflect an ‘emphasized femininity’ or to challenge traditional gender power structures and practice a ‘resistant femininity’. A resistant femininity therefore entails strategies of challenge and protest practiced by activists towards the patriarchal control of their organisations as well as masculinist social elites in the environmental movement.

Leadership. A feminist resistance strategy to hegemonic masculinity within movements

In feminist critiques, leadership has been associated with hegemonic masculinity and male leadership (Connell 1995, 2002 a & b, 2005; Stobbe 2005; Donaldson & Poynting 2007; Young & Hurlic 2007); nonetheless, the agency and competency of women activists in leadership undermines stereotypes (Mallory 2006; Barry 2008; Unger 2008). The following feminist, ecofeminist and movement literature articulates leadership as a feminist resistance strategy to masculinist structures of hierarchy and power. I articulate feminist discussions of agency and competency in generalist organisations, which is followed by ecofeminist interpretations of women’s agency and competency in eNGOs, politics and grassroots movements. Core events include the Fukushima nuclear meltdown of 2011, U.K. Greenham Common Peace Camp of 1983 and Texan-based Diane Wilson’s innovative environmental justice anti-toxic waste campaign against corporation, Union Carbide in 1984 in India.

An ongoing challenge for feminist researchers of agency and competence is that men are perceived to be better leaders, although this does not match the actual performances in workplaces (Young & Hurlic 2007:173-74). Women are typically believed to be less competent than men in terms of managerial and leadership responsibilities (Young & Hurlic 2007:173-74). Again this was largely based on perception of competency rather than the proven actuality of competency as a performance. Masculine terms were ascribed to successful managers, such as
competence, independence and rationality. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) found that agentic behaviours were assertive while communal behaviours were nurturing; comparatively, men were described as naturally possessing agentic qualities while women were described in communal terms (Young & Hurlic 2007:171). This uneven representation indicates why men dominate management roles (Leonard 1997, 2005); hence the glass ceiling effect. Further, gender is a perception that influences ideas of male and female agency and competency, despite actual performances.

The political agency and competency of women anti-nuclear activists may be relayed through a female leadership effort to the Japanese Fukushima disaster (Salleh 2011:1). On the 11th of March 2011, the Fukushima nuclear electricity plant in Japan was hit by a powerful earthquake and tsunami (Salleh 2011:1). An undetermined land area remains uninhabitable due to the toxic levels of radiation in their environment. Around the world, this nuclear disaster has led to advocacy actions by grassroots, eNGO and political organisations, where the female voice is heard and at other times clouded. Salleh acknowledged that women advocates around the world have been active in diverse groups advocating for the rights of mothers and children (2011:9). Suddenly politicised angry mothers and housewives took to the streets in their thousands (Salleh 2011:10).

In response to the Fukushima meltdown, women-led grassroots organisations and eNGOs, and politicians advocated against nuclear energy through leadership and diplomacy in global contexts. Friends of the Earth attended to the needs of women and children, demanding wider evacuation zones and sackings in high places (Salleh 2011:9-10). Greenpeace also encouraged the public to mobilise. Since March, mass demonstrations have rolled across Japan, urging the end of nuclear power (Salleh 2011:10). ENGO strategies were strengthened by local grassroots action, through a collaborative challenge to authorities. The Asian Rural Women's Coalition condemned plans for nuclear plants (Salleh 2011:10). The GenderCC Network contested nuclear power through its climate change campaigning. In the U.S., the National Organization of Women (NOW) and United Farm Workers investigated radioactive cesium from Japan in Californian cows’ milk. In Australia, indigenous women continue to fight the government's proposed nuclear waste site on their land.
Women activists’, in grassroots, eNGO and political contexts, therefore express a comprehensive gendered critique of nuclear power.

In addition, Salleh identifies a gender gap in the political representation of Japanese women politicians (2011:10). The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, an NGO with consultative status to the UN, wrote to the Japanese Prime Minister, observing the vulnerability of women in post-disaster situations. They noted only one woman in the Reconstruction Design Council. They referred the Prime Minister to Japan’s obligations under the UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Salleh 2011:10). Salleh ponders this gender segregation as discriminatory and questions, how can a country call itself a democracy when it does not give women equal seats on its Council? (2011:10) She concludes that an ecofeminist politics is essential to expose and neutralise the deeply cultural androcentric interests that let Fukushima happen. Hence, this is why women must take political leadership in Japan (Salleh 2011:10). Therefore, the leadership of Japanese and global women in grassroots organisations and eNGOs illustrates their action for change but that glass ceilings and sex-segregation are barriers undermining their capacity to effectively challenge the power of the nuclear industry.

**Women’s leadership in core grassroots campaigns**

Women’s agency and competency has been expressed in landmark grassroots movements, such as Greenham Common Peace Camp and Diane Wilson’s anti-toxic waste campaign against Union Carbide. These campaigns demonstrate women’s capacity to engage with other activists but to also challenge industry bodies and governmental authorities. In a study of environmental peace activism, British women activists were shown to be skilled leaders in their anti-war resistance. The Greenham Common Peace Camp imagined new forms of protest at Greenham Common RAF Base in 1983 (Cockburn 2012a: 57). In spite of men’s resistance to women’s protest voice, the women activists’ organised a 70,000-person, fourteen-mile human chain linking Greenham to the atomic weapons establishments (Hudson 2005:135, cited in Cockburn 2012a:41). Women continue to resist war through peaceful strategies within grassroots and political contexts. An able activist, Catherine Marshall, resigned as parliamentary secretary of the U.K. National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies because of the war issue (Cockburn 2012a:41). Kate Hudson, the General Secretary of the U.K. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament sees
it as symptomatic of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’s (CND) mature leadership: ‘to give direction to the mass mobilisations’ (Hudson 2005:135, cited in Cockburn 2012a:41). Hence, women’s civil disobedience actions present their resistance, which also challenges gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency.

In relation to female leadership, Godfrey’s research on U.S. environmental justice activist, Diane Wilson, in her anti-toxic waste campaign against Union Carbide, considered women’s resistance against a patriarchal and capitalist ideological framework (2005:37-47). The women campaigners questioned not just toxic waste pollution but also the capitalist and patriarchal oppressions within public and private domains, including the government and corporations. Diane Wilson was initially reluctant to lead the movement because of her shyness, lack of formal education and expert skills. However, she recognised that she was the perfect person because of her beliefs and own experience with pollution (Godfrey 2005:45). It was found that women activists embraced their ‘new-found political power and empowered feminist consciousness’, within public versus private spheres (Godfrey 2005:47). Diane Wilson’s successful strategy against powerful oppositions involved transgressing, taking risks, and making links of a personal and political persuasion, as Godfrey elaborates:

I believe that the game board, the rules, are made by the people in power, these corporations. Corporations like control...You spend your time filing your drafts, making your petitions, going to court, dealing with bureaucracy, and in the end they give you little scraps...you've got to not play by the game. If you don't, they won't know what to expect. If we play by their rules, we're not going to get anywhere. I believe you have to be unreasonable and go out for what you believe... (2005:55).

In addition, ‘The League of Women Voters’, a non-profit U.S. organisation, adopted a strong leadership role in their grassroots campaign to save Lake Erie (Schulte 2006:8-9). Schulte outlined the strategy of League Members: they conducted research into water pollution in Lake Erie; they educated the public about the problems facing the lake, and lastly launched an intense lobbying campaign targeting the government to engage in cleanup efforts. Even though the League did not view themselves as participating in an ecofeminist movement, they provided opportunities for women activists to help break down gender barriers. They provided political training and skills for women to help them negotiate the political system, to cultivate a political identity and civic empowerment (Schulte 2006:10-11). In
addition, the activism of grassroots women in the Lake Erie campaign strengthened their political agency and enhanced their capacity to contribute to social change. This example leads me to a deeper exploration of the roles and strategies of women in the environmental movement in relation to notions of agency, competence and identity.

Thus, the feminist, ecofeminist and movement literature, in this section, has identified female resistance within a gendered culture of work. Structures of hegemony, patriarchy and power are being transformed by the prowess of women activists within grassroots and professional sectors; however, decision-making at a corporate and political level is male dominated, which is a challenge in bringing about social change. The agency and competency of women is through their challenge towards male norms and practices. In response to the Fukushima disaster, Salleh (2011) identified gender barriers and enablers. For example, the leadership of women illustrates action for change, but glass ceilings undermine their challenge to the nuclear industry. Women are consequently resisting and accommodating their roles; nonetheless, gender prejudices present barriers to agency and competency.

Part 4. Environmental justice movements: gender, race and class

Environmental justice movements are platforms to address inequalities along the lines of gender, race/ethnicity and class/socio-economic status. Movements can focus on one or more of these dimensions. I consider the intersection of gender with race and class issues in order to focus on women activists’ struggle with power relations within ecofeminist and environmental justice movements. Notable theorists in this section include Warren, Gaard Barry, MacGregor, Stein, Mellor, and Caldicott. For instance, Warren’s (1999) advocacy of a peace making model enables me to criticise war and androcentric approaches, and Gaard’s (2001) critique of environmental sexism, classism and racism within U.S-Canadian energy companies, enables me to consider the gender and social inequalities that constitute women’s rationale and struggle within activism. My view is that social inequity is a factor that motivates women’s environmental activism; however, women also acquire skills and knowledge in order to challenge those organisations or practices causing social and environmental ill. Feminism has undergone major transformation through its encounters with theories of domination, especially race and class (Plumwood 1997).
The ecofeminist movement is situated in activist struggles along gender, race and class lines, and has adopted traits from peace, socialist, environmentalist and feminist movements (Plumwood 1997; Gaard 2011). Also, environmental justice movements are dominated by women activists, advocating for disadvantaged groups. Although women activists struggle with gender stereotypes, their agency and competency along with resistance and resilience challenges traditional assumptions of knowledge as well as entrenched biases of competence.

Historically, the environmental justice movement was initiated by a group of African-American activists in protest over a toxic waste dump in the Mississippi region (Mellor 1993; Gottlieb 2009; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Wilson 2010 et al.). Literature has identified that social differences, like class and status, affect the motivation of activists (Epstein 1993; Brown 1995; Meyler 2003). The demography of a disadvantaged socio-economic group means that their motivation towards activism may counter with the interests of an affluent group (Diekman & Goodfriend 2007). An environmental justice agenda often reflects an ecofeminist agenda, whereby women volunteers have participated in high numbers within landmark movements (Mellor 2009, 1997; Salleh 2009). Grassroots environmental justice advocates traditionally are women, with many from working class or Culturally And Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD) (Maddison 2004; Barry 2008; Bell 2008). Krauss identified the diverse demography of anti-toxic waste activists, such as working class housewives, secretaries, rural black farmers, urban residents, Mexican-American farm workers and Native Americans (1993:247-48). Comparatively, they all struggled to negotiate change with bureaucracies. Nonetheless, Godfrey’s (2005) study of working-class women activists’ challenge to the authorities revealed a subjective change in female empowerment. This was evidenced by their competency in scientific jargon and technically skilled work.

In contrast to traditional environmental justice movements dominated by working class women, middle class women dominate contemporary climate-sustainability movement (Rankin & Gale 2003; Spitzner 2009). Australian women, for example, advocate a strong leadership role in environmental politics. Markedly, the Australian Greens party has seven senators in Federal Parliament (Australian Greens Representatives, 2014). A strong middle class component of climate women activists, working in the professions, has been identified in the European Greens: ‘Greens are well educated...One study found that the Finnish Green League are ‘the
female-dominated party of the average to highly educated, and the relatively young, new middle classes (Zilliacus 2001:50, cited in 2007:97). Supporting insights challenge findings on gender, class and race (Brown & Ferguson 1995; Eder 1996b). Yet studies show that environmental justice activists of working class and ethnic minority backgrounds struggle to achieve change (Egan 2009; Kuletz 2009; Rainey & Johnson 2009). Their environs are sometimes dumping grounds for toxic waste, which has dangerous implications (Culley & Angelique 2003, 2010; Hosey 2011). The process of complaint resolution is made difficult by the disparity of resources at their disposal, such as money, status and powerful connections (Alcoff 2003; Caldicott 2006; Faber 2008; Caldicott 1996). That is not to say the middle class women are wealthy or have access to powerful people. The complexity of the situation is challenging because authorities are often responsible for the mismanagement of pollutants. Notably, nuclear power is not ‘clean and green’, as industry claims, because large amounts of fossil fuels are required to mine the uranium needed to run nuclear reactors (Caldicott 2006:xiii). Industry and governance is thus male centric whereby women campaigners and others continue to struggle for reform (Krauss 1993; Barry 2008; Unger 2008).

**Grassroots Struggles, research gaps and a peace making model**

In relation to Barry (2008), Stein’s (2004) ecofeminist collection, *New perspectives on environmental justice: gender, sexuality, and activism*, stands as the original contribution to women’s studies and environmental justice scholarship. Stein (2008) interrogated the gaps in existing scholarship acknowledging inequity surrounding race, class, gender along with health issues. The primary motivation for women’s activism is to protect families and communities threatened by environmental hazards or deprived of natural resources (Stein 2004:2, cited in Barry 2008:26). Stein assesses the connections between race, class and environmental ills:

> Environmental justice activists and scholars have clearly established the connections between race, class and environmental ills, amassing strong evidence that communities of colour and communities of the poor suffer far more from such problems than do whiter and wealthier communities, and so, in contrast to the mainstream environmental movement, environmental justice organizations are composed of poor people and people of color, working to protect their communities’ (2004: 2; cited in Barry, 2008: 26).
Following on from Stein (2008), Macgregor (2010) articulates the compelling way in which gender is lacking analysis in comparison to concepts of class and race within environmentalist scholarship. With a focus on social inequalities and gender injustices concerning climate refugees, especially women, in the global South, MacGregor explains that: ‘concepts of class, poverty and race make regular appearances in social scientific analyses of global climate change, but the same cannot be said for gender’ (2010: 223). The small amount of existing gender-sensitive work has been carried out by Gender, Environment and Development (GED) researchers, where the focus is on the material impacts of climate change. MacGregor make two arguments about current research on gender and climate change (2010: 223). First, she argues that although the GED research makes important contributions to understanding of the politics of climate change, it also contributes to an understanding of gender and the view of women in the developing world, particularly those of the Indian Ocean Region, as victims of ecological crisis. Second, in response to these gaps, MacGregor argue for a deeper gender analysis where empirical research is complemented by critical feminist theorising of the discursive categories that shape climate politics (2010: 223).

According to Mellor, many of the original leaders of the ecofeminist movement were academics, who have had a long history of activism in feminist and peace movements (1997: 39). This opens up some criticism toward white, middle-class academics, Mellor adds. Despite the involvement of women in grassroots environmental struggles around the world, Mellor contends that there is no formal ecofeminist movement. However, it could be argued that an informal movement exists, she adds. It is a movement of ideas, theories and practices, which builds upon women’s actual struggles. On this point, I contend that formal and informal environmentalist movement exist, by the way in which tactics embrace gender rights with that of race/ethnicity and class/socioeconomic inequalities.

Mellor argues that not all women-based grassroots and activist campaigns across the globe make specific connections between women and the environment (1997:17). As a feminist, I am aware that not all of my participants identify with a connection between women and the environment. Concerning the emergence of ecofeminism, I agree with Mellor that women’s involvement in grassroots struggles and global campaigns does not necessarily mean that they are feminists. Yet they are concerned individuals pursuing a common cause that has a strong socio-ecological
aspect. Seager notes that many women who take part in such campaigns are in the midst of a struggle against a daily-life threat (1993:237; cited in Mellor 1997:39). Grassroots activists were often people who had not previously been political, although the experience of campaigning was a politicizing one (Mellor 1997:39).

Grassroots campaigns are characterised by women and other categories lack of access to decision makers as well as their capacity to impact on decisions. Men are predominantly located in a positon of decision-making and authority, which, in turn, impacts on policy and strategies on the environment. What is common in women’s grassroots campaigns, both North and South, is their vulnerability to environmental problems and their lack of access to decision-making platforms (Mellor 1997:24). While women are disproportionately represented in poor and vulnerable communities, men are disproportionately represented in positions of power and influence. This means that women are not able to influence state and industrial decisions (Mellor 1997:24). Due to embedded masculinist forms of privilege, I sum up that women struggle to negotiate decisions within environmental political hierarchies, yet their stubborn resistance and collective resilience is a platform towards environmental justice.

Ecofeminist, Warren (1999) considers the value of environmental ethics and peacemaking models for the purposes of achieving environmental justice. Warren adopts a philosophical approach to a critique of Sterba's book, *Justice for Here and Now* (1999: 411). Sterba undertakes a methodological and ethical research agenda (Warren 1999: 411). The methodological project aims to promote a peacemaking model over a war-making model of doing philosophy, in its commitment to fair-mindedness and openness. The ethical project establishes two related claims: rationality is required for morality, and it is possible to reconcile the practical perspectives of alternative positions on justice; socialism, feminism, multiculturalism, environmental ethics, and pacifism (Warren 1999: 411). Hence, an ethical ethos that values peace is a just methodological approach to achieve social change through a rationale and just dialogue. I support Warren’s (1999) advocacy of a peace-making model, and add that war involving death and suffering is never the ideal approach to resolving conflicts.
Women's environmental justice efforts and demystifying gender stereotypes

Barry considered gendered class dimensions to the environmental justice efforts of women activist participants in the Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW) in West Virginia, U.S.A. (Barry 2008: 25). The CRMW is a grassroots group formed in 1998 to fight the effects of mountaintop removal coal mining. The organisation is comprised mostly of White, working-class women whose homes and community have been adversely impacted by this extractive industry. Barry explains that poor and working-class women respond collectively to threats on their homes and communities. However, the impact of this social trend has yet to be addressed by feminist and environmental justice scholars. Despite research gaps, Barry considers the value of a class-based focus within environmental justice praxis and theory:

Environmental justice praxis and theory centralizes the presence of humans in the natural world, defining the environment as where humans live, work, and play. It is more class-based in its focus, operating from the assumption that poor people tend to live in poor environments, and is guided by the forged links between social and environmental justice (Barry 2008: 26).

Barry redresses existing gaps in existing scholarship within the spectrum of environmental justice scholarship (2008: 25). By examining the activist women of the CRMW, Barry highlights the existing connections between gender, class and environmental justice activism (Barry 2008: 26). Critically, Barry acknowledges the spiritual element to much ecofeminist scholarship, and its inconsistencies in considering the role of class and its relation to gender and the environment. The bulk of environmental justice scholarship infrequently assesses the importance of women activists in grassroots movements; although, women make up 90% of the membership in EJ groups around the country (Barry, 2008: 25).

Barry’s interviews identified themes on hegemonic power within the coal industry along with the powerful influence of government authorities (2008: 30). All of the women interviewed were aware of hegemonic power of coal in their communities, and the dangers they faced. Members mentioned the corrupt forces of the coal industry and governmental authorities as the biggest roadblocks: ‘dealing with the most corrupt politicians...they will fight you at every opportunity...just changing the political system. That’s a big issue’ (Thomas 2006, cited in Barry 2008: 30). Also members relate the challenges towards the transition to sustainable energy:
‘…fossil fuels aren’t going to be here forever…if we don’t start making the transition now when are we going to?’ (Hart 2006; cited in Barry 2008: 30).

Despite hegemonic resistance, women activists demonstrate agency and competency through their opposition. Barry sums up that women activists in the Appalachian coalfields fight the industry and political system in the face of opposition and personal risk (2008: 31). They experienced abuse from locals and some were jailed. Others received death threats. Patricia formed a group that stood on a road, blocking coal trucks (Barry 2008: 29-30). All were jailed for their civil disobedience. Despite opposition and risk, the CRMW described their mission as to: ‘stop the destruction of our communities and environment by mountaintop removal coal mining, to improve the quality of life in our area and to help rebuild sustainable communities’ (The Coal River Mountain Watch, 2006; cited in Barry 2008: 30).

Robust engagement strategies were adopted by these women activists. They engaged in social protest, including organising rallies and direct actions, educational campaigns, litigation, monitoring coal industry meetings, community organising, and lobbying state government to fight for economic and social justice in the coal fields. The women of the CRMW are engaged in a battle with the coal industry and the state political system to create sustainable communities and to promote alternative energy sources versus coal. In doing this, they challenge the socio-economic arrangements of the State. They realise that they cannot stop mountaintop removal coal mining without a paradigm shift in energy policy and state politics. As such, their work is progressive and potentially transformative. This group are doing everything in their power to reiterate famed sociologist Margaret Mead’s assertion about collective action and social change (Barry 2008: 32). Hence, political and grassroots tactics demonstrate women’s agency and competency in the pursuit of sustainable solutions.

Environmental sexism and environmental classism

Ecofeminist studies have considered the intersection of environmental sexism, environmental racism, and environmental classism. For example, Gaard (2001) assessed the experience of women with water and energy, and pinpointed uneven power relations concerning gender, race and class. She criticised the strategy of Canadian and U.S. based power companies, and exposed the corporate appropriations of water power from the people and from the land: ‘gendered, cultural assumptions about water, power, and human relations have led to creating a water-
power infrastructure that perpetuates environmental sexism, environmental racism, and environmental classism’ (Gaard 2001: 157). Moreover, Gaard envisions an ecofeminist approach advocates strategies towards ecological democracy and ecological economics, along with a partnership culture in which water and energy flow freely (Gaard 2001: 157). I focus on the gender and social inequalities in Gaard’s (2001) analysis.

Concerning environmental sexism, Gaard explains that clean water like women or women’s work does not appear in national accounting systems or in the international market economy (2001: 161). Waring (1988) observed that in colonial accounting systems of developing countries, the water that rural women carry from wells to their homes has no cash value, but the water carried through pipes has value (Gaard 2001: 161). Also, Gaard considers the gender and cultural differences between Euro and native American cultures in their environmental relations (2001: 161). Both cultures see a connection between women and nature, but values these differently (Gaard 1993, cited in ibid 2001: 161). For many Native Americans, Mother Earth is to be respected and her bounty is not to be abused. Whereas Euro-Americans tend to view Mother Nature as ‘an enemy to be conquered’ and ‘a force out of control’ (Gaard 2001: 161). Within Euro-American cultures, the devaluation between women and nature exemplifies manifestations of environmental sexism (Gaard 2001: 161).

In relation to environmental classism, Gaard presents a class-based ecofeminist attack on the strategy of Canadian and U.S. based power companies, Canadian Hydro-Quebec and Manitoba Hydro. These companies ‘locate their plants in rural communities, using up the water, polluting the land and the health of the people, and transferring the energy to the wealthier urban residents’ (Gaard 2001: 166). Concerning Euro-Americans, Western culture’s domination of water and economically disadvantaged communities is described as environmental classism. In 2000, a battle against environmental classism took place on the Canadian-American border of Whatcom County, in Sumas, Washington State (Gaard 2001: 166). The Environmental Protection Agency found ethylene-dibromide in the groundwater (Gaard 2001: 167). Also, 50% of the wells are contaminated with nitrates (Pizzillo, 1999). It is in this context that a new power plant are being proposed? (Gaard 2001: 167). The human and environmental health costs with this proposed power plant are
detrimental: ‘…Sumas Energy 2 (SE2) will emit more than 3 tons of hazardous pollutants, including ammonia, lead, mercury, benzene, and toluene; it will consume up to 1.2 million gallons of water’ (Bumford, 2000; Hanners, 2000, cited in Gaard 2001: 167). Gaard concludes that the costs to human and environmental health is not offset with benefits, as ‘the health of the local residents, the animals, the water, air, and land will suffer’ (Gaard 2001: 167).

In an overall assessment of water, power and human relations, Gaard concludes that examples of environmental sexism, environmental racism, and environmental classism reveal insights to Western culture’s attitude toward nature, and how ‘we’ are conditioned to think about water and power (2001: 167) Traditional conceptions of power and energy perpetuate gender and social inequalities: ‘water, from poor people, from people of color, from women—without giving back anything of sustenance’ (Gaard 2001: 167). Further, Gaard’s (2001) insight to power relations guides my feminist interpretation of domination/subordination and women’s struggle with agency. A core insight of feminism has been its ‘understanding of power and power relationships’ (Gaard 2001: 167). From a feminist perspective, power is a neutral entity that is found in environmental sexism, racism, and classism:

Domination of others—whether in the form of rape, slavery, animal experimentation, colonialism, clear-cutting, or damming—has been called “power over” and is part of the violent and oppressive framework that feminists reject. In contrast, teaching or supporting others in using their own inner strength, deriving strength from their relationships, or working in coalition with other groups for the good of life on this earth has been called empowerment, or “power with”. It is this peaceful use of power that feminists advocate; its implications for social justice, for environmental justice, and for sustainable energy production can be denied only at the risk of human and ecological health (2001: 167-68).

Part 5. The resistance of mothers as activists’ and maternal identity

A finding in my interviews is that women with and without children identify their activist motivation through a nurturing identity, encompassing concern for the human and nonhuman. Some of my participants identify with emphasized femininity whereas others align to resistant forms of femininity. Overall, participants’ demonstrate a nurturing ethic within their activism. In this section, I consider core local and international anti-nuclear campaigns led by mothers, such as the U.S. Three
Mile Island (TMI) event (Culley and Angelique), the Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW) U.S. regional anti-mining campaign (Barry), the West Australian Alcoa Wagerup alumina refinery campaign (Brueckner & Ross 2010) and Leahy’s (2003) assessment of mothers’ grassroots campaigning in regional N.S.W. These studies show that women demonstrate emphasized and resistant femininities in their activism. Also, I assess ecofeminist and sociological interpretations of mothers’ activist strategies and maintaining a work/life balance. Studies show that mothers as activists’ perform resistant femininities in a social hierarchy, which challenges essentialist ideas of motherhood (Leahy 2003; Barry 2008; Unger 2008). In a critique of a maternal essence, agency relates to choice and subversion, where resistance entails female empowerment and corporeal embodiment (McNay 2003; Meynell 2009).

Mothers’ grassroots resistance in glocal activist campaigns

The resistance of mothers is practiced in anti-nuclear-toxic campaigns, whereby women recognise disempowering and empowering experiences. Within activism, labels and stereotypes are being resisted and accommodated. Culley & Anglique’s (2010) study of long-term Three Mile Island (TMI) activists’ identified the importance of maternal resistance in their narratives (2010:236). In response to the TMI nuclear meltdown disaster, in Middletown, Pennsylvania during the 1980s, Culley & Anglique (2010) acknowledge that mothers were some of the first activists to respond to the disaster through individual and collective actions. Mothers established grassroots community groups, such as Concerned Mothers and Women (Culley & Anglique 2010:233). Although nuclear illiteracy - that is the ability to comprehend nuclear technology, was identified as a barrier, the impact of the disaster on their children encouraged mothers to learn and acquire knowledge on the topic:

It was almost 30 years ago. There are younger generations of people who may have heard the words but didn’t live through it and don’t understand the complexity of how people’s lives were uprooted and how they had to evacuate, how some people lost their businesses, how some women lost babies, how some babies were born deformed, how people have continued to have cancers (Culley & Anglique 2010:241).

Australian studies have highlighted the social and environmental impacts of toxic-waste pollution on local communities along with mothers’ activism. Brueckner and Ross’ (2010) review of the Alcoa Wagerup alumina refinery in Western
Australia, showed that residents endured long-term health and social challenges through their proximity to the toxic waste site. A contributor to the research is Erin Brockovich, the famous anti-toxic waste activist, who identifies as a mother and advocate of communities, driven by integrity, truth and justice through knowledge awareness: ‘I am an advocate for awareness, the truth, and a person’s right to know. I believe that without the truth, we are helpless to defend ourselves, our families and our health’ (May 2010, Brueckner & Ross 2010: 4-5). In turn, mothers’ activism was motivated through the concern for their children’s health:

We had 13 to 14 acres of land... The blocks were subdivided for the kids to build... That’s all gone down the chute (former resident)... Mum was in an ideal situation in the sense that she had, of her six boys, four of them... liv[ing] within walking distance: two on either side of her and a couple of others scattered around. For her, even though the family married and had their own families, that connection was still very strong.... (former resident, cited in Brueckner & Ross 2010:75-77).

Still in an Australian context, Leahy (2003) found that mothers who are environmental activists embrace resistance towards gender labels. Diane, a participant, attacked the view that humans can own nature, for other species have rights too (2003:112). When Diane says that ‘we’ are not looking after the future of our children, her accusation speaks most strongly to women as mothers. Concerning emphasized versus resistant femininity within ecofeminism, Diane's discourse, for example, parallels toxic waste activists, by constructing environmental resistance from the position of mothers (Leahy 2003:112). The discourse of women as ‘moral mothers’ and ‘god’s police’ attacks stereotypes of environmentalists as ‘loud’ or even ‘lazy’ (Leahy 2003:122). Women’s agency and competency is therefore evidenced by their active position as mothers who appropriate ‘the moral mother’ discourse in order to advocate for the home against toxic pollutants, while challenging the social elites in governance and industry.

Thus far, ecofeminists have considered the maternal role within activism pertaining to barriers and enablers’ that influence women’s exercise of agency and competency. In relation to Brown (2006), Barry identified mothers’ agency and competency in the CRMW campaign:

Women have more staying power...care more about their families and our communities...traditionally, they say women were the gatherers...an old saying that the Native Americans, the women say, the men sit around the
campfire discussing what they’re going to do and the women get up and do it (Barry 2008:31).

However, an entrenched conservative culture impacted on the roles and expectations of women in these mining communities (Barry 2008:32). Within the culture of the coalfields and mining communities, women’s social role comes primarily from their role as mothers and wives. This gender ideology explains why CRMW women have a strong sense of protection over their families. Ironically, this same gender ideology has propelled women out of the ‘ideal’ private home sector into mining sites, the state legislature, stockholder meetings and public spaces. In the process, women speak up, defend, and represent themselves as members of their communities. In doing so, they became confident and knowledgeable adversaries of the coal industry and the political system. Further, the merit of mothers as agentic and competent campaigners undermines essentialist labels of female incompetency.

The dual notion of gender as a barrier and an enabler has been identified in anti-nuclear ecofeminist studies, nonetheless, mothers as activists demonstrate agency and competency which undermines stereotypes and labels (Culley & Angelique 2010, 2003). Women’s technical prowess transformed their political agency: ‘...women’s gender initially was experienced as a barrier to their antinuclear activist efforts. To overcome this barrier, women took it upon themselves to become educated about nuclear technology...women described their identities as mothers as a catalyst for activism’ (2003:458). Hence, ‘the moral mother’ discourse is a motivator to women’s activism, whereby their agency and competency is also demonstrated.

I have argued that ruling class men located in patriarchal organisations and dominate social elites, have responded weakly and incompetently to the environmental issue in comparison to women members of professional and grassroots environmental organisations. I also contend that men members of environmental activist groups tend to resist hegemonic masculinity in their activism, which contrasts with the approach of ruling class men in elitist hierarchies where male norms tend to be perpetuated (Connell 2005). For this reason, I have criticised ruling class in relation to their positon of dominance in exploiting the environment and vulnerable communities. But not all men exploit nature or resources, as there are many men in the environmental movement that have made a positive contribution by working with women and as men in male groups (Connell 2005). In an ecofeminist
critique of the mastery of nature, Plumwood (1997) critiqued the dynamic of power within gender relations, because not all women treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother, so it is false to assume that women have a special connection with nature. In my empirical chapters, I analyse participants’ maternal identity, but argue that those considered to be non-mothers, as women without children and the men partners of my participants, also adopt a nurturing ethic.

I contend that women struggle with the power of men in patriarchal and hierarchical contexts: men as capitalists, men as scientists, men as consumers, men as employers. Research indicates that the social class dimension positions women as ‘the outsider’, and this is related to men, in particular ruling class men in patriarchal organisations and social elites, having more power at their disposal in society and political contexts. Although women identify this power, they also resist the dominance of men in their activism. During the second half of the 20th century, full-time mothers had prescribed gender roles but they were also exposed to environmental dangers, which rendered them uniquely powerful as environmental activists (Unger 2008:119). The gendered segregation of private and public spheres has relegated women to the home, but women have demonstrated agency and competency as activists:

Men’s world of profit, power, and control extended into nature through activities that included developing bigger and more deadly chemical weapons...Woman’s proper and natural place was, once again, decidedly not outdoors but within the home, where her role was to see to the health, happiness, and safety of her husband and children. Yet ‘home’ extended into the local community, where women provided much of the unpaid labour in neighbourhood schools and houses of worship. Women around the world also participated in far more political activities, including ‘Ban the Bomb’ campaigns...citing their status as mothers and homemakers as their most compelling credential (Unger 2008:118).

The ecological crisis of reason in women’s work and the sexual division of labour

Ecofeminist studies illustrate the masculine/feminine binary in relation to maternal identity and the exercise of power within environmental activism. In Canavan et al’s (2010) interview with Ariel Salleh, embodied materialism in action relates to the dualist conceptualisation of the Madonna/mother/housewife. In the private sphere, the Madonna/mother/housewife ‘mediates nature’ for the family; but
in public employment, women service workers are understood as ‘closer to nature’, which is a reason why they receive lower wages (Canavan et al. 2010:185). Salleh’s interview identified key themes in her activism: politics is linked to practical experience and the grassroots; social justice is related to ecology; climate change is sex-gendered; the domination of nature is intrinsic to masculinity; mother (and women, as bodies) exists as primal ground; the pervasion of humanity/nature binary and radical movements. Additionally, Salleh identifies as a grassroots academic activist of social and ecological justice, yet argues that climate change is gendered:

...it is impossible to write sense-fully about politics without practical experience at the grassroots. My own activism has crisscrossed the movements from social justice to ecology and back, and I have found that analysis of the humanity/nature binary helps interconnect the diverse political strands...Yes, I am saying, for example, that climate change is sex-gendered. The domination of nature is intrinsic to masculinity as we know it—a preconscious but social identity for whom the mother (and women, as bodies in general) exists as primal ground (Canavan et al. 2010:186).

The above account shows that women activists’ are subject to dominant forms of ruling class masculinity: ‘The domination of nature is intrinsic to masculinity’. This domination therefore informs the social identity of women and their location in a complex social hierarchy of power and masculine privilege. Salleh suggests though that women activists’ are recognising and resisting such gender dichotomies. Additionally, an empowered maternal identity is being revitalised in Latin American countries of a socialist persuasion in their challenge towards the Global North (Salleh 2010:118). In response to the COP15 stalemate in Copenhagen (2009), Bolivian President Morales called a Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (2010) (Salleh 2010:128). This conference interrogated the hegemony of capital as well as gender rights and injustices (Salleh 2010:128). The Conference developed recommendations from workshops on the structural causes and historical responsibility of climate change (Salleh 2010:129). Salleh esteemed Cochabamba as an historic postcolonial moment drawing together an alternative North-South climate constituency in addressing the rights of the mother (2010:129).

This review of the maternal role is extended to an analysis of father and mother images, pertaining to ancient Greek texts. Plumwood’s critique of nature, culture and agency identifies patriarchy, agency as well as father and mother images in everyday life roles (2006:119). Plumwood argues that the power relations
involved in this model of creativity are best illustrated by patriarchy, as in the monological theory of Aristotle. The father is the sole agent and creator, contributing the superior element of mind to the generative act. The mother is merely a nurse (medium) for the child; woman is matter-associated whereas the father owns the child. This interpretation corresponds to the Greek system of patriarchy- a system which recognised as creator only one parent, only one agency, the male (Plumwood 2006:119). Ancient versions of patriarchy inform current discourses.

Plumwood’s (2002) assessment of the ecological crisis of reason was explored through male centric global economic systems. She argued that ‘the rationality of ‘the master subject as an autonomous, separate self’ erased the agency of both social others and of nature, just as they erase or downgrade the agency involved in ‘women’s work’ (2002:29). Additionally, these conceptual blindspots are features of rationalist dualisms, which have been used for millennia to naturalise power, including the one that informs the ‘empire of men over things’, the human domination of nature (2002:29). For this reason, women’s reproductive domestic labour and child raising are treated as inessential. Such gender binaries are the background services that make ‘real’ work (work of the male) (Plumwood 2002:29).

Sociological studies have reviewed the barriers Australian working women face in juggling paid and unpaid roles in the gendered labour market. A work/life balance is a gender issue in how the burden of housework and the responsibility of caring for children places additional constraints on mothers. Craig and Bittman argued that women contribute the bulk of households’ time allocation to childcare upon the birth of the first child (2008:76). In Australian households, fathers not only do less childcare and domestic labour than mothers, but their total workload is lower. In a study of an Australian work/life balance, Baxter and Chesters found that women’s predominance in part-time employment is due to their continued responsibility for unpaid labour and care work (2011:140). Despite mothers’ involvement in paid work, they still perform most unpaid domestic work (Baxter 2000). Baxter’s (2005) study of domestic labour patterns found that women perform more than twice as much childcare work. Baxter and Chesters (2011) argued that control over working hours underlies positive perceptions of a work/family balance.

In this section, a ‘nurturing’ subjectivity has been identified to be a motivator to mothers’ activism. This is evidenced by an ethic of care and responsibility towards
the future of their children and the planet. The literature has revealed that mothers’ activism challenges perceptions of the ‘domestic’ stay-at-home role, in that mothers are challenging authorities by engaging in protest events (Barry 2008; Unger 2008). They are not letting the men make all the decisions. This is not viewed to be a traditional female role in society; consequently, women activists are challenging stereotypes. Female competency and prowess in grassroots and professional leadership roles is also undermining labels of female incompetency and male dominance. However, mothers’ dominate household responsibilities, which reproduce the traditional role of the mother in private versus public spheres (Baxter 2000, 2005). An uneven work/life balance thus is a pressing issue for gender equity. Nonetheless, gender norms are being resisted and accommodated. This indicates that roles are subject to diversity and change. The literature challenges the idea that ‘Mothers don’t have a voice in our society’, in that despite inequity and struggle within a social hierarchy, women continue to make a difference, which accentuates their agency and competency. Hence, a masculinist culture of work is undergoing transformation through women activists’ resistance and prowess; although, it should not be underestimated that women continue to experience gender differences and barriers in their organisations and across the movement.

**Conclusion**

The core finding from this chapter is that the agency and competency of women environmental activists is demonstrated by active and passive resistance strategies towards masculinist cultures and structures in the pursuit of social change and environmental justice. As a constructivist feminist, I reviewed the position of materialist and idealist feminists in their attack on oppressive masculinist structures found within current socioeconomic systems, but contend that change is likely to occur by advocating (eco)feminist principles of progress and diversity within organisations, rather than a revolution. Additionally, I support Warren’s (1999) advocacy of a peace making model over war or hostile androcentric approaches, which is further evidenced by Cockburn’s (2012) appraisal of women’s passive resistance within the Greenham Peace Camp. I contend that women can adopt passive and direct strategies of resistance towards social change, yet this social interaction should take place within organisations and political structures rather than
a radical change. I add that organisational structures and political systems need to be altered in order to reflect a more flatter and inclusive rather than hierarchical and patriarchal way of working, historically informed by masculinist forms of privilege and power. Ecofeminists analysed dichotomies where the masculine/feminine is located in opposition. Women, femininities and the environment/nature are located in dualist dichotomies of struggle/disempowerment (Plumwood 1997, 2002, 2006; Canavan et al. 2010). However, with flatter structures, as suggested by supporting theorists, I also contend that traditional gender dichotomies and dualisms with men/masculinities and women/femininities located in opposition to each other, should be less of a challenge for feminists and women activists.

Consequently, I have argued that women activists’ agency and competency is undermined by dominant representations of masculinity and the power of men in organisations and movements. This intersection of gender and power contextualises the struggle of locating my participants’ agency and competency. This gender binary is evaluated in my interview chapters. However, this review has shown that activist engagement is a strategy to challenge hierarchy and patriarchy, while demonstrating women’s power, agency and competency. I conclude that a traditional social hierarchy is undergoing change through feminine resistance strategies. Women activists are actively constructing their gendered-work-based identities in contexts receptive and resistant to them. Cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy are being transformed through women’s prowess and merit. Thus, women’s social change leadership reflects their purpose. My contention is that agency and competency is contextualised by the way women recognise gendered forms of power, but how they also resist this power, and achieve consequential empowerment. This is achieved through passive and active forms of resistance. Activists’ demonstration of skill and acquirement of knowledge in grassroots and professional contexts of engagement also shows that traditional gender roles and perceptions of competency are being reworked and revitalised. Women perform gender by negotiating masculinity and femininity plus resisting gender stereotypes. Hence, women are ‘doing and undoing’ gender (Butler 1990, 2006). This review supports my empirical chapters, detailing participants’ agency and competency as well as gendered performances in environmental activism. Chapter four (Methodology and Method), considers my constructivist approach that links theory to practice through an applied interview design.
Chapter Four- Methodology and Methods

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design, sample of participants, recruitment and ethical considerations along with the thematic analytical techniques constituting my study. My methodological approach, as identified in Part 1, assesses feminist issues and debates: the experience of events versus ‘the truth’; a constructivist feminist approach to agency and competency; Butler’s social transformation and worldview positions; organisational and social movement analysis; gender as a performance: women’s active and passive resistance; and, feminist social research challenges on the environment. In Part 1, I also explore feminist methodology in relation to its intellectual context pertaining to my research questions and interview questions. I assess the ideas of interpretivism and subjectivism within a constructivist methodology, and analyse the positioning of agency within activist discourses and feminist sociological research. The lack of central feminist theory in an analysis of power relations is explored through my interview questions. Part 2 details my research design and procedure, as: qualitative interviews as the principal research method; recruitment strategy, general advertising approach; ethical considerations, interview timeline and location; and the thematic analysis. Part 3 presents a demographical and sociological overview of the Greens party, eNGOs, Grassroots organisations and Academic Activists. Three appendices support this chapter: Biographical and Sociological Snapshots (appendix 1), Sample of Interview Questions (appendix 2) and Recruitment flyer (appendix 3). My Biographical Snapshots outline demographical factors such as age, marital status and work status, and also provide an overview of participants’ paid and unpaid roles. The Interview Sample details my line of questioning as principal research investigator. Further, the recruitment flyer emphasises the value of participants’ contribution to my study. My participatory accounts, therefore, illuminate the gendered-work-identities of Australian women environmental activists.

Part 1. Methodology

The paradigm of this sociological study is a constructivist sociocultural feminist qualitative approach. The epistemology is constructivist, the theoretical perspective is feminist, and the method is sample-based interview research. In my
interviews, I use theme identification along with data and conversation analysis (Crotty 1998:4-5). Social constructivism is the most useful epistemology in this study, for I contend that meaning does not exist in its own right, rather it is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in strategies of interpretation (O’Leary 2004). Through interaction, I argue that members of organisations and movements may challenge oppressive and hierarchical structures. A constructivist theory of knowledge contends that humans generate knowledge and meaning-making from their experiences (Trede & Higgs 2009:19). I incorporate materialist and idealist feminist theory to provide a sociocultural context to research study. My liberal approach is thus far supported by ecofeminist, sociological and social movement theory. My goal is to investigate the way women activists in the environmental movement experience their activism in relation to issues of gender and feminism.

The experience of events versus ‘the truth’

My interview data provides evidence about particular ‘events’ and the ‘experience of events’. This is relayed through how participants’ see and describe events. As this interview study provides evidence to the ‘experience of events’, it is ‘suggestive’ about the nature of the events themselves. Additionally, I am aware of reproducing labels and stereotypes. I consider that women who join the environmental movement may be influenced by feminism yet my participants may not solely define themselves by gender. My interviews are based on subjective opinions that have an individual and collective substance. I acknowledge the premise of Butler that ‘genders can be neither true nor false’, in that gender is a sociocultural construct (2004: 193). In relation to Butler, I also reject the ‘essentialising’ of sex along with entrenched male/female binaries that have a biological rather than sociological construction.

In the Introduction, I stated that my research is not ‘the truth’ per se, and that my thesis presents a claim to truth. Through my interviews, this thesis provides evidence to what activists are doing and what they claim is ‘the truth’. I have accumulated evidence on how women participants’ see their activist practice in relation to gender, and these examples contextualise the focus of my thesis. My claim to knowledge is articulated through the views of these women activists in light of their everyday experiences within organisations and social movements. In theoretical
and practical terms, this research is situated in the context of Environmentalist New Social Movements (ENSM)s.

In relation to my constructivist position which recognises multiple claims to truth rather than a single absolute truth, I consider that women activists may identify with feminist issues but may not identify as feminists or recognise particular gender differences. According to MacGregor, a methodological issue of significance to (eco)feminist researchers who study grassroots activism, is the interpretation of women's ‘lived experience as truth’ (2001: 34). There are problems associated with taking women's lived experience to be the truth: ‘we may fail to see that these experiences are filtered through and situated in specific contexts, ideas, and interpretations, as are the theorists’ (MacGregor 2001: 34). One group of women's experiences does not explain all of the factors that contribute to the complex problems of gender inequality or environmental degradation. MacGregor suggests that ecofeminist research ought to strike a balance that constructs ‘valid feminist theories about the place of women in heterosexist, patriarchal, capitalist and white supremacist societies’ (2001: 34-35). Researchers need to employ methods that enable them to listen to the voices and interpretations of women engaged in campaigns. Ecofeminists should rely on standard social research methods: ‘scepticism, triangulation... secondary sources, and objective indicators’ in order to ascertain women environmental activists experience of gender dynamics (MacGregor 2001: 35).

A constructivist feminist approach to agency and competency

In chapters 1 to 3, I considered the insights of materialist (Mellor, Salleh) and idealist (eco)feminists (Butler, Warren, Sandilands, Plumwood, Cuomo), in order to construct the intersection of masculinity/femininity through gendered performances within environmental activism. Such theories inform my feminist approach to social constructivism within organisations. Mellor’s (1997, 2002, 2009) ecofeminist political model, for example, enabled me to consider radical sustainable approaches to political structures and organisational practices. I acknowledge the power of a radical alternative sustainable economy informed by ecofeminist principles, as advocated by Mellor; however, I identify with the sustainable ecofeminist model proposed by Phillips (2014), in which a sustainable economy is achieved through organisational and political reforms. Hence, I am not advocating a radical political
change or a revolution, for like Phillips (2014), I see the value of corporations and organisations incorporating ecofeminist principles of sustainability to their practices. Nonetheless, this involves challenging hierarchy and masculinist power structures currently in place. Social change is thus achievable through passive and active resistance within a complex social hierarchy.

In my interviews, I consider the extent to which a complex gendered culture of work, influenced by dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, affects women activists’ capacity to exercise agency and demonstrate competency. I contend that women’s recognition of gender barriers and dualisms, as with the sexual division of labour, glass ceilings and male privilege, continues to position women with ideological and practical challenges towards their capacity to be agentic. Assumptions still exist that women are less agentic and competent than men. My research aims to address such assumptions along with entrenched forms of gender bias. Although, women experience gender barriers, they also resist masculinist structures. My position is that women’s active and passive resistance along with their competence is a strategy towards gender diversity, progress and change. Oppressive structures need to be challenged and reworked in order for a cohesive human and nonhuman world to eventuate.

My aim is to articulate the relevance of a masculinist cultural paradigm and to investigate whether a masculine/feminine binary exists within organisations and movements. I consider whether women experience gender dichotomies and barriers in masculinist contexts, and the extent to which gender differences may affect their agency and competency (Connell 1995, 2005; Donaldson 2007, 2009). I have argued that a feminist research challenge to empowering notions of women’s agency and competency is the dualist construction of man/woman, masculinity/femininity and science/nature, whereby men are associated with higher levels of agency and competency (Plumwood 1997, 2001, 2006; Meynell 2009). Further, I show that the activism of women undermines traditional gender assumptions as well as labels associated with essentialism and female incompetency (Leahy 2003:106-7). Emotion is arguably a feminine construct in its alignment to women, however, I contend that both women and men have emotional capacities. My empirical findings should reveal the way in which gender labels and stereotypes of female incompetency are being resisted.
Butler’s social transformation and worldview positions

Butler’s focus on social transformation and worldview ideologies, guides my analysis of masculine and feminine intersections within organisations and movements. Butler contends that: ‘feminism is about the social transformation of gender relations’ (2004: 204). She situates the complexity in the relationship between feminism and social transformation, in how social transformation can be ‘imagined’ differently (Butler 2004: 204). This insight suggests that change is feasible within institutions and political practices. However, I note that Butler’s approach does not fully appreciate the complexity of women’s activism that entails active and passive forms of strategic resistance to their situations. In turn, my goal is to link the ‘I’ in participants’ identity with social change strategies advocated within organisational hierarchies. My ambition is to integrate the complexity of these ideas within Australian environmental activism, and to acknowledge that through social transformation ‘new imaginaries’ are indeed feasible. Notably, Butler advocates a worldview or ‘an idea of the world as it would be’ as ‘transformed by feminism, pertaining to its effects (Butler 2004: 204). Such transformative worldviews are not of an essentialist nature, Butler adds. Butler’s philosophical feminist approach to social transformation, therefore, enables me to locate women’s gendered roles and social identities within institutions and everyday life contexts in relation to events and meaning making: ‘how we compel the world, and its institutions, to inhabit new values, means that its philosophical pursuits are in some sense at one with the aim of social transformation’ (2004: 204).

In regard to gender as a process of doing within social structures, Risman adds that the dual goal of feminism and activism is to improve the status and agency of women by focussing on reducing inequality and bringing about a social change (2004:446). Risman argues that constraint is an important function of structure, and helps to explain the struggle of women activists in movements towards social change (Risman 2004:431-32). Social structures not only act on people; people act on social structures, for they are created by human action (Risman 2004:432). Risman argues that the central question for feminists should include a focus on social transformation, reducing inequality, and improving women’s status and agency (2004:445-46). A key feature of gender structure theory is its dynamism (Risman 2004:435). Change is fluid and reverberates throughout the structure dynamically. Institutional change may result from individual or group action. Risman contends
that the feminist project is best served by finding empirical answers to questions and identifying how processes explain outcomes in order to effect change (2004:435). The insights of Butler, Rismam and Phillips consequently enable me to comprehend the power of social change and social transformation within organisations and movements. I add that organisational structures and political systems need to be altered, to reflect a flatter and inclusive way of working, rather than hierarchical, as historically informed by masculinist forms of patriarchy and also privilege. With flatter structures, as suggested by supporting theorists, I further contend that traditional gender dichotomies and embedded dualisms with men/masculinities and women/femininities located in opposition to each other, with women the less powerful and subordinated category, should be less of a challenge for feminists.

**Organisational and social movement analysis**

This study considers the structures and ideologies of environmentalist workplaces, but it does not fully engage in a discourse analysis of organisations. I aim to explore the way gender and issues of feminism inform women’s’ engagement in organisations. I acknowledge the history of women’s marginalisation and struggle within work contexts dominated by men and masculine values (Walby 1990; Maddison 2004, 2006). My objective is to assess organisational characteristics informed by masculinist ideological and practical structures of hierarchy, patriarchy along with power and privilege, undermine the capacity of women activists to achieve social and environmental reform. In my literature chapters, the ideological challenges facing women’s inclusion relate to the sexual division of labour, gender differences, glass ceilings along with men’s dominance in leadership hierarchies (Connell 2009).

In my empirical chapters, I consider whether these examples evidenced in the literature, additionally present barriers to women’s engagement and capacity to initiate reforms. My goal is to articulate the gendered identities of women working in diverse paid and unpaid capacities of environmentalism (eNGOs, grassroots, academic institutions and political organisations), and to identify commonalities and differences in such contexts. My view is that women employees, in particular, face challenges towards inclusion within workplaces, especially when men dominate decision-making positions. The problems women face, such as privilege versus meritocracy, may be understood in terms of masculinity, identity and power (Segal
Segal adds that men’s engagement in ‘skilled’ work is central to their identity and that women’s presence threatens this (2007:248). Despite a history of marginalisation, I do not assume that women are subordinated in paid work.

**Gender as a performance: women’s active and passive resistance**

Agency is a performative construct entailing women activists’ resistance towards dominant forms of hegemonic masculinity and ruling class elites. Women perform gender by negotiating masculinity and femininity and challenging dominant masculinist power relations (MacLeod 1992; Leahy 2003; Plumwood 2008; Hall et al. 2009). My position is that women should engage in active and passive strategies towards environmental reform and social change, but this does not mean dismantling hierarchy in its entirety- but rather challenging masculinist forms of power, such as privilege, from within these parameters. Also peaceful approaches are the solution. Hopefully, more flatter and inclusive organisational structures as well as gender diversity will eventuate.

My literature review showed that women’s agency and competency is defined by their passive and active resistance towards masculinist cultures and structures in the pursuit of social change and environmental justice. Here, I aim to consider the way this is recognised within my interviews. Although Plumwood (2006) had illustrated that agency is legitimated through the use of agentic vocabulary that has active than passive constructions, I emphasise the value of agency through passive and active forms of resistance. I acknowledge the integrity of peaceful approaches to social change, as Warren’s (1999) advocacy of a peacemaking rather than war making model, which is further evidenced by Cockburn’s (2012) appraisal of women’s passive activist resistance in the Greenham Peace Camp. In my empirical chapters, I aim to consider the way women activists’ express passive and direct forms of resistance, and how such expressions contextualise their agency and competency.

**Feminist social research challenges on the environment**

Methodological researchers elaborate that gender is lacking analysis in relation to the environment within feminist social research studies (Macgregor 2009, 2010). Nonetheless, a constructivist analysis presents a viable challenge to
hegemonic gender codes still implicit within glocal climate movements (Macgregor 2009, 2010). In chapter 3, Macgregor (2010) articulated that gender is lacking analysis in comparison to class and race issues in climate movements, especially in the global South. On this point, the theorist advocates the need for feminist social research on climate change, with an overarching question: ‘why call for an end to the strange silence that exists on gender and climate change within the social sciences? Why is feminist research in this area necessary?’ (Macgregor 2009: 136).

Within a constructivist analyses, Macgregor advocates the integration of materialist and idealist approaches in critical feminist thinking concerning non-material and discursive aspects of climate change (2009: 137). Sociologists have historically interpreted the processes in which social issues are constructed and framed, and this approach is useful in the climate change arena. The dominant discourses that shape climate change as a social issue along with the kinds of responses and concerns that are displaced by it, are ripe for feminist analyses of hegemonic gender codes, Macgregor explains (2009: 137). Thus, the development of this kind of constructivist analysis should enable an improved sociological understanding of the climate issue that dominates everyday life in the 21st century (Macgregor 2009: 137).

**Intellectual context and Research questions**

As a sociological feminist researcher of women environmental activists’ experiences, I acknowledge the insight provided by (eco)feminist and social movement theorists, and how such theory provides a context to my participants. Feminism helps to explain the gendered dynamics within organisations, and ecofeminism adds to this argument in accounting for the complexity and diversity of power relations within the environmental movement. Social (and environmental) movement theory enables me to consider collective mobilisation strategies as well as social change and environmental justice goals (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Maddison 2004; Doyle 2005). Social movement theory enables me to interpret social activism, and environmental movement theory provides context to environmental activism. The terms workplace/movement are referred to simultaneously to signify that women are participating in an organisational context and that through their working roles,
they are also contributing to social movements. The three key theoretical tools of feminism, ecofeminism and social movement theory, therefore, strengthen my methodological to epistemological framework.

In methodological terms, this research aims to understand the work experiences and social roles of women environmentalists as they exercise their agency and competency, and deal with challenges in their advocacy. As in the theory chapters, my methodological to method-based objective is to consider the way women perform gender and negotiate aspects of masculinity and femininity. Moreover, my personal involvement in grassroots and academic environmental activism provides a background to this study, as well as being a valuable insight. Participants’ were advised in the recruitment process that their assistance may contribute to the improvement of workplace contexts/cultures and movement engagement. An overarching theoretical to empirical goal is to compare paid and unpaid work in order to understand what it means to be a woman environmental activist in Australia today. This involves connecting ontology and epistemology by drawing upon accounts as well as comparing social relations of power and cultural representations of gender. For example, Greens women appraise grassroots democracy and gender equity within their party, however, criticised Parliament as hierarchical and patriarchal.

In the ‘Introduction & Overview’, three major areas of intellectual context to my thesis were identified to be women’s activism, gender performativity, and, women’s agency and competency in environmental advocacy. This is further investigated by specific research questions. In order to match research questions with one’s methodology or method, the researcher needs to consider the emphasis on the topic and the form in which data is available to address the topic (Lawler 1998:77). My research has six overarching questions with sub-questions that were explored in the literature chapters (1-3) and in the later empirical chapters (5-7). The final chapter (8) links my theoretical to data-driven analysis, where I identify insights, contradictory findings and knowledge to the interdisciplinary field.

My key research objective is to investigate how women activists in the environmental movement experience their activism in relation to issues of gender and feminism. The following research questions enable me to evaluate participants’ gendered roles and work-based identities in Australian environmental activism:
(1) How do women activists in the environmental movement experience their activism?
In what way, are their experiences influenced by issues of gender and feminism?
To what extent, are the work roles and activist agendas of participants informed by gendered power relations?

(2) How do women activists demonstrate their agency in the environmental movement?
Do they participate in strategies of resistance, challenge and protest or accommodation?
How do women advocate social change and environmental justice?

(3) How do women activists demonstrate their competency in the environmental movement?
How do women perform their roles? How is gender a performance? In what way, do women recognise hegemonic masculinity? How do women negotiate emphasized and resistant forms of femininity?

(4) What are the barriers and enablers impacting the experiences of women?
Are these gender-specific or gender-neutral?

(5) What does this research suggest about a feminist agenda? How can the environmental movement better engage the skills and attributes of women activists?

(6) What do women environmental activists have in common? Are there commonalities or differences in backgrounds, experiences and motivations?

**Connecting the methodology to my line of interview questioning**

What guides the overall empirical analysis is the authentic voice of participants. My goal is to articulate: how do women activists’ operate in the world- not just how they think that they operate. This thesis is participatory-based and relative to an activist approach. Qualitative interview data informs my conceptual and empirical outcomes. My questionnaire was designed according to the work status of each participant: whether they were volunteers or employees. I categorised the interviews
according to women’s workplaces. Also, my interviews enable me to access the perspectives of my participants on the world. Interviews provide evidence about the real nature of events that they have experienced. On this point, my interview questions reflect core elements of my conceptual research questions (Punch 2005).

The following interview questions, for example, enable me to locate participants’ work context along with their experiences, roles and agendas in the movement:

- What is your title? What roles do you perform/ paid and unpaid?
- An activist/advocate? How does that relate to working in the professions?
- Missions, agendas, goals/barriers and enablers/gender, sociocultural, political
- How does this role compare to other duties? Academia/ Other work sectors/Public role
- Do politicians, policy makers etc. listen to what you are saying/ who is/not listening?
- Please tell me about some of your key research projects? How do these contribute?
- Conference presentations/success versus challengers/public speaking/
- What are your goals, aims and objectives within the climate movement/campaign?

An open-ended collaborative approach was favoured in order to encourage diverse responses from participants. Specific questions were asked, although participants’ were encouraged to provide open-ended responses. This enabled me to source data and contribute to new types of knowledge and perspectives. Hence, my research study aims to illuminate the voice and identity of my participants. Only a few times were my questions amended during the interview. This was due to the participant talking about a totally un-related subject for a lengthy amount of time. Overall, my contention is that researchers endure methodological challenges in constructing an integrated empirical design (Punch 2005).

The interview itself is also an opportunity to reflect upon the theoretical literary insights and the extent to which a central argument has been articulated. Comparatively, the interview questions were constructed in everyday conversational language, with some intellectual direction in order to encourage depth and breadth
from participants. I constructed the interview questions in order to investigate the roles of women in both the Environmental and Women’s movements, and to compare experiences of social activism. I analysed the way gender (and other facets in everyday life) influenced women’s identities and goals pertaining to differences and commonalities. In my recruitment drive, the advertising literature emphasized that the research findings should help to unite women from diverse sectors and capacities. In similarity, women activists are united by their environmental concerns.

Although my research is not a grounded methodological approach, my research is grounded to the degree that the voice of participants guides the empirical analysis, rather than it being entirely theoretical driven. Undoubtedly, theory links to practice; but what the participants’ reveal in the empirical chapters may compare or contrast with traditional theoretical positions. An approach grounded in regard to the authentic voice of participants drives my thematic and conceptual analysis, and enables me to construct the work-gender identities of women environmentalists.

In addition, my research objective is to connect epistemology and ontology in relation to constructivism and knowledge making within the environmental movement. Delanty (1997, 2005) evaluates the way constructivism and knowledge has been reworked within the changing discipline of social sciences and environmentalism. Delanty (1997) further questions whether social scientific knowledge can provide society with a discourse of renewal and critique. In regard to discourses that connect the nonhuman to the human, Delanty pinpoints that nature has emerged as a new theme in natural and social sciences in response to the ecological crisis (1997:5. My goal is to connect women’s human experience as social and environmental activists to that of the nonhuman world in which they are often advocating for.

The ideas of interpretivism and subjectivism in a constructivist approach

My approach was enhanced through interpretivism and subjectivism (O’Leary 2004). Interpretivism acknowledges the cultural and historical interpretations of the social world. This approach enables me to develop my argument on the exercise of agency and competency within a gendered culture of work. The historical interpretative element enables me to consider women’s history of oppression within masculinist discourses. Social and environmental movements also have a strong historical and ideological scope. Historical dimensions are
relevant when assessing individuals’ biographical accounts and ideas of subjective reality. My focus on identity considers how subjectivity, purpose and meaning making empowers participants. This is an opportunity to consider how women respond to power, patriarchy and hierarchy in relation to their agency and competency. This may be related to barriers and enablers, for subjectivism emphasises the value of social engagement and personal reflections as the foundation for knowledge (O’Leary 2004).

Also, my methodological ambition is to interpret the data through a qualitative lens in order to locate participants’ experiences of events (phenomena) and meaning making. In turn, Lawler argues that because qualitative projects are conducted in the natural world, they are prone to be unpredictable and highlight elements of the surprise-riddled nature of social life (Lawler 1998:70). Broadly speaking, qualitative researchers are interested in one or more of the following topics: experience of events (phenomena) and meaning making; social constructions, social rules, sense making and sociocultural systems; identity, sense of self, selfhood, social interactions; discourses, power, and ways of knowing (Lawler 1998:70-71). My research investigates the phenomena or events experienced by women in order to decipher knowledge, meaning making as well as subjective identification within sociocultural systems. Markedly, interpretivism is a tool that enables me to interpret women’s working roles, empowering experiences along with their subjective identification. A feminist lens on my interviews construes a snapshot of women’s lives (see Biographical Snapshots, appendix 1).

In my line of questioning, interpretivism is considered by meaning making through participants’ subjective identification, targeted work experiences and goals:

- I would like to start by hearing about your work (Prompt include: goals /barriers and enablers/ gender, position/length of time/ 9-5/ skills /activities/demographics/campaigns)
- What drew you to this role? (Prompt: Past/current roles/ paid/unpaid/motivations towards activism/ purpose/ideology, ambitions/aspirations)
- Achievements to date/future?
- What type of response do you achieve in the group/public/community level?
- What is the biggest environmental issue you face right now? Community/workplace?
• Do you share commonalities with others in your group? Similarities/differences?

My objective is analyse how women participants’ construct their world in regard to competencies and skills that are grounded in everyday life and meaning making experiences. This is supported by a qualitative method that interprets the sociocultural experiences of participants in the workplace/movement, and draws upon new types of empirical knowledge. An objective is to compare social relations of power and cultural representations of gender within theory and practice. In qualitative research, multiple constructed realities are recognised and grounded in people’s different attributions of meaning making events. Such an approach, therefore, contrasts to positivism or a scientific method (Trede & Higgs 2009:18-19). My focus on meaning making as dynamic and changing, contrasts to an essentialist position, where knowledge is viewed as objective and consists of phenomena that are orderly and hierarchical (Trede & Higgs 2009:19). A constructivist theory of knowledge challenges empiricism; a belief that all concepts are derived from sense-experience (O’Leary 2004).

My aim is to discover: what is actually happening in the interview data- not just what my participants think that is happening. The following questions consider the work satisfaction of participants concerning the recognition of merit. They are designed to find out the way that participants’ understand their work situation in which they find themselves.

• What is your view about the way good work or success is recognised in the organisation?
• What is your understanding of skill in this role? How is this performed and experienced? And in gender terms? What about in the community/workplace?
• What are some campaigns/projects most proud of? Future campaigns? Preventing this?
• Conference events/ success versus challengers/ public speaking/ skills and competencies
• As a woman, do you feel that you are treated differently for what you can do or how you perform? Please give me an example of when gender may have been an issue?
Agency and activist engagement within feminist sociological research

For the purposes of understanding individual choice and activist strategies within activism, it is necessary to consider human agency in relation to cause and effect plus determinism and free will. According to Ramazanoglu and Holland, agency implies that people have the ability to choose their goals and act (more or less rationally) to achieve them, as opposed to actions and ideas being determined by one’s social position, genes and subconscious (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:10). Western feminism has recognised that agency is difficult to establish whereby most versions assume that people have some power to make choices and act on them and so can be held morally responsible for their actions.

Questions relating to choice, action and goals enable me to consider women’s activist strategies as well barriers and enablers affecting agency and competency:

- What type of activist approaches or methods are considered?
- Please give an example of dealing with a difficult person at work or in the community?
- Are there any barriers or obstacles may you face? How about motivators or enablers?
- How may this role relate to other forms of activism/advocacy, local and global scale?
- What are your approaches in addressing environmental issues in the community?

Analyses of agency and activist engagement within feminist social research are further complicated by gendered stereotypes and prejudices. Historically, women and femininities have been differentiated from men and masculinities within social contexts (Mellor 1997; Plumwood 1997, 2006; Meynell 2009). This is why women sometimes struggle to exercise power and agency within activist discourses. In addition, critical debates in feminism have developed over the ‘true nature’ of sex, sexuality and gender, and the extent to which these are social (constructivist) or biological (essentialist) (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:12). Different feminist epistemologies focus on varying social relations between knowledge, experience and reality (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:13). In regard to connecting ideas, experience and reality, feminist methodology presents justifiable knowledge of gender relations (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:10). Claiming connections between these three terms
entails a social process of knowledge production. This requires reflection on who is doing the knowing, and the extent to which knowledge is individual or community specific. Undoubtedly, this process has ethical and political implications. My emphasis on the social (constructivist) approach undoubtedly contrasts to biological (essentialist) positions.

My methodological ambition is to explore two kinds of constructivism: the social construction of gender and the social construction of knowledge. My belief is that gender is socially constructed but that sociology is an attempt to find out about the nature of social reality. To do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the centre of one’s enquiry (Lather 1991:17). Feminist researchers view gender as a basic organising principle that shapes or mediates the concrete conditions of everyday lives. Through the questions that feminism poses and the absences it locates, feminists consider the way gender relations are informed by social realities that inform: ‘the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and privilege’ (Lather 1991:17). Feminist enquiry also looks to the interaction of other social forces, like race, class, sexual orientation. Feminist research has been preoccupied with the politics of knowing and being known (Lather 1991:17). Hence, feminist empirical work is multi-paradigmatic; some feminist scholars operate within a conventional, positivist paradigm, some within an interpretive/phenomenological paradigm, and some within a critical/praxis-oriented paradigm. Multi-paradigmatic approaches are concerned with producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. For this reason, those who work within the positivist paradigm endeavour to eliminate sex-based inequality (Lather 1991:18).

In my questions, I assess participants’ interpretation of sex-based inequality and equality, in regard to practices of decision-making, hierarchy and patriarchy. I contend that a traditional social hierarchy dominated by hegemonic masculinity and masculine power can be problematic for women’s activist roles as well as organisational engagement. To a certain extent, the paid and unpaid roles of my participants’ are defined by a masculinist culture:

- How does the decision-making process unfold in the organisation (Prompt: accountability)
- Please tell me about the organisation’s leadership structure? How do you perform this?
• What is the relevance of hierarchy? Patriarchy? Status? A gendered culture of work?
• Who are the decision-makers in your organisation? And what about in the environmental movement? Is it gendered? Do men or women make the decisions?
• Hypothetically, if women made key decisions in the movement, what would be the effect? Would it be stronger or weaker?

A feminist analysis of complex power relations

A research goal is to investigate the specificity of gender and power relations within organisations and movements. I aim to explore the way participants’ perform gender and negotiate masculinity and femininity within a social hierarchy. Interpretations may reveal gender-specific barriers and enablers. My contention is that participants’ deal with disempowering and/or empowering experiences, which conveys a complex intersection of gender and power. On this point, Ramazanoglu and Holland’s review of the lack of feminist theory on power is a useful insight to my investigation of complex gendered power relations:

Feminism, therefore, entails some theory of power relations. Feminist conceptions of gendered power have been a critical factor in developing distinctive feminist theories and practices, but there is no unified theory of power, and feminists have drawn on a variety of ways of thinking about how to conceptualise power, the exercise and effects of power, and what can be done to change specific power relations and practices (2002:5-6).

Drawing upon the above example, my research aims to fill a gap in theory and practice by linking gender to power within a feminist methodological framework. My goal is, therefore, to locate the authentic woman activist voice within gendered power relations. In relation to power, feminist methodological researchers are in a competitive position to question who has the power and how power is implicated in the process of producing knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:13). Feminist researchers contend that knowledge of social life is shaped by theory, culture and ideas, and is also a historical product produced in sociopolitical contexts. According to Punch, feminism identifies sociopolitical aspects within methodological research, as it stresses the role of power, especially in the traditional hierarchical relationships between the researcher and researched (2005:135). Traditional methodologies of gender and empiricism have been critiqued as
contributing to the oppression of women, especially when the masculine experience is generally defined as all encompassing and the normative human experience (Punch 2005:136-37). Haig identifies five features of feminist methodology: the rejection of positivism, the pervasive influence of gender relations, plus the value-ladenness of science, the adoption of a liberation methodology and the pursuit of non-hierarchical research relationships (1997, cited in Punch 2005:136). Each of these points is perceived to be contributing to women’s subordination (Punch 2005:137). Thus far, a patriarchal basis on traditional orthodox research methods undermines my objective to construct participants’ empowerment and subjective reckoning (Roman 1992, cited in Punch 2005: 136-37).

In my research, there were methodological challenges in representing a feminist interpretation of women’s activism within ruling class elites, as in patriarchal organisations and dominant social elites in governance and industry. My questions consider the connection between gender and complex power relations:

- What is the gender composition of the organisation? Power and influence?
- Who are the powerful peoples and what type of position do they hold? Is it gendered?
- How is power experienced? In the public/community sphere and in your organisation?
- Are there any challenges/issues you face? (positions of power/gendered culture of work)

A feminist methodological ambition is to assess the extent to which women recognise a masculinist culture of work along with gender differences. Punch conveys the difficulty in describing a distinctive feminist methodology within the broader social sciences (2005:136). A central feminist methodological challenge is that all science and social relations is based on the masculine way of viewing the world (Blaikie 1993, cited in Punch 2005:136). It is androcentric and omits or distorts women’s experiences (Stanley & Wise 1983, cited in Punch 2005:136-37). Although I did not observe women in action, I interviewed them about their activist strategies and gendered performances. As a result, I argue that women are exercising their own power but that they are also challenging male power and hierarchical elites. Hence, social relations are hegemonic and susceptible to diversity and change.
In addition, I investigate the way knowledge encompasses gendered performances and social relations in order to understand women’s specific experience, which is arguably experienced as different to the male experience: ‘Women’s experience systematically differs from the male experience upon which knowledge claims have been grounded...when the male experience is taken to be the human experience- the resulting theories, concepts, methodologies, inquiry goals and knowledge-claims distort human social life’ (Harding & Hintikka 1983:x, cited in Punch 2005:136). In my line of interview questioning, knowledge making is explored by questions on gender issues and differences plus leadership and sexism:

- As a ‘woman advocate’, what are the issues you face? Gender issues?
- Do you consider yourself a feminist, ecofeminist? Science male-dominated?
- Are there any challenges you face? (gender /discrimination/ sexism/ male culture of work)
- What are the challenges facing women in Australia in the movement and everyday life?

Methodological studies have considered intersections of gender and power in relation to social justice issues and activist framework for change. Feminist notions of social transformation are rooted in theories of gender and power, and incorporate a range of moral and political judgements on what constitutes injustice (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002:6). Despite complexity, a strength of a feminist approach is its potential to incorporate justice within diverse situations and activist frameworks: ‘it is important to centre and make problematic women’s diverse situations and the institutions and frames that influence those situations, and then to refer the examination of that problematic to theoretical policy, or action frameworks in the interests of realising social justice for women’ (Olesen 1994:158, quoting Eichler 1986, cited in Punch 2005:136-37).

To a certain extent, I maintain that participants’ social change and environmental justice agendas are evidenced by the way gendered power relations, in practices of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy, are actively resisted and accommodated. Feminist scholars have explored social change as an activist strategy, arguing that research is only feminist if it is linked to action: ‘What I suggest is that our intent more consciously be to use our research to help participants understand
and change their situations’ (quoting Reinharz 1992:175, cited in Punch 2005:137). Environmental justice and social change questions include:

- What are your goals, aims or agenda in this role?/ the climate movement/campaign? (Prompt: local versus global / personal versus political/ barriers versus enablers/)
- What empowers you? Is there anything that is disempowering? Power-centric?
- How relevant is social and environmental justice to your work?
- Is a social change required to achieve environmental goals?

Part 2. Method

Research Design

Interview data is the primary source of the thesis. The interview was in a structured and semi-structured format, which enables me to draw upon a diversity of detailed and meaningful accounts. The duration of each interview was between 90-120 minutes. Each interview was individually tape-recorded with an audio recorder and subsequently qualitatively analysed. Two devices were used, a digital recorder and a manual tape recorder as a back-up. Initially, I transcribed some of the interviews and outsourced the remainder to a professional agency due to time constraints.

According to Punch, the semi-structured and unstructured interview approach is a useful tool in qualitative feminist methodologies (2005:168-72). It enables the researcher to understand people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations along with their constructions reality. Ruane adds that qualitative data empowers researchers to ‘walk a mile’ in the subjects’ shoes (2005:12). DeVault suggests that the ‘the talk in the interview data’, should be central to a feminist analysis (1990, 1991, 1999; DeVault & McCoy 2002). Hence, a qualitative method improves a diversity analysis and achieves depth rather than breadth (Blaxter et al. 2001:64). Open-ended interviews thus enable me to gather descriptive data.

I interviewed Australian women activists and advocates participating in paid and unpaid capacities of the environmental movement. The initial target was 30 women, with an estimated 50/50 split, for example, fifteen salaried and fifteen voluntary advocates. The initial interview period was 12 months. But the process
lasted 14 months rather than 12 months. This was because I required an extra participant in the academic activist category. Over a period of 14 months, I conducted 31 interviews, and have a relative split of salaried and voluntary participants. Nonetheless, the academic category has fewer participants to the other groups but their data is detailed. Academic activist insights are frequently cited in my data chapters. In Chapter 6, although academics recognise that EEO laws have enabled women’s performances in universities, they still struggle with gender prejudices, such as with ‘the boys club’ and women as token members of panels.

The interview is an open-ended, semi-structured format in order to encourage a variety of responses, knowledge and insights to gender and power relations. It is expected that participants’ possess an interest in the outcomes of my research findings and results. In addition, their participation enables me to understand women’s contribution to the movement plus its strengths and weaknesses. Findings may help to improve organisational practices and the status of women within the workplace/movement. Notably, my participants are members of the climate action movement, the sustainability movement, the anti-nuclear-toxic waste movement and the conservation movement. They take part in paid and unpaid capacities. Moreover, I am aware of diverse viewpoints, for some participants’ may not view themselves as (eco)feminist and also reject labels and stereotypes (Barry 2008; Duncan 2010; Yoder et al. 2011). But this does not dissuade me that gender differences and a masculinist culture affects women activists’ exercise of agency and competency.

In regard to one’s choice of method, there are different social aspects that qualitative researchers endeavour to investigate (Lawler 1998; Punch 2005). Social research methods involve interviews or focus groups (Lawler 1998: 77). In relation to Lawler, if the researcher is interested in the individual’s experience and how they manage this, then it is appropriate to conduct individual interviews with a number of different people (1998:78). On the other hand, if the researcher is interested in how this experience resonates with a group of individuals, then focus groups are viable. I selected interviews over focus groups because I am interested in analysing the individual to collective experience of a number of women working across sectors of environmentalism, rather than comparing specific individual accounts within a singular group setting. It is not necessary for these women to be located in the same location in my critique. What each participant reveals about themselves and their environs in the interview is collated in the analysis, and organised into themes.
Recruitment

Participants’ were sought in relation to the selection criteria. My aim was to have an event split of salaried and voluntary environmental activists. Interestingly, women volunteers work in paid positions and salaried women often work as volunteers; hence, this comparison enables me to draw upon rich data. In the questions, I considered women’s diverse work experiences in relation to my research objectives. The thematic analysis also contributes to the why, how, when and where questions of the interview schedule as well as research design.

Overall, most of the women employees or volunteers work in the third, public and political sectors. In my classifications, an activist is typically defined as a volunteer, and an advocate as an employee, although there is some overlap. For this reason, I believe that activists agendas are linked to a life purpose and ideological worldview, in that activist agendas are central to their life goals. On the other hand, an advocate, in general, is paid for their advocacy in that it is not necessarily a personal mission. Nonetheless, an advocate can also perform as an activist and vice versa, which has been the case in my study. On this point, a salaried employee is one that receives payment for their work, and a voluntary activist usually receives no a payment for their unpaid work. The rationale of a volunteer, anti-nuclear campaigner, for example, may contrast to that of a salaried woman environmentalist politician; overall, most women taking part in diverse sectors share a common link in their advocacy. But what is interesting here is contrasting the diverse work capacities without casting judgement on whether one is more valued than the other. Rather it is the experience and the subjective value of work satisfaction or dissatisfaction that is of relevance. Consequently, my goal is to analyse complex work situations.

General advertising

A principal strategy to engage participants was general advertising. I formally submitted a request in writing, principally via email, to the Human Resource department of the particular organisation or group of interest. Internet searches of organisations enabled me to consider potential candidates. It is worthwhile to point out that there are hundreds of environmental organisations in Australia, so a background research is paramount. An additional tactic to source eligible participants’ was to attend general meetings of organisations and indirectly leave information sheets for those interested. Although I considered the potential strategy
of word-of-mouth or snowball sampling; my participants’ were sourced through a formal invite in writing. They responded or rejected this. I sought advice from contacts within the movement on organisations to source.

Once an organisation was identified, a cover letter and recruitment flyer was designed. Markedly, discretion and confidentiality were part of the recruitment process. Participants’ were informed that the research process is confidential and anonymous, in that individual names were not identified in the thesis. Instead fictional code names or pseudonyms were used. This was emphasised in the Recruitment flyer and Information Sheet. The flyer emphasised that participation in the study should contribute to new empirical knowledge, the improvement of workplace contexts/cultures, the status of women, grassroots democratic engagement as well as climate reforms and robust movement actions (see flyer, appendix 3).

Interested participants’ received supporting literature, such as an information sheet outlining the research objectives and finer details of the interview. On this sheet, eligible candidates were provided with relevant contacts, such as the UWS Ethics (Human Subjects) Committee, my supervisory panel and support services, such as the UWS Ethics Officer’s contact details. The contact details for the organisation Lifeline were additionally provided, if for some reason, my study caused stress amongst participants. However, I did not identify stress with any of my participants during interviews. Along with the Information Sheet, these sources were then emailed to the generic email of the organisation. Ultimately, it was the participant(s) choice to make the first point of contact. Upon agreement, a consent form was to be signed by the participant, usually on the day of the interview. Further, the preferred strategy of contacting the organisation in writing was a strategy to allow the participant to choose while maintaining ethical protocols and professional integrity. I sought to be representative in sourcing women across diverse sectors. My involvement in grassroots activism provided networking opportunities. However, potential participants’ received a formal invite in writing, of which they responded to or rejected. If someone met the selection criteria, it is their choice to contact me. This avoided potential bias or favouritism. Further, identifying information was changed in the thesis to protect privacy and anonymity.

Out of the eligible candidates, the Greens members were the quickest to respond to my general advertising. Actually, I purposefully halted contacting the Greens party, for I needed to recruit other groups and to have a representative
Overall, the Greens women represented a third of participants, and conveyed articulate and detailed responses. In the analysis, most participants were socially progressive and somewhat left-leaning rather than conservative. The nature of the work is such that environmentalists are over-represented in Green politics, eNGOs and the grassroots, which strengthens my research drive. High profile, senior environmental women activists were targeted, although due to demanding schedules, some were difficult to source. Yet I successfully recruited some women politicians.

**Ethical considerations, interview timeline and location**

Ethical considerations are important in all social research projects that consider the human and the nonhuman, and such protocols were strictly adhered to in my study (O’Leary 2004). During the entire recruitment and interview process, I represented the University through professionalism, integrity, authenticity, accountability, responsibility and dedication (Punch 2005:277-78). Issues of harm and risk or possible conflict were considered. Participants’ were informed that the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Further, they were advised that the thesis is publishable and that some of my research findings and data will be used in supporting publications.

Another consideration was location, in that issues of safety and security are paramount to the ethical research procedure. A comfortable suitable place is important for most interviews took more than an hour. Interviews took place at participants’ work sites, such as their office. At other times, a public site, such as a meeting room in a library or community room was booked. Once, my postgrad office was used. Most academic activist interviews occurred at university campuses. Domestic residences were avoided for ethical and safety risk reasons. Some interviews were conducted in closed rooms in participants’ places of employment. This was due to ease of access issues and participants having limited time. Confidential conversations were conducted. Participants’ seemed comfortable disclosing positive and negative experiences relative to their organisation or everyday life. Hence, organisational sites were the preferred location of interviews and enabled the participant to allocate time and easily return to their paid work.

For volunteers, organisational sites were also used, such as locations affiliated with the group. Meeting rooms in libraries and Community Halls were also used for volunteers. In one interview with a grassroots activist, the interview was
conducted in a Library meeting room and it was free of charge; in another interview with a grassroots activist, an interview conducted in a library meeting room cost $12 for 2 hours. Further, interviews were conducted in Australian Metropolitan centres and affiliated suburbs. Once, I travelled to a regional location, yet this was an easy day trip. Access was not an issue as public transport was sought.

**Thematic analysis**

The interview data was analysed in relation to my research objectives. My contention is that insights and knowledge has significant implications in theory and practice. The following analytical strategies were applied to the data: theme identification, comparative analysis as well as data, conversation and content analysis (Crotty 1998:4-5; Trede & Higgs 2009). Themes from the qualitative analysis provide context to my remaining three empirical chapters. Chapter headings were based on the key themes from my data analysis, such as ‘boys club’, token women and maternal identity. These findings chapters are also compared to theory from the previous literary chapters. Further, thematic analysis enabled me to develop insights. According to Holliday, the formation of themes represents the necessary dialogue between data and researcher, which emerges from and helps to further make sense of the data as well as to provide a structure for the writing (2002:104).

**Part 3. Demographics**

In this demographical section, the participants’ are categorised into Group Categories, in order to provide a brief sociological profile. Notably, the Biographical and Sociological Snapshots (appendix 1) has a more detailed profile of my 31 participants, concerning their work status, age, marital status and sexuality along with specific ideological worldviews. Across my groups, the majority of the paid participants worked in unpaid capacities of environmentalism, which reflects descriptive data on work practices. First, I present a demographical breakdown in terms of employment/voluntary status, age group, gender, marital status and children, educational background as well as urban and regional locality. There is a further categorisation of the role type, and whether it is salaried or voluntary, such as a Greens volunteer versus a salaried employee.
Initially, it was considered that the sample may represent a cross-section of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. There was some cultural diversity, but less than expected. Most are Anglo-Celtic Australians, although six were from CALD backgrounds, including one participant of South American Heritage, another of Indian stock, another of an Ashkenazi Jewish background, and another three of comparative Dutch, German and Irish migrant parents. Regardless, all of these three participants of migrant parents, were born in Australia or had lived here from a very young age so linguistic issues were not a challenge.

Overall, most participants are White, middle-class, well-educated and worked in the professions. One participant identified as an Indigenous Australian with mixed European heritage whose identity was related to spiritual understandings of the natural world. Some participants recognise their Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) identity in relation to their activist roles, although one’s ethnic identity was not perceived to be an overall barrier to activist engagement. Nonetheless, Wendy, who is from an Asian background, contended that being an activist is breaking away from family and societal expectations for activism is perceived to be an unusual role for a young woman. Despite this perception, Wendy was committed to social change-climate leadership within CALD communities.

Of the 31 participants, 10 are members of the Greens party, 10 of eNGOs/NGOs, 7 of grassroots organisations, and another 4 are Academic Activists. The majority work in salaried environmentalism: in the Greens, 8 were salaried and 2 were volunteers; in the eNGOs, 7 were salaried and 3 volunteers; in the Academic activism, 4 were both salaried and volunteers. However, an exact breakdown of paid versus unpaid is difficult to quantify as most salaried participants worked across both paid and unpaid advocacy. What is characteristic about environmental work is that it is community centric and reflective of the modern 24 + 7 schedules. As such, it is often expected that employees work on campaigns afterhours on a voluntary basis, which suggests the relevance of this comparative analysis. What women share in this research is a deep commitment to the environmentalist cause.

Most participants were in the age group of 35+ with the majority either married or living with partners. In addition, the majority in this age group had one or more children. To a certain extent, being a mother guided one’s social and environmental responsibility as well as outlook for future generations. Those considered to be ‘non-mothers’, such as women without children, shared this
commitment. Interestingly, for those in the younger age group of 18-34, there was perhaps less experience conveyed due to age, yet most demonstrated comparative passion and commitment towards the environmental cause. Ageism was not a challenge within inclusive Greens contexts, which contrasts with other sectors. Age was found to be barrier at times for both the younger and older women. Some of the data indicated that labels of activism, age, ethnicity and feminism/eco-feminism were more of a barrier than gender; yet, women struggled with gender differences across the results. The high level of education of participants signified their knowledge as well as social statuses. Yet for those without tertiary qualifications, status was improved through merit and demonstrated skills in job situations.

Concerning residence, most participants resided in urban metropolitan areas of a large Australian city with two in regional areas, and another in the peri urban fringe or regional location. This reflects a largely urban versus rural representation. Participants’ specific locality has not been identified due to privacy, yet is described as an urban or suburban metropolitan location, such as, a socially progressive suburb. On the topic of sexual identity, two participants identified as lesbian or gay. One participant had separated from her husband, and identified as a lesbian who has been living with a female partner for a number of years. The other participant was in a younger age group and resided in a progressive urban area with her female partner.

Group 1- Greens party

Participants’ were sourced from the Australian Greens, with most holding salaried positions in the party. There were also volunteers. For example, 8 work for the party on a salaried capacity, with 2 politicians, 2 administrative staff and the other 4 as Locally Elected Government Councillors. The other two are volunteers in local campaigns. The Greens were a key source due to their policies on the social and natural world. They are grouped as follows:

Group 1.a- Greens- Politicians (Salaried): Jennifer, Maxine, Amy, Margaret
Group 1.b- Greens- Councillors (LGA) (Salaried): Jacqui, Stacey, Kate, Tanya
Group 1.c- Greens- Volunteers: Joan, Ruth
Group 2- eNGOs

The NGO category includes 9 salaried employees and 1 volunteer, although most employees work on a voluntary basis, which shows the flexibility of roles.

Group 2.a- eNGOs (Salaried): Deborah, Linda, Juliet, Heidi, Penny, Mara, Helen, Stephanie, Barbara

Group 2.b- eNGOs (Volunteer): Eileen

Group 3- Grassroots

In the grassroots group, all 7 activists are obviously volunteers, but also talk about their salaried work in environmentalism or their other paid and unpaid roles in diverse sectors. It is intriguing for an organisational study to draw on diversity within salaried and voluntary capacities for a comparative interdisciplinary field. It was initially predicted that these participants were more likely to identify as activists, yet biographies reveal that the term ‘activism’ is fraught with some complexity.

Group 3.a- Grassroots (Volunteers): Dion, Jessica, Shelley, Gillian, Wendy, Catherine, Abigail

Group 4- Academic activists

Turning to the women academic activists, all work in an environmental capacity within a paid capacity, yet they also do voluntary unpaid work, such as community or social advocacy. For instance, Yvonne conducts free talks on climate change, and lawyer, Rachel, provides free pro-bono services to clients in financial hardship. All are committed to the movement and reflect upon gender dynamics in their work. Obviously, all have PhD’s or higher degrees with two in the scientific field and another in Law and Arts. The fourth, Maggie is a medical doctor by profession. What is notable about these academics is the way in which education is tool to link professional and grassroots environmental advocacy.

Group 4.a- Academic activists (Salaried): Anna, Yvonne, Rachel, Maggie

Conclusion

This chapter has provided context to my feminist constructivist position. The methodological section (Part 1) addressed the conceptual and theoretical challenges
of feminist social research along with the best strategy to address gaps in theory and practice. It presented the rationale of the study, research questions and objectives as well as intellectual context. My line of interview questioning strategically connects theory to practice in order to locate participants’ gendered performances and organisational experiences in Australian environmental advocacy. The method section (Part 2) presented my qualitative method, research design, interview structure, the limitations of the study, recruitment strategy, ethical considerations as well as the thematic analysis applied to my interview data. An analysis of gendered power relations detailing participants’ experience may support or contrast with the reviewed literature. Part 3 presented a demographical overview of participants. The Biographical Snapshots (appendix 1), Sample of Interview Questions (appendix 2) and Recruitment flyer (appendix 3) also support my methodological approach.

Chapters 5-7 present a qualitative analysis of the interview data in light of my research and methodological objectives. These empirical chapters evaluate my research findings, core thematic insights along with contradictory conclusions. Core thematic insights to agency and competency in practices of ‘the boys club’, token women and maternal identity are explored in these data-driven chapters. The final eighth chapter- the conclusion, brings together the theory and interview data, in order to review conceptual and empirical points. Findings may identify gender-specific weaknesses and strengths in movements, along with suggestions to better engage the contribution and statuses of women advocates. Chapter five focuses on participatory accounts of women’s agency and competency in Australian environmental activism, whilst linking to the previous agency and competency theory chapter.
Chapter Five- Agency and competency in the context of women’s environmental activism

Introduction

This chapter outlines the gendered roles and work-based identities of Australian women environmental activists and focusses on their exercise of agency and competency. My interviews provide a context to the parallel theory chapter, and one of my core areas of intellectual context: women’s agency and competency in environmental activism. In this chapter, women working in grassroots organisations, eNGOs, Greens politics and academia detail their gender-power-based experiences plus barriers and enablers. I argue that women perform gender by negotiating masculinity and femininity, but they struggle with gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency. Within structures of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy, I analyse the way women exercise agency yet resist elitist practices. This involves investigating women’s resistance or accommodation to dominant notions of masculinity/femininity. Some women talk about ‘being arrested’ and performing ‘physically hard’ work, which are not perceived to be usual female performances.

The core themes of this chapter include: the egalitarian ethos of women activists’; activism as anti-hierarchy; a maternal/caring position in relation to activists’ motivation; and, a pro-caring ethic.

Women activists’ agency and competency is evidenced in this chapter; however, a pressing barrier to women’s power and influence is that men decision-makers dominate the glocal politics of gender and the environment. Participants’ comment on men’s resistance to women’s leadership, gendered campaigns and differentiated positions of responsibility. Some women criticise hierarchy and patriarchy, whereas others praise the flexibility, egalitarianism and inclusiveness of non-hierarchical and apolitical organisations. However, not all of my participants identify hierarchy or masculinity as a barrier. I also evaluate whether grassroots participatory action is a strategy of both volunteers and employees. Participants’ academic competency is articulated by social change leadership, communicational skills, campaign techniques, web literacy plus diverse sector negotiations. Thematic insights to Civil Disobedience, Leadership, and Empathy as well as Silence and Voice are shown by strategies of resistance, protest and accommodation. My
contention is that women are agentic and competent performers exercising resistant femininities within gendered power structures.

This chapter is organised into four thematic parts with sub-sections:
(Part 1) The egalitarian ethos of women activists versus the hierarchical structures within which they work;
(Part 2) Gendered power relations and activism as anti-hierarchy;
(Part 3) Environmental competency and gender as a performance; and
(Part 4) Agentic forms of active and passive resistance. (a) Civil disobedience; (b) Leadership; (c) Empathy; and (d) Silence and Voice.

Part 1. The egalitarian ethos of women activists versus the hierarchical structures within which they work

An egalitarian ethos and resistance to hierarchy

In this section, I consider the egalitarian ethos of women activists, and how this contrasts with the hierarchical contexts within which they work. In turn, the approaches of activists is viewed to be non-hierarchical. I argue that internal organisational structures that are non-hierarchical, apolitical, and egalitarian and grassroots enable participants’ engagement in environmental advocacy. Hierarchical structures have been critiqued as patriarchal and power-centric (Spitzner 2009; Walby 2011); although my participants endure hierarchy, they also resist hierarchy and gender stereotypes. Resistance represents empowerment, for women are active subjects who challenge experiences of domination and subordination (MacLeod 1992; Mellor 2009; Cockburn 2012). Participants’ exercise their power. Such action challenges masculine power as well as structures of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy. Participants’ identify hierarchy as a barrier or enabler to their work roles and activist agendas. For some women activists, it is more of a challenge than others.

In regard to enablers, Dion, a climate activist and governmental employee, views the public service to be hierarchical, but adds that the flexible work conditions and the independence of the job enable her to spend more time on an after-hour grassroots campaigns. She prefers the grassroots work, despite both roles being in environmentalism:

The work I do outside of paid work is more interesting than my paid work. While I enjoy my job, I’d much rather be doing what I’m doing as outside work full time... I’d say about 10 to 15 hours a week I spend outside on top of
a 35 hour week, and that can be longer if there’s events on the weekend or at night (Dion [audio] 2010).

Activism, as a strategy, is perceived to be anti-hierarchical, and the evidence from my interviews confirms this. Resistance towards hierarchy is a feature of social movements (Eder 1996a; Hawkins 2006; Doyle 2008). My participants also resist hierarchy and bureaucracy. Abigail explains how egalitarian structures enable women’s advocacy:

It requires creativity, imagination, vision; it’s about people skills, relationships. If you want to turn it into a bureaucracy, go somewhere else. We try and be egalitarian, but I’m very happy not to have to worry about running this, we’re always running things by each other. But as president, you’ve got influence of how bureaucratic it’s going to be... I want it to be somewhere where people feel inspired and it’s about co-operative relationships, and enjoying meetings. We have to comply with certain requirements, but that doesn’t mean we have to be a bureaucracy (Abigail [audio] 2010).

Women adopt an egalitarian ethos in their activism, but the capacity to perform this also relates to whether their organisations are egalitarian or hierarchical in their approach. In regard to resistant strategies, an egalitarian structure and culture enables women and men to cooperate despite some men wanting to dominate. The following account shows contradictory insights to gender and egalitarianism: ‘...there is a more egalitarian feeling about men in the progressive movements. But not always, they can be dominant or have difficulties in their personalities that they don’t know how to manage in a group situation’ (Abigail [audio] 2010). The egalitarian approach of men, according to Abigail, shows contradictions in that some men are also challenging the same dominant power relations, but this is not always the case, as Abigail indicates. Connell’s (2005) research on Australian men environmental activists revealed that their rejection of hegemonic masculine ideologies in favour of ecofeminist advocacy principles enabled them to work collaboratively with women and other men. Consequently, there is no singular masculine or feminine way of engaging as there are plural masculinities and femininities; nevertheless, women continue to endure gender-specific barriers, such as masculinist elites, in their work. Some participants’ define men’s power in terms of structures of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy as well as men dominating decisions. This relates to the
patriarchal control of their organisations, and the dominance of social elites in governance and industry. Moreover, women also comment on gender diversity.

My interviews provide evidence that women adopt a maternal/caring position in relation to their activism, but men can also adopt a caring position towards gender rights and environmental protection. Gillian conveys the value of gender diversity and that men activists are also challenging the same power relations by identifying with women’s rights:

There are plenty of men that are very active. While it [gender] might have some effect on the way I think. I did this after my mother more than after my father, and my sister. There’s a gender issue, but women tend to be more caring. Look at these men who are challenging that same power. My husband would feel just as strongly about the role of women in society (Gillian [audio] 2009).

Egalitarian and informal structures consequently enable women and men to cooperate and collaborate, which suggests that gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency can be destabilised. Women (and men) are climate campaigners whom play similar yet different roles, which signifies the ambiguity of gender dynamics and power relations.

Open and inclusive work strategies along with an ecofeminist ethic enable activists’ performances whilst empowering their agency and competency. Amanda, a grassroots leader, conveyed that a feminist ideology pervaded her group and that a maternal identity guides her ethic. In a female-dominated apolitical organisation, the goal is to prevent hierarchical structures and power dynamics from subverting the internal structure, ‘we worked hard to create a structure that was open, inclusive and protect it from other organisations that have more hierarchy, and probably a little bit predatory agendas politically’ (Amanda [audio] 2010). Additionally, organisational structures that encourage ‘collaboration’ enable grassroots women to engage across sectors, in that women-led strategies symbolise their empowerment:

Representation is a huge issue and central to our group, we decided that if climate change was to be fixed, then you have to include everybody...We have to get Liberal people standing next to Greens people, and you need bi-partisan support to get the whole system to change. It’s central that we’re apolitical, non-aligned. We’re clean politically; it means that people can work with you, because they know you’re not pushing a political agenda. So to set up a structure that we can all communicate and work collectively; but it’s all on a locked-in basis (Amanda [audio] 2010).
The above account shows that women recognise and resist discourses of bureaucracy in their activism. My accounts suggest that hierarchy is a barrier to women activists’ goals. I investigate the way hierarchy is resisted and accommodated by eNGO, Greens, grassroots and academic participants. Accounts may reveal barriers and enablers specific to gender, organisations and activist engagement. Empirical evidence demonstrate resistance to structures of hierarchy and cultures of patriarchy. Hierarchy is not entirely specific to women’s organisations, but as they manoeuvre across diverse sectors across the movement. Participants’ reckoning entails sociopolitical engagement within divisive power contexts.

The resistance towards hierarchy and patriarchy is shown by participants’ grassroots strategies; yet, Greens women politicians struggle to have their grassroots reformative ideologies realised within masculinist ruling elites, such as, State and Federal Parliaments. Despite challenges to having their voice acknowledge, women endorse grassroots democratic engagement in their diverse negotiations. Tanya, an LGA Councillor, rejects hierarchy and ‘absolute power structures’ within governance and everyday life in favour of ‘communalism and less consumption’ ([audio] 2009). Jacquie, who is also an LGA Councillor, perceives hierarchy to be more of an issue than gender. She adds that because her party is grassroots; this actually contrasts with mainstream politics:

I haven’t found that to be the difficult thing to deal with because of my gender. It is more the hierarchy. It is having to know who to speak to; I find that difficult, the Greens do not operate that way. Everything is grassroots and locally done. So to go from that headspace of coming to decisions by consensus as a local group, and then having to deal with the different parties and levels of government and administration and knowing who is the boss, that’s hard to negotiate the two (Jacquie [audio] 2010).

Moreover, one participant identified the Greens as hierarchical in its media negotiations, which is a contradictory insight. Interestingly, Ruth, a Greens volunteer, argues that her paid workplace is bureaucratic and hierarchical, but adds that the Greens adopt hierarchical aspects in their media negotiations, but avoid this during internal meetings:

...well, there’s definitely a hierarchy at the [omit], it’s quite clear and established... the same thing goes with the Greens. I mean, in terms of policy and media, if you were interviewed by journalists, you would want to ensure that your interpretation of Greens policy was accurate. There’s people in the Greens who advise. So there’s definitely a bureaucracy and a hierarchy of
people to refer to. However, any organisation has to have that to an extent, but there’s opportunities to question that. For example, there’s a State Delegates Committee, a meeting of all the [omit] groups where they discuss policy issues. It’s allowing everyone to have a say about how things work, the process, the policy. There’s opportunities for people to be involved, even though there is a certain hierarchy there (Ruth [audio] 2010).

The party’s adoption of hierarchy to suit particular agendas therefore contrasts with the other Greens accounts. In relation to the media, the Greens are somewhat hierarchical in representing themselves to the public view; however, hierarchy and bureaucracy are often challenged during State and local policy meetings. Greens meetings are characterised by conciliatory and consensus-based grassroots approaches. This suggests that the Greens adopt a multi-faceted approach within negotiations, rather than a one-dimensional strategy.

In a strategic manner, academic activists accommodate and resist elements of hierarchy. Anna highlights her personal resistance to rigid hierarchies: ‘I’m not very good with hierarchies. I trample it!’ ([audio] 2010). Anna explains that hierarchy is necessary for university accountability, but formal and informal structures are susceptible to flexibility:

It depends on the relationships and trust between members within that hierarchy. I wouldn’t do what somebody told me to do, if I didn’t respect their view. I can’t do something that I never believe is right or practical. You’ve got formal hierarchies and informal hierarchies. I see them both working together ([audio] 2010).

In the grassroots analysis, Gillian ([audio] 2009) pointed out that her organisation avoids hierarchical people and hierarchical structures. Participatory accounts demonstrate that men and women work well together, especially when men embrace a Greens justice ethic. Gender diversity is further strengthened by apolitical practices, consensus-based principles and a justice ethic. Gillian’s grassroots group is characterised by informality in contrast to the formality of INGOs, which reflects critiques on patriarchal INGOs dominated by male boards (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Doyle 2000). In the Climate Summit, Gillian condemned the way some of the NGOs ‘wanted control of the communication of the group, whereas it was a grassroots summit’. Further, the grassroots strategy challenged potential hierarchical structures. Moreover, third sector organisations engage in different tactics, whereby hierarchy characterises some NGOs, but is not characteristic of the grassroots.
In contrast to the grassroots, NGOs have been described as hierarchical. Some eNGO women esteem hierarchy in providing structure, and others emphasise the value of grassroots techniques as a strategy of engagement. It is indicated that hierarchy is ‘there for a reason’ (Helen [audio] 2010) but it also changes the dynamics of power within organisations. This has implications for the development of empowering gender and activist subjectivities.

Grassroots women, like Wendy, argue that INGOs are hierarchical but that grassroots organisations are decentralised and have a flatter, more inclusive structure. In relation to third sector partnerships, Wendy explains that youth organisations operate in a ‘fairly decentralised structure in comparison to the civil society INGOs that are fairly hierarchical’([audio] 2010). Wendy explains that uniform decision-making is difficult when the grassroots collaborates with INGOs, in light of ‘overarching bureaucracy and tiers of management’. Wendy elaborates that men are usually in ‘decision-making leadership roles within civil sector NGOs, whereas the super grassroots tends to be female dominated’. Wendy advocates a gender balance that integrates male and female competencies within decision-making and leadership.

In addition, Linda argues that her eNGO is hierarchical rather than consensus-based, which contrasts with perceptions, yet the work culture enables independent decision-making:

The culture isn't so hierarchical in that people have a lot of autonomy in decision-making provided they do well. There’s a misunderstanding in this organisation and other NGOs about whether they are hierarchical or practice consensus decision-making because we’re not a consensus-based organisation...in practice we might spend a lot of time trying to build consensus, but at the end of the day it’s a hierarchical top-down decision-making organisation (Linda [audio] 2010).

Other eNGO women detail hierarchy in large organisations and the public service, where barriers and enablers are viewed as organisational-specific rather than gender-specific:

In large organisations, there is hierarchy for a reason; to make things flow better. People sign off and take responsibility. Heads of organisations can be ego focused, so that’s something you manage. Learning to act appropriately and when you can represent the organisation and when you can’t in terms of public face requirements (Helen [audio] 2010).

...everyone knows what their job is, but there’s a lot of cross over and assistance given. With my boss, it’s definitely hierarchical. In the broader
organisation, it’s not really. Whilst, I need to answer to my boss, that scene isn’t applied to him from his boss. I’m in an outlier case, in the whole organisation, in that regard. ‘Cause, my immediate supervision is different to most other people’s’ (Stephanie [audio] 2010).

The public service is hugely hierarchical, far more than we are here. There were more levels of management... [omit] had been in the service for thirty years and she knew how to manipulate it to her advantage. She had risen to a level beyond her capability, and unfortunately was given a task that was too difficult. She would get you to things that she should have been able to do...It was bullying of the worst...She wasn’t struggling in that way [gender]... She wasn’t knowledgeable in the area and wouldn’t trust you to get on with what you had to do (Deborah [audio] 2010).

Discussion.
This section has revealed that the egalitarian ethos of women activists’ motivates their activism, and that egalitarian organisations are more conducive to the ambitions of female participants. Many of the women in my sample praised the egalitarian approach of their organisations. Some participants endorsed the feminist analysis that sees bureaucracies as reflecting male personality traits. This shows that men dominate organisational hierarchies. Some women identified men’s leadership style as ‘dominating’ and a barrier to an egalitarian ethos. Some praised hierarchy as efficient or necessary for effective political engagement. This indicates a rejection towards feminist critiques of ruling class masculinist elites.

I found that a maternal/caring position also inspired women’s activism; however, Gillian noted that her husband shares a pro-caring ethical view towards gender rights and environmental reforms. Such positions undermine gender essentialist assumptions. Surprisingly, Ruth criticised the Greens as hierarchical, in its dealings with the media. This shows that even in political parties of a strong grassroots and social change persuasion, it is not possible to totally eradicate hierarchy. The existence of hierarchy is perpetuated by the fact that not all of my participants identified it as a pressing obstacle. However, most of my participants advocate a non-hierarchical stance, which constitutes their agenda for change. Participants’ locate hierarchy within masculinist practices, which suggests that a gendered culture of work hinders women’s agency. I conclude that hierarchy is present in paid and unpaid work contexts; although it is more of a challenge for salaried women. Women volunteers and employees, nonetheless, challenge hierarchy
in their organisations and the movement. This demonstrates their recognition and resistance towards masculinist structures.

I conclude that organisational structures that are grassroots, flexible, non-hierarchical and egalitarian enable women’s performances. Hierarchy and bureaucracy constrain the agenda of women advocates; however, women resist hierarchy. They demonstrate resistant versus emphasized femininities (Connell 1987, cited in Leahy 2003). Yet women endure patriarchal and hierarchical obstacles in their advocacy, which constrains agency and competency (MacLeod 1992; Mallory 2006). In my research, women’s empowerment is shown by strategies of resistance and protest to the patriarchal control of their organisations and dominant social elites in governance. Furthermore, the leadership of women within salaried and voluntary capacities demonstrates their agency and competency.

My research findings demonstrate that hierarchy can be more of a barrier than gender. My contention is that women struggle to exercise their agency and competency in organisations dominated by hegemonic masculinity and that they also struggle to engage within dominant social elites such as governance and industry (Von Werlhof 2007; Connell 2009; Gneezy et al. 2009). Women’s activist resistance is challenging gendered power relations in a traditional social hierarchy (Connell 1995, 2005; Donaldson 2009). In addition, hierarchy can be both a barrier and enabler. Concerning enablers, Helen argued that hierarchy ‘makes things flow better’, and Anna illustrated that ‘formal and informal hierarchies’ work well within universities. Evidently, eNGO and academic women view hierarchy as enabling their roles, yet Greens and grassroots women reject hierarchy. Participants’ confer with hierarchical elites, which illustrates a degree of flexibility on their advocacy process along with potential reforms.

Hierarchy is experienced at an organisational and movement level. Greens and grassroots women identify hierarchy in their external negotiations, but not within their own party and organisations. The only exception is Ruth who identified hierarchy as a strategy of the Greens when negotiating with the media although this was avoided during internal meetings. The Greens accounts also illustrate that grassroots principles inform policy, and that hierarchy can be more of an issue than gender. The social change agenda of Tanya was shown by her critique of hierarchy pertaining to ‘absolute power structures’ in favour of ‘communalism’. Academic and eNGO women identify hierarchy as stabilising organisational processes as well as
enabling their leadership. In Stephanie’s eNGO, she claimed her boss was hierarchical, but added that work relations are more open across her organisation. Helen found that hierarchy makes ‘things flow better;’ yet heads of organisations can be egotistical, but this is not gender-specific. Deborah identified the public service as hierarchical; in a critique of a female manager, competency rather than gender was the issue. Therefore, hierarchy constrains or enables advocates performances as well as organisational engagement.

Further, hierarchy provides some functionality to eNGOs and academic structures, but has been evaluated as constraining women’s ambitions, especially in conservative masculinist practices. Overall, hierarchy is a barrier to participants’ agency and competency plus social change and environmental justice ambitions. Within eNGOs, hierarchy is ‘top-down’, which contrasts with the bottom-up approach of the grassroots. Grassroots women assessed the hierarchical approaches of eNGOs versus the collaborative consensus style of their organisations. Eyerman and Jamison (1989) had reviewed Greenpeace as a patriarchal hierarchy with a top-down structure, where managers reported to their chain of command. Unlike the grassroots, it is also less about consensus building. My study validates this point.

Organisations that are led by women with a strong feminist ethic are considered to be proactive sites to resist hierarchy and masculine norms (Jacobs 2004; Maddison 2004). Moreover, I have found that inclusive organisational structures that are egalitarian, apolitical and consensus, enable women to reject hierarchy and patriarchy. In the pursuit of social change, women esteem non-hierarchical grassroots structures in their engagement. Hence, egalitarian practices enable the advocacy, of women, and female empowerment is strengthened by strategies of female resistance and prowess. Studies have identified the value of egalitarian approaches in feminist women-led organisations and movements, in how a gender-egalitarian ideology improved self-efficacy among women that transformed their struggle (Hasso 2001; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Yoder et al. 2011). Women’s resistance therefore challenges historic notions of gender subjugation. Despite constraints, my participants are leaders, practicing resistant and protest femininities. They also engage in accommodation strategies within environmental advocacy.
Part 2. Gendered power relations and activism as anti-hierarchy

This section considers the gendered power relations affecting women activists, and also shows that women adopt anti-hierarchical strategies in their activism. Women’s struggle with power is demonstrated by their resistance to corporations and governmental authorities. For example, women’s resistance through lobbying and petitions, shows their resilience and capacity to challenge key decision makers. Some women express radical views, as Penny elaborates that ‘real political change’ is only achievable by changing political structures or ‘the Greenhouse Mafia’. Some women adopt conservative approaches; hence, Linda suggested that a male negotiator is more likely to achieve the eNGOs campaign outcome. This section reveals that women identify with gender stereotypes, but that they are competent political agents in their resistance within masculinist hierarchies.

I have found that social change unifies participants’ in paid and unpaid sectors of environmental advocacy, and strategically symbolises women’s agency and competency. Amanda had commented on the inclusiveness of representation and that climate change action needs bi-partisan support in order to achieve social change. This entails accommodating and challenging ‘the outsider’, such as organisations that oppose climate change. Social change ambitions unify grassroots and professional women’s objectives despite some different practices. In a strategic manner, social change is advocated by participants’ across diverse sectors. Hence, women share commonalities. Social change, as a goal of professional women too, is potentially a new finding, as studies have focussed on social change as a grassroots strategy (Aitchison 2011; Schlembach 2011; Singh & Burnes 2011; Sheridan 2012).

In relation to social change strategies, power is an issue women identify in their working agendas, yet critically power is a corrupt force to reckon with:

I believe in the old saying, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but I am in a position that has some power. Having been one of the powerless, a disability pensioner living in housing commission...whether I like it or not, I do not like dealing in power, but I have some power (Tanya [audio] 2010).

The above quote shows the complex way social status and disability status intersect within power relations, pertaining to someone who has historically struggled with power but now has power? In regard to complex power relations
within governance, eNGO advocate Penny, identified the power of the ‘Greenhouse’ mafia as the main obstacle. The labelling of the opposition as mafia is a powerful statement. The Greenhouse mafia includes organisations and individuals that oppose climate change reform or those that object to the reality of climate change. They represent dominant social elites in governance and industry. In tackling the greenhouse mafia, the empowerment of activists is through grassroots community collaborative resistance. It is in the power of individuals and collectives to challenge the dominance of the Greenhouse mafia, and only then will there be real change:

I think that kind of change is not necessarily the people or the government that are making the decisions. It’s the greenhouse mafia. Creating change is going to take an absolute ground swell of people to stand up to that mafia and make them not be the ones with all the power, for us to sort of get change in politics, the political world. Umm, which I think is starting to happen in terms of some of the leaders saying they want a carbon tax and action, but you look at the movement and you see how much power they have... but I think its reality until we as a community, work out how to take that mafia. It’s only then that we’ll get real political change (Penny [audio] 2010).

Volunteers identify barriers when negotiating with government and corporations; yet the grassroots is a powerful lobby force. For Gillian, the Federal government’s policy and close relationship with big business and industry is the biggest obstacle for activists:

... the government’s policy is the biggest barrier, and their very close relationship with the big industry. The smaller companies don’t seem to get any say... maybe the residents have more power than small industries, because they can get together and bring petitions and lobby their politicians. The small companies have the disability in that one company itself isn’t very powerful. It seems that the tourism industry is going to suffer with climate change, yet the government says that they care... the government is the biggest opposition to activists achieving their goals (Gillian [audio] 2010).

The interview with Wendy revealed power-specific barriers and enablers; nonetheless, ‘disempowered’ experiences actually enabled Wendy to become a strong leader:

The most enjoyable things are when I am out with communities, learning from them or sharing my ideas and helping make things happen. The most challenging are when I am disempowered, and I feel I am unable to change a situation or communicate to a specific person or community, and they are not listening. When communication breaks down in a team and have to do a bit of conflict management (Wendy [audio] 2010).
Grassroots activists endure disempowering experiences through barriers in climate conferences and policy reforms, which is complicated when there are political interests:

The low is the disempowerment that comes with not seeing what we wanted to see in Copenhagen, or Poznan. There were high points politically in both places. But it’s a huge complicated issue. We wanted a solution in Copenhagen; it’s a hard issue to get a consensus on; because there are so many political interests (Wendy [audio] 2010).

Gender barriers, in terms of men’s dominant power and injustices present women activists with challenges, especially when men politicians are criticised as exploiting vulnerable families to suit their political agenda. The ability to be agentic as an activist is complicated by the dominance of men in politics, business and industry and their opposition to participants’ social change agendas. Catherine’s activist ambition is to encourage anti-mining grassroots resistance, and a barrier is the injustice and justice issue of rich men in positions of power:

...when I see the number of good people whose livelihood is rolled by the expansion of, coal mining, that is a massive injustice, because in some cases, it’s only a couple of very rich and powerful men that have their way. Our society, our government is set up for them to have power… Why should they have all this power over what happens when, 20, 30 or 40 families in an area, have to lie down and take it? I find that absolutely immoral. That’s a big social justice issue (Catherine [audio] 2010).

Catherine’s interview articulated activists’ strategic challenge to the mining industry, but also specified that traditional power structures, in the form of social elites, reproduce masculinist dominance. In my research, women negotiate stereotypes of masculinity and femininity by resisting and accommodating labels. Women-led strategies of ‘consensus and collaboration’ were viewed as viable alternatives to men’s power and masculine norms (Linda [audio] 2010). Linda’s account acknowledged women’s resistance, and suggested that if there were more women leaders, there would be different outcomes:

There’s a number of powerful men within the environment movement that disempower women or give less regard to their viewpoint... I’ve experienced bullying which is gender related... I’ve tried to negotiate with a head of another NGO where the advice I had was to fight, and to get a male to go in and do that because I wasn’t going to get anywhere. I think that was valid and that’s what we did (Linda [audio] 2010).
**Discussion.**

Participatory accounts revealed that power is a barrier to women’s activism, and that power takes different forms, yet power is largely found within masculine structures and cultures. For example, Catherine commented that ‘powerful’ and ‘rich’ men lead the environmental movement, and Linda added that she has experienced bullying as a woman eNGO employee. This section shows that women experience power-specific barriers—again within hierarchical contexts informed by masculinity and the dominance of men; however, their activist goals for social change, strategically positons them as anti-hierarchy. Further, my participants challenge corporations and governmental authorities, through active and passive forms of resistance, which demonstrates their anti-establishment approach to change.

Overall, I have found that power is a gender-specific and organisational-specific barrier that constrains participants’ social change goals within environmental advocacy. Tanya outlined that power is ‘a corrupt force’ and Penny commented that the ‘power of the Greenhouse mafia’ is the main obstacle towards social change. In addition, Wendy pinpointed the challenge of feeling ‘disempowered’ and ‘not being listened to’ as well as the ‘lack of consensus’ at conferences like ‘Copenhagen’ due to ‘competing political interests’. Linda recognised the issue of powerful men who ‘disempower’ women; although men were tougher negotiators. This insight illustrates an interesting gender dynamic of power. On one level, women identify power as a gender and work-related barrier; and, on another level, there is an accommodation towards masculinist competency in tough debates. Catherine realised the injustice/justice issue of rich men controlling the mining industry and the governments and corporations that support them. However, women are resisting male dominance through their grassroots campaigns that challenge the power of the ‘Greenhouse Mafia’. Despite power and gender-specific barriers, women exercise leadership in their diverse grassroots and professional capacities. This accentuates their agency and competency. Thus, women practice varying degrees of resistance and accommodation within a gendered culture of work.

Agency is demonstrated by the advocacy of women in paid work and voluntary work, where women aspire towards a positive change through actions and assertions as well as understanding the world (Leonard 1997, 2005). The women in my study are genuinely passionate about environmentalism, in that pay or financial...
incentive is not a core motivator. Academics often perform voluntary tasks and aspire towards a positive difference in their academic writings at university as well as voluntary community work (Salleh 1997, 2010, 2011). Further, agency represents political participation and subjective engagement in regard to social change agendas, where the ‘I’ in identity is actualised as a personal and cultural experience of engagement and empowerment (Butler 1990, 2004, 2008). Activism is an experience of social engagement and personal empowerment within glocal contexts (Arvanitakis 2009). Further, Salleh (1997) considered agency as politically discursive where lows and highs impact subjective formation in that the common ground approach of grassroots and academic activists was through robust ecofeminist protest actions.

Part 3. Environmental competency and gender as a performance

In this section, I illustrate the environmental competency of my participants and gender as a performance through the negotiation masculinity and femininity. I consider the way environmental competency is located in participants’ grassroots and everyday knowledge as well as their intellectual skills. This section begins with relevant quotes from women who identify the power of written and oral skills within their activism, and how this informs their negotiation techniques with other activists along with formal and informal political lobbying strategies. For example, participatory accounts (Yvonne, Gillian, Dion, Wendy) show that written and oral communication is a strategic tool that enables activists to successfully perform their work. The agency and competency of women activists is demonstrated by their written and oral skills, time allocation and prioritising, campaign strategy, technical and web literacy, academic and professional competency plus political literacy. Within everyday life, a rigorous skills-set demonstrates the professional and practical engagement of women:

To be effective, need to communicate well in written and oral form. You need to be a good teacher because the most important group that we influence are our students. I think people need to work hard; it comes back to deciding how best you can use your time to influence things. It would be better if I could do less things but do them better (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Communication is important, not only the spoken but also written. One thing that is beneficial is good people skills. My people skills aren’t as good as they could be. I’m more into going out by myself and do some weeding. In my
activist role, you are talking to the public, politicians; communication is important (Gillian [audio] 2010).

...the commonalities are basic skills, so being able to communicate verbally and relate to people, interpersonal skills are important. You need to be in a relationship with your boss and colleagues, and doing that in a climate sense, on a stall talking to people. And written skills, we’ve written grants for our climate group. Those communication skills are critical. Our group has different skills sets, but I have inside information on how the government works, and that can be useful in looking at what’s realistic in our achievements and what we plan to achieve as a group (Dion [audio] 2010).

...understand the Internet, Web skills and design skills, understand management, handle funds, to deal with people…I would like to learn more about movements, how I can bring my strengths. I have unique strengths that not a lot of people have in [omit country]...Internet skills, writing skills, online campaigning. I would like to take the skills from Australia, and see how things could be changed (Wendy [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

The agency and competency of women activists is located in their knowledge, comprehension and literacy. In my results, environmental competency is evidenced by communicational skills, campaign techniques, web literacy, diverse sector political negotiations plus academic competency. Skills and meaning-making are acquired through formal training or practical experiences on field sites (McPhillips 2002; Maddison & Scalmer 2006). Further, academic competency is performed by volunteers and employees. In regard to flexibility within sectors, academic activists perform well in grassroots advocacy campaigns and grassroots women also perform competently in their diverse sector negotiations. Culley and Angelique (2003, 2010) had outlined the professional competency of grassroots women within anti-nuclear activism, whereby women’s empowerment was realised by resisting men’s power structures and acquiring practical knowledge of nuclear jargon. McPhillips’ (2002) study on Australian crusaders as local heroes considered the perception that because activists do not have qualifications, this is why their competency is under-estimated. Yet women acquired knowledge of scientific toxic waste, and such prowess was articulated in negotiations with politicians and industry. Hence, practical knowledge is a platform for grassroots volunteers without formal qualifications to develop professional skills and competencies (Maddison 2004;
Maddison & Scalmer 2006), which undermines tags of female incompetency and stereotypes of appropriate gender roles.

Evidently, participants’ empowerment is through their passion, prowess and merit as volunteers and employees of environmental organisations pursuing climate-sustainable reform within contexts receptive or hostile to change. Activism is thus a form of individual and collective reckoning whereby the ‘personal is political’ (Gardiner 1995). Patriarchy and hierarchy, in the form of a traditional social hierarchy and gendered dualisms, are barriers to women’s inclusion (Plumwood 1997, 2006), nonetheless, the merit and prowess acquired by women in formal and informal contexts of advocacy, illustrates their agency and competency.

**Performing masculinity and femininity**

The performativity of gender is evidenced by the way women actively ‘do gender’, in regard to negotiating masculinity and femininity. Gendered performances involve participants’ resistance to gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency. In turn, women in this study, resist or accommodate tags of ‘normative’ masculinity and femininity. My results emphasise that women are not afraid of getting their hands dirty and performing hard fieldwork. This is traditionally stereotyped as male versus female work. Agency and competency is subsequently demonstrated by the way gender norms are being challenged:

> you can’t be afraid of getting your hands dirty or have good nails or anything like that. It can be physically hard. Recently, we did an experiment with 800 pots, and all of them were 10 kilograms each. We had to move them all the time. Some people don’t like doing that sort of thing. But that’s the sort of science I do. You find more women in biochemistry, that is purely lab based stuff, rather than, so there are less women in field based sort of work that I do (Anna [audio] 2010).

As an activist, Gillian perceives herself to be ‘not a typical woman’. As a former teacher, she was labelled, ‘different’, but additionally argues that activists who worry about getting their ‘fingernails dirty’ are probably only pretending to be activists anyway:

> As far as being an activist, there are advantages to being a woman, but I’m not a typical feminine woman, so maybe it makes a difference...what people perceive women as like, painting their fingernails and not liking to get their hands dirty. I’m not like that. I’ve been told I’m different by some of the male teachers in my last school, they made comments about the other girls didn’t want to get their hands dirty, like work in the garden, and I said, ‘I don’t care
about that’. They said, ‘Oh yes, but you’re not typical, you’re different.’ I think that’s true... the ones that worry about getting their fingers or hands dirty, maybe pretend to be activists (Gillian [audio] 2010).

In regard to performing femininity, Dellinger and Williams (1997) questioned ‘Beauty Work’ with gender and agency in how women negotiated appearance in their makeup work (cited in Kwan & Trautner 2009:1017). Interviews found that women are negatively sanctioned when they do not wear makeup and positively rewarded when they do wear makeup. Such practices reinforce gender stereotypes and representations of femininity in that potential resistance is fraught by perceptions and structural constraints in organisations.

Drawing upon gendered performances and entrenched glass ceilings, Barbara argues that some women are ‘acting like men’ in order to reach ‘the top’ and acquire CEO positions in eNGOs. This confirms that there is no singular feminine or masculine way of behaving:

...in the environment movement, there are a lot of women who are well placed... they are bossy, pushy. They’ve been told they were a princess, and they make their way to the top, they don’t care whose head they tread on, they’re just the same as men. They operate in a dynamics where if they want to be the CEO of an eNGO, they will operate just as ruthlessly as men. Maybe they have to do it even more because there’s still those inherent glass ceilings. I don’t think there’s a glass ceiling in the public service but there is in some industries. But these things take time (Barbara [audio] 2010).

The above quotes of Barbara and Gillian show the conflicts between women in the environmental movement in relation to the performance of emphasized femininity. These examples suggest that women who perform femininity are not really considered to be environmental activists, whereas women who succeed in eNGOs potentially adopt non-feminine strategies (unlike the speaker). I have also found that participants’ encounter gender differences, which relates to performances of masculinity and femininity. The idea of being a woman, as ‘an outsider’, is something that participants’ resist and accommodate. Gender performativity is articulated by the way women respond to experiences of inclusion and exclusion. This entails resisting gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency. In ‘the doing’ of femininity and masculinity, Dion revealed that gender is specific to her activism and that there are differences in the behaviours and roles of men and women in
climate campaigns. However, when women embrace ‘conciliatory’ techniques, it appears they are rejecting the criticism of men:

I went to a scientific panel, 10 people, all men. You look at the stall, doing all the work behind the scenes, it’s all women. There’s some great women that do fantastic things in the climate movement, I find men are more likely to say, ‘We should be doing this,’ and be argumentative for no reason. Women are better at having more of a conciliatory approach, they’re more happy to work together... in the movement where people are critical and negative, they’re generally always men (Dion [audio] 2010).

Within the diversity of environmental advocacy, some campaigns are gendered which reflects the different interests of men and women and the reproduction of gender norms. This accounts for why women may need to perform masculinity/femininity in a particular context. Deborah also explains how campaigns are gendered, which suggests that stereotypes are being reproduced, although meritocracy in terms of ‘the best person for the job’ is relevant:

...the climate change team, it’s all men whereas the green home team, it’s all women...the green home team don’t do advocacy work like we do. They’re not campaigners, they do the public outreach program, they do teaching...Some areas tend to attract men; our two nuclear campaigners are both men. I think climate change attracts men to the economics. It’s more of a hard science as opposed to a soft science...I find the biodiversity side more interesting (Deborah [audio] 2010).

Greens, grassroots and eNGO participants’ comment on the differences in female and male participation in voluntary and salaried capacities; although it appears women are over-represented in the grassroots, they are also securing leadership posts in governances, which locates their agency and competency:

...concern for climate change is dominated by women in our community and that’s shown by polling... industry, very dominated by men... the employed staff on climate change, there’s probably more men than women. Within the government departments, certainly at the national level, very dominated by women (Linda [audio] 2010).

Participatory accounts assess volunteers’ vibrant social change strategies, in lieu of high wages. Yet, paid and unpaid roles continue to be differentiated along gender lines:

...the climate change action groups at the local level; it is all the women sitting around the kitchen tables, going to cafes and meeting in libraries. And getting on with the shit, they are making stuff happen... I used to say, the
women are doing all the work, and the men step forward and say, ‘I can take this, I have a higher paying job, I’ll take the glory, thanks’. The women are all the ones that do not tend to want the profile. They want the change. I feel that’s a big difference (Maxine [audio] 2010).

...this office isn't representative. We’re female-dominated. We’ve got 80% women, 20% men and we get excited when boys apply for a volunteer role or a paid role in the office because we want to get more gender balance. In my team, a third female, two thirds males, which is opposite (Juliet [audio] 2010).

In relation to gender differences, the medical hypothesis argued by physician Maggie is that women and men think and act differently in relation to their internal biological functioning in the brain. This interpretation apparently crosses the dangerous territory between constructivist and essentialist debates. However, Maggie adamantly argues that women need to exercise their own power within activist discourses. Hence, a constructivist approach is a preferable engagement strategy:

...I’m a biologist fundamentally. I’m interested in the work on the hormonal receptors in the brain and how that influences behaviour, male and female, the Jungian psychology...men have a smaller connection between the right and left brain than women and men tend to be tunnel-visioned, very left brain. Women can incorporate both the right brain where feelings and intuition and the left brain together and multi-task. Hold a baby on one hip, stir the soup with another and organise a campaign with the phone on your ear. So, women are very intelligent, they’re very good at conflict resolution, yet somehow we’ve given up our power... (Maggie [audio] 2010)

On the topic of gender differences within the environmental movement, according to Wendy, this is interpreted by ‘men as hunters and women as gatherers’. Women’s equality, is therefore, complicated by entrenched cultural representations of masculinity and femininity:

Gender equality plays a huge role in the protection of the environment; the way women engage with the environment is very different to the way men engage with the environment. I was reading, traditionally men were hunters and women gatherers. Men engage with the environment in an independent sense, and for women an interdependent sense, it was a very different relationship (Wendy [audio] 2010).

Dion also claimed that sometimes women and men think and act differently; nonetheless, a gender balance is useful in the workplace. This is because skills are
not entirely defined by gender binaries. Furthermore, Dion downplays perceptions of
gender competency:

Sometimes there could be more men. I think men and women think
differently about things, but it’s useful to have a gender balance. Some of the
men and the women I’ve worked with, they have varying skills sets both of
them, but, I feel comfortable working with women...Women have an ability
to compromise a bit more. Particularly, in the climate movement. I’ve noticed
it more so than in my job– but I couldn’t say that the skills differ between
men and women (Dion [audio] 2010).

In regard to gender competencies, Stephanie illustrates that women listen
more to the opposite view whereas men tend to get stuck on their ideas; yet they
share a motivation:

I’d say when it’s negotiating. Women seem to be more receptive to listening
to the opposing view, whereas, sometimes blokes will have an idea, and keep
steamrolling it, they can’t really widen their blinkers to see another
perspective. They generally think their idea is a great one, which is why
they’re trying to steamroll it and dismiss others. I think it’s a shared
motivation, but just a different strategy (Stephanie [audio] 2010).

Men’s resistance to women’s leadership is a gender barrier, which
exemplifies the latter’s struggle for inclusion and equity. Participants’ agency and
competency is thus underscored by a male blocking consensus. However, women
resist pressure, which highlights their strength and determination. Although Maggie
struggled to negotiate with ‘hierarchical males’ in elitist corporations, she advocated
a grassroots women-led social change movement:

... if I’m asked to address corporate meetings, the men don’t talk to me
afterwards. If I was pre-menopausal and attractive I could get away with it,
but now I’m part of the wallpaper. They don’t like strong women telling them
unpleasant things...I don’t have a penis. It’s as simple as that... I was deposed
in my organisation by hierarchical males who were jealous of me... corporations never come to me which is very serious. They should be aspiring
to enormous power to save the planet... the way you do that is to organise a
grassroots but you can't organise a grassroots without educating them and
how do you educate them? Only through the media (Maggie [audio] 2010).

A male blocking consensus that is ‘argumentative’ affects the ‘energy’ of
activists, yet women show agency and competency by organising peace groups and
writing letters:
We had a local peace group, a Church based; we would write letters, go to marches. Our difficulty was a member who seemed to be blocking consensus, a male blocking consensus all the time. He was very argumentative. We lost energy convincing this guy that it was worth doing this, he was just a blocker (Abigail [audio] 2010).

In particular, the lack of merit in some organisations presents an additional barrier to female inclusion. Some participants’ recognise competency but also critique the lack of meritocracy. Linda pinpoints women’s professional skills and the lack of feedback at work:

Everyone I’ve worked with here has great skills and experience. I was having a conversation with a woman at lunch today about good work being acknowledged, and she said that in the last 12 months not a single person has given her positive feedback... merit is recognised. If you’re good at what you do, you get promoted... but there’s not a culture of positive feedback (Linda [audio] 2010).

Further, the lack of merit contributed to Barbara’s depression; nevertheless, her involvement in paid and unpaid environmental roles revitalised her confidence:

I was exhausted after 25 years of work. I had been cold shouldered. I didn’t expect a golden handshake...But no, my response was depression...what happened to change it was my environmental work. I did a lot of voluntary work and some paid work in my valley, where I started to regain my confidence (Barbara [audio] 2010)

Discussion

Evidently, women activists’ environmental competency and agency is defined by their work contexts, which are either informed by egalitarian principles or by hierarchical structures. Women activists engage in work contexts that are conducive or resistant to their environmentalist agendas. Yet they also resist the structures and practices that constrain them. Additionally, the lack of merit was contested more by employees than volunteers. In turn, the economic factor is less of a motivator for grassroots women, and that work satisfaction may not drive their goals. Notably, some of the grassroots and professional women reflect essentialist views of femininity whereas others resist emphasized forms of femininity. Dion pointed out that women and men ‘have varying skills sets’, although she stressed the value of a gender balance at work. Maggie explained that ‘women can incorporate both the right brain where feelings and intuition and the left brain together and multi-task’ but
added that ‘somehow women have given up our power’. This suggests an essentialist view, but challenges the response of women too. Women are encouraged to resist male power. Gender stereotypes are being accommodated and resisted in my study. Grassroots activist Gillian and academic activist Anna both enjoyed ‘getting their hands dirty’. Their accounts a recognition and resistance to gender labels.

My participatory accounts reveal that gender is an active performance that involves the active negotiation of masculinity and femininity. Hence, women’s performativity within activist discourses and contexts is undermining traditional perceptions of competency and agency as masculinist constructs (Butler 1990; Gardiner 1995; Cockburn 1988; Kwan & Trautner 2009). Historic experiences of marginalisation and subordination were challenged by women’s exercise of power and agency along with empowering leadership strategies towards change. Such prowess undermines gendered distinctions. Markedly, gender is a process of active engagement as well as feminine and masculine intersections. Gender performativity evidenced by the women in my study, further relays the ‘I’ in women’s subjective recognition as social change advocates. Gardiner (1995) contended that women are performing stereotypically masculine attributes of self-confidence and political autonomy. Women’s agency is undermining perceptions that ‘maleness’ represents rationality and elevated competencies. In my interviews, agency is shown by challenges towards masculine power and female competency is shown by women’s skill in professional and grassroots roles. Participatory accounts suggests that skills are gender-specific and gender-neutral yet women possess certain strengths in regard to ‘listening’ and ‘compromise’, although a gender balance is advocated.

Agency is both power and gender relational, whereby women accommodate and resist experiences of struggle and marginalisation (MacLeod 1992; Leahy 2003; Plumwood 2001, 2006, 2009). The interviews, with women in my study, confirm the existence of a masculinist culture of work within environmentalism in regard to: gender-power-specific barriers: labels of female incompetency; male power, men resisting women, a male blocking consensus, internal hierarchies, the sexual division of labour, glass ceilings; the lack of merit in some organisations, and a conservative resistance to women-led social change leadership strategies. As a result, female inclusion is differentiated by gendered campaigns and gendered leadership, which is why men are still the decision-makers.
Gender barriers within a masculinist culture of work are evidenced by glass ceilings in environmental organisations. Connell (2009) claimed that women executives are 2% of CEOs in corporations, which supports Mellor’s (1997) analysis of men’s managerial leadership dominance in eNGOs. My accounts reveal that the glass ceiling represents a power-centric gendered culture of work. Barbara’s account demonstrated that women sometimes behave like men, and adopt tactics of ‘bossy’ and ‘pushy’ in order to acquire CEO positions in eNGOs. This supports Greer’s (1999) contention that when women enter traditional male preserves, they sometimes behave like men and even appear manlier. Greer adds that a woman who becomes the leader of a conventional political party can only do so if she has become tougher than the men: ‘It was often said of Margaret Thatcher that, despite her frothy bows and four-inch heels, she was the only man in her cabinet’ (1999:299).

Hence, there is no singular masculine or feminine way of acting. Evidently, at times, women adopt ‘male characteristics and strategies’, which confirms that women practice masculinity in their roles. Nonetheless, they also practice femininity and embrace a gender balance in leadership and decision-making, as Dion pinpoints. In turn, my findings validate a complex gendered culture of work. In particular, a masculinist culture influences women’s work-based roles and gendered identities. In regard to women’s experiences of being the outsider, men’s resistance to their leadership underscores potential agency and empowerment. The lack of meritocracy and positive feedback additionally highlights an organisational barrier to female inclusion. Although, women comment on commonalities and differences within gendered power structures, a gender balance that integrates the competencies of men and women is also advocated.

Part 4. Agentic forms of active and passive resistance.

My contention is that women activists’ agency and competency is contextualised by both active and passive forms of resistance. Some participants’ believed that to engage in effective political struggle, it is necessary to abandon aspects of emphasized femininity (passivity, delicacy), and rather than confirm to male power, to resist male power. An active form of resistance is civil disobedience, where getting arrested is a strategy that challenges authorities. A passive form of
resistance is shown by women being silent rather than boisterous during peace campaigns; their incorporation of ecofeminist empathy principles within activist campaigns; and, their academic competency, evidenced in their publications and speeches, which are also strategies to promote awareness as well as change.

(a) Civil disobedience

In regard to civil disobedience, women comment on being ‘arrested’ as an activist strategy. Grassroots and salaried women’s prowess is evidenced by bravery, camaraderie and dedication in social change campaigns that challenge authorities. I have found that both volunteers and employees, in my study, adopt civil disobedience strategies. Nevertheless, it is mostly a strategy of grassroots activists. At Climate Camp, Greens politician Margaret indicates no fear of arrest or legal repercussion in pursuit of the greater cause:

There’s a few of us prepared to be arrested at Climate Camp, and there’s one coming up, so we will be quite happy to be arrested. We feel as though we’re helping. There’s a lot of young activists that are brave, that put their careers on the line and we feel that we can help them. We advocate for other people (Margaret [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon ‘happy to be arrested’, Stacey was part of a group where over one hundred people were arrested outside Federal Parliament. There is an interesting power dynamic here when politicians- people with political power are exercising the laws of the land but also challenging it. In relation to Stacey, evidently social change strategies agendas compel women’s civil disobedience, but there are other ways to be environmentally active:

I went to Canberra and was part of a protest where 130 people got arrested outside Parliament House and I was one of them. It was about highlighting to the government before they went to Copenhagen, they needed to be serious about reducing emissions, having a proper mandatory target and expanding the coal industry and logging forests was not going to address the issues...You can be activated and very engaged...They don’t see themselves as environmental activists. I hope that somebody like me can say to Mums and Dads, you are already an activist. You are fighting for the environment because you think about your kids and how you do things (Stacey [audio] 2010).

Notably, Climate Camp, an annual Australian protest event organised by grassroots organisations and eNGOs, is a collective action that women esteem in their activist strategies of resistance. According to Dion, Climate Camp challenges
the coal mining industry and engages the community towards a renewable sustainable future, but this can be dangerous:

People came in the middle of the night and jumped on tents, and came drunk and started abusing people and people threw eggs at us the next day. It’s scary when you’re in that situation... they see us as a direct threat to their livelihoods, ’cause they work on the mine and we were saying, it shouldn’t continue (Dion [audio] 2010).

The account of Dion identifies the way this action places activists in a ‘scary’ position, when the livelihood of locals clashes with the anti-mining campaigning of activists. However, the direct action of women (and men) in the firing line shows that women are competently performing roles not conventionally deemed feminine, which is helping to destabilise perceptions of gender. The agency of women is therefore demonstrated by the way activism reworks social relations of power and cultural representations of masculinity and femininity. For instance, Tanya outlined radical strategies within Climate Camp, such as stopping the coal trains, along with her involvement in social justice and Indigenous rights campaigns:

I attend rallies, I’ve been to the last two climate camps. The last one; we marched to the entrance of the coal facility. The year before we marched to the rail yards and stopped the coal trains from taking their coal. I’m involved with a lot of issues. I speak about indigenous problems, rallies against the Northern Territory Intervention. I also do work with homelessness. I speak at a lot of anti-war rallies (Tanya [audio] 2010).

The women in my study, especially older women, convey a bold and proud history in social change campaigns that challenge male dominance. Women’s agency was demonstrated by a powerful collective actionist event organised by Australian ecofeminists outside a U.S. army base, where the potential to being arrested was shrouded by brave anti-war protests:

...one of the most exciting actions was in 1983 when 700 women camped outside Pine Gap, a U.S. military installation outside Alice Springs, that was a very powerful action by these hundreds of women to say no to war. I had a real pleasure working with those women and I learnt a great deal at the time (Jennifer [audio] 2010).

However, some women resist activist labels and adopt conservative versus radical tactics in their pursuit of social change. In my findings, women share a common ground ideological worldview, but differ in their approaches. Activism is a
personal choice or based on the organisation type where some are less radical or confrontational. Choice is a characteristic of the social structures within activism and its movements (Leonard 2005; Giddens 2009; Meynell 2009). In my interviews, women are resisting or accommodating their gender roles pertaining to how they respond to being arrested. Participatory accounts suggest that social change is feasible through collaborative efforts. Abigail rejected protest events at Climate Camp because of the fear of potential arrest and confrontation with the police:

It takes courage to do it... I find it intimidating to interact with the police in that way. I went to climate camp, and I couldn’t participate in sitting on the road because I didn’t want that interaction with the police. I don’t think the police are violent or unreasonable. I don’t have the courage. I’m not real convinced how effective it is, but my temperament doesn’t fit very well; but I admire people who do it...but I don’t think social change is more likely to come about because of those actions. It’s more about talking to people, standing for something. I understand why people do it, I’m just not sure how well it advances what we’re on about (Abigail [audio] 2010).

Labels associated with activism and perceptions of a female role in society indicate barriers towards exercising social change strategies. An ideological barrier for Wendy is the family perception of deviating from the norm where social change is not part of the plan:

It hasn’t been a huge a barrier for me, but to get involved in activism as a young [Asian] person is culturally difficult, it’s not the normal way to pursue your life path. With women, it’s a big pressure on getting married and finding the right family. I think any woman who wanted, at my age, to devote her life to social change, would be very challenging within her family. They are afraid what the community would think, afraid for the future of their daughter, how will she get married? It’s not an Australian phenomenon so much... But I am born and brought up here, so there is a difference if I had been brought up there. I’m not sure if I would have been empowered in the same way as I have been empowered here (Wendy [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

As a performance, the agency and competency of participants in activities deemed dangerous or ‘unfeminine’, such as ‘happy to be arrested’ (Margaret), indicates that women are challenging gender power relations and perceptions of the feminine and masculine. The corporeal and physical significance of activism, in how women are ‘prepared to be arrested’, ‘get their hands dirty’ and perform ‘hard field work’, highlights the physical and intellectual engagement of women through their bodies and minds within activism, which supports the reviews of Meynell (2009) and
Salleh (2010). In feminist analyses of gender stereotypes, aggressive and hostile strategies are not viewed to be actions initiated by women (Blackstone 2004; Maddison 2004; Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010). Nevertheless, studies illustrate that grassroots activists have endured arrest warrants through their challenge to authorities. In the environmental justice efforts of the Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW), women stood on a road blocking coal trucks (Barry 2008). All of the activists were jailed for their civil disobedience. Yet, the CRMW described their mission, ‘to stop the destruction of our communities and environment by mountaintop removal coal mining...to help rebuild sustainable communities’ (2006, cited in Barry 2008: 30). The worldview motivated them, in spite of jail, where the direct challenge to those in power, illustrated agency and competency.

The way in which women in my study resist male power illustrates empowering experiences as well as their exercise of agency and demonstration of competency. Activists engage in tough dialogues and dangerous campaigns. At Climate Camp, they experienced ‘abusive’ and ‘scary’ situations, but also resisted those individuals and groups whom opposed them, for ‘prepared to be arrested’. However, direct civil disobedience approaches were also resisted by less radical women, pursing a conservative agenda that is consultative rather than confrontational. I have found that women adopt resistance (radical) and accommodation (conservative) strategies in their civil disobedience. Moreover, participants’ are similarly united by an empowering ethic of justice and change.

(b) Leadership

The agency and competency of women is evidenced by their gender performances and the practice of ‘leadership’ strategies. A masculine culture in paid organisations, is argued by Linda to be ‘combatative’ and ‘competitive’, which is juxtaposed to the positiveness of women leaders. In regard to leadership as a performance, with more women in authority, there would be a different gender dynamic in the work culture and its environmentalism outcomes:

My strong belief is we would be more effective if we had more women involved in senior leadership roles in the environment movement. We have a culture as a movement and in the paid funded organisations of combatativeness and competitiveness and underminingness, which my experience of working with the women in the movement, I believe we would be less likely to behave that way and more likely to build more consensus and
As a mature wise person, Maggie reflected that in her younger days, she lacked the security to challenge Ivy League professors, yet now strives towards social change leadership:

I was depleted; I was still a little girl. These guys were professors at [omit] and I didn't have the emotional security, the self-esteem to take them on. Now, it would never happen but I’m [omit age] and it’s too bloody late. I’d like to relive my life...We are sitting here ready to go and it would increase the GDP and employ hundreds of thousands of workers. Why don’t we do it? Because the politicians are scientifically illiterate. They listen to corporations and their propaganda (Maggie [audio] 2010).

Strategies of gender equity practiced in grassroots and professional contexts highlight women’s agency and competency through leadership direction and social change agendas:

In terms of gender equity; the two ways that comes into my work is, 1) being a female leader and a young female leader, I think that plays a big role by diversifying the type of leadership that we usually see in society... for any leader, you have to care about it and be passionate. Being able to communicate well, feel emotion, articulate emotion and thoughts, to speak publicly with confidence is useful (Wendy [audio] 2010).

We’ve got a couple of great women managers who are absolutely fantastic. They would shit all over some of these blokes. I’ve written recommendations to the manager, ‘I want you to seriously consider them in your next batch of promotions.’ He’s done that. One has been promoted to a senior role.... We ran a strong campaign against electricity privatisation...I was part of a coalition (omit) that had members from every political party. It was a most amazing campaign, we ended up getting our local member [omit] to cross the floor. We campaigned for 12 months, we worked our butts off! We had street stalls every week, we were at railway stations handing out flyers, we run public meetings, we did a lot of writing campaigns ...We mobilized the whole community and it was fantastic (Kate [audio] 2010).

It’s activism; you learn by doing, you lead by example. If you want something done, do it yourself. I’m very individualistic, but I believe in the collective. You must have strong individuals to lead... The satisfaction is having people in our valley, land owners, pick up the environmental message, don’t wait for the government, get down there. Then the bush appreciation, my Indigenous part... (Barbara [audio] 2010)

In my personal life, I’d consider myself to be an active citizen and actively engaged in society and issues I feel passionate about... who is part of
something that’s bigger than themselves, engaged, whether it’s in a local community level, with their school, neighbourhood, church, community. Someone who’s participating actively, whether by talking to others, building community gardens or meeting with politicians. Someone who’s engaged with the issues that they care about (Juliet [audio] 2010).

In an NGO event in Canberra, Indigenous female leaders and women politicians from diverse parties were invited to talk about their family challenges. Juliet elaborates on the ‘safety and inclusion-ness of it being women in that space’ and is ‘amazed by the number of powerful Indigenous women as leaders’ ([audio] 2010), and claims that she has developed an automatic affinity with them based on the same gender. Discussions at the forum included health and gender, such as Mums and babies; others included kids having access to safe sex education and access issues for elderly patients. On the theme of leadership, Juliet summed up the event as an empowering experience for the politicians and Indigenous leaders.

Academic competency reflects the leadership of women in organisations and communities, in how women ‘multi-task’ which contrasts with the approach of men:

We have a fantastic female director of research in this college [omit]...she’s an absolute dream to work with compared to the men. Well she gets things done. I think men tend to dither a bit. I think one thing about women too, is that they can multi-skill and they tend to get things done more if they’re good at their job (Anna [audio] 2010).

On the topic of academic competency, Juliet esteems professional campaign skills plus lobbying advocacy that aims for a change in the community in order to empower them:

My professional role is campaigner. I’m involved in direct advocacy and lobbying, but my role is working with the Australian public to build their confidence, skills and knowledge for them to be activists. I see myself as facilitator (Juliet [audio] 2010).

The leadership role of Helen is in providing advocacy to civil society and its decision-makers is recognised as high status and a means to achieve climate reform:

...My work at [Omit] was a clear advocacy role. It was engaged very directly with the civil society. Here, I’ll be providing information to key decision-makers. And [Omit] has a very high standing, very high status. To be providing information from a trusted source means that the findings get into
Leadership skills were demonstrated by academic competency at conferences. At the UN Copenhagen and Poznan conferences, the high was meeting young global leaders on climate change, and comprehending mentoring and negotiation tactics:

Poznan was eye-opening; it was the first time I went to an international conference, let alone international UN conference. It was interesting to see how the negotiations worked, how countries engaged with each other, what a negotiator was and their role. The high is meeting and learning from these very capable, inspired and fantastic young leaders all over the world. We are working on a global movement, so that’s definitely a high (Wendy [audio] 2010).

Academic competency is, therefore, a social change strategy of engagement acquired by professional skills and practical knowledge in paid and unpaid work. The social change leadership of women is strengthened by academic prowess along with a diverse skills set:

As an advocate, it’s a broad range of skills. I was a science teacher; I have a Bachelor of Science and a Masters of Environmental Management. We need to change the environment to make it more sustainable. You have to have the knowledge side. I picked up transport in the last two years, but I have a strong science background, I know how to talk to people. In the skills area, you have to be a good organiser because you are running events and it can cross into areas (Deborah [audio] 2010).

Having a PhD is important; [omit] values them. My networks I’ve built over the years, my leadership and management skills, particularly from running an organisation, and my bridging of physical sciences and social sciences. Plus practical skills in social research and application of different methodologies, such as participatory action research and quantitative surveys and analysis (Helen [audio] 2010).

I work on climate change, my goal as a scientist is to contribute towards saving the planet. I have a large administrative role...but isn’t helping save the planet. My main challenge is juggling my administrative responsibilities and the things I want to do, which is more research on climate change (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

Leadership has been critiqued as a masculine practice; but the leadership and prowess of women here through academic competency and practical knowledge,
undermines gender stereotypes. An ongoing challenge for feminist researchers of agency and competence is that men are perceived to be better leaders; however, this does not match the strong leadership of women in organisations (Leonard 2005; Young & Hurlic 2007). The performance of women in similar positions to men undermines dominant power structures and practices of hegemonic masculinity. Hence, women’s leadership in social change activists’ demonstrates prowess, and also shows that women do not necessarily adopt ‘competitive’ approaches (Connell 2005; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009; Cockburn 2012a & b).

Across sectors, women-led strategies achieve results, and their leadership challenges traditional power dynamics within the global movement (Linda). Women are competent leaders and decision-makers in their paid and unpaid roles, which suggest that labels of female incompetency are undergoing accommodation and resistance. However, a traditional social hierarchy as well as gendered dualisms hinder female inclusion and social change goals (Plumwood 1997, 2001, 2002; Salleh 2010; Mellor 2012). Nevertheless, activists succeed by working collaboratively with each other and through gender diversity and a gender balance.

On the theme of leadership, agency and competency was demonstrated by the diplomatic negotiation skills of women in professional and grassroots capacities, such as climate conferences. Women exercise agency as political environmentalists arguing for reform and against injustices. As agency is politically discursive (Salleh 1997, 2009), women reformers are subject to tough debates. In relation to anti-activist governmental measures, Rankin and Gale (2003) found that Australian women anti-nuclear activists experienced a loss of political agency. My participants are agents of political leadership that have been advocating social change and gender justice for decades. Hence, the connection between the individual and the collective represents women’s competency and agency.

(c) Empathy

The women in my study recognise empathy as an activist approach that can be gender-specific or gender-neutral. Empathy is a performance by men and women, yet the empathy of women is sometimes more obvious. For Deborah, empathy is not entirely gender specific, which reflects Plumwood’s (1997, 2006) critique of women’s essential connection to nature:
...being able to empathize with the community. I did a radio interview and you have to empathise with what they’re asking…not all women have empathy, and men do; but some men are inclined to blow their trumpet and say this is how it is. Politicians are like that. They’re telling you how they need to be voted for again…women politicians I have come across are very emphatic, and happy to talk to you, not at you. They’re nicer to deal with…there wasn’t that patriarchal concept coming from the women... Some of the male politicians have been wonderful and very helpful. Whereas some are typical politicians, they’re trying to sell a vote, so they’re politicians first. I haven’t seen gender as the issue so much as politicians wanting to tell you how good they are (Deborah [audio] 2010).

In an interpretation of competency and gender differences, participants’, like Gillian, interpret empathy as a skill that empowers their agendas:

... they [women] probably have better people skills. Women probably have better skills at communicating and understanding, having more empathy than some men... sometimes men are more confident and sure they are right. Maybe it’s not really good in public; you’ve got to be more sympathetic and understanding of other peoples’ views (Gillian [audio] 2010).

In a critique of the masculinisation of politics, Wendy outlines her feminist objective of embracing ‘empathy’ as an empowering leadership tool and engagement strategy in the climate movement:

I’d like to bring the feminine into my leadership through my style of campaigning, of bringing emotions into what I do. I feel that politics is very male dominated, a very male style of thinking. Emotions often aren’t as legitimate as facts or logic, that’s a male concept, that’s something men do more naturally. I feel that women more naturally communicate in emotions in terms of empathy, I think logic and rationality isn’t always about outcomes, it’s about the relationships. I can’t say it’s men versus women, it’s more the masculine and the feminine, which I think are different. My leadership is helping people understand their emotional side, and the concepts of forgiveness among activists (Wendy [audio] 2010).

**Discussion.**

The women in my study recognise empathy is an engagement strategy, which illustrates their agency and competency within activism. It is both gender-specific and gender-neutral. Deborah demonstrated agency and competency by negotiating with politicians and participating in media interviews, whereby empathy was an advocacy strategy. For Deborah, women and men politicians are empathetic, but one’s political agenda is the core issue of differentiation. Competency relates to
empathy and people skills, where women may be stronger in certain areas. Gillian adds that women ‘probably’ have better communicational skills than do men, who are prone to ‘self-righteousness’. A few of my participants’ claimed that men and women perform differently. My accounts show an intersection of essentialist and constructivist views. Overall, women resisted stereotypes and recognised the power of women’s agency. Wendy advocated a gender balance and emphasized the power of integrating ‘emotions’ and ‘empathy’ as a core strategy in the climate movement.

Plumwood (1997, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2009) had disputed the idea that women had a special or essentialist connection to nature. Plumwood’s (1997) dualist critique argued that not all women are empathic, nurturing and co-operative; nor do they treat each other as sisters or the earth as their mother. Empathy as specific to femininity, has been extensively evaluated by constructivist ecofeminists (Merchant 1989, 1994, 1996; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; MacGregor 2006). In my research findings, resistant femininities represent empowerment along with a challenge to men’s power. I have found that empathy is a poignant campaign plus leadership strategy that informs the direction of social change movements. Women’s recognition of empathy reveals an intersection of essentialist and constructivist views within the environmental movement. Participants’ comment that women are sometimes more empathetic, in men tend to engage in singular-oriented discussions. Empathy, as a women-led strategy, has the potential to transform campaigns. For example, empathy, emotion and forgiveness is part of Wendy’s social change leadership. This is contrasted to the masculinisation of politics where emotions are not viewed as legitimate. Within politics and industry discussions, rather logic and rationality are legitimate characteristics. These findings support the dualist critiques of Plumwood (2008, 1997) and others (Merchant 1996; Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997; MacGregor 2006; Mellor 2009) in that it is not men versus women, but rather different leadership and engagement tactics.

(d) Silence and Voice

Strategies of silence and reckonings with voice represent quiet yet poignant resistance strategies that exemplify agency and competency. I consider that aspects of emphasized femininity can be used politically so that women activists’ can make a
point and address their concerns. The method of ‘being silent’ is a powerful activist engagement strategy towards achieving change. Women have been present in activist events, such as the Women in Black campaign, where standing in silence was a core strategy:

...some of the women have done things that are more passive, like the Vigil outside town hall. And the Women in Black, they were against injustices rather than environmental, but they were just standing, and just have a presence, and hand out leaflets without saying anything at all. In the U.K., who were against the nuclear power stations [the Greenham Common] had some good ones (Gillian [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon the above account, standing in silence was a successful approach in achieving positive outcomes. On the other hand, in an assessment of the mainstream feminist movement, Joan explained that stay-at-home mothers do not have a voice in society:

I consider myself a feminist and when I had children I found that mothers didn’t have a voice in our society, especially stay-at-home mothers and it had given women a lot of freedoms and entitlements, but for mothers it fell short (Joan [audio] 2010).

Turning to the Pacific advocacy of Eileen, an Australian and Island leadership contingent was sent to the Copenhagen Climate Conference [2009]. Here, Eileen played a silent yet crucial role in supporting the Pacific voice on stage, as a key engagement strategy:

We had a Pacific [omit] delegation... our role was to support the Pacific Islands and the Pacific story. We helped the Government [omit], they had a side event and we had a side event which was telling the Pacific story, but I didn’t speak. It was the Pacific Islanders... They did lots of media interviews, our role was to support and pick them up after each interview, because it’s sad talking about the issues (Eileen [audio] 2010).

In regard to voice, the power of being silent in relation to karma is an important activist strategy that has the potential to transform gendered leadership:

...sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is be silent and listen, and reflect and try to understand your opposition. The conciliatory approach of karma, communication and less aggression... to teach men to do the same thing, it’s not just up to the women. My feeling is that women will show leadership and pave the way because it comes more naturally to women than to men... if you had balanced gender at all levels of leadership, a lot of world social issues would be solved. I think the key is balance of both the feminine and the masculine (Wendy [audio] 2010).
Thus far, engagement strategies of voice and silence highlight participants’ agency and competency. The voice of women in developing countries is an objective of Penny in affecting change. Although women endure barriers, education is an empowering strategy:

I have always been interested in how women can affect change. In developing countries, women are adversely affected by a lot of things, and having that voice to actually stand and do things... In Bangladesh, over 70% of the people that died were women, this was because the men went were taught how to swim and women were at home and didn’t have the knowledge of how to swim away from the flood. Education is one of the keys. And having a fairer representation of women in government and power, getting rid of that glass ceiling that still exists (Penny [audio] 2010).

On the theme of voice, Wendy struggled with aspects of ageism in how the voice of young people is viewed as ‘less legitimate because there is a perception of them being less informed or have spent less time being experts’. However, the youth voice is ‘a very legitimate voice’ for change within glocal environmental discourses, despite the lack of years and experience, Wendy argues. In addition, Greens politician Jennifer critiqued the way ‘the male voice’ is dominant in Parliament, which clouds the female protest voice of dissent:

...often when women are in those positions, they’re judged harshly in terms of their voice because we get used to hearing the male voice... when we get more women into leadership, people will get used to hearing women, hearing their voice, seeing them give leadership... (Jennifer [audio] 2010)

Discussion.

Strategies of silence or ‘being silent’ and the recognition of voice in regard to negotiating masculinity and femininity are empowering resistance strategies that demonstrate participants’ agency and competency. I have demonstrated that aspects of emphasized femininity can be used politically so that women activists’ can make a point. However, a barrier is that ‘the male voice’ clouds ‘the female voice’ for change. In my empirical chapters, participants’ struggled to have their voice heard and campaigns acknowledged through male veto power, such as a male blocking consensus in Parliament and Councils. Nevertheless, silence is a strategy of female empowerment that achieves results, even in tough campaigns. This is a powerful insight, as studies have focussed on the way women have been silenced and oppressed within patriarchal organisations and ruling masculinist social elites (Lewis
2006; Hosey 2011). For Doyle (2005), the Australian environmental movement is one of the few dissenting voices in an increasingly silent society.

This research has additionally found that a gender balance through strategies of voice, silence and empathy has the potential to address unjust structures and potentially bring about a social change. Empathy and voice strengthens social change agendas. In turn, the accounts revealed gender differences and a gender balance (Dion, Wendy, Juliet), which reveals contradictions. In regard to karma, Wendy argued that if men and women were more aware of their emotions, then leadership would be progressive. A ‘gender balance’ in relation to empathy and voice thus has the potential to integrate feminine and masculine competencies.

Empathy, as a sub-theme in this research, is an engagement strategy that illuminates participants’ voices along with a gender balance. Male green writers, like Porritt (1984) draw upon the Taoist idea of yin and yang, the feminine and the masculine, in order to restore a gender balance (Mellor 1997:130). The masculine/feminine balance may be reclaimed through the feminine principle, the ‘soft/yin’ qualities of co-operation, empathy, holistic thinking, emotion and intuition (Porritt 1984:201, Mellor 1997:130). For Porritt, the problem is the lack of balance within the human psyche, with men being tough and hard (competitive, assertive, rational) and women gentle and soft- rather there needs to be a balance. Empathy signifies the collaborative efforts of men and women as well as an inclusive gender balance. I also contend that a gender balance contributes to a flatter more inclusive way of working.

Moreover, ecofeminists reviewed women’s role in ecological struggles that have been ‘hidden from history’ (Rowbotham 1973, cited in Mellor 1997:14). In *Silent Spring* (1962), scientist Rachel Carson warned of the danger of pesticides (cited in Mellor 1997:14). Although she did not present a feminist critique, Carson criticised the scientific approach to the natural world, which inspired further ecofeminist analyses. Moreover, governmental and industry authorities mocked her as an ‘emotional fanatic and spinster’ (Mellor 1997:14). Such labels represent the historic struggle of ‘the female voice’ and notions of silence; yet, my participant’s advocate change, resist gender stereotypes along with male power.

A further finding is that participants’ voices are strengthened by proactive education strategies and knowledge-making experiences. Eileen criticised patriarchy in Pacific culture that reflects the traditions of male elders; nonetheless, women
exercise their voice and decisions within village life. A sociocultural identity represents activists’ engagement (Alcoff & Mendieta 2003; Arvanitakis 2009). Eileen criticised Copenhagen for the difficulty in consolidating local Pacific cultural identity with climatic reforms advocated on a glocal scale. Such findings suggest that power privileges rich influential countries and their agendas, which evokes the Global North versus Global South debates (Isla 2009; Spitzner 2009).

Feminists have argued that social movements are in a state of abeyance, in that activist strategies hibernate during low political activity (Taylor 1989; Maddison 2004; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLellan 2009). However, my participants were consistently performing gender and activist campaign strategies in periods of low and high political activity. Participants’ adopt resistant (direct) and accommodating (indirect) approaches that reflect radical and conservative strategies. Civil disobedience strategies is aligned to an active resistance towards authorities. Seemingly, ‘noisy’ or ‘silent’ strategic action undermines perceptions that activism is static or in a state of abeyance. Participants’ activist engagement within paid and unpaid contexts shows robust activity, in that movements have not hibernated. Participants’ grassroots and professional contribution is thus integral in shaping Australian environmentalism. Hence, my interviews reveal how women’s social change advocacy is transforming the power and direction of movements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that the egalitarian ethos of women activists’ is a motivator to their activism, and that egalitarian organisations are more conducive to their ambitions. A maternal/caring position inspired women’s activism; however, Gillian noted that her husband shared a pro-caring ethical view towards gender and environmental issues. Such positions undermine essentialist assumptions. Most participants advocated a non-hierarchical stance in their activist agenda for change. Hierarchy is present in paid and unpaid work contexts. Some eNGO and academic women viewed it as necessary in work operations. Overall, participants’ locate hierarchy within masculinist practices. I found that a complex gendered culture of work underpins women’s capacity to exercise agency and competency. Although, women struggle with power-specific barriers, they also adopt anti-
hierarchical strategies in their activism. Women’s resistance through lobbying and petitions, shows their resilience to challenge key decision makers, such as corporations and governmental authorities. The agency and competency of both grassroots and academic activists is demonstrated by their written and oral skills, time allocation and prioritising, campaign strategy, technical and web literacy, academic and professional competency along with political literacy. Both radical and conservative approaches towards change were found in the interviews. Also, some grassroots and professional women reflected essentialist views of femininity/maternalism whereas others resisted forms of emphasized femininity. I have found that women activists’ agency and competency is contextualised by both active and passive forms of resistance. My findings reveal insights and contradictions. Some participants’ believed that to engage in effective political struggle, it is necessary to abandon aspects of emphasized femininity (passivity, delicacy), and rather than confirm to male power, to resist male power. This was evidenced by resistant and protest femininities, as with civil disobedience struggles. Although some women struggled with gender stereotypes and gendered differences, evidently, they are resilient competent political agents. Conclusively, gender performativity is a process of doing (Butler 1990, 2006), whereby masculinity and femininity involves an active negotiation, relative to the ‘I’ in one’s identity and social change agendas.
Chapter Six- The gendered nature of the elite: ‘the boys club’ and leadership styles

Introduction

This chapter considers the way women recognise a gendered elite in the context of politics and environmental organisations. This is evidenced by women’s experiences of ‘the boys club’, men’s leadership styles and gender barriers. Men’s style of leadership is perceived by some participants’ to be dominating and competitive, especially in Parliament. Evidently, this shows that men perform ruling class masculinity, and that a masculinist elite hinders women’s agency and competency. Also, this chapter builds on my discussion of women’s resistance to hierarchy and patriarchy, and shows that in contrast to men, women tend to adopt egalitarian approaches. Although women resist hierarchy and masculinist structures in their activism and as members of organisations, some also accommodate to hierarchical expectations. Some women argue that accommodation was necessary in order to be successful in negotiating with politicians and industry executives across the movement.

The idea of ‘a boys club’ was raised by participants in a number of contexts. Greens women identified ‘the boys club’ within Parliament and politics in terms of: ‘blokey culture’, ‘aggressive’, ‘adversarial’, ‘competitive’, ‘abusive’, ‘male dominated culture’, ‘androcentric’ practices, ‘male voice’, ‘male dress’, and ‘appalling behaviour of men in Parliament’. Such approaches therefore constrain the ambitions of women for change. The experience of being the ‘token woman’ on climate panels further exemplifies the way advocates recognise ‘a boys club’. However, ‘a boys club’ was not experienced by all participants. Some work in places that have proactive policies that rejected hierarchy and privilege, in favour of meritocracy and social mobility. The women in my study comment that proactive EEO laws promote gender equality. Such equality undermine the dominance of ‘the boys club’. Academic activists illustrate that EEO policies improve women’s status, yet men still dominate senior professorship positions. Hence, glass ceilings are still in place. Greens women emphasise that grassroots democracy is strategically practiced at a party level and that in relation to EEO polices, this enables women. Although some participants did not recognise ‘a boys club’ as such, women
experienced a masculinist culture through misogyny, chauvinism and sexism, whereby the power of men is a barrier to their agency and competency.

This chapter is organised in two Parts: ‘The boys club’ and Tokenism. These headers contextualise the two core themes from my interviews. The chapter beings with an exploration of the boys’ club. Firstly, in 1a, I consider how Greens politicians recognise ‘the boys club’ within politics, such as Parliament. Secondly, in 1b, I pinpoint the resistance of Greens women to masculinist and hierarchical expectations through grassroots participatory engagement. Thirdly, in 1c, I highlight the resistance and accommodation of eNGO and academic activists through their recognition of merit, EEO polices and glass ceilings. Fourthly, in 1d, I illustrate the way eNGO women experience gender barriers and ‘the boys club’, and whether they recognise or resist this. Part 2 focusses on the second core theme of Tokenism. In 2a, I consider the experience of women as token members on environmental panels. Lastly, in 2b, I pinpoint the gender barriers faced by voluntary and salaried participants in relation to their struggle with men taking credit for their work.

Part 1. ‘The boys club’

(1a) ‘The boys club’ within Green politics

Greens women perceive ‘the boys club’ through men’s leadership styles, which is viewed by some to be dominating and competitive. In turn, Greens women politicians advocate egalitarian and grassroots democratic processes within their leadership styles and their activism. Yet, they perceive political structures to be hierarchical and hostile towards Greens agendas. In this section, my participants detail their experiences of ‘a boys club’ within parliamentary contexts. The ‘boys club’ theme was identified by Greens politicians who encounter gender differences and policy struggle when debating in Parliament and Councils; however, experience gender inclusion at a party level through strong internal gender policies and grassroots democratic principles (The Australian Greens, Policy 2014). Hence, ‘the boys club’ was not identified within internal party contexts. Greens women take part in State, Federal and local politics. I have labelled Parliament as external because it has members from different parties. It is also a site from which to argue for one’s political platform, yet is a difficult place for women to achieve reforms and acceptance (Mellor 1997; Rankin & Gale 2003). Consequently, women politicians
struggle with alienation and marginalisation in their exercise of agency and competency in glocal contexts (Greer 1999; MacGregor 2006). Although politicians are members of Parliament, their Greens ideology largely guides their advocacy. Grassroots participatory democracy is practiced by Greens politicians, locally elected Councillors of Local Government Authorities (LGAs), administrative employees and voluntary members.

Evidently, Greens women politicians perceive ruling class masculinity, through the behaviours and actions of men politicians along with their leadership styles. Women define this as: ‘adversarial’, ‘aggressive’ and ‘blokey’. Jennifer and Maxine, comment on a masculinist parliamentary culture though ‘the male voice’ and ‘men speaking’. For Jennifer, ‘a boys club’ is shown in the leadership hierarchy, with men in suits, where there is a double-standard for women; however, this should change with more women in leadership positions:

There’s still very much a boys’ club in Parliament and I think it’s broken down. We have women in the three major parties. The stereotypes are being broken down but not fully...Women politicians get judged more harshly than men—even though you may be a strong feminist, if you’re constantly seeing one’s leaders are men in suits and used to men speaking, making the announcements, giving the leadership; when women are in those positions, they’re judged harshly in terms of their voice because we get used to hearing the male voice. We see today, how fussy people get about women’s hair, women’s clothes. Things that were virtually never discussed with male politicians. When we get more women into leadership, we will get used to hearing women, hearing their voice, seeing them give leadership and then some inconsistencies would fall away (Jennifer [audio] 2010).

According to Maxine, ‘a boys club’ exists in Parliament, conservative eNGOs and corporate financial boards. Parliament is assessed as ‘traditional’, and ‘blokey’ that is composed of ‘old White men’ who are ‘absolute chauvinists’ with ‘conservative’ approaches, especially towards women politicians:

...this is ridiculous how traditional and blokey this place is. I am the only female [omit], and they are old White men; really, old White men, largely conservative. A lot of men are absolute chauvinists and they don’t get challenged, they’re older blokes, that could be from the country, and that’s how they do that kind of thing. I was in a meeting with the opposition, and the only woman around the table. There is ten guys, and the [omit], when I asked him whether he was supporting a motion, he called me a ‘bright girl.’ He said, ‘I’m not going to support your motion, c’mon [omit], you’re a bright girl.’ I challenged him on that (Maxine [audio] 2010).
A masculinist culture in terms of conservative attitudes towards women politicians and political agendas was found in the LGA critiques of ‘a boys club’ in urban and regional contexts, whereby Jacquie views herself to be ‘on the outside’:

I’m close with the independent councillor, but everyone else, there’s a pretence to chumminess. Two of them, it’s like a little boys’ club. They’re from different parties... myself and the independent councillor are always on the outside, which is why we work together so much. We just help each other... they’re quite Green. We work together along party lines. There can be that cross, political stuff but it depends. There’s one male councillor I work better; he’s a lot more open to ideas. So, it depends on the issue but definitely I feel on the outer (Jacquie [audio] 2010).

In relation to conservative politics within regional contexts, Margaret criticises the local council as ‘a boys club’, arguing that women are still marginalised in rural contexts:

...the local council [omit] is totally ‘a boys club’. We had a woman councillor for four and a half years and it was wonderful, but there were only two. That sets an example to our community, women are marginalised, women aren’t that important. In metro areas, it’s a different ball game. In my area, it’s a long way to go (Margaret [audio] 2010).

Masculinist performances were commented on by locally elected government Councillors [Tanya, Jacquie, Stacey, Kate], who described ‘a boys club’ as: ‘adversarial’, ‘aggressive’, and ‘blokey’. Again this is not experienced in the party, but in external platforms of negotiation. On this point, Tanya, views Parliament to be ‘a huge ‘boys club’ that is characterised by ‘adversarial’ masculinist practices and behaviours:

... men are more adversarial and I’m more conciliatory and consensually based...I was absolutely horrified. I stopped. I used to go and watch Parliament. They’d have their things they’d say about the women ones, we’re constantly being called communists and tree huggers and want to live in caves and the things that I heard [omit] say were appalling and the behaviour of the house was appalling and I couldn’t go and watch it. Our MPs, two of whom are female, did not do that; they’d stand there and let them say it. [Omit] had a trick of restating what they’d said to make sure it went into the record, how abusive they’ve been, but it was incredibly abusive. I was absolutely horrified and any normal person who watches this would lose all respect for the parliamentary process. It’s that line of men, sort of going at each other and then you look at someone like [omit], she behaves just like a man, it’s horrible. We should be all working together. The Greens try and work with them, but it’s just so competitive (Tanya [audio] 2010).

The above account showed that non-Greens women politicians sometimes
behave like men in Parliament. The performance of masculinity in Parliamentary
corresponds the existence of ‘a boys club’, yet underscores the practice of femininity as
an engagement strategy. It appears that women struggle to integrate ‘masculine’ and
‘feminine’ performances. Tanya pinpoints that a high status politician from another
party is operating in the masculinist culture of ‘the boys club’, but it is not evident
that she is behaving like a man:

...she’s in [omit] Parliament, which is a huge ‘boys club’. She has to be
operating in a masculine environment. I see photos of her and she’s the only
woman. I’m sure she would agree she operates in a fairly male dominated
culture (Tanya [audio] 2010).

Within LGAs, ‘a boys club’ is discussed by Stacey in terms of ‘a male thing’,
with men behaving in emotion-driven ‘adversarial’ and ‘manic’ ways, plus an
aggressive debating position that pervades veto decisions, and hinders Greens and
women’s social change agendas:

When I first got onto council there were three women out of 12. This time
round we have five women out of 12...I think it’s a male thing. There’s an
aggression in the way they hold the position and debate a position...not all of
them, but some, if they feel that the vote is going to against them, they go
manic. They don’t know how to control their emotions. It’s like they’re more
adversarial. You’re with me or against me, whereas it’s not so black and
white for women. We see the grey and can find a way through. We don’t
always agree but we’re respectful of each other’s opinions (Stacey [audio]
2010).

For Kate, ‘a boys club’ is identified as ‘diabolical’ and ‘old school stuff’, ‘a
very gendered culture’ and ‘blokeyness’, in that strategies are ‘different’ and
‘aggressive’:

...I found local government to be one of the most diabolical things, in terms
of old school stuff, but there’s lots of women, we work together...about 3 per
cent of general managers in local councils are women...it’s a very gendered
culture in terms of the blokeyness...there is a totally different way of working
and dealing with people, it’s a lot more aggressive...in the transport
campaign, I brought together a large alliance of disparate groups, all blokes,
what is it about blokes and transport? I copped a lot of personal flak with my
style, not being aggressive enough, and I’m like, who has managed to get the
best results in the last 12 months? That would be me. I have found it very
challenging, I’m not scared of anybody, but that culture of being aggressive
and instantly going to a fight and nit picking over silly details, not being able
to think about consensus building, I found shocking (Kate [audio] 2010).
Discussion.

Evidently, Greens women recognised a gendered elite through men’s competitive and dominant leadership styles, which is evidenced through performances of ruling class hegemonic masculinity. However, Greens women resisted emphasized femininity, and advocated women’s activist leadership as a political strategy. Women aligned their activism with grassroots democratic principles, and adopted an egalitarian ethos in their work. Yet some participants identified the way women accommodated to hierarchal expectations. Tanya found that non-Greens women sometimes adopted masculinist behaviours. Overall, ‘the boys club’ is defined by patriarchal cultures and hierarchical structures. Such practices undermine activists’ reformative agendas. I found male privilege to be a gender barrier for participants’; yet, women’s resistance challenges the rule and power of men in Parliament.

Traditionally, ‘a boys club’ is associated with social class distinctions and hegemonic ruling class masculinity (Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Penner & Toro 2007; Gregory 2009; McDonald 2011). Although Cockburn (2012a) reviewed peace movements as not being classist, she found that intellectuals, professionals and students were the core campaigners. Such categories represent the middle class. Grassroots women volunteers, in my study, are largely from the middle classes with most possessing tertiary qualifications and working in professional occupations, which challenges perceptions that activists are largely working class (Brown & Ferguson 1995; MacGregor 2006; Faber 2008; Unger 2008). Nonetheless, working class women have played a proud bold role in grassroots movements (Krauss 1993; McPhillips 2002). Ecofeminists have argued that a working class environmental justice effort has been complicated by issues of race and gender (Epstein 1993; Mellor 1993; Bell 2008; Rainey & Johnson 2009, Wilson et al. 2010). Although my participants identify with a cultural and gender identity, ethnicity and/or race is not a core theme. However, they do contest the patriarchal control of their organisations- and not a patriarchal versus class control.

Most of my participants were from middle class backgrounds and are therefore informed by similar levels of knowledge and social status. However, I acknowledge that a member of Parliament should have more power than a grassroots volunteer. Notably, my interviews also reveal that it is the patriarchal control of the organisation that is being contested- not the patriarchal versus class control.
Concerning a resistance strategy to male institutionalise dominance, the ecofeminist project, therefore, aims to turn the discourse against patriarchy into a type of ‘resistant femininity’ (Leahy 2003).

Participants’ identified ‘a boys club’ in regard to a masculine culture that is: ‘blokey’, ‘aggressive’, ‘adversarial’, ‘competitive’, ‘abusive’, ‘male dominated culture’, ‘culture of being aggressive’ and ‘appalling behaviour of men in Parliament’. They also identified challenges, such as, labels of female incompetency, with women being judged on their image and the resistance of men to their leadership. My findings on men’s resistance to women’s leadership as a gender barrier supports the critiques of Cockburn (1991) and Connell (2009) on masculinist corporate structures and glass ceilings that reproduce men’s dominance.

The cultural domination of ‘the male’ in terms of voice, dress and authority undermines the protest voice of women for change. Protest is an activist social change strategy, yet women advocates have historically struggled to have their voice for change formally acknowledged within political arenas (Lewis 2003; Maddison 2004; Doyle 2005; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Irwin 2010; Hosey 2011). An obstacle to women’s inclusion was men’s dominance in Parliament, referred to as: ‘old White men’ (Maxine). This finding supports Connell’s critique of glass ceilings with ‘White men in middle management’ (2009:117-18), and that there is a ruling class masculinity in place across sectors (Giddens 1991; Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Giddens 2009; Gregory 2009; McDonald 2011).

Within urban and regional contexts, an obstacle to Greens social change agendas was male veto power in Parliament, whereby men tend to dominate internal voting practices. A male blocking consensus that opposes climate reforms exemplifies ‘a boys club’ in action. In addition, conservative policies and chauvinistic attitudes to women was found in urban and regional political contexts. Maxine condemned the chauvinistic attitude of men politicians from the country, and Margaret assessed that glass ceilings were embedded in regional leadership structures. Also, Alston’s (2011) study on the Australian drought in the Murray-Darling Basin highlighted the gendered impacts of these changes, while arguing for a gender sensitive policy to address the needs of local men and women under stress during climatic changes. Policy reform, therefore, guides advocacy initiatives.

Moreover, EEO policies on gender equity enabled women’s social mobility, but their achievement was also located through proven success in a culture of
meritocracy. Hence, workplace meritocracy enables participants’ performance plus competence (Leonard 1997; Merithew 2004; Leonard 2005; Castilla 2008; Meynell 2009). The lack of hierarchical and patriarchal parameters within the party also enabled Greens women. However, participants’ struggled with masculinist structures gender prejudices, which locates the complexity of their sociocultural engagement within the politics of gender and the environment.

Some participants perceive men to be more emotional than women, in regard to: ‘aggression’ and ‘not knowing how to control their emotions’. This insight challenges essentialist assumptions of women being more emotional (Irni 2009; Nickson & Korczynski 2009; Payne 2009; Warhurst & Nickson 2009; Kosny & MacEachen 2010). For Stacey, women were more likely to control their emotions in tough debates. Emotion-driven masculine practices that are ‘adversarial’ ‘aggressive’ and ‘competitive’ made it difficult for women to negotiate agendas. This insight challenges assumptions that men are more rational and that women are more emotional than men (Leonard 1997; Plumwood 1997; McNay 2000; Meynell 2009).

A feminist environmentalist ethic along with high levels of female participation undermines the idea that feminism is not central to Greens politics (Mellor 1993; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999; Shiva & Moser 1995; MacGregor 2006; Kopecek 2009). The advocacy of feminist principles is compatible with Greens ethics (Carter 2007; Mellor 2012; Australian Greens Policy, Women, 2014). Greens women have demonstrated leadership and prowess in glocal platforms. Although Mellor (1993) had criticised the lack of a feminist agenda within leftist Greens politics, Mellor (1997) also identified a strong feminist ideology in the former West German Greens party, led by Petra Kelly. Carter (2007) appraised the high female participation in European Greens parties, who were credited as educated and articulate politicians. Women’s political participation, in my study, therefore shows that feminism is central to left-wing and mainstream politics, and that women have achieved power and status in the senior echelons of politics (Caldicott 2006; Clements 2008; Caldicott 2009).

In regard to the performativity of gender, non-Greens women sometimes behave like men in Parliament. This finding reflects Greer’s (1999) review on the masculinist performance of the late Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of the U.K. Tory party. However, here, Greens women resist masculine structures as well as the men that oppose their reforms. I have found that Greens women resist gender
expectations as well as labels of female incompetency. Women’s agency and competency is evidently demonstrated by advocating social change and challenging climate opponents and sceptics. Rather than adopting ‘androcentric’ approaches, women comment on the value of consensus and conciliatory approaches. Kate rejected ‘androcentric’ approaches and viewed ‘consensus’ to be a valid strategy in tough negotiations. Tanya also described herself as ‘more conciliatory and consensually based’. Hence, women are articulate negotiators and political actors in the exercise of agency and competency. Women-led strategies, thus, challenge the gendered elite along with ruling class masculinity, currently entrenched within governing hierarchies.

Overall, my participatory accounts reveal that labels associated with activism and gender place women in a complex position to negotiate their agency and competency (Blackstone 2004; Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010; Ussher et al. 2011). Tanya described labels as gender and activist related: ‘behaviour’, ‘adversarial’ and ‘appalling’, where women politicians were labelled as ‘communists’ and ‘tree huggers’. In a political meeting, Maxine was labelled a ‘bright girl’ by a male politician. Ruth pointed out that in mainstream society, the Greens are viewed as ‘a bit whacky’, and ‘kooks’ who ‘chain themselves to trees’. Consequently, my contention is that women experience labels specific to gender and activism, yet their agency and competency is destabilising tags and stereotypes.

(1b) Resisting ‘a boys club’: Grassroots participatory democracy

I argue that grassroots participatory democratic engagement is a strategic goal of Greens women that is practiced in their activism, and also supports their egalitarian agendas. Women’s resistance to hierarchy and patriarchy therefore challenges the governing elite. Greens women emphasise the value of grassroots democracy as a resistance strategy towards ‘a boys club’, which is evidenced in their leadership. Grassroots democratic principles link to activists’ social and environmental justice agendas (Shiva 2005; Faber 2008; Shiva 2008; Mellor 2009; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009; Salleh 2010). Grassroots strategies are practiced by Greens politicians negotiating with community groups, eNGOs and obviously, political chambers. Jacquie explains that Greens policies focus on: ‘consensus building, environmental and conservation issues as well as women’s issues,
indigenous representation and social justice’. Kate adds that women from different parties work collaboratively in the pursuit of common goals, which strengthens women’s leadership and political engagement:

We have a lot of office bearers, female staffers at Parliament, female MPs, there’s a different vibe, a lot of emphasis on gender equity in the Greens and in our pre-selection processes. Even in our local groups, we actively support women to stand for the Greens. We had the Local Government Shire’s Conference and there was an alliance of women across the Greens, Labor and the Independents, to knock over some draconian maternity leave proposals. We worked hard to network and come up with comprises and get decent maternity leave provisions through. That was a good active network, women who were in support of each other (Kate [audio] 2010).

In contrast to hierarchy, Ruth describes the Greens grassroots democracy model in terms of: ‘positive discrimination’ ‘dialogue’, ‘communication open,’ ‘consensus based decision-making,’ ‘very democratic’, ‘allows everyone to have their say’, ‘cooperative’, ‘good’, ‘ethical’ and ‘transparent.’ In turn, positive discrimination models promote the equal representation of men and women. The gender equity policy within the ‘pre-selection processes’ ensures that women are not excluded from leadership. Although there is a high female involvement, the party is attracting male and female members, which emphasises its diversity, Ruth argues. Kate adds that ‘all members have a say on policies which ensures that it bottom-up versus top-down’. However, because the Greens are grassroots and consensus based: ‘it takes longer to get things happening’ (Ruth). Nevertheless, the grassroots model is anti-hierarchical and anti-patriarchal in its rejection of power-centrism (Shiva 2005; 2008).

Approaches that are consensus-based and community focussed, in a rejection of hierarchy and patriarchy, cement the ideological direction of the party. Stacey outlines that the Greens was constituted by members of political parties and environmental groups that rejected patriarchal structures and conservative ideologies in favour of grassroots democracy and social change. In turn, Die Grünen (the German Greens) rejected patriarchal practices and hierarchical structures, and advocated feminism, in its ideological practice (Mellor 1997). The attraction of the Greens is in its ability to engage the community towards climate action akin to a robust ecological grassroots democratic model that connects the party to the community:
...lots of the people that came to the Greens came out of the peace movement... it was made from the Nuclear Disarmament Party, environmental groups, social justice groups. They moved from the other parties because it was so patriarchal; it was a top- down approach whereas the Greens are about the grassroots. It’s bottom-up, that is how our model works and how we do our decision-making... you’re promoting grassroots democracy and everybody has a chance to be involved, particularly for me the political process and to be an active community member (Stacey [audio] 2010).

The grassroots ‘bottom-up’ meritocracy model of the Greens contrasts with gender differences and ageist issues that some of my participants’ endure. In regard to gender differences, Kate claimed that older men dominate LGA meetings whereas she is often the only young woman. This contrasts to the Greens, where the campaign team is mostly comprised of young women. In addition, Amy considered women’s needs as different to men: ‘to be recognised as a woman in the workplace and having different needs to your male counterparts’. Another point is that the high presence of Greens women in Parliament contrasts with mainstream parties (Rüdig et al. 1996; Carter 2001; Kopecek 2009). Nonetheless, men still form the majority in Parliament: ‘there is still a strong dominance of a male outlook’ (Jennifer). Hence, the ‘bottom-up approach’ of Greens politicians is undermined by patriarchal cultures and hierarchical platforms in Parliament and workplaces.

However, feminist ideology and gender diversity undermines a traditional social hierarchy. Australian Greens politics is characteristic of innovation, change and diversity, in that male and female members resist traditional practices hegemonic to masculinity and accommodate an ecofeminist justice ethic (Connell 2005; Doyle 2005, 2008). Maxine argues that Greens men must respect the feminist viewpoint, for equal opportunity is ‘very alive in the party.’ Jennifer, who self-identifies as an ecofeminist and additionally criticises hierarchical aspects in society, remarks that as a politician ‘people defer to you’, yet ‘the Greens commitment to grassroots democracy means people have a real say’.

The identification with meritocracy downplays hierarchy. In the opinion of Tanya, the Greens endorse a culture of meritocracy and actively reject hierarchy from subverting their agendas. They promote women-led networks and encourage female mentoring. Her first role in the party was voluntary; and through merit, it turned into a salaried Councillor position. She appraises the Greens as ‘warm’, ‘encouraging’ and ‘I’ve loved every minute of it’. Meritocracy therefore enables
women’s participation at work; yet, women elevate through prowess, rather than solely through a gender selection process. Greens women, as other women in my study, are competent political performers and articulate negotiators of gender, subsequently arguing for grassroots participatory democracy in glocal contexts.

Discussion.

Greens women’s incorporation of grassroots democracy, as a political activist strategy, is further strengthened by an egalitarian ethos in work and society. The party formed in protest to a masculinist elite, and sought to improve the status of women and the rights of the environment. The Greens is therefore largely anti-hierarchical and anti-patriarchal, and is situated in direct contrast to traditional ideas of ‘the boys club’ and ruling class hegemonic masculinity. Interviews show that participants’ are supportive to a feminist agenda. Tanya esteemed women-led networks and that through merit and competency, she elevated in status. The party’s egalitarian approach, through grassroots principles, thus enables women to demonstrate prowess and leadership. I additionally contend that egalitarianism represents a threat to the ruling political elite and hegemonic norms.

Evidently, a strong commitment to gender equality defines the experiences of my participants’ in the environmental movement, and of the Greens women in particular. In this, their approach contradicts some feminist analyses of environmental politics as patriarchal (Mellor 1993, 1997; MacGregor 2006, 2009, 2010). Although most participants’ seemingly identify with feminist principles, it is not absolutely necessary to identify as a feminist or an activist to be a competent environmentalist (Maddison 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010). Also, women encounter gender prejudices and stereotypes across the movement, such as the resistance of men to their leadership. Moreover, environmentalism unifies the ambitions of salaried and volunteer participants’. Further, gender performativity involves an active negotiation of masculinity and femininity. Participants’ perform resistant femininities within campaigns (Leahy 2003; Plumwood 2009; Mellor 2012). Thus, participant’s agency and competency undermines assumptions that movements are in a state of abeyance or that activism has stalled (Taylor 1989; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLellan 2009).

Resistance to the destruction of the environment and a masculinist elite is an objective in glocal grassroots movements (Plumwood 1997, 2006, 2008, 2009). The
women in my study power, through grassroots participatory democratic action, while resisting men’s power, which illustrates their agency and competency. Such action empowers participants’ subjective engagement whilst undermining a traditional social hierarchy (Plumwood 1997; Salleh 1997; Mellor 2007, 2009; Salleh 2011; Mellor 2012). In regard to a global grassroots struggle, the grassroots ecofeminist movement is fuelled by ‘resistance, persistence, stubbornness, passion and outrage’ (Mellor 1997: 16). Around the world it is a story of ‘hysterical housewives’ taking on men of reason’ (Seager 1993:280, cited in Mellor 1997:16). Despite women’s involvement in global struggles, a perception is that there is no formal ecofeminist movement (Mellor 1993; Salleh 1997; MacGregor 2006). Mellor (1993) adds that the German Greens feminist agenda was an exception as they were the minority within Green politics. Moreover, participants’ agency and competency legitimises ecofeminist actions and the validity of a 21st century ecofeminist movement. The grassroots principles of volunteers and professionals signifies a common ground approach to social change and environmental justice. Most salaried participants’ perform voluntary work, for environmentalism is an issue of genuine concern. Intellectual and practical engagement illustrates that women resist ‘a boys club’ and gender labels. Despite constraints, resistance continues.

I argue that participants’ ecofeminist actions and resistant femininities challenges ideas that leftist Green politics is patriarchal and anti-feminist (Eyerman & Jamison 1989; Salleh 1997; Sydee & Beder 2009; Cockburn 2012b). MacGregor (2006) condemned the ecological movement for not embracing feminism as part of its commitment to participatory democracy. Some ecofeminists observed that environmentalism, as an androcentric (or male-dominated) position, historically displays sexist tendencies and overlooks gender specificities. MacGregor (2006) adds that feminism has had a contentious relationship with left-green politics, relating to the failure of male-dominated perspectives and movements to acknowledge feminist concerns. Although participants’ identify androcentric practices in ‘the boys club’, as with mainstream parties, the results suggest that a gender balance is a strategy to unify men and women in their advocacy, while also challenging prejudices and stereotypes.
(1c) Resisting ‘a boys club’: Merit, EEO and glass ceilings within academic activism

The gendered nature of an elite that is informed by hierarchy and power is also recognised and resisted by women academic activists. In this section, I pinpoint the way some women challenge hierarchy and masculinist structures whereas others accommodate to this within their roles. Some participants comment on gender equity in universities, but contend that women struggle with glass ceilings and marginalisation. There is evidence that EEO laws have improved equity in universities, but that women’s agency and competency is defined through prowess and merit in their leadership, not only through proactive gender legislation. Women comment on their experiences of ‘a boys club’ in the Bar (Barrister’s court), Ivy League Universities and in their dealing with executive men. Also, women experience enablers and barriers. Barriers include gender prejudices and stereotypes of incompetency in professorship executive positions. Again, the ‘boys club’ is not entirely specific to the environmental movement, but to the institutions that women take part in, through formal and informal levels of engagement.

Rachel, an environmental barrister and academic, considers the historic context of the Bar (Barrister’s court) as ‘a boys club’ dominated by older men with chauvinistic attitudes, but claims that this is gradually changing with the competency of women in leadership positions:

... the attitude was I may be a lawyer, but I’m just a woman. That attitude gets my goat, I get very antsy...when I first went to the Bar 20 years ago, it was very much ‘a boys club’. Women were patronised or discounted. You had to prove your worth by winning cases against men. Today, there are more assertive women on the bench... that’s done a lot to change male attitudes in the law. There are fossils, men 50+ who have a very chauvinistic view of women. It is changing slowly, because more women are receiving judicial appointments and as magistrates (Rachel [audio] 2010).

In turn, Yvonne rejects the existence of ‘a boys club’ in her university due to EEO laws, for women are established in executive roles, unlike other institutions:

We have a male vice chancellor but [omit] of our deputy vice chancellors are women so there’s more senior or equal numbers of senior women in the university then there are males. Other universities are very male dominated. I think having a female vice chancellor helped, but our current vice chancellor is also very non discriminatory and looks to hire the best people, not other males... (Yvonne [audio] 2010)
Proactive EEO gender equity policies that encourage meritocracy and competence, undermine ‘a boys club’ and masculinist leadership within academia. Merit relates to the prowess of women advocates and their resistance towards labels of female incompetency. Although most organisations, including the legal professions, have protocols on EEO laws, gender equity has yet to be realised. As such, men are over-represented in senior decision-making roles within bureaucracy and governance (Smith & Crimes 2007; Sharp et al. 2008; Storvik & Schøne 2008; Connell 2009; Burn 2011). I acknowledge the progressiveness of empowering EEO policies, but contend that women are also proving their merit and competence:

... I have no gender issues at all; it’s a great environment to work. We have a lot of very competent, assertive women working at [omit] in a number of capacities. There is a culture of gender equality, which is great (Rachel [audio] 2010).

Concerning merit, critically, Rachel finds the Women’s Barristers Association to be discriminatory, in how competency is defined by club membership, rather than merit:

I have issues in regard to the Women Barristers Association, I think that’s discriminatory. Why should women have an exclusive club? Whereas if it was men doing, if it was a men’s barrister club, there would be a hell of outrage you know. So why should women get away with things that men can’t do? (Rachel [audio] 2010).

Academic activists’ identify with the masculine cultural dynamics of ‘a boys club’, but there are other obstacles. Yvonne identifies ‘an old boy’s network’ in a U.S. Ivy League University, but adds that competition and patronising attitudes were more of an obstacle:

It was an old boy’s network, but there were senior women in the department, there were young women coming through the ranks. In general, the American system’s very different; there are a lot more opportunities in terms of places, but a huge amount of competition... It’s a hard slog. It’s not easy here, but I don’t think it’s got anything to do with being a woman. I think being an Australian in an American institution, that’s more challenging than being a woman. There’s an element in a place like [omit] and in America of being patronising about the rest of the world... we’re very small and not visible on the world scientific stage (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Although Yvonne maintains that there is little discrimination against women academics, the number of women in the upper levels of academia is ‘still very low’.
This observation conveys the relevance of sex-segregation and glass ceilings within Australian academia. This account showcases the enablers and barriers women encounter in their work:

I’m an ecologist and an environmentalist and a feminist - somebody who believes women should have the same opportunities as men...in academia there is very little blatant discrimination against women. There’s a fair bit of affirmative action, however it is still the case that when you look at the statistics, the number of women coming through PhDs is about on par with men. Women in the upper levels of academia are still very low and lower further up the levels. Something has happened to prevent those women from advancing or else they are choosing not to advance, or a combination of things. In some ways, being a woman’s opened up opportunities rather than hindered me, because of the field I’m in (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

In contrast to Rachel, Anna, a scientific academic, highlights her struggles to recruit women professors, and argues that they should have improved equal opportunity, for women actually bring something special to the workplace:

I’ve tried to recruit women. I’m going through the lists of people in universities that I might have forgotten, but we recruited two people and the same thing; we had over 100 applicants and one woman. That was for the professorial level...women should have equal opportunities to men, they bring something extra to the workplace... the men are more ego driven and talk over women (Anna [audio] 2010).

In regard to women’s academic competency and disputing labels, Anna led the establishment of the university’s research centre: ‘I had a leadership role from the beginning. I’m a dominant person’. Also, Anna esteems the competence of women colleagues to men:

We have a fantastic female director of research...she’s an absolute dream to work with compared to the men. She gets things done. Men tend to dither a bit. One thing about women is that they multi-skill and tend to get things done more if they’re good at their job. She’s fantastic (Anna [audio] 2010).

This account illustrates that women’s ability to perform their roles is not entirely dependent on legislation, but through their competencies. Evidently, sometimes it is easier to work with women scientists, which suggests an essentialist viewpoint. Drawing upon gendered performances, academic activist Maggie criticised women for letting men take over rather than stepping into ‘our own power’. Maggie embraces women-led strategies of aspiring to confidence and attributes of
‘nurturing’ and ‘intrinsic value of life’. This also suggests an essentialist position. However, women need to argue for change and to not act like men, Maggie adds. A policy reform is suggested by Maggie so to minimise glass ceilings:

53% of us are women and we lack the guts to do what is necessary... we let the men take over rather than stepping into our own power. There should be a law that 53% of every corporation, academic, Parliamentary body is women. The magic number is 30% below which women tend to vote to please the males, above which they say, no, you’re not getting your missiles today. We’re voting for milk for children. That’s got nothing to do with political lines. It’s across the board, because we’re nurturing and understand the intrinsic value of life. We’re not into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act. I’m not talking about the Thatchers or Hilary Clinton. I’m talking about women. When there are very few women in power they behave as men to rise up the ranks and that’s what those women did (Maggie [audio] 2010).

This account reflects essentialist views of women and femininity, with women being described as ‘nurturing’ and women not being ‘into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act’. However, Maggie criticises women politicians who act like men in order to achieve power. This account further suggests that women’s nurturing qualities are an empowering foundation to initiate change. Also, Maggie’s condemnation of women lacking ‘the guts to do what is necessary’ was underpinned by her case for a uniform gender equity law. In retrospect, women need to exercise power and reject the supreme power of men and such elitism in order for a social change to be realised. Despite this, glass ceilings informed by ruling class masculinity and hierarchy, present barriers to women’s leadership and equity within corporations and Parliament (Probert 2005; Sharp et al. 2008; Connell 2009; Burn 2011). Maxine adds that women are acquiring executive roles in the ‘corporate world’, but ‘they are entering a culture that is male dominated’, for the glass ceiling is still in place:

I think the way that it does for me would be around the masculine corporate world. Women are starting to get on boards and become CEOs, but they are coming into that corporate world, as created by men. That corporate domination of nature, and the fact that we are using resources so unsustainably, we are looking at everything in a short-term, profit-making way, rather than long-term generations. To me, that reflects a very masculine way. My being in Parliament, trying to change laws; I am not so much an idealist that I think we are not up against it, when it comes to an overpowering corporate dominance of everything, in terms of the laws. Other parties are controlled by the wishes of companies and individuals, making
profits for corporations....I doubt women would have come up with that ([audio] 2010).

Academic activist and Greens women, like Maxine, have identified ‘a boys club’ and a glass ceiling effect in Parliament and corporations. Comparative themes were found in the diverse sector negotiations of eNGO women. In an eNGO meeting with a politician, Eileen describes politics as ‘a male game’, hence ‘a boys club’; yet, the Pacific voice for change was actually recognised which suggests that women-led meetings achieve outcomes:

Politics is very male dominated...if you’re dealing with political situations; it’s a good idea to get a man to front because that’s the game. However we took a delegation to meet with a Minister, it was all women...The Minister was rude and a couple of the Pacific Islander women ended up in tears... we felt the mistake was having all women in our delegation. I mentioned it to a campaigner who said, ‘you probably did well, a lot of his treatment was because you’d rattled him and he didn’t know how to handle you because you were all women.’ I don’t know, maybe it would have been better if we had a man in the delegation but maybe not, we made a impression because his department started consulting us (Eileen [audio] 2010).

Discussion

The gendered nature of the elite was contextualised by women academic activists’ recognition of ‘the boys club’ and masculinist forms of leadership and hierarchy. For example, women commented on men’s chauvinism in the legal profession, universities being ‘male dominated’ and the struggle to recruit women professorships. A masculinist elite was recognised and resisted by my participants. My interviews revealed insights and contradictions. Rachel identified ‘a boys club’ around ’20 years ago’, but adds that ‘there are more assertive women on the bench’ nowadays. However, Rachel contends that some older men ‘possess a very chauvinistic view of women’. Women therefore continue to experience prejudices and stereotypes. The patriarchal control of organisations along the dominance of social elites is therefore an obstacle for women activists’. Although, women are achieving status through leadership and merit, they also struggle with gender differences, the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings. This reflects a complex power-based masculinist culture of work informed by hierarchy, patriarchy and male privilege. Nevertheless, women challenge the power of ruling class men through their agency and competency as professors and judges.
Gendered performances are defined by the negotiation of masculinity and femininity. In support, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010) found that demographic and attitudinal characteristics differentiate men and women’s political participation. Niederle and Vesterlund (2008) documented gender differences in the competitive behaviours of men and women. They concluded that a quota-like affirmative action environment, in which women are equally represented, actually encourages women to compete. Hence, gender differences characterise women’s struggle, yet proactive programs promote inclusion while reducing marginalisation.


Participants’ rising status within academic and other institutions illustrates that women are not entirely subordinated and are making a positive difference in how the world is run (Leonard 1997, 2005). However, women struggle with glass ceilings in work contexts. Margaret’s account showed that a glass ceiling effect was embedded in regional politics and male dominated leadership structures. Alston’s (2011) study on gender and climate change in regional Australia plus Poiner’s (1990) review of Australian bush firefighting practices found that conservative male norms were barriers for women volunteers advocating change.

Further, the glass ceiling effect is an example of ‘the boys club’ and tokenism, where gender barriers hinder inclusion. The glass ceiling effect is not entirely specific to environmentalism but rather the institutions of women, such as academia and Parliament. It is experienced more by salaried employees than grassroots volunteers. This suggests a difference in work relations, professional engagement and competency levels within paid and unpaid contexts (McPhillips 2002; Maddison 2004). Although academia and Parliament have gender equity laws, there are gender barriers that have prevented women from advancing.
(1d) Resisting ‘the boys club’ and recognising gender differences in eNGOs

In this section, I contend that a gendered elite is defined by the way eNGO women identify environmental organisations as hierarchical and dominated by men. Some women comment on the pervasion of masculinist ideals and the dominance of men as leaders and decision makers. My interviews also show the leadership resistance of women to hierarchical practices, in how some women are breaking down gender barriers, by organising women-led meetings or engaging in radical action campaigns. This section builds on my previous critique of dominate social elites as hierarchical and dominated by men.

ENG0 women accommodate and resist ‘a boys club’ within their organisations and as they negotiate across the movement. Women perform masculinity and femininity and identify with gender prejudices and differences. They also resist tags of incompetency. A masculinist culture of work, in terms of conservatism, chauvinism and ego provides evidence to ‘a boys club’. Yet this was not specific to women’s environmental organisations. Maxine had previously criticised the conservative behaviour of men parliamentarians and the ‘male corporate culture’. Here, Maxine criticises the conservative gender politics of eNGOs:

I did find after coming through uni as a feminist and Greens politics, going into the [omit NGO name], the gender politics and dynamics within the environment movement less than ideal. Particularly within some older organisations, some of the dynamics in terms of gender politics were interesting. I challenged them. I would have been seen as a full on feminist. The dynamics within the [state] environmental movement, I was the only female head of an environment group. Every other peak group other than the [omit] had no woman at the head... it is the kind of older bearded men brigade that tend to dominate the [state] movement. That’s a problem. I’m talking of more traditional movements of nature based conservation. There’s a male dominated group mentality. It has been dominated by strong male individuals (Maxine [audio] 2010).

On the theme of ‘the boys club’, eNGO volunteer, Eileen pinpoints patriarchy and hierarchy in the Pacific Island ‘maneaba’ [the decision-making place], whereby meetings are dominated by men. Despite men making the final decisions, they still consult with the women. As a member of a Christian religious order Eileen has been
proactively educating Island women in climate strategies, which is empowering their agency and competency:

…it’s very patriarchal. They’re trying to empower women…the educational level is very low. Most people live a subsistence life, you don’t need a higher education to do that... But when they meet in the maneabā, it’s the men gathering in a circle and the women are behind them, but the women aren’t just bringing them cups of water to drink. The women are negotiating with the women and the men will be consulting with them. Things have changed probably because of education by religious orders...the women we’ve had dealings with are the more educated ones, if all they can do is educate them to be assertive and put forward their view in the community, then they would have achieved a lot (Eileen [audio] 2010).

A masculinist culture of work is recognised and resisted by my participants. When Eileen first started in her NGO, the culture was ‘male’; nonetheless, the male management encouraged female involvement through proactive recruitment strategies, and ‘now there are more females and the work environment is more conducive to women’ (Eileen [audio] 2010). Moreover, Deborah disputes ‘a boys club’ in her eNGO and remarks that ageism and activism can be more of an issue than gender or being a woman as such. The activist label of ‘tree hugger’ or ‘radical’ is more of an issue than gender when negotiating with executives and politicians, which is why a formal suit is needed in order to be taken seriously, ‘they’re politicians and you know what they look like, they wear a suit you have got to wear a suit’ (Deborah [audio] 2010). However, Deborah experienced aspects of an ‘old boys club’ when negotiating in an inter-state meeting; but her position as an outsider was more of an obstacle:

That was the only time I ever felt Old boys’ club…when I was in [omit State] and I went to meet the [omit] minister. The [omit] CEO was there with me and he was a man obviously. He introduced himself to someone and there was a little bit of old boy’s thingee, oh we used to work together years ago, so, it was chummy. But I was the outer-stater, so it was possibly more of him establishing his position as, well I’m [omit state] rather than some blow in from outside the state. Maybe it wasn’t old boys so much as, we’re [omit] and she’s not (Deborah [audio] 2010).

The interview with Deborah reveals contradictions, for although she has not experienced ‘a boys club’ in her eNGO or is treated differently as a female, she outlines gender differences in paid and unpaid campaigns and in the performance of women and men:
...the climate change team, it’s all men whereas the green home team, it’s all women....the green home team don’t do advocacy work like we do. They’re not campaigners, they do the public outreach program, they do teaching...Some areas attract men; our two nuclear campaigners are both men...I think climate change attracts men and to the economics...it’s more of a hard science as opposed to a soft science... I find the biodiversity side more interesting... (Deborah [audio] 2010)

Mara, an eNGO Director and voluntary activist, comments on gender distinctions in the grassroots, yet disputes the idea that being a woman sets her apart as different. Prejudices, stereotypes and labels are consequently being resisted by my participants:

...there can be gender role distinctions in circles, but there is diversity...I participated in direct action blockading in forests and the coal industry, and sometimes gender roles become marked but I know exceptions for it to be a fair reflection of the direct action crew on coal and forests. I heard people remark the tendency for women to gravitate or be chosen for facilitating roles, and for men to be given action campaign roles...the challenges women in Australia face vary according to their socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity, sexual preference. I don’t experience challenges in work/life that I associate with being a woman. In social movements, it is an advantage to be a woman, because there are tools available for us to disrupt dominant or status quo patterns that may not be available to men... (Mara [audio] 2010)

A masculinist culture of work was evidenced by women’s experiences of conservatism, chauvinism and ego. My interviews reveal contradictions in the way women enjoy inclusion and belonging or encounter struggle and marginalisation. On this point, marginalisation is experienced in hierarchical organisations where patriarchy is endorsed. Stephanie acknowledges the existence of ‘an old boys club’ in her previous career in finance, but disputes its existence in the environmental movement, for it is ‘less ego driven’. In contrast to Australia, ‘the boys club’ is obvious in the strata of U.K. elitist commerce corporations, often defined by social class, Stephanie contends. However, there is more of a sexist attitude in the Australian versus U.K. workplace: ‘in the U.K, if you get to the upper echelons, where it’s real ‘old boys club’, you get it there. We don’t have the extremes; we have maybe a higher level of sexism’. Stephanie evaluates that eNGOs have networks of power hungry individuals but comparatively eNGO people are less egotistical:

If you look at the superannuation industry, they’re old dudes, on multiple boards; no one’s proactive, because there’s no pressure to be proactive. It’s just keep to the pack. Keep getting your director’s fees... it’s definitely an old ‘boys club’... I’ve only been around for 18 months in the environmental
world. I haven’t come across it. There’s networks of important people; powerful people, but not as strong as the corporate world. In the NGO world, we justify it by it being for a good cause. The corporate world is very cut throat...whereas, NGOs, there’ll be some power hungry people, but the majority believe in the cause than their own agenda. If you’re that driven to be powerful, you’d go into the corporate world and get remunerated. Here, it’s a less ego driven environment to work in (Stephanie [audio] 2010).

Stephanie’s interview moreover reveals contradictions because she identifies ego in the behaviour of men in eNGO meetings, as a practice of ‘a boys club’; however, women-led meetings reject masculinist dimensions of hierarchy, power and ego in favour of collaborative open strategies. This reflection suggests that ego is gender and organisational specific:

I’d say it’s more female, we’ve got a meeting every week and the door’s always open. It’s not very masculine...it’s a more conducive environment to discussing ideas and questioning, someone going off on a tangent, it doesn’t work. It is a more collaborative environment. We had a breakaway women’s meeting, cause on Friday’s, we like wine and cheese. It was productive. It’s different vibe with women. Cause we’ll talk about it, there were no egos, or power, or anything to protect. Whereas with men, there can be an ego element (Stephanie [audio] 2010).

Ego as a practice of ‘the boys club’ was additionally perceived to be an issue for Heidi, a PhD graduate who possesses academic and diverse third sector industry experience. Comparatively, Heidi reproaches the egotistical elements of ‘a boys club’ within scientific academia but simultaneously disputes its existence within her eNGOs. Heidi denounces the publication agenda and ego drive of some male scientists, which sharply contrasts with the advocacy mission and environmentalist strategies of the men and women in her organisation:

....as a PhD student, I’m tarnished and unimpressed by the academic environment; it is more about posturing and resource acquisition than environmental outcomes. I think research scientists are driven by ego, in some ways they are well intended. There are wonderful scientists who aren’t like that, but I’ve had two experiences now with scientists that it’s really about them, it’s not about working together to achieve positive outcomes...the NGO world can be political and competitive but in [omit] it’s not evident, because we are so busy, everyone has their own defined role, we just don’t step on each other’s toes. We have our area to look after, but we work together when it’s required... the [omit] has a good reputation... it’s highly regarded by the scientific community, and you have kudos in all areas, it’s a really nice environment to work in. I’m enjoying the NGO community (Heidi [audio] 2010).
In the interview with Heidi, ‘a boys club’ was found in academic conferences but not so in eNGO conferences. She assesses the way in which some men scientists have excluded women, despite their merit, which presents a constraint to female intellectual recognition:

...the academic community and workplaces, they are different. With men making their way up, I don’t think merit is acknowledged...it’s ‘a boys club’. It’s a lot of conferences...We hold a bi-annual conference [omit], and that’s a great networking experience. It puts everyone together in one place (Heidi [audio] 2010).

Across organisations, ego has been recognised and disputed as being gender-specific. Heidi characterised ‘ego’ as a trait of male scientists rather than the competent men and women in her eNGO. This insight demonstrates gender and organisational differences in professional engagement. Stephanie differentiated corporate finance from eNGOs in that its members were less driven by ego or profit. Women-run meetings frequently reject hierarchy, whereas men-run meetings expose ‘power’ and ‘ego’ along with hierarchical decision-making practices. Helen points towards ego as a problem within large hierarchical INGOs. While considering differences in the roles of men and women, ego is not gender specific:

Women are a key part of environment and climate movements, but I would not differentiate their role from that played by men. Men can be more rational and cool-headed with less bitchy behaviour, but I have experienced large egos and dominating personalities from both genders (Helen [audio] 2010).

Although women oppose sexist labels, the notion of ego reflects the complex intersection of gendered power relations. Catherine explains that being a leader means ‘not letting ego get in the way and being self-reflective, which is easier for women’. Catherine has worked well with men climate activists, which shows the unity of grassroots men and women. However, men control resource industries, in the practice of ‘ego’ and ‘control’, which curtails women’s social change and sustainability agendas. Consequently, ‘a boys club’ is evidenced by the masculinisation and centralisation of the coal industry:

It’s interesting about men in industries like coal. There’s something very masculine about centralising sources of energy, something very alien to think that we could have bits of energy coming from solar panels, wind and somewhere else, because there’s no control. Being able to centralise the source of energy is very appealing, to make lots of money, it’s very masculine (Catherine [audio] 2010).
Thus far, my participatory accounts show commonalities and differences within third sector environmentalism. Thematic insights undermine perceptions of gender and activism. Mara acknowledges differences in the grassroots and eNGOs, but disputes the idea that this is gender specific. Nonetheless, the cultural environment encourages certain behaviours:

In the grassroots, you can be more free and independent, you set your boundaries, work according to your priorities and so everything is a gift freely given. Which is not to say that people don’t work hard in the grassroots, I worked hard, but you are working according to the terms you set yourself and are more in control...When I started working in the NGO climate movement, I was struck by how much more freely people gave support, encouragement and warmth. There is a lot of nastiness, mean-spiritedness and bickering in the grassroots, and my experience has been that it is less prevalent among the paid campaigners. This is partly a consequence of having financial and reputational standing. That said, in the grassroots, the constraints people work under bring out the best in those who rise to the challenge. I know special people in grassroots activism whom I have profound admiration (Mara [audio] 2010).

Chauvinism is a constraint that Greens and eNGO women identify as the practice of a masculinist culture of work, especially ‘the boys club’. Chauvinism was not uniform across eNGOs, as some participant’s did not mention it as a barrier. Stephanie’s organisation has more males and her boss is assessed as chauvinistic, yet not all men managers are like this:

In my business area, there’s myself and my boss, who’s a male. He’s a special male. I tend to be the doer and do stuff, and he is the alpha to my beta. He will direct what is being done, and I will do it. I’ve worked with very good men; he’s probably my first of meeting a slightly chauvinistic, old-fashioned male, which is a bit odd. He’s from consulting; it is a very male dominated background (Stephanie [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon the above interview, the agency and competency of Stephanie was demonstrated by her identity as a ‘doer’, although chauvinism constrained her performance. Supporting accounts identifies misogyny and chauvinism as examples of ‘a boys club’ and gender-specific barriers within third sector employees. ENGO advocate Barbara commented on misogyny and chauvinism, for she was fired by a male panel for ‘not toeing the party line’, despite prowess in the Green Sporting Committee position. Male chauvinism adversely impacted her future leadership role in the movement:
I worked with a committee...they wanted an assessment about the remediation, and was it going to be good for the green games? Because I didn’t toe the party line, it was led by a man and a male lawyer; they wouldn’t let me back on the committee and sacked me, and didn’t pay me... I was sacked because I didn’t deliver the report that this environmental group wanted for the games. I knew the subject, that’s why I was asked to do the job... there was this cabal of blokes and a woman; the cabal of blokes just bundled me out and it was terrible. That was absolute male chauvinism...I experienced misogyny in the 1990s, I was never provided the opportunity to play an executive role in the mainstream movement (Barbara [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

Evidently, eNGO women identify a struggle with patriarchy and hierarchy in their organisations. This shows the existence of a masculinist elite in eNGOs as in other environmentalist sectors. Moreover, there is evidence that women struggle with the power of dominant social elites, as hierarchical and dominated by men. Catherine commented on the patriarchal and competitive nature of the coal industry. Additionally, this shows that overarching forms of masculinist leadership and hierarchy is problematic for women, even outside of their own organisations. A finding is that grassroots men and women activists encounter less gender barriers than salaried men and women in eNGOs. The resistance of men to women’s leadership in eNGOs is thus perpetuated by the power plays of the ruling elite.

A masculinist culture of work was identified by issues of conservatism, chauvinism and ego within third sector environmentalism. Women described ‘the boys club’ in terms of: power, ego, chauvinism, dress, conservative approaches, criticism and support of eNGOs and the grassroots, gender differences, stereotypes and prejudices as well as women-led strategies towards social change. The findings reveal insights and contradictions. Stephanie’s interview revealed contradictions; for she disputes ‘a boys club’ in her eNGO, yet her boss is viewed to be chauvinistic. Gender differences were found in leadership. Women-led meetings rejected ‘hierarchy’ and ‘power’ in favour of ‘collaboration’. Also, Heidi labelled men scientists as ‘ego-driven’ and academic intuitions’ dedication to resource acquisition rather than environmental solutions. Academic conferences were assessed as ‘a boys club’, whereas NGO conferences enabled female networking. Helen further recognised ego and hierarchy as an issue in large NGOs, but disputed gender is an issue of marginalisation. In the grassroots, ego was located in the male centrism of resources. This presents a barrier towards social change. Despite barriers and
prejudices, women exercise agency and demonstrate competency in professional and grassroots contexts.

When participants’ downplay the relevance of gender, this suggests a resistance to gender labels; however, gender stereotypes were identified across my interviews. An additional point is that women are performing gender through their negotiation of masculinity and femininity, and locating the ‘I’ in their identity and social change ambitions (Butler 1990, 2004, 2006; Salleh 2010). In addition, labels of activism can be more of a barrier than gender. Deborah’s interview revealed contradictions. Although she did not identify as a feminist, she elaborated on gendered campaigns. This reflects the work of Mellor (1997) and others (Brown & Ferguson 1995; Rankin & Gale 2003; Salleh 2010, 2011; Cockburn 2012a & b) on gender gaps within environmentalism. Although Mara disputed gender distinctions, she emphasized the value of ‘diversity’, and ‘disrupting the masculinist status quo’. Mara’s review of the ‘nastiness’ within the grassroots suggests that third sector organisations operate along different levels of professionalism. If women do not experience gender barriers, they endure constraints within hierarchical elites that undermines their agency and competency. Further, eNGO women comment on proactive recruitment strategies and gender policies that have promoted their inclusion and challenged men’s ruling power. Thus, women experience barriers and enablers within third sector advocacy; however, they actively ‘do gender’ through their accommodation and resistance towards ‘a boys club’ and masculinist cultural practices.

Part 2. Tokenism

(2a) Women as token members on environmental panels

My discussion of women as token members on environmental panels shows that gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency relate to women’s struggle with a hierarchical elite informed by dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity. It is also challenging for me to construct women’s agency and competency, when their deliberate placement on panels, may be because of their gender rather than their merit. Although I question the gendered tokenism of women here, I also consider the
way women’s agency and competency is challenging masculinist leadership as well as biases and prejudices within elitist platforms.

In relation to ‘the boys club’, women comment on their experiences of masculinity and struggle with gender labels, such as ‘token woman’, the ‘masculine cultural domination of nature’, ‘where are the women speakers?’ The experience of being a token woman is an example of the way women experience ‘a boys club’. I argue that tokenism exemplifies the way women negotiate masculinity and femininity, perform gender roles and exercise agency and competency. A token woman refers to when a woman is put into a position to give the appearance of gender equity, which does not necessarily exist (Yoder & Aniakudo 1997; Gupta 2007; Erkut et al. 2008; Terjesen et al. 2009). It can imply the woman does not deserve the position on merit, such as deliberate placement on a male dominated conference, in order to fill a gender gap. A woman is a token woman if she has no effective power amongst the men (Erkut et al. 2008; Terjesen et al. 2009). I argue that ecofeminist actions and women-led strategies that challenge male power through prowess also challenge gendered tokenism. There is a lack of scholarship on women as token members of Australian climate panels, committees and meetings. This suggests the relevance of my study and its contribution to knowledge and meaning-making in organisations and movements.

In regard to ‘the boys club’, tokenism represents barriers and enablers that women resist or accommodate. A barrier is that placement is less based on merit than it is on representing an illusion to gender equity. An enabler is that women receive the opportunity to perform as leaders in roles that may have traditionally been awarded to a man. Tokenism is experienced when women are invited to fill a gap on panels; in this way, they may experience their role as an outsider within masculinist discourses. In regard to gender differences, Linda described herself as a token woman on climate panels:

I was there as the token woman because they didn’t want the panel to be all male... I was the project leader but I had a colleague who was more involved and it was only a portion of my work. I suggested he’d be better placed as the panellist but it was pointed out that would make the panel all male [laughs] so would I please stay on it? ...it’s often the case I’ve taken on the role of creating gender balance on panels or representative bodies, because we’re still male-dominated in the environment field (Linda [audio] 2010).
Yvonne adds that she is often asked to make up a gender balance on committees, panels and editorial boards, and that there are not many senior women in her area:

I’ve been fortunate in the field I chose, climate change, which has become more topical and opened up a lot of opportunities that I wouldn’t have had in another area...often I’m the only woman on a panel or a committee. I’ve been asked to do things because they were looking for a senior woman; there are not many senior women in the area. In some ways being a woman’s opened up opportunities rather than hindered me, because of the field that I’m in (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Tokenism is experienced by the women in my study engaging in diverse sector of environmentalism. Overall, participants’ contend that gender can be a barrier and an enabler to their activist roles engagement. Previously, Greens politician, Margaret assessed ‘a boys club’ within regional LGAs and labelled the women Councillors as ‘token managers’. In retrospect, women’s issues are still marginalised in rural contexts: ‘There are some token managers. Out of 12 councillors there’s two women’. Hence, salaried and voluntary women realise the gendered barriers within conferences and committees. Women’s inclusion, therefore, is complicated when men in authority dominate intellectual thought and decisions.

Maxine explains that there are usually no women speakers on climate panels, which contrasts with the Greens gender pre-selection process. Although women are acquiring executive positions, corporate boards are dominated by men:

...there was a conference, when I had a look at the agenda, I went, where are the women speakers? Like, where are female speakers on this whole thing? It was on bushfire, so it’s hard to get women speakers. Even when they had no women speakers in the scientists, they didn’t think to get a woman speaker for a MC [Master of Ceremonies], it wasn’t even on their radar...There was no rule around making sure we had to select women on to the executive. Some members of the executive said, it would be good if we had another woman or two. But it wasn’t anything set, you know? In the Greens, even our pre-selection process, when we select candidates, if the party votes three men in a row and a woman is number four, she’ll get bumped up to two for gender equity in the top two (Maxine [audio] 2010).

In my study, a token woman is evidenced by: the resistance of men towards women, women’s struggle with labels as well as being ‘the outsider’ or on ‘the outer’ in climate panels. Such examples position women in a marginal position. Maddison (2004) pointed out that one’s collectivist politicised identity is influenced by a
worldview of ‘insiders and outsiders’, in which feminists are negotiating labels in contexts where group definitions are resistant to change. The insight to being an outsider reflects Yoder & Aniakudo (1997) findings on gender and race in U.S. urban firefighting practices. African-American women urban firefighters encountered token differences and marginalisation, whose pluralistic struggle for recognition, acceptance and career mobility, was due to their location ‘as outsiders’ within a masculine vocation. Although I have not identified an intersection of gender and race issues with women’s placement on panels, participants’ struggled to have their voice heard during consultations with male panellists. Hence, gender is a barrier to inclusion.

In a grassroots-led coal protest initiative, the male mining panel labelled the climate activists as ‘loonies’; despite gender distinctions, the female protest voice was paramount:

In the last seven years, there are two more huge coal mines... we protested and put in submissions against them, I confronted [omit] to say, basically that this was going to affect our greenhouse gas emissions, I was looked at like a total loony, of course. But it was an all male panel. It’s very, very male, absolutely (Catherine [audio] 2010).

On the theme of tokenism, the ability to exercise agency and competency in male dominated meetings is complicated by prejudices along with stereotypes of age, gender and expertise; nonetheless, labels are being accommodated and resisted:

I find my age, when I’m in meetings with senior government officials, I’m not taken as seriously as if someone who was 20 years older than me sitting, but it’s not necessarily about my age per se, it’s about my experience and knowledge and part of that is that I’ve been on this planet a lesser time than someone who’s 20 years older who’s had more exposure to issues or who has invested more time in becoming an expert in an area. But definitely at times, I feel that’s a challenging factor...as soon as they meet you, they can guess roughly how old I might be (Juliet [audio] 2010).

Wendy doubted that she would be taken seriously as a young woman on a panel of experts in a televised media event, yet age was perceived to be more of a barrier than gender:

I was more conscious about my age, potentially my cultural background, not so much my gender...they have women on the panel, I never thought about the women would have made much of a difference. It was more the age. I felt much younger, I feel at times our voice is less legitimate because we are less informed or have spent less time being experts. But, it doesn’t mean that we are less legitimate. The youth voice is a very legitimate voice, especially on
this issue. I think not having that same way with words that our older leaders have, or the same knowledge from the past 20 years of work, definitely makes it harder to legitimise ourselves (Wendy [audio] 2010).

In relation to age as a barrier, Maggie perceives herself to be on the ‘outer’ that is as an ageing woman addressing corporate men in corporate meetings:

...if I’m asked to address corporate meetings the men don’t talk to me afterwards. I freak them out. I’m not sure what it is. If I was still pre-menopausal and attractive I could get away with it, but now I’m not, I’m part of the wallpaper [audio] 2010).

Concerning one’s position as ‘the outsider’, Kate is often the only young woman in regional LGA meetings, nonetheless, she insists on being included:

I am the only woman around the table of 40 men, they’re at least 30 years older than me, and I have insisted on a seat at the table and being there. They found that challenging and confronting. Within the Greens, there’s a very different vibe to it, we had a nearly all female campaign team in the Federal election (Kate [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

Thus far, women are competently performing their roles and exercising agency and competency; although, a masculinist culture, informed by the patriarchal control of organisations and dominant social elites in politics and industry, presents constraints to women’s inclusion and equity. Empirical findings on male dominance, token women membership on panels along with female under-representation in salaried positions, further validates that ‘a boys club’ is an issue. Tokenism is recognised by my salaried and voluntary participants engaging in professional and grassroots contexts, which exemplifies the broader gender struggle within complex elitist hierarchies informed by male privilege (Segal 1999, 2007; Erkut et al. 2008; Terjesen et al. 2009; Cockburn 2012a). Sex-segregation and gender differences in leadership is evidenced in ‘the boys club’ and gendered tokenism in my study. A gendered division of labour, therefore, reflects the existence of ‘a boys club’; however, women’s prowess and agency entails empowered subjectivities, which, in turn, threatens masculinist forms of dominance in organisations and politics.

Chapter 5 highlighted women’s marginalisation in relation to being ‘the outsider’ and ‘on the outer’. This section has also shown how women experience their role as an ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ on panels in terms of inclusion and exclusion.
Yoder and Aniakudo’s research with U.S. African-American women firefighters analysed subordination and token differences within discourses of race and gender (1997). Maddison (2004) contended that women experience the ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ within the Australian Third Wave feminist movement. Nonetheless, activists’ also challenge barriers through practical knowledge, such as on-site field actions (Maddison & Scalmer 2006). In my study, participants’ refer to themselves as ‘the outsider’ and ‘insider’ in relation to thematic insights to gender, age and activism. During urban LGA meetings, Jacquie was ‘on the outer’, and Margaret argued the lack of female representation shows that women are marginalised in rural politics. Kate is often the only young woman in regional LGA meetings, yet insists on being included. Maggie explained that she is on the ‘outer’ as a mature expert when she addresses men in corporate meetings, and Deborah viewed herself as the ‘outsider’ in inter-state meetings, although this was not gender-specific. Urban and regional contexts illustrate comparative female differentiation, where women are included on one level and excluded on another level. Further, women’s placement on panels to fill a gender gap and men scientists taking credit for the work of volunteers highlights women’s marginalisation and struggle for acceptance. Despite being ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’, women are actively performing masculinity and femininity while exercising their agency and competency. Women’s prowess and merit, thus challenges traditional social hierarchies of power and privilege.

Women are invited on panels, but it is questionable whether this is for their competence? Literature has analysed gendered tokenism in management, in terms of barriers experienced by executive women on boards. Terjesen et al. (2009) examined tokenism and advocacy in relation to individual processes impacting women directors on corporate boards. They found that change occurs when there are three or more women are on the board, thereby women feel less constrained about men’s opinions (Erkut et al. 2008). Consequently, diversity is not a ‘woman’s issue,’ but a group responsibility, where the critical mass normalises women’s presence as leaders (Erkut et al. 2008, Terjesen et al. 2009). Although my participants struggled with the label of ‘token women’ on panels and their positioning on ‘the outer’ during meetings, they insisted on being included and having their voice heard.

Feminists have debated the label of women as ‘incompetent’ in masculine vocations (Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010; Burn 2011; Ussher et al. 2011); however, my participants also identify ageist labels in their experiences of ‘the boys
club’ and token membership. Juliet expressed ageist concerns during meetings and Wendy doubted that she would be taken seriously as a young woman on a panel of men experts. Further, Maggie complained that her maturity and lack of youthful looks, ‘part of the wallpaper’, is why she is often ignored by corporate men, despite intellectual competence and expert knowledge.

My participatory accounts have revealed the power of resistant femininities and women’s proactive leadership strategies. Women-led social change strategies point towards their resistance to a traditional social hierarchy. On this point, women’s agency and competency challenge to both patriarchy and hierarchy (Mellor 2007, 2009, 2012). Women’s leadership is contributing to a flatter and more inclusive culture within movements and organisations (Shiva 1993, 2005). Environmental advocacy encompasses human and nonhuman dimensions, in how women’s leadership aspires toward climatic reforms and sustainability alternatives (Doyle 2005; Horton 2006; MacGregor 2006; Kuletz 2009). Such agendas threaten masculinist governing elites. Cockburn (2000, 2012a & b) researched the political dynamics of peace movements, and argued that women’s collectivist anti-war activism is a powerful strategy of resistance. Here, climatic leadership empowers women whilst undermining the gender and political dynamics of movements. Anti-war-peace-approaches inform social change and justice agendas, whilst challenging male power. Thus, the woman-led protest voice on panels indicates that quests for changes have not been silenced.

(2b) Gender barrier: Men taking credit for the work of women

In this section, the idea of token women is evidenced by men taking credit for the work of women, which locates the existence of ‘a boys club’ within environmentalism. This Catherine, for example, states that women are doing the grassroots work, but men scientists are taking credit for this on climate panels. This finding consequently indicates gender barriers as well as differences in equity issues within voluntary and professional capacities:

Because what pisses me off, I went to the town hall a couple of weeks ago, there was this fantastic talk about beyond zero emissions, and there are these middle-aged balding men up there, every one of them, talking. I am thinking, where are the women? The women might be out on the ground doing all the work, but there’s a lot of men out there taking all the kudos and writing the papers and writing the books… (Catherine [audio] 2010)
According to Dion, ‘scientific panels’ are dominated by men who frequently take credit for women’s voluntary work:

I went to a scientific panel, 10 people, all men. You look at the stall, selling the reports and doing all the work behind the scenes, it’s all women, there’s definitely an element of that in the climate movement. There’s some great women that do fantastic things in the climate movement, men are more likely to be the person who gets up in a room and says, ‘We should be doing this. This is the wrong way forward’, and be quite argumentative for no reason (Dion [audio] 2010).

Women have recognised paramount gender barriers: men taking credit for their work and failing to formally acknowledging their grassroots and professional contribution. On the other hand, women-inspired strategies actually achieve results. For instance, Dion perceived men to be argumentative and negative, which contrasts with the approach of women:

Women are better at having more of a conciliatory approach. They’re more happy to work together to come to a point, whereas a man is more likely to get up and say, ‘I think this,’ and ‘What are you doing?’ and definitely be more critical. The experiences I’ve had in the climate movement where people are directly critical and negative of what I’m doing, they’re generally always men (Dion [audio] 2010).

Linda’s interview (chapter 5) had criticised the ‘powerful men in the movement’ who ‘disempower women’ or ‘give less regard to their viewpoint’ (Linda [audio] 2010). On this point, Maggie comments that women have been instrumental in social movements but their success is clouded by men taking credit within structures of hierarchy and patriarchy:

I was deposed in my organisation by hierarchical males who were jealous of me. I hate hierarchy...we need a revolution. I don’t mean blood and guts but I mean a revolution. We had a revolution against the French tests and uranium mining...I believe in educating people and then they get out in the streets and take over...it’s usually the women who induce changes and revolutions. Women started the Russian Revolution...they’ve usually induced most changes and then when we start to become successful the men stop putting us down but they take over and take credit and that’s happened to me time and again and it really pisses me off (Maggie [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

I conclude that ‘hierarchical males’ and governing elites present a barrier for women activists. Women show their criticism towards elite males in control of
industry and politics. Additionally, by men taking credit for the work of women, this locates a particular masculinist approach that is competitive and androcentric. Interviews show that women work better in organisations informed by egalitarian principles and flatter structures. Dion commented that men were ‘critical’ and ‘negative’ but that ‘women have more of a conciliatory approach’. This suggests an essentialist view, but also that women’s resistance to hegemonic masculinity and masculinist elites, through collaborative strategies, is a preferable work environment.

A principal barrier that has emerged from this analysis is that men resist women’s leadership and expertise or take credit for their grassroots work. The women in my study recognise gender barriers and enablers in organisational contexts of ‘the boys club’ and as token members of environmental panels. This finding indicates a masculine slant towards professional engagement and academic competency (McPhillips 2002; Culley & Angelique 2003; Salleh 2011; Cockburn 2012b). For Maggie, women have been instrumental in movements, but their success is clouded by men taking credit for it. ‘Hierarchical males’ and corporate elites were perceived to be a barrier to Maggie’s social change ambitions. Dion reproached a panel for having all men speakers. She acknowledged that women perform most of the behind scenes work. Linda branded herself as a token women on climate panels for the purpose of creating a gender balance. This shows that the movement is still male dominated. Maxine was concerned that no women speakers presented at a conferences, which would not have occurred in the Greens due to progressive gender equity policy. Although Yvonne identified as a token member on panels, her climate knowledge enabled her career mobility. Thus, women struggle in a masculinist culture but their competency undermines labels and barriers.

The collective activism of participants is sustaining and renewing both the Women’s and Environmental Movement’s, whilst undermining gender barriers and labels. Women’s movements are evolving and changing rather than static (Taylor 1989; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLennan 2009). Participants’ vibrant mobility reflects the hegemonic nature of social relations and power dynamics that are susceptible to change (Donaldson 1993; Connell 1995, 2002a, 2005; Donaldson 2009). Maddison (2004) argued that although young Australian women’s activism is less visible to previous movements, they are sustaining the ideologies and networks necessary for a strong wave of feminist activism to re-emerge.
Women’s merit and prowess is challenging tokenism or the idea that women are deliberately placed on panels to reflect an illusion of gender equity. Rather, meritocracy is a platform for women’s inclusion and empowerment (Hall et al. 2009). Women exercise power and agency through rigorous movement engagement and making a positive difference in the world (Leonard 1997, 2005; Arvanitakis 2009). Further, participants’ demonstrate academic competency as employees and volunteers, which shows that women are exercising power and achieving status. Such prowess undermines glass ceilings and men’s power. Participants’ competency challenges the tag of being a ‘token women’, lacking power and agency.

‘A boys club’ in terms of ‘an old boys network’ has traditionally revealed social class distinctions that characterise patriarchy and hierarchy along with women’s historic struggle for equity in organisations (Lindsay 2008; Durbin 2011; McDonald 2011). However, in this research, women largely of middle class backgrounds share a consensus in their criticism of the patriarchal control of organisations. Women and men in the environmental movement and academia are operating at the same class level. My argument, therefore, is that it is the patriarchal control of organisations that is the issue, rather than the patriarchal versus class control. The main gender barrier for women activists, in my research, is the power of the governing elite. An elite dominated by men controlling industry and politics. Additionally, women’s experiences of ‘a boys club’ and tokenism is situated by dominant practices of hegemonic masculinity and the ruling power of men (Connell 2002b, 2005; Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Donaldson 2009). In my findings, examples of patriarchy and hierarchy show that men’s power is a barrier to women’s activism. Maxine had branded ‘White haired White men’ in Parliament plus the masculinist conservatism of eNGOs.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has investigated the gendered nature of the elite by the way Greens, academic, eNGO and grassroots women recognise and resist dominant notions of masculinity within environmental organisations and political contexts, as with ‘the boys club’. I found that participants’ experience hierarchy and patriarchy in their organisations, which shows the existence of a masculinist elite. Women also show their criticism towards elite males in control of industry and politics. They
struggled with the power base of overarching dominant social elites that are, in turn, hierarchical and dominated by men. Catherine had criticised the patriarchal and competitive nature of the coal industry. This shows that a governing elite, is problematic for women, even outside of their own organisations.

Women tend to resist hierarchy and masculinity in their activism, but I have also found that some women accommodate to masculinist and hierarchical expectations. The power plays of ruling class men and interplays of hegemonic masculinity is revealed by women’s perception of men’s leadership style that is dominating and competitive. I argue that women advocate anti-hierarchical and anti-patriarchal approaches, which challenges elitist practices. The resistance of men to women’s leadership in eNGOs is thus perpetuated by the power plays of the ruling elite. However, women also demonstrate their leadership through egalitarian principles and grassroots strategies that are not conducive to the ruling class.

My participants also suggest that a conciliatory, consensus building and egalitarian approach characterises the environmental organisations that they work in. They argue that such an approach is consistent with women’s personality style and facilitates the operation of women in politics through the environmental movement. In this, they counter a feminist analysis represented by some studies that argues that environmental organisations are dominated by men. Such findings have implications: that the organisations that women work in are different from the ones considered previously by feminist academics; that they are ignoring patriarchal aspects of patriarchal power in the organisations that they work in; that feminist academics have misinterpreted environmental organisations.

A masculinist culture that is power-centric, androcentric, conservative, ego-driven and chauvinistic presents barriers for participants’ exercise of agency and competency. Conclusively, participants’ resistant femininities and their negotiation of masculinity/femininity locates gender as an active performance. Participants’ prowess and merit is subverting and transforming the traditional power dynamics of ‘a boys club’ and token labels. I have found that a maternal/caring position informs women’s activism, and this will be explored in chapter 7. Chapter 7 focuses on how participants connect their femininity and ‘the role of mother’ to their activism.
Chapter Seven- Maternal Identity and the ‘role of mother’ within professional and grassroots environmental advocacy

Introduction

In this chapter, maternal identity and the role of mother is evidenced within professional and grassroots contexts of Australian environmental advocacy. My goal is to articulate the way my participant’s connect their femininity to their activism. Some accounts reflect essentialist views, and others show a resistance to emphasized form of femininity. Contradictions were found when some participant’s identify with essentialist views of gender, but then resist the notion of a maternal ethos within environmentalism. Data-driven analysis illustrates four thematic insights: Maternal identity within professional and grassroots advocacy; maternal ecofeminism and Greens consciousness in everyday life and social movements; a work/life balance and workplace entitlements; and the active role of men in the movement. A number of my participants were mothers and interview findings illustrate the way their maternal identity inspires their activism. To a certain extent, being a mother guided one’s social and environmental responsibility and outlook for future generations. I also consider a nurturing identity in relation to an ethic of care that includes those considered to be ‘non-mothers’, such as women without children.

In feminist critiques, the perception of women in the traditional role of a mother has contributed to their over-representation in domesticated or unpaid roles rather than professional and paid positions (Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997, 2010; Baxter & Chesters 2011). Markedly, the social construction of mothers as essentially homemakers is questioned in my study because participants’ are educating their children towards a green ethic at home, or are incorporating their nurturing identity within professional advocacy. Interestingly, the maternal role symbolises the identity women share with the environmental cause and their strategies in the workplace, be it as volunteers or employees. Notably, not all of my participant’s are mothers, especially those in the younger age group. Comparatively, women without children demonstrate an ethic of care in the form of a nurturing identity towards human and nonhuman populaces affected by climatic changes. Moreover, the women’s accounts show that men are also challenging those same power relations through activist engagement. This indicates that masculinity and femininity are located in hegemonic contexts subject to diversity and change.
This chapter is organised into four thematic parts:

(Part 1) Maternal identity within professional and grassroots environmental advocacy;

(Part 2) Maternal ecofeminism and Greens consciousness in everyday life contexts and social movements;

(Part 3) A work/life balance and workplace entitlements; and

(Part 4) The support of men in the environmental movement.

**Part 1. Maternal identity within professional and grassroots environmental advocacy**

In this section, I contend that maternal identity or the role of mother motivates and constitutes the environmental advocacy of women within paid and unpaid capacities. My participant’s perceive their environmental activism in relation to a nurturing ethos of care. This relates to a desire to care for other people and the planet. Women adopt aspects of emphasized femininity in their activism. This viewpoint is relevant, in that it is a position from which women have something to contribute to society. It is a compelling finding that professional and grassroots participant’s share commonalities and differences in their objectives towards addressing the social and natural world. Historically, women have been over-represented in unpaid domestic roles as homemaker and carer (Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997; Baxter 2000; Pocock 2003; Burn 2011); nonetheless, grassroots mothers have played an integral role as activists within glocal ecofeminist movements (Shiva & Moser 1995; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; McPhillips 2002; Shiva 2005; Oppenheimer 2008). However, there is no research documenting maternal identity concerning the agency and competency of professional and voluntary women environmental advocates. Hence, this study fills a gap. I consider the way the maternal role contextualises the sociocultural identities of participant’s in paid and unpaid work in light of new findings and insights plus contradictions.

The following eNGO accounts highlight participants’ maternal and environmental subjectivities in relation to social change and environmental justice goals. Deborah, a part-time eNGO employee who performs voluntary bushcare work outlined her professional and personal objectives (Deborah [audio] 2010). As a mother and salaried advocate, Deborah was determined to protect the unique
biodiversity of the natural environment for her children plus future generations in relation to long-term sustainable goals:

You mean wanting to seek a job in this area? Wanting to make a change or a difference to Australia to look long-term rather than you know how politicians think short-term within election cycles. Somebody had to be there pushing we have to change because you’re only elected for a number of years. A friend of mine’s mother said when you’re dead all you leave behind is your children and works. I have got my children and am doing the good works to help the country (Deborah [audio] 2010).

The above excerpt indicates that social change inspires the advocacy of environmental women like Deborah. Social change is a key strategy of grassroots voluntary movements (Risman 2004; Diekman & Goodfriend 2007; Jagger 2008; Spitzner 2009); interestingly, professional women also emphasise its relevance. Deborah contended that political engagement is one dimension towards achieving change, in that long-term solutions need to be advocated at all levels. In addition, Deborah’s account suggests the value of rigorous grassroots practices and diverse sector collaboration towards social change. This is because environmental change is all encompassing and not dependent on one sector. A professional and personal aspiration guides Deborah’s advocacy, such as, wanting to make a change or difference in policy, organisational strategy and community engagement. The role involves negotiating with diverse sectors, like other eNGOs, grassroots organisations plus industry and governmental authorities. Evidently, Deborah’s personal to professional identity encompasses a strong social consciousness and commitment to environmental responsibility. According to Deborah, the eNGO position is not well paid, yet rewarding in work satisfaction and one’s ideological belief in a future of sustainable technologies versus resource-based approaches. The fact that she works in bush care in her spare time for no payment, signifies that environmentalism is an area of passion and is all encompassing, rather than solely a 9-5 venture. Deborah’s ethic of care and green consciousness therefore reflects a nurturing identity encompassing individual and collective efforts towards making a difference.

In an additional eNGO account, Barbara, who owns a small environmental company and has worked on diverse campaigns across third and public sectors, relays her maternal activist identity in the Anti-Toxic-Waste movement. Barbara describes her feminism as emphasising the protection of healthy reproduction and the right of mothers to not be bossed around by multinational bottle baby companies.
She adds that mothers have a right to breast feed without the interference of patriarchal systems of medicine and childbirth, such as plastic bottles. Barbara’s advocacy is focussed on reproductive health rights that challenge corporations and their products that may be toxic to the health of mothers and their children:

I do have a strong maternal, one of my main drivers on my work on pollution was because of the chemicals, we did tonnes of work on birth defects. And on breast feeding protection against bottles, sticking bottles in newborn babies mouths’ with all this crap, you know, the [omit] campaigns. A lot of my early justice work was about women’s, the diet, the mother and the child, their right to healthy reproduction. Probably because I had my son at 30. I did a lot of work with midwives and nursing mothers on the World Health Organisation code of marketing breast-milk substitutes, and was a leader...Their right to breast feed the child without interference of technology and patriarchal systems of medicine and child birth, even infant nutrition they’re telling women how to do it... I would have loved to have had more children, but I didn’t have that opportunity. But, I wasn’t upset about it (Barbara [audio] 2010).

The maternal identity of Barbara was located in activist campaigns that targeted women’s reproductive health rights and simultaneously rejected patriarchal and masculine systems of medicine, childbirth and infant nutrition. Her criticism of multinational bottle baby companies entailed the rejection of anti-toxic waste equipment for infants, such as, the right to breast feed versus bottle feed. This insight to the rejection of patriarchal systems of medicine presents new findings to the interdisciplinary field. The rejection of plastic bottles represents a challenge to corporate consumer dominance. The right to breast feed also empowers mothers. Feminists have analysed the patriarchal structures of organisations and its practices (Hartmann 2002; Godfrey 2005; Daly 2006; MacGregor 2006); however, the role of mother as a powerful social change advocate is often ignored or overlooked. Moreover, the idea of bottle feeding as a patriarchal representation that constrains mothers’ right to healthy ‘natural’ infant nutrition is a new insight. Moreover, Barbara’s leadership relates to an empowering nurturing subjectivity, who is also actively challenging the masculinisation of consumerism.

In addition, participants’ agency and competency is demonstrated by the performance of leadership and education strategies towards making a positive change. As a voluntary leader, Barbara assists postgraduate students and young people in their professional development and skill acquisition. Educating young
people is an opportunity to grow as a leader and to pass the baton onto the next generation, who are the future of the movement:

> I used to do it informally, but now it’s through [omit]. You’ve got to keep in touch with young people, otherwise you lose touch. It’s never like here have my wisdom. Just by interacting with young people, you pick up so much. I’ve usually got at least two or three post-graduate students that I’m helping with their studies, often in engineering or science... I like to grow more as a person, so I can fulfil my role as a leader. As a person who wants to bring a group of us together to bring some knowledge, pass the baton on to the next generation (Barbara [audio] 2010).

Markedly, Barbara’s Indigenous identity encompasses a spiritual connection and feminine subjectivity in regard to a ‘nurturing’ and ‘mother earth angle’. The idea of an Indigenous identity as core to one’s activist motivation adds a new dimension to this analysis:

> It was my kids, reading The Weather Makers; it was my love for the environment. Then I discovered that maybe back in the 1820’s in my Tasmanian history, there may have been an indigenous person. Maybe, I have, six generations back some indigenous roots, it was a tiny part. I started wondering why am I doing this work? I think these things have come my way, people often say I’m just very honest, and it’s about my kids, and a fairer world. Often the angle I’m coming from is a very feminine sort of caring, nurturing, mother earth angle, and there seems to be space these days for that. I don’t know whether that’s different than in the past, but it does seem to be valued. But I’d love there to be higher representation by women (Barbara [audio] 2010).

A nurturing identity is also found in the account of Maggie where her ethic as a physician inspires social change goals. Academic activists’ also emphasise the maternal role in their professional environmental advocacy. They comment on empowering leadership strategies performed in grassroots contexts. In Maggie’s account, a physician by profession and a public speaker on the environment, a strong maternal identity, professional competence and acknowledgement of the planet being in a dire state, in turn, motivates her ethic of care. As a physician treating her patients and environmental activist aiming to rectify the problems facing the planet, an emphasis here is on global preventative medicine:

> The happiest I ever am is after I’ve had a full day in the clinic helping my patients...We’re here to serve others and serve the planet. We’re not here to serve ourselves because you’ll never get happy doing that, and that’s an ethic that’s come out of capitalist America. We used not to be like that in Australia... all the world’s children are my patients. I extend it beyond my
family to the whole of the human race. Yeah, that’s global preventive medicine (Maggie [audio] 2010).

Maggie identifies as a feminist activist whose leadership and individualism in the movement enables her to proactively engage with diverse sectors. This involves liaising across professional and grassroots contexts plus performing paid and unpaid roles. Medical training has strengthened her competency and knowledge on scientific and biological issues in regard to identifying with human and nonhuman issues. Such expertise has been an empowering tool in engaging in the global climate-sustainability debate. Social change advocacy is practiced by Maggie through voluntary community talks with grassroots activists and professional debates with scientists and corporate executives. In symbolic terms, Maggie’s agency and competency is demonstrated by negotiation strategies in grassroots and professional contexts, which entails a powerful force for change. Research has found that grassroots women struggle to negotiate with executives, who are largely men located in power-centric positions of power within governance and corporations (Epstein 1993; Brown & Ferguson 1995; Kuletz 2009; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Antoinette et al. 2011). Markedly, Maggie is performing in these contexts, but gender continues to be an issue of differentiation.

Maggie pinpoints positions herself as a ‘grandmother’ and ‘mother’ within environmental activism. Maggie’s nurturing subjectivity is located by her argument that the work she does, is so that her children and grandchildren will inherit a ‘healthy versus dying planet’. This suggests an essentialist view of women and gender roles, but her interview additionally suggests that women have the power to challenge companies and governments. Evidently, women’s knowledge and competency is located in their nurturing ethic, and this ethic empowers women to pursue social change. In a dispute of labels, Maggie argues that men also have a drive towards addressing environmental injustices. Further, democratic grassroots action challenges the power of corporations and bureaucracies. Such active engagement is an opportunity to represent the interests of children.

I found that sociopolitical strategic engagement is complicated by gender prejudices that are power specific. Maggie’s account shows that the ‘nurturing’ trait guides activist ambitions for change whereas ‘power and ego’ pervade the decision-making of men. What is needed is a dramatic sociocultural change; however, Maggie
contends that women are: ‘letting men run the world’, which is reproducing male dominance. In relation to gender as a performance, Maggie identifies mothers’ nurturing ethic in democratic action:

If you don’t use your democracy you don’t deserve to live in it and that doesn’t mean voting every 3 years. That means getting out and making sure your representatives, who are the politicians, represent you, the interests of your children, the environment, the world, and don’t represent the interests of the big companies...Psychic numbing and blocking out the real evil of what they’re doing, chopping down forests; when their children are dying or they’re on their deathbed themselves that’s when they recant and tell what wicked things they’ve done in their life and change at that point... women tend to vote to please the males, above which they say, no, you’re not getting your missiles today. We’re voting for milk for children. It’s across the board because we’re nurturing. We understand the basis and the value, intrinsic value of life. On the whole, we’re not into power and all that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act (Maggie [audio] 2010).

An intersection of emphasized and resistant femininity was evident in my interviews. Participants’ locate the power of a maternal ethos, and also resist gender stereotypes and labels of incompetency. They also resist the governing social elite and patriarchal organisations, which constrain their reforms. Plumwood (1997, 2002) had assessed essentialist dualisms, arguing that it is false to assume that women have a special connection with nature. Moreover, not all men exploit nature or resources, as many men activists that have made a positive contribution to the movement (Connell 2005). My participant’s add that they often work well with men that share a common Greens justice ethic. This contrasts with the men arguing for the maintenance of traditional resource industries, like mining (Rankin & Gale 2003; Horton 2006; Faber 2008; Tyree & Greenleaf 2009; Gerulis-Darcy 2010; Irwin 2010).

Although my interviews show that a nurturing identity informed by the role of mother is a platform for grassroots democratic action; a masculinist elite hinders participants’ social change agendas. In my eNGO and academic accounts, women encounter obstacles; nonetheless, their campaign tactics, in the pursuit of change and justice, show the agency and competency of mothers. Women endure gender and organisational barriers but it is not entirely specific to their work sites. Furthermore, humans’ impact on the health of the planet and their ecological interdependence of a shared responsibility is a reason to protect collective environmental goods and
engage in activist strategic action (Davidson 2004; Horton 2006; Smith & Pangapa 2008; Spratt & Sutton 2009).

A maternal ‘nurturing’ identity in this study is connected to grassroots environmental strategies practiced in paid and unpaid capacities by employees and volunteers. Yvonne’s activism is located in her salaried university position and voluntary community advocacy. She is a member of professional environmental bodies, a policy advisor plus a mother:

I have two children, so that’s my main one; yeah... I give a lot of public lectures. I respond as much as I can to requests for public activity... unlike a lot of people but the thing I most enjoy is talking to community groups because often there are people there that are really good people that give a lot of their time voluntarily to good causes and if I can help them well it makes me feel good (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

The role of mother along with a nurturing identity constitutes the activist agenda of participants; however, the ability to juggle this sometimes involves mothers removing themselves from the workforce. With added paid and unpaid responsibilities in the last 12 months, Catherine describes herself as ‘a bit of a back seat activist, armchair activist’. In relation to the extra work, she has found ‘everything too draining’. There have been tensions at home. Her ten year old son was ‘ecstatic’ when she was not attending activist events. But the concern for her children plus environmental degradation inspires Catherine’s activism:

And having a little child, knowing that by the time they’re my age, the world will be a different place, there would be less mammals, birds and trees; that image was frightening. There were a few months, I lay awake at night thinking this is terrible, no one is talking about it. It wasn’t on the political agenda (Catherine [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

This section has shown that my participants believe that their environmental politics came out of a maternal desire to look after their children and care for the people of the world and for other species. Accounts also suggest that it is the responsibility of women to advocate change by taking on a proactive approach in their activism. Contradictions were found in my analysis. Women appear to identify with essentialist positions, but then some also identify with forms of resistant femininity. This suggests that women connect their femininity to their activism, but also that a maternal or nurturing identity is an empowering platform to initiate
change. Participatory accounts evidently demonstrate that an Indigenous, spiritual and nurturing identity inspires women’s grassroots and professional activism. On this point, only Barbara identified as an Indigenous Australian, pertaining to a ‘mother earth’ angle. This insight contrasts with Plumwood (1997), yet presents grounds to review Merchant’s (1989, 1996) essentialist critique of the earth mother. The maternal role is a rationale for participants’ activism, nonetheless, a patriarchal culture within bureaucracies and corporations entails difficulty for the voice of mothers to be recognised. Despite complex elitist structures, activist strategies towards social change continue. Ecofeminists articulated grassroots mothers struggle to negotiate with powerful men within governance (Godfrey 2005; Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Spitzner 2009). Nevertheless, the social change leadership of grassroots and professional advocates, in my study, challenges masculinist elites and hierarchical structures.

In addition, my review has found that participants’ criticise or praise the Women’s Movement, as enabling or constraining them, which is a potential new insight to feminism. In traditional critiques, the Women’s Liberation Movement empowered women from their domestic role while enabling more choices and responsibility in a work/life balance (Freeman 1973; Taylor 1989; Cockburn 2000; Maddison 2004; Segal 2007). The women in my study identify stereotypes but also challenges labels and tags through their agency and competency.

I conclude that social change leadership, a nurturing ethic, the role of mother as well as mentoring strategies contextualises participants’ agency and competency within grassroots and professional contexts. The maternal role of Barbara is evident in her support roles as an eNGO advocate and mentor performed in paid and unpaid capacities. In theory and practice, professional advocates and grassroots activists have practiced leadership and academic competency as a strategy towards social change and environmental justice in their political negotiations. View and Boles (2010) reviewed the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) who met with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to present climate change recommendations from the perspective of the low-income minority communities. In turn, Tyree and Greenleaf’s (2009) exploration of the injustices of ‘Clean Coal’ argued that the environmental justice movement, through its leadership on climate justice, serves as a centralising force for advocacy efforts.
The movement brings together students, scientists, policy advocates, community residents, and others engaged to fight clean coal and advance real green energy solutions.

The exercise of choice enables women to perform their roles and develop empowered identities, while demonstrating their agency and competency. Margaret identifies the power of choice in the Liberation movement in that women were liberated in their choice to be mothers and homecarers (Part 2). In Leonard’s (2005) qualitative questionnaire, agency entails making a difference in one’s area of choice. High organisational agency was associated with accentuated autonomy and choice. Additionally, McDonald et al. (2006) argued that choice in maternal Labour-Force Participation (LFP) is contentious through relative external factors and available opportunities. Wood and Newton (2006) criticised the mother–child dyad and advocated women managers’ choices to exercise agency and remain childless. Further, this research demonstrates that agency is shown by women’s choice to be mothers, their choice to be stay-at-home mothers or employees, and their choice to exercise their own power as well as accommodating and resisting male power.

**Part 2. Maternal ecofeminism and Greens consciousness in everyday life contexts and social movements**

This section begins with a discussion of Greens women view of maternal ecofeminism and a Greens consciousness informed by an ethic of care and responsibility. This is then supported by grassroots accounts detailing the power of the maternal role informed by a nurturing ethic within community activism. My participant’s further comment on how being a mother enables their environmental activism within everyday life contexts and social movements. Women also experience barriers in their work and engagement with society. In regard to enablers, Margaret commented that women have the choice of whether to be mothers. Concerning barriers, Joan found that ‘mothers do not have a voice in society’.

The politics of gender and the environment is located by the way Greens women emphasise the value of motherhood in their activism, with many emphatic that the maternal role motivates their ideological worldview and performance in politics. Mellor (1997) had considered German Greens women politicians’ struggle with a work/life balance, despite the fact that the party endorsed a strong feminist
ethic and had a female leader. Hence, a masculinist elite hinders mothers’ agency and competency along with capacity to manoeuvre across private and public spheres. For many Greens mothers, one’s femininity is connected to sustainability. For Joan, a full-time mother of three, her maternal ecofeminist identity and sustainable ethic was an empowering strategy to educate her family towards change:

...if you can’t reuse it or recycle it, then it’s going to landfill or you can’t compost it...I see mums who use disposable nappies or cloth nappies but they’re still buying all the food they give their kids, packaged things that’s wrapped in plastic and that’s all going in the bin...I’m on the committees for childcare and school, they might say, ‘for Harmony Day we let off 100 orange balloons.’ I say, ‘Where do those balloons come from and where are they going’...I had an issue with glow sticks. They’re made with oil, they’re plastic. You use them for one or two hours then they’re in the bin and how long does it take to break up and what’s leaching in the earth as they’re decomposing? They said, ‘Right, we’re never going to use them again’ (Joan [audio] 2010).

The above account illustrates that Joan is struggling to be a ‘renewable mother’ in a consumer society somewhat hostile to Greens consciousness and sustainability practices. There is a gender-power-based struggle affecting desired changes. The difficulty of negotiating a feminist sustainable ethic in unreceptive patriarchal contexts has been explored in critiques (Davidson 2004; MacGregor 2006; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009). Moreover, the agency and competency of Joan was evident in strategies of recycling, walking and buyer behaviour. This demonstrates how seemingly quiet suburban action, like organising a Green children’s party, educates the community towards sustainability. Joan is an active community member and participates in school committees plus social events in council. She encourages her children to view articles online and buys clothes from op-shops. These activities are strictly adhered to in order to avoid landfill and contamination of the human to the non-human. Joan’s stream of green consciousness is to think global and act local. Local action is a key sustainable strategy practiced by activists across glocal communities (Westra 2005; Horton 2006; Kuletz 2009; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009; Spratt & Sutton 2009).

In regard to one’s identification with a sustainable Greens ethic, Stacey is careful about what she buys, in that a ‘greenie’ approach towards consumerism may reduce landfill, ‘I’m doing this to shape the world that my kids are going to inherit and the society that they’re going to live in’ ([audio] 2010). Horton illustrated the
power of advocacy strategies in regard to ‘beyond over political campaigns’ practiced in everyday life, such as, ‘a whole range of oppositional practices—bicycling not driving, boycotting ‘unethical’ foods and shops, innovating methods of recycling consumer ‘durables’- green activists are a key group generating conflict’ (2006:131-32). It is suggested that through struggle, women form their activist and environmental identities. For this reason, the practical sustainable strategic action of mothers in everyday life situations and contexts is a powerful force for change.

Joan’s agency and competency is further evidenced by her writing about environmental activism in mediums like women’s newspapers and online feminist blogs plus forums. Such robust methods aspire to educate mothers and the community on green issues:

And just putting the message out wherever I can that we don’t need to keep consuming all this stuff that’s going to end up in landfill, that we can live more simply, more sustainably and we have an obligation to do that so that our children live on a healthy planet. So the writing, I do that. I also post on mum’s forums on the Internet. There are forums for everything on the Internet. I belong to some forums that are for mums... I post about green issues. It might be reaching an audience that may not otherwise think about these things. And other writing, I have a blog, the Maternal [omit], so I talk about green issues on that (Joan [audio] 2010).

In supporting studies, activist writings and blogs in print and online mediums have empowered the communication networking strategies of feminist and social change advocates (Calhoun 1998; Havemann 2000; Merithew 2004; Gustavsson 2005; Price 2006; Kwan & Trautner 2009; Keller 2012). In particular, Joan wrote a Greens Guide for Mums, which was a way to educate mothers towards a green sustainable agenda. The Guide shows that Mums can simply do this at home and in the community. Hence, women identify a maternal subjectivity, which is strengthened by their prowess plus rapport with other mothers. Culley and Angelique (2010, 2003) similarly identified the competency of women anti-toxic waste activists through acquired technical knowledge. Such findings challenged labels of female incompetency and stereotypes of women volunteers’ inability to comprehend science jargon.

Despite women’s merit and prowess, the voice of mothers is often ignored or overlooked, which indicates further constraints. When Joan had children, she realised that mothers do not have a voice: ‘I’ve been more aware of our civic and global responsibilities. I consider myself a feminist and when I had children I found that
mothers didn’t have a voice in our society’ (Joan [audio] 2010). Furthermore, grassroots and professional women campaigners have endured a historic struggle to have their voice for social change and gender equity formally legislated (Maddison & Scalmer 2006; Segal 2007; Rainey & Johnson 2009).

In the interview with Joan, a finding is that the voice of mothers is clouded by the legacy of the Women’s Movement that advocated for the rights of women in the paid workforce and neglected the issues of stay-at-home mothers. This contrasts with Margaret’s empowering account of the Women’s Liberation Movement. Joan is critical of the mainstream movement for not endorsing the domesticated role in comparison to the more valued role of working mother. She questions why the maternal role is not central to its rhetoric, which alludes to movement divisions. This criticism was also voiced by Shelley; yet, such reflections contradict with comparative findings on female empowerment in Women’s and environmentalist movements (Maddison 2004; Hall et al. 2009; Burn 2011; Walby 2011).

The ability to exercise choice enables the advocacy of the women in my study. In particular, the Women’s Liberation Movement educated women that they had the choice to be mothers. Women’s empowerment is therefore related to choice and meaning making. Margaret articulates that Australian women are lucky to have the freedom to make their own choices, and to choose whether to be mothers or not:

I wanted to have children. I saw it as something I didn’t have to, but I was looking forward to it, so I’m glad I did. But it could have gone another way... my girls are in their 30s and neither of them have children. Things happened, when I was growing up, people had children younger. So people have children older now, they do a lot more with their life. They’re more formed in their feelings, if I’d travelled overseas and done other things, maybe I wouldn’t have, I’m not sorry the way it’s happened, but life could be different. It’s the choices we make and being able to make those choices freely is important and we’re so lucky being brought up in this country. I had those choices as a woman and having a mother who encouraged me to make choices, like get a career, and only have children if you really want to (Margaret [audio] 2010).

The agency and competency of mothers is demonstrated by their advocacy in feminist and environmental movements tackling social change and environmental justice campaigns. In regard to the maternal role, Margaret adds how this inspires her ‘responsible positions’ with feminist and community management committees, ranging from the 1960s to the 1980s:
There’s a whole range of issues. The Refuge was one and Family Support, I took an office bearer position. I enjoyed being responsible. The peace movements were on, environmental movements were on. I was involved with community management committees. Women’s Refuge, Family Support. I’ve got three children. When they were young, I was the President of the Preschool Committee. And from Women’s Refuge, Family Support, then went to [omit] Special Care which was an organisation that looked after older people with dementia. I’ve had a lot of experience in those communities. Some taught me lessons which is great, it’s lessons we need to learn about organisations and getting involved (Margaret [audio] 2010).

Within gendered performances that constitute agency and competency, Margaret’s involvement in numerous Peace, Women’s and Environmental movements was strengthened by her passion for social and environmental justice issues (Margaret [audio] 2010). Margaret identifies as an activist from a very young age, who participated in the Women’s Liberation Movement, May Day Marches, anti-Vietnam campaign, peace rallies and anti-toxic waste campaigns. Greens politicians Jennifer and Maxine illustrated their extensive contribution to such movements from a young age, which impacted on their rationale towards Greens politics. Thus, the research has argued that a maternal-nurturing identity influences the work-based identities of my participant’s within the glocal politics of gender and the environment.

A finding is that grassroots and professional participant’s perform well in diverse paid and unpaid capacities, for advocacy is practiced at home, the workplace and society. Grassroots women exercise their agency and competency in the community as volunteers while negotiating with executives and politicians. This reflects diverse sector engagement. Grassroots women detail the ways their maternal role guides their activism and their subjectivity. Catherine explained that the motivation towards grassroots activism is driven by concern for her children and view of young people as custodians of the environment. As a public relation advocate, she plays an educative mentoring role in the public service:

If you want children to be good custodians of their environment in the future, they’ve got to know what’s in the environment. They’ve got to be aware and understand it. If we don’t get our kids outside and know what’s living on the ground and flying in the sky, they are not going to be aware of it in the future, they are not going to look after it. As the habitats for birds and animals and insects diminish, we have to think about land management issues. My project is enabling teachers to take kids into their environment and study the diversity and biodiversity. If you are going to teach about the environment, you’ve got to do it in the environment (Catherine [audio] 2010).
These interviews consequently illustrate that grassroots women perform well across paid and unpaid capacities in their diverse roles. Strategies of education, knowledge and leadership inspire their social change agendas. Grassroots mothers’ ability to perform leadership is strengthened by collectivist activist methods that unify women, despite barriers. In regard to barriers, activist Shelley, a volunteer of a local action group, articulated that an obstacle towards community climate action is the state-centric approach of governments and the influence of corporations towards consumer buying power on unsustainable items. Historically, women had strong grassroots networks where the maternal role was paramount; however, the increasing entry of women into paid work has actually disempowered mothers:

I think that there was a grassroots community for women. They had each other, they were at home with the kids, in the neighbourhood, I think they were stronger then. They had more networks from the neighbours and when you go to work you go away from your home. I think you take away a woman’s power when you take away her ability to socialise and make connections that are not just an alienation from herself, where she’s just got all these work associates, that’s not really proper connections to networking for your best self interest. Whereas women neighbours would have that but yeah, that’s kind of the last era, so I don’t think women have been empowered by joining the work force at all (Shelley [audio] 2010).

A sustainable ethic reflects the diverse agenda of participants in their ideological worldviews and practical engagement. Findings show that women experience commonalities and differences. In regard to one’s worldview, Shelley’s advocacy was connected to a faith-based Christian versus state-centric approach encompassing her role as mother of four, nurturing identity and concern for future generations on a sustainable planet. Shelley’s maternal sustainable identity was located in a critique of mothers’ disempowerment, but this is juxtaposed to grassroots networks led by mothers and future empowering experiences:

I feel they need to get back to local community networking between women. Being involved in the P&C community, they can network on a local level that can transcend to the family. Not just through school but develop friendships because friendships are very empowering and feeling you’re part of the community, not really a work horse, being paid for, being alienated from yourself, but you are part of a community. Through your personal efforts, not just materially but the values and the morals of the family are enhanced by what you’re doing (Shelley [audio] 2010).

Shelley’s argument for grassroots communities run by mothers has implications for feminist agency and competency. For Shelley, these communities
are strengthened by bonds of friendship and localisation strategies where neighbourhoods can act as quiet yet poignant forces of change and resistance. The account of Shelley indicates that local action or localisation is the answer to such challenges, where communities run by mothers and for women and their families may reduce governmental and commercial control on people’s lives. Shelley’s argument therefore is that people need to educate themselves on environmental issues and to not rely on the government to fix the problem. In a strategic sense, community consensus, grassroots action and local collectivist methods empower women. Local action is integral to social movements (Unger 2008; Spitzner 2009; Antoinette et al. 2011; Price & Feldmeyer 2012). My research also shows that mothers’ local community leadership has the potential to transform disempowering experiences and their struggles.

In regard to empowering community activist strategies led by mothers, Amanda, a voluntary leader of a grassroots organisation, who is married with three daughters, adds that being a mother has inspired her activism. Mothers dominate the group’s membership, where the maternal role pervades a sense of responsibility and ethic of care for future generations:

I’d left all those behind when I became a parent, then I became more involved in my community...Then becoming involved with a beautiful primary school with an amazing principal who has an incredible ethos around community. Through that community, I became connected with other women through a book club, and through a choir, beautiful things. It was almost like emerging from this cocoon as a new parent, and just being completely focused on the children (Amanda [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

I conclude that my grassroots and professional advocates connect their femininity to their environmental activism in organisations and everyday life contexts. My accounts reveal essentialist and resistant interpretations of femininity pertaining to the role of mother within paid and unpaid work contexts. Both volunteers and employees identify with aspects of emphasized and resistant femininity (Connell 1995; Leahy 2003). I found that mothers’ experience enablers and barriers in their work. Being a mother is an enabler to wanting a more sustainable world for their children, however, a barrier is that structures in society are not entirely supportive to their Greens consciousness and social change agenda. Nonetheless, participants’ nurturing ethic is a platform to inspire change, and this is
made possible by women engaging with their local communities, such as neighbourhood groups. As mothers who are activists, participants’ are not located on ‘the outer’ of society, rather they are engaging in contexts that are receptive or unsupportive to their Greens consciousness.

A maternal nurturing identity motivates the advocacy of professional and grassroots participant’s through a unified common objective. Both employees and volunteers incorporate social change methods in their advocacy goals, whereas social change has been interpreted as a grassroots strategy (Risman 2004; Diekman & Goodfriend 2007; Jagger 2008; Spitzner 2009). Deborah’s role of mother and wanting to make a positive long-term sustainability entailed professional and personal objectives. Women engaging in diverse paid and unpaid, capacities be it politics, eNGOs, grassroots and academia therefore share a worldview and agenda as mothers arguing for environmental justice. Ecofeminists have focused on grassroots mothers’ struggle within patriarchal hierarchies (Godfrey 2005; Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Leach 2009); here, participant’s struggle to perform their gender and work-based roles within a social hierarchy; nevertheless, grassroots democratic participatory engagement is a unifying factor for change. Further, participants’ agency and competency was demonstrated by: social change agendas within grassroots and professional contexts; the health and reproductive rights of mothers; a rejection of consumer culture; leadership and mentoring towards social and environmental responsibility; sustainable everyday strategies of recycling; feminist writings and online networks; future grassroots communities run by mothers; and the exercise of choice. Choice entails higher and lower levels of agency.

I found that participants’ critique or embrace the legacy of the Women’s Liberation Movement, in how mothers’ rights have or have not been met. Studies have documented the success of feminist movements in enabling working mothers to juggle work/life balances (Cockburn 2000; Maddison 2004; Probert 2005; Maddison & Scalmer 2006; Segal 2007). However, this research has identified a conflict in the representation of the domestic homecarer role, that has been devalued to the salaried organisational position. Despite feminist achievements, gender gaps remain, in the form of glass ceilings and the sexual division of labour, which highlights the struggle for women’s equity. Shelley and Joan criticised the shortfalls of the mainstream movement for not embracing the rights of stay-at-home mothers. In addition, Barbara criticised the Movement for its ‘focus on lesbian women and its lack of focus on
heterosexuality and the inclusion of men’. Although Amanda acknowledged the legacy of the Liberation Movement, women still receive less pay. Jennifer added that the pay disparity along gender lines is ‘huge’, but this is not specific to environmentalism. Overall, I contend that a complex gendered culture of work presents challenges for working mothers to negotiate an effective work/life balance.

As a result, conservative and progressive interpretations towards feminism have emerged. Participants’ resist and accommodate radical and conservative approaches within activism. As a feminist with conservative views about the role of mothers, Shelley’s account shows that women play a central social change role in the climate debate, but that they need to return to their homes and communities in order to rectify this problem. Previous chapters have identified that men and women adopt conservative and radical methods. Maxine had argued that conservative eNGOs fall short in gender politics and social justice issues, which supports the idea that there are conservative elements with the generalist environmental movement that constrain social change (Eder 1996a; Doyle 2000, 2005). Nonetheless, women advocate change through resistant femininities that embrace conservative and radical tactics.

Part 3. A work/life balance and workplace entitlements

This section considers how women’s activism is constrained by current constructions of work and motherhood. I consider the feminist critique that work is supposed to be full-time (or more) and motherhood is supposed to a mother’s responsibility (and not a father’s or a community or governmental responsibility). Also, I build on my discussion of gender barriers and enablers in mother’s work. Thus far, I have found that a masculinist elite, informed by patriarchal cultures and hierarchical structures, hinders women’s agency and competency in their work. Yet, resistant activist strategies, as practiced by the women in my research, also relates to a maternal/caring position that challenges hierarchical structures and notions of ruling class masculinity. I further consider the way my participant’s resist or accommodate to hierarchical structures and societal expectations in their activism and organisational contexts. I contend that organisations that endorse an egalitarian ethos and feminist principles, are more conducive to women’s exercise of agency and capacity to juggle a work/life balance.
The results from my research show that mothers’ struggle and succeed in juggling their paid and unpaid roles along with workplace entitlements and conditions. Internal policies that are supportive to mothers, at an organisational level, enable participant’s to perform multiple roles and maintain a work/life balance. In Deborah’s eNGO, the performativity of advocacy was strengthened by liberal workplace strategies friendly to working mothers along with their educational aspirations. A flexible, part-time position was favoured by Deborah. Firstly, it enabled her to devote time to raising her young children. Secondly, the sharing of the job enabled her to do post-graduate study:

I do a three day week, I share my job. He does the travel. I have two children now. I have been doing this for five years...While I was doing the degree, I did this part-time. But my children were in late primary school. My job is to make Australia better but at the same time I have a life. The major hobby is bush regeneration, even though that is a contribution to the community, it is still a hobby because it is not paid work...I do volunteer work, bush regeneration but in my own time and it is not to do with [omit]. That would be once a month, three hours a month. That’s to contribute to my community where I live, rather than as a working thing (Deborah [audio] 2010).

McDonald et al.’s (2006) analysis of the rhetoric of choice in maternal Labour-Force Participation (LFP) found that two-thirds of women working full time would actually prefer to work part time. The reasons for not acting on their preferences are due to the nature of the job and the lack of career opportunities for part-time employees. However, my participatory accounts reveal that eNGOs offer flexibility that enables women to perform their part-time roles. Thus, agency and competency is illustrated through effective work/life balances.

In regard to a work/life balance, my participatory accounts demonstrate that some eNGO women enjoy flexible conditions that enable them to perform part-time work while juggling paid and unpaid roles. Helen, an eNGO director, grassroots group leader and mother, adds that feminist activist achievements have improved the work/life balance of mothers. In her organisation, flexible workplace conditions enables mothers to perform part-time roles along with an understanding of parenting limitations on a professional career. ENGOs run by mothers and for mothers therefore model the conditions for an effective work/life balance:

Once I became the director, then they were mine [laughter]. We were focused on a work/life balance. So the staff could work from home if it was appropriate. We had a time-off new policies, if you’ve done overtime, you could have that time back. We were all women. There was only three staff,
but we were all women with children, I was very sensitive to making sure their lives weren’t infringed upon by their professional role; that’s what I wanted for myself. I tried to model the conditions that I wanted as well as granting them those conditions (Helen [audio] 2010).

Historically, Helen has often sought part-time roles within environmentalism that are flexible and supportive of her key domestic maternal role. She has managed this well through organisational support. Her community group educated children about biodiversity in the classroom and also organised groups that advocated anti-toxic-waste management in the use of play equipment for recreational activities. However, there is the issue of maternity rights:

I have always sought jobs that have part-time options, I have been a mother since I entered the workforce. The concerns have been not receiving paid maternity leave and a position to return to after having my second child. I have been able to work from home in the last two positions... I am the very lucky beneficiary of previous feminist activism. The workplace is open to a mother who seeks part-time work, work from home, flexible conditions and understanding of parenting limitations on a professional career. I have been lucky to find excellent managers (Helen [audio] 2010).

On one level, flexible part-time work and supportive managers enable participant’s to enjoy a work/life balance within eNGOs; on another level, Helen’s critique of ‘paid maternity leave’ and the flexibility to return to work after ‘having a second child’ indicates contradictions. Evidently, mothers experience enablers and barriers in their work/life balance. Emslie and Hunt’s (2009) qualitative study of men and women in mid-life (aged 50 to 52 years) suggested that gender is embedded in one’s negotiation of a work/life balance. Gender-specific commonalities and differences were found in my research. This research suggests the ways gender-specific versus gender-neutral theories of work/life balance may be developed.

Moreover, the research shows that an integrated work/life balance and ambitions for motherhood are not straightforward in large International [I]NGOs indicative of a demanding workload. The account of Linda, an INGO employee, shows that there are pros and cons in this sector. A ‘pro’ is the INGO has a strong productive work relationship with the grassroots, which improves the capacity for community engagement. Turning to ‘cons’, Linda complains that due to the position’s demands, she has not been able to do voluntary work. In turn, there is a
difficulty maintaining personal relationships, which is why so many colleagues do not have a partner or children. Linda’s interview highlights the barriers and enablers working mothers encounter in their work/life balance:

I was probably out of the country for at least 12 weeks of last year. Not all at once but at different times... like, we’re considering having children and I don’t think I could do that and have children. I don’t even know if I could do my job... and this is similar to a lot of NGOs, it’s so demanding of your time and the expectation that you will just be available whenever needed but it’s very difficult for parents of young children and, umm, certainly been in situations where we discuss it where we find that you know, virtually everyone one there. Certainly in the international work, hardly anyone has children. In fact, most people don’t even have a partner because they they’re not living a life that maintains relationships...Passion for the cause (Linda [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon Linda’s eNGO critique, due to the lack of strong maternity provisions, the desire to be a mother involves a change in environmentalism sectors. According to Linda, a colleague, a mother of two children, has travelled extensively but comments, ‘it is really hard for her because she feels very guilty and a bad mother. She may change the job when she has a family’. In the international campaign work, Linda adds, ‘hardly anyone has children’. In addition, most people do not have a partner because they are not living a life that maintains relationships. International travel therefore conflicts with a future domesticated role, and at this stage in her career, children are not feasible. Linda and her partner are considering having children in the next five years, but the juggling of the INGO role with the role of mother is expected to be too difficult. Critically, many eNGOs do not have any paid maternity leave:

I think this organisation would like to be family-friendly but is similar to a lot of NGOs, it’s demanding of your time and the expectation you will be available whenever... I would like to work in the environment movement, but a lot of people have taken the option of a job in government when they decide to have families so that they have better income, better lifestyle. There’s the financial support in terms of paid maternity leave. The incomes tend to be higher in the private or public sector. If you want to work part-time you might be better off in the public sector so you earn more for your time... a lot of it’s the demands and expectations you be available. We have paid maternity leave but I don’t think there’s much beyond that (Linda [audio] 2010).
In contrast, the private and public sectors are perceived to offer better work conditions for mothers working part-time. Linda may change to a government job because of perceived improved financial support and paid maternity leave entitlements. Her eNGO has some paid maternity leave—a minimum of four or six weeks, depending on years of service. She still plans to work in the environmental movement, which demonstrates passion, but like other mothers seeks better income and lifestyle entitlements for her family.

Studies have identified a work-to-family conflict affecting mothers in the connection between work hours and a flexible work/life balance. Grönlund’s (2007) gender study on job demand-control and work-family conflict, considered the connection between work hours and a work-to-family conflict. Grönlund (2007) found that women in jobs with high demands and high control, regarded as the prototype for modern, flexible work/life, do not experience more work-to-family conflict than men, even when working the same hours. My study shows that flexibility enables participants’ part-time roles but that long work hours contribute to a work-to-family conflict as well as an effective work/life balance.

The passion for the ‘role of mother’ is such that some women have removed themselves from the workforce, and focussed on other care duties and domestic responsibilities. For Amanda, the social organisation of the family was a core goal:

... for the last 12 years, I’ve been a mother; a lot of my working life is focused on the organisation around my family, my three girls and partner. That initially took me out of the paid workforce ‘cause I had three children; we have three girls within just over three years basically. So that took up all of my working time for a good five year period, six years, until they were all in school or pre-school (Amanda [audio] 2010).

This research shows that one’s connection with the human and the nonhuman world motivates participatory activist engagement. This involves performing environmental and social responsibilities. Juggling strategies and a nurturing ethic of care illustrates participants’ agency and competency. On this point, academic activists outline their nurturing identity, a work/life balance, affirmative action and a gender gap in higher education:

I do a lot of things outside my University role, for example, I co-convene a national network of researchers looking at climate change and bio-diversity
and I’d like to spend more time doing that. I’m also a member of [omit]...our goal is to provide scientific information on climate change to politicians and policymakers. I am on a couple of government advisory committees and a director [omit], I do a lot of things outside my strict University role. But, they’re important things so it’s a bit of a juggle trying to prioritise on a day to basis, which I spend time on (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon the nurturing identity and professional advocacy of Yvonne, there are challenges and successes in maintaining a work/life balance. This is a common finding across my results. Yvonne comments on the barriers plus enablers facing mothers in academia:

I think most women want a family and career, the usual work/life balance. I’m fortunate I have a partner, who is an academic and shoulders as much or more of the home responsibility. Being an academic allows you to be flexible in your work pattern. If I need to leave early to pick up my children, I do, I also take work home, but there are lots of jobs that don’t have that level of flexibility, so an academic job is good in that you can work from home…In academia, there is very little blatant discrimination against women. There’s a fair bit of affirmative action, however when you look at the statistics, the number of women coming through PhDs is on par with men. The number of women in the upper levels of academia is still very low and lower further up the levels. Something has prevented those women from advancing or are choosing not to advance, or a combination of things (Yvonne [audio] 2010).

Despite gender barriers, Yvonne sums up that academia is a progressive career path for women with children, for it encourages ‘a work/life balance’, she argues. On the topic of gender within academia, Yvonne adds that ‘there is very little blatant discrimination against women’; however despite this inclusive factor, ‘the number of women in the upper levels of academia is very low- for some reason, these women have been prevented from advancing’. Comparatively, she perceives her university to be less male dominated than other institutions, yet men still dominate certain schools. The merit and prowess of women in executive and leadership positions shows their rise in status. Consequently, participants’ enjoy a work/life balance within academic contexts, nonetheless, a glass ceiling is an issue, for women are under-represented in senior echelons (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre 2008; Connell 2009).

On the theme of the glass ceiling effect, Rachel argues that this is less evident in law in comparison to other professions. However, in the very top echelon of the large law firms, it is still there. Rachel points out that women are limited by their
biology. Although women have babies, this is ‘not an illness but rather something women do. But inevitably it can interrupt other events’, she argues. Rachel presented a paper at a conference the night before she went into labour, and elaborates that women should deny their biology. For instance, ‘we have to acknowledge that. I don’t think we can deny our biology and say, I’m a mother, but you still have to make allowances for that’. After her son was born, Rachel juggled her domestic homecarer role plus professional position. In his early years, Rachel work at the Bar (Barristers court), and was allowed to take work home. In addition, Rachel had a good friend who cared for him. An extended network enabled Rachel and her husband to continue their independent careers. Despite this enabler, women continue to suffer gender stereotypes in the workplace, ‘I think firstly it is that perception that, oh, she’s female, she’s of child bearing age, therefore she is going to leave and want to go and have children’ (Rachel [audio] 2010).

In support, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre (2008) considered glass ceiling barriers in their study of the ‘Women to the Top’ Programme. They suggest that reconciling reflection and action that evaluates gender inequality and the privileging of practical action, is a top priority for policymakers desiring changes in the gendered outline of industry. In regard to addressing gender inequality, another conflict that represents women’s struggle pertaining to a work/life balance is inequity surrounding remuneration. Women’s lower pay reflects continuing issues with gender inequity and glass ceilings, although this is not entirely specific to environmentalism. Within gendered hierarchies, it is disconcerting that women still receive less pay to men and struggle to find childcare facilities that enable an independent career:

...to my mind one’s feminism is like one’s commitment to the environment...the issue of women’s equality should be how society works and there has been huge achievements from second wave of feminism in terms of job opportunities and education for women, but the pay disparity is still huge. That’s something that needs to be addressed that in the 21st century women’s pay is still so far below men. While there have been huge advances, the lack of childcare and after-school care...what I see as basic rights for children and the parents limit women, in terms of their work prospects. It’s still women who bear the burden of managing that side of domestic life when there isn't adequate services they can call on (Jennifer [audio] 2010).

As a self-identified feminist, Amanda entered the workforce after the progressive years of the Women’s Liberation movement and acknowledges feminist
activist’ achievements for change, although there are gender barriers and glass ceilings in place:

Being born in the 60s, in my working life, I inherited a lot of the incredible women’s work, women’s movement, the legacy of hard yards that had happened two decades before I entered the working world. I was oblivious of the women’s movement. By the time I arrived in the workplace; women were more or less treated like second class citizens, which is a bit infuriating in terms of remuneration (Amanda [audio] 2010).

In masculine occupations, women performing the same job as men still sometimes receive less pay. For example, in the vocation of architecture, men have higher salaries:

That was the 80s, early 90s it was changing. In the architectural world, it seemed men were paid more than women, even though they were doing the same job. As an expert or a professional, I didn’t feel I was in an environment where there was difference; just in the pay, it was populated by men and women (Amanda [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

This section has demonstrated that a work/life balance is complex; for women struggled to negotiate the time burdens of their domestic role with their paid role. This insight supports feminist critiques that women’s positioning in the domestic sphere prevents them from engaging in political contexts. This section has implications for the idea of economic power within feminist critiques of paid and unpaid work. I found that salaried women, who work full-time, experience more challenges in negotiating a work/life balance and fulfilling their role as mother. Nonetheless, the maternal/care ethos informs their femininity and role of mother, which, in turn, relates to their activist motivation. Moreover, women in part-time work, as in some eNGOs, depend on other colleagues and the support of their partners or husbands to maintain a work/life balance. This is not satisfactory, from a feminist perspective. Participants’ economic power is not entirely independent, in that the choice to work part-time depends on their role of mother too. Hence, the struggle to juggle paid and unpaid roles, confirms feminist critiques and society’s expectation of women in the domesticated role. However, the environmental activist role contextualizes participants’ agency and competency, in that women as employees, mothers and activists are performing multiple roles in society. In these
roles, they are actively engaging in power plays. Therefore, women are defined by
their maternal identity as well as the role of volunteer or employee and activist.

The principal barriers and enablers affecting participants’ work/life balance are as follows: the part-time role enables an effective work/life balance within eNGOs; flexible organisational structures and conditions enable women to juggle their roles; the lack of maternity entitlements within eNGOs; international campaign travel: an activity that is performed and/or rejected; women still receive less pay for the same job; the glass ceiling effect; and, the lack of workplace entitlements affecting a work/life balance. The glass ceiling effect and sexual division of labour encompass women’s struggle to manoeuvre between paid and unpaid roles and their work/life balances. Greens and eNGO women acknowledge the shortfalls in family measures and entitlements. Grassroots and academic accounts reveal that flexible structures plus the support of one’s partner enabled an effective work/life balance. Women are achieving status through merit and prowess in academia, but a glass ceiling prevents their full inclusion. Furthermore, a nurturing identity is embraced by categories considered ‘non-mothers’, such as women without children and men. This shows that the role of mother includes categories not traditionally defined as maternal or mother.

In regard to enablers, my research shows that the part-time role enables an effective work/life balance. McDonald et al. (2006) argued that women would prefer to work part time but are prevented from doing so due to the lack of career opportunities. However, the accounts of Helen and Deborah show that eNGOs provide women with the opportunity to work part-time, which enables them to perform as mothers and employees. Yet, there are barriers too, such as the lack of maternity provisions within eNGOs, as argued by Linda. Thus, flexible structures and progressive policies enable a work/life balance, but participant’s still endure gender and organisational specific barriers, which hinders their full inclusion.

Atkinson and Hall (2009) argued that informal flexible working mechanisms should be combined with formal flexibility in order for a greater flexibility of workplaces. Russell et al. (2009) found that rapid economic growth in Ireland was accompanied by a surge of women in employment; yet, working from home was associated with a work/life conflict. Hence, women endure barriers and enablers that are specific to gender and organisations.
In my research, hierarchy and patriarchy were interpreted as barriers, but was more of an issue across the broader movement rather than solely participant’s own organisations. Overall, participant’s detail the way their environmental organisations reject hierarchy and patriarchy, in favour of feminist principles, grassroots tactics and apolitical strategies. However, Linda reviewed some of the large INGOs as hierarchical and top-down, and also lacked maternity entitlements. This constrains participants’ work/life balance and their ability to perform the mother role. However, grassroots organisations were perceived to flexible in their time allocation. Women spent considerable spare time on campaigns, although there was an element of guilt in not being able to spend as much time with their children, but overall their children and the planet was a motivation to long hours.

Travel has been identified as an activity that women reject or support in their work/life balance. The enablement of Deborah was sharing the position with a male colleague who travels to conferences. Some eNGO women identify international travel as a barrier to a work/life balance. Linda criticises eNGOs as ‘demanding’ and is considering a change to the government sector because of paid maternity leave.

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On this point, maternity entitlements are an issue of concern and praise for women in their work/life balance. Helen’s eNGO is dedicated to mothers maintaining a work/life balance along with a rejection of hierarchy in favour of feminist grassroots principles. Moreover, Helen acknowledges the shortfalls of a part-time position in not providing paid maternity. This suggests that motherhood is a challenge. On one level, women are motivated by their nurturing subjectivity. On another level, the role of mother is contrasted by the lack of provisions. Academics praise EEO rights but acknowledge constraints, such as the need to improve childcare support provisions. For Stacey, flexible Greens structures enable her to bring her children to events while her partner’s support enables a work/life balance.

My research results reveal that grassroots groups are dominated by mothers, which supports the findings of Mellor (1997) and others (Krauss 1993; Brown 1995; Salleh 1997, Unger 2008; Salleh 2009; Brueckner & Ross 2010). In addition, the voluntary nature of the role enables women to juggle their paid and unpaid roles while maintaining a work/life balance. Grassroots women work very long hours without pay, which initially suggests that workplace provisions are of secondary importance. It appears that grassroots women are satisfied with their conditions in that monetary value or financial reward is less significant to broader climatic and
sustainability objectives. Nonetheless, Catherine felt guilty in neglecting her son while spending many hours on campaigns. Further, the women in my study recognise gender-activist-organisational barriers and enablers that impact a work/life balance.

Part 4. The support of men in the environmental movement

Some of my participant’s suggest that women who are effective politically, are supported by men who take on a key role in childcare and domestic work. So far, glass ceilings and gender differences have been shown to be issues of concern for working mothers and their work/life balances. Here, participant’s comment on the important role of men or partners in their lives, as with their performance of domestic and homecarer responsibilities. In turn, men’s support enables women’s work/life balance. By men taking on domestic duties, this enables greater flexibility in women’s ability to perform across the domestic front and in their organisations. Such support enables women perform their activist responsibilities. Overall, participant’s comment on the barriers and enablers they and their partners face in negotiating a work/life balance. An insight therefore is that a work/life balance is dependent on the experiences of both men and women rather than solely a female experience. As a feminist, I contend that this is the dual goal of feminism- to engage men in this work and enable women to have a more active public role.

Participants’ comment on the enablers and barriers in their work/life balance in relation to their partners. In regard to constraints, Rachel argues that there are not suitable provisions for mothers or fathers in the workforce that enable the juggling of the homecarer role:

There are many areas where there aren’t sufficient provisions for women in the workforce. And fathers in the work force as well. Because often parents have shared responsibilities for children. There should be allowances for, but for parents within the work force, such as in large organisations, to have available and affordable child care, which is, you can’t really get anywhere without affordable child care. Once, we had extended families, there were grandmothers and aunts who could look after them. Now the nuclear family is isolated, we need child care. There should be child care available as a matter of course, for parents (Rachel [audio] 2010).

The supportive role of men partners enables participants’ work/life balance. The comments of women about these men, makes visible rather than invisible their domestic roles plus active contribution within Australian environmental activism
(Ainsworth 2002; Ainsworth & Cutcher 2008; Leahy 2003; Connell 2005; Kosny & MacEachen 2010). Such insights challenge findings documenting men’s resistance to women advocates (Cockburn 1991; Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Spitzner 2009). As Greens meetings are often held in the evenings and weekends, Stacey’s husband performs homecarer tasks, which enables her to perform the Councillor role:

I wouldn’t have run for council if I didn’t think he would be supportive. You couldn’t put your hand up in the first place to be a candidate if you didn’t have that family support, but you put systems in place. He comes home from work, by 5.30 in the evening, and I run out the door to be at council for 6 o’clock. By that stage, the children have been fed. Then he helps them with homework and whatever, baths, bed. There’s 2 hours of caring at the end...But weekends, I can be out a lot more because I’m either on council business or I can be doing Greens’ business because I’m a representative on council. I’ll be out doing that as well (Stacey [audio] 2010).

This account illustrates the competent way Stacey’s husband performs homecarer and domestic duties. Evidently, those considered to be non-mothers, such as men, competently perform the ‘traditional role of mother’ through an ethic of care and nurturing identity. His contribution enables Stacey to attend after-hours council meetings. A work/life balance is upheld though the shared responsibility of men and women working together. Gender diversity, along with competency, unifies common ground advocacy approaches. Notably, the flexibility of the Council role, the support network of young Greens mothers and evidently support from Stacey’s husband, enables her to juggle paid and unpaid responsibilities. Across my results, Greens participant’s identify a gender balance in diverse party positions, but struggle with a masculinist culture and stereotypes in political chambers, as with ‘the boys club’ and labels of token women. As a politician, Stacey is advocating legislation for women’s right to perform home births, which is considered to be a contentious policy issue.

In supporting studies, Ainsworth and Cutcher’s (2008) analysis considered how the reluctance to introduce a national paid maternity leave scheme in Australia, reflects gender norms and constructions of parenthood and work. By focusing on what is both absent and present in the media texts, they explain how ‘actual fathers’ are rendered invisible and are cast as ‘symbolic fathers’. Alternatively, my research makes visible the roles of fathers and mothers, which addresses this gender gap in representation (Ainsworth & Cutcher 2008).

Greens politician Maxine explains that mums and dads are worried about their children’s future, which motivates their activism. An ecofeminist ethic inspires
Maxine’s anti-toxic-waste campaigning, which is contrasted by the corporate domination of nature.

We have a different way of operating; you can see it with a lot of women active on climate change issues. Lots of mums are so worried about their kids’ futures. Lots of dads are as well. My values; in terms of how repulsed I am by the corporate domination of nature is my feminist values. I’m a feminist looking at this stuff and analysing it. But I’m not just a feminist when it comes to women’s rights? I’m a feminist when I am assessing the actions of mining companies and how mining companies will wildly, they are coming in and ripping the guts out of communities and land, walking away, it’s a very violent act what they are doing to communities and agricultural land and to rivers. It’s a huge worry. I don’t know whether I feel that any more a feminist, but I definitely view it through a feminist lens (Maxine [audio] 2010).

Within gender dynamics and changing roles, husbands are increasingly taking on domestic roles that enable women’s greater participation in activism and work/life balance. Catherine has a supportive partner involved in the raising of the children, although there are limits, due to him running his business. The number of Dads taking on the domestic role is contrasted to the seventies, where they were hardly seen at schools or at home in the daytime:

It holds you back, but I’ve got a very supportive partner. If you become a mother, if I had a partner who could stay at home, that would be fine. I have a partner who has his business and it’s impossible for him to be a house dad…if you go to schools and see the number of dads who care for their kids, it’s huge now, compared to when I started working in the ‘70s. Now there is almost as many dads come and pick up their kids or take their kids to work as mums… I have no qualms about going away for two weeks, oh, I’ve only got two days, but in my jobs sometimes I travel… because my kids can feed themselves and get themselves dressed, I’ve got no qualms saying, ‘I’m going away for a week,’ that’s it. My work here is being done (Catherine [audio] 2010).

Amanda adds that her husband has been supportive in her diverse roles, which helps in the management of her public and private roles:

You go through some transformation where I rediscovered myself, and could tap into what was important, and was in a luxurious situation where my husband supported the work I would do. Basically, allowed me space to get involved in other things. I was dragged along by a friend to a renewable forum. I knew a fair bit about renewable energy, environmental management and sustainability (Amanda [audio] 2010).

Participants’ acknowledge the contribution of men in feminist and environmental movements, which supports Connell’s (2005) research, yet contradicts
with perceptions of gender segregation in movements (Rankin & Gale 2003; Antoinette et al. 2011; Swank & Fahs 2011). In my findings, voluntary groups are dominated by mothers who engage because of concern for their children; however, men are also challenging the same power relations:

But there are plenty of men that are very active. I did this after my mother more than after my father. Now one of my brothers is getting involved in the environmental movement. So there’s a gender issue there, but women tend to be more caring. But look at these men who are challenging that same power. My husband would feel just as strongly about the issue of women, and women in society (Gillian [audio] 2010).

The above interview shows that women and men are active in the movement, and play a similar yet different role, which suggests the ambiguity of gender relations. This is because women experience commonalities and differences. For Gillian, ‘women tend to be more caring’, as ‘women look after the children, so they have to be good at doing the mothering roles, which has gone over into caring about the environment’. Men are also resisting the same power as women environmental activists, Gillian adds. This insight evokes greater gender diversity than studies have previously suggested.

Moreover, the ecofeminist movement was criticised by some participant’s for lacking diversity and ignoring the contribution of men and their involvement in changing gender roles. Barbara had advocated that the movement could have been strengthened by the inclusion of men in the debate rather than them being the problem. In addition, Joan argues that feminism needs to be inclusive of diversity, whereby men play a special part in transforming gender roles and stereotypes:

...even though I call myself a feminist... the stuff we wanted in the 60s and 70s hasn’t turned out the way we thought...I’m aware of the history of the women’s movement and what people said they wanted. Women could work and that there would be childcare- but also that men would be involved in what we consider to be women’s work... So in the green movement, I’m resistant to seeing it as feminist work because it should be everybody working; focusing on feminism hasn’t got us where we expected to be, so we need to make it broader (Joan [audio] 2010).

Discussion.

This section has shown that some of my participant’s view their husbands or partners positively in enabling their work/life balance. This support enables the activism of women and ability to take on multiple roles in society. However, this
positive view of their partners is in direct contrast to their perceptions of a governing masculinist elite. Maxine had criticised ‘the corporate domination of nature’ and ‘actions of mining companies’, which contrasts with her ‘feminist values’. Critically, the patriarchal control of nature hinders women’s agency, but their power is additionally contextualised by men’s willingness to take on the domestic role. I contend that ruling class masculinity, as evidenced with a governing elite in politics and industry, is a barrier to women’s activist agendas. On the other hand, men’s resistance to hegemonic norms and practices, by taking on the domestic role, actually enables women to appropriate diverse roles while also challenging the elite. Thus far, this is the dual goal of feminism- to engage men in this work and to enable women to have a more active public role.

This research demonstrates participants’ resistance and accommodation to traditional gender roles. An insight is that the men partners of women are also performing the homecarer role, which enables women’s work/life balance. Despite mothers increased involvement in paid work, studies articulate that little change has taken place, studies have documented that women still perform more than twice as much domestic and childcare work, which shows a marked gender division of labour that also renders fathers as invisible (Ainsworth 2002; Ainsworth & Cutcher 2008; Baxter & Chesters 2011). However, in the views of my participants’, their partners are frequently performing household duties, which enables women to juggle multiple responsibilities along with paid and unpaid roles. Consequently, a nurturing identity is endorsed by those considered to be non-mother categories, such as men. Joan, Yvonne and Stacey illustrated that a supportive partner performing homecarer duties enabled their work/life balance. In these accounts, the support of men enables women to perform their activist roles. This finding supports Connell’s (2005) research that Australian men activists embrace a Greens feminist ethic but challenges other research that men are less visible to women in domestic roles (Ainsworth & Cutcher 2008; Baxter & Chesters 2011). Hence, these men should be acknowledged for their role in environmental activism, and their domestic support enabling women to manage a work/life balance.

It has emerged from my analysis that men who work from home are constructing their identities in assumed ‘feminised’ contexts. This insight to a paternal ‘nurturing’ identity challenges assumptions and stereotypes associated with
the domestic homecarer role (Merchant 1996; Leach 2009; Yerkes 2010; Baxter & Chesters 2011). My research undermines tags of the ‘stay-at-home’ mother and domestic homecarer role as essentially feminine (Pilcher & Whelehan 2004). In support, Marsh and Musson (2008) considered the experiences of men at home working from home in their managing of emotion in Telework. In this context, men were provided with a space to adopt emotional discourses and practices traditionally associated with working mothers.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that participants are constructing their roles through sociopolitical engagement as activists, which is informed by a maternal ethos of care and responsibility. This insight challenges Merchant’s (1989, 1996) critique of women as caregivers and men as dominating nature, along with Plumwood’s (1997, 2002, 2006) and Leach’s (2009) dualist critiques of ‘earth mother myths and fables’. My participant’s see their environmental activism, as at least in part, coming out of an emphasized form of femininity. Their maternal role therefore influences their activism. Their maternalism is informed by the desire to care for other people and the planet. This enables women to contribute to society. For example, Barbara connected her activism to a spiritual Indigenous identity: ‘nurturing, mother earth angle’, which is a compelling insight to essentialist viewpoints of motherhood.

As a sociologist, I point out there is an element of danger arguing that women possess an inherent or special connection to nature and children. My overall contention is that participants’ agency and competency is contextualised by their ethos and performance as mothers, arguing for social change and environmental justice in communities and organisations. A maternal/caring ethos is a platform to engage in one’s activism, for mothers are constructing their identities through actionist engagement. This involves degrees of resistance and accommodation to hierarchical structures and societal expectations. This is demonstrated through active power plays and negotiations of masculinity and femininity.

I found that sustainable principles along with the ‘role of mother’ constitutes participants’ activism within professional and grassroots contexts. A sustainable agenda is also a platform from which activists’ challenge the patriarchal cultures of
organisations as well as the pervasion of ruling class masculinity present within governing social elites. Women also adopt an egalitarian ethos in their leadership. Women experience commonalities and differences in their reckoning of motherhood within organisations and domestic contexts. The women in my study detail gender-organisational-activist specific barriers and enablers in their negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as common ground activist social change strategies. I contend that gender is an active process of doing, and locate the ‘I’ in my participants’ identity and social change agendas (Butler 1990, 2006). My participatory accounts, therefore, reveal insights, knowledge and contradictions that support or contrast with the reviewed literature.

Participants’ experience enablers and barriers in their roles. A supportive paternal figure, enabled women to achieve a work/life balance and perform multiple roles. An insight is that men play an important role in care giving, which challenges assumptions of women as caregivers and men as dominating nature (Merchant 1989, 1994, 1996; Plumwood 1997; Salleh 1997; Plumwood 2002, 2006; Leach 2009). Stacey’s husband is a paternal role model whose homecarer role enables her work/life balance. Merchant (1996) had reviewed historical associations of Eve and women with nature, and Leach (2009) explored the ‘myth’ of ‘earth mothers’. Additionally, flexible work conditions and supportive maternity entitlements also improved a work/life balance for my participants. However, there was some criticism of the inadequate maternity provisions in eNGOs. Women consequently experience barriers and enablers. A barrier is that women still receive less pay to men. Glass ceilings and the gendered division of labour is a pressing issue for women’s inclusion in the workforce. Moreover, women activists’ demonstrate prowess by challenging the power of men within a social hierarchy. A maternal identity thus far represents one’s rationale towards advocacy; nonetheless, the empowerment of women is further evidenced through their diverse activist engagement strategies, as members of an organisation, a household and a community, pursing change and progress.

Across my study, a nurturing ethos is practiced by participant’s without children and some of the men partners of participants. Across the empirical chapters (5 to 7), non-mothers, such as women without children, detail a nurturing ethic of care, compassion and dedication for current and future generations impacted by climatic changes. A nurturing sustainable agenda relates to an ethic of care towards the social and natural world as well as human and nonhuman dimensions. Those
considered to be non-mothers, including men, are similarly, if not equally, concerned about a climate catastrophe and with its impact on future generations. The plight of human and nonhuman species was shown to be a motivating factor towards activism in professional and grassroots contexts. Further, participants’ agency and competency is demonstrated through resistant and emphasized femininities that strive for social change and environmental justice. This involves challenging structures governing elites and patriarchal organisations that hinder this from occurring. The strategic engagement of participants’ in constructing empowered gender-environmental-activist identities thus highlights their exercise of agency and competency within robust power plays in workplaces and society. Further, the final ‘Conclusion’ to this thesis, chapter 8, will draw upon the key thematic and theoretical insights from my study.
Chapter Eight- Conclusion to Thesis

Introduction

In conclusion, this research exploring women’s agency and competency has identified insights and knowledge in the fields of feminism, qualitative methodologies and the Australian environmental movement. Although I illustrated women’s recognition of emphasized femininity, which is somewhat conducive to an essentialist position, I also found that women perform resistant femininities in their activism. Women’s agency and competency was evidenced by their resistance to the patriarchal control of organisations and the dominance of masculinist social elites in industry and governance. In turn, women’s struggle with masculinist elites is evidenced by their response to men’s leadership, which is viewed by some to be ‘dominating’ and ‘competitive’. Insights to emotion and empathy undermine essentialist interpretations of agency and competency along with gendered notions of rationality and logic. In negotiations, some women perceived men to be more emotional in terms of ‘aggression’ and ‘not knowing how to control their emotions’. This view challenges the stereotype that women are more emotional or less rational. This research reveals insights to the Women’s and Environmental Movements. Participants’ acknowledge the legacy of Women’s movements in achieving landmark legislative reforms and improving a work/life balance. Despite EEO laws along with participants’ prowess and merit, gender and organisational barriers have prevented women’s advancement. Gender differences in terms of the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings, such as ‘the boys club’ and gender tokenism, confirms that women are located in a complex yet ambiguous masculinist culture of work.

Within a social hierarchy, professional and voluntary advocates struggled with labels of age, gender, activism, culture and incompetency. Nonetheless, their performance of resistant femininities through leadership along with prowess and merit, challenged labels. Hence, cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy were resisted and accommodated by women exercising agency and competency within Australian environmental activism. Thus far, gender is an active performance whereby masculinity and femininity are constantly being negotiated. Gender is a barrier and an enabler to activist engagement. Participants’ endure gender differences, but advocate a gender balance uniting the agendas of men and women.
I found that women adopt an egalitarian ethos in their activism and such approaches undermine masculinist forms of power and privilege in organisations. I also found that organisations that adopt egalitarian principles are more conducive to the social change agendas of women activists’. Egalitarian approaches are also more conducive to a feminist agenda. In regard to social change, maternal identity inspires the activism of salaried and voluntary women, where grassroots democratic participatory engagement is a common ground approach. Maternal identity is a platform to perform gender and engage in one’s activism, which challenges essentialist assumptions of women’s connection to nature (Butler 1990; Plumwood 1997; Butler 2006, 2008; Plumwood 2008, 2009). Further, women’s active negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as gendered dualisms is revitalising and renewing the vitality of both the Women’s and Environmental Movements.

The conclusion is organised into four thematic parts:

(Part 1) Undermining essentialist assumptions of agency and competency;
(Part 2) Negotiating labels of female incompetency, activism, age and culture;
(Part 3) Intersections of feminism in the Women’s and Environmental Movements; and,
(Part 4) Unpacking a masculinist culture of work and resistant femininities

**Part 1. Undermining essentialist assumptions of agency and competency**

**Emotion**

An insight from this research is that some women participant’s viewed men to be more driven by emotion than women in negotiations. This challenges essentialist assumptions of men possessing a superior rationality and logic (Eder 1996a; Young & Hurlic 2007; Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre 2008; Meynell 2009). I conclude that women are competent and agentic performers in the politics of gender and the environment. Also, men can be less rational and skilled in negotiating outcomes. Feminists critiqued the way agency, rationality, intellect, leadership, decision-making and confidence is connected to men and masculinity (Salleh 1997; Barnes 2000; Leonard 2005; Salleh 2009). My research suggests that women can outperform men in relation to these attributes. Hence, women activists’ are rational and competent agents whose contribution is undermining labels and stereotypes.
Insights to emotion, from women reporting, undermines essentialist assumptions of female incompetency. Empirical evidence additionally illustrates that there are indeed plural masculinities and femininities, as Connell (1995, 2002a & b, 2005) and others on gender hegemony have argued (Pease 2002; Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Schippers 2007; Segal 2007; Donaldson 2009). Moreover, the idea of emotion as a masculine experience and findings that women are rational and logical undermines essentialist interpretations of agency and competency. Emotions are articulated to be an activist strategy towards social change agendas, whereas theorists have focussed on dualist critiques of emotion and the feminine (Plumwood 2002, 2006; Marsh & Musson 2008; Irmi 2009; Payne 2009; Warhurst & Nickson 2009; Kosny & MacEachen 2010). My findings supports the critique of Plumwood (1997) and others (Merchant 1996; MacGregor 2006; Leach 2009; Meynell 2009; Mellor 2012) challenging the ‘perceived’ emotional capacity of women.

Emotion has long been considered to be synonymous with a range of women and a certain range of femininities, and such interpretations have positioned women as polar opposites to men (Mellor 1997; Kelan 2008; Meynell 2009; Nixon 2009; Payne 2009; Warhurst & Nickson 2009). However, this study emphasises emotion as an empowering strategy of passion where women’s activism is a contributing factor towards transforming the culture and structure of movements. Notably, Rachel Carson’s landmark text, *Silent Spring* (1962) warned of the danger of pesticides and criticised mainstream science and its patriarchal structures in hindering social change (cited in Mellor 1997). Nevertheless, governmental authorities and industry mocked her as an ‘emotional fanatic’ and spinster. The feminine association with emotional labels has traditionally thus located women as ‘the other’ to men.

Emotion is perceived in terms of enabling and constraining participants’ advocacy. Some women viewed emotion as an activist strategy, and others viewed it as a challenge. Empowering experiences of emotion is evident in leadership, communicational skills, negotiation techniques and the ability of activists to empathise with the cause. In regard to enablers, Wendy argued that gender equity involves incorporating emotion to an activist agenda: ‘to communicate well, feel emotion, articulate emotion and thoughts, to speak publicly with confidence is useful’. Wendy’s feminist objective of embracing ‘empathy’ and ‘emotion’ is an empowering engagement strategy in climate campaigns: ‘I’d like to bring the feminine into my leadership...bringing emotions into what I do...women more
naturally communicate in emotions in terms of empathy...’ Wendy summed up emotion as a powerful leadership strategy: ‘My leadership is helping people understand their emotional side, and the concepts of forgiveness among activists’. Participant’s comment on the gender specificity of emotion yet also advocate a gender balance that integrates male and female competencies.

The masculinist recognition of emotion is evidenced by the way women recognise men’s emotion to be ‘‘aggressive’ and ‘competitive’. This is a barrier to their activism. This type of emotionality associated with men, hinders women’s capacity to exercise agency and competency. For example, Maggie reflected that as a young woman, she lacked the ‘emotional security’ and ‘self-esteem’ to challenge professors and ‘take them on’, for ‘I was depleted; I was still a little girl’. As a physician and grandmother, she possesses expert knowledge, which is practiced in social change leadership: ‘Now, it would never happen’. Critically, Maggie believes that the best years have passed her by concerning shaping the current generation: ‘I’m [omit age] and it’s too bloody late. I’d like to relive my life.’

Evidently, participants’ found that some men were prone to emotion in terms of ‘aggression’ and ‘not knowing how to control their emotions’, which reveals that emotion is not conducive to women and femininities (Irni 2009; Payne 2009; Warhurst & Nickson 2009; Kosny & MacEachen 2010). Across sectors, masculinist practices that were ‘adversarial’ and ‘competitive’ signified the difficulty for women to initiate reforms. Such examples illustrate women’s struggle with ‘the boys club’ and tokenism. On the other hand, women controlled their emotions. In relation to emotion, Stacey argued that it was not as ‘black and white’ for women who adopted a ‘highly rational’ and ‘cool’ approach to decision-making. Hence, women were more likely to control their emotions in tough debates.

Masculinist cultural dynamics were identified by the way women interpret emotion in relation to ‘the boys club’ and gendered tokenism. For Kate, ‘a boys club’ was identified in Parliamentary meetings through emotional terms: ‘diabolical’, ‘old school stuff’, ‘a very gendered culture’ and ‘blokeyness’, in how strategies were ‘different’ and ‘aggressive.’ Tanya criticised State Parliament as ‘a huge boy’s club’ characterised by ‘adversarial’ and ‘competitive’ masculinist practices that contrasts with the Greens approach: ‘men are more adversarial and I’m more conciliatory and consensually based...’. Further, ‘a boys club’ was defined by Stacey by emotion-driven ‘adversarial’ and ‘manic’ behaviour of men ways in LGAs, along with an
aggressive debating position that pervades veto decisions. Hence, a masculinist elite in politics influenced by conservative ideals hinders Greens social change agendas. Despite barriers, women argue for change, which demonstrates their agency and competency. Such insights challenge essentialist assumptions of superior male rationality, in that agentic formations and competency attributes are not dualistic opposites (Leonard 1997; Plumwood 1997; McNay 2000; Meynell 2009).

**Empathy in terms of gender-specificity and gender-neutrality**

Empathy is an example of emotion, and my research has found that women and men demonstrate empathy in their activism; nonetheless, the empathy of women is sometimes more obvious. Women comment that empathy can be gender-specific and gender-neutral. For Deborah, empathy is not entirely gender specific: ‘...not all women have empathy...but some men are inclined to blow their trumpet and say this is how it is’. Participants’ identified gender differences in the empathy of men and women; however, they also resist gender stereotypes and labels. Gillian interpreted empathy as a skill that empowers women’s agendas: ‘...Women probably have better skills at communicating and understanding, having more empathy than some men...’. Empathy is demonstrated in the campaign tactics, political negotiations, academic competency and leadership of women within activism. Empathy entails passion, and like emotion, is an empowering engagement strategy, which illustrates women’s agency and competency. Hence, empathy reflects a sociocultural constructivist activist position in how women are actively negotiating their gendered roles and work-based identities (Leahy 2003; Godfrey 2005; Kuhn 2007; Roets et al. 2008; Kuletz 2009; Mellor 2009). Moreover, competency relates to people skills and the ability to empathise with a diverse audience. I found that empathy is a strategy that strengthens the communicational skills of activists. Participants’ prowess and merit is thus challenging stigmas associated with female incompetency and activist tags. Thus, empathy enables women to initiate action, skills and campaigning, whereby their leadership is changing the direction of movements.

My participatory accounts, thus far, demonstrate emphasized and resistant femininities. Wendy argued that women advocates are sometimes more ‘empathetic and compassionate’ in that ‘men tend to engage in singular-oriented debates’. Nonetheless, empathy and forgiveness is part of Wendy’s leadership: ‘I feel that women more naturally communicate in emotions in terms of empathy, I think logic
and rationality isn’t always about outcomes, it’s about the relationships’. Women’s communication strategy of embracing emotion and empathy illustrates their agency and competency. This approach contrasts to the masculinisation of politics in terms of ‘logic’, ‘rationality’ and ‘outcomes’, where emotions were not viewed to be a ‘legitimate’ strategy. Although women experience gender differences, a gender balance that integrates masculine and feminine competencies is also advocated: ‘...women will show leadership and pave the way because it comes more naturally to women... if you had balanced gender at all levels of leadership, a lot of world social issues would be solved’. Wendy acknowledges the power of karma and explains that if men and women were more aware of their emotional side, then leadership would be progressive. A ‘gender balance’ is a strategy to integrate feminine and masculine approaches. A gender balance therefore has the potential to challenge a masculinist elite in organisations and across industries (Mellor 1997; McNay 2000; Meynell 2009; Ainsworth 2012).

**Gender differences and advocating a gender balance**

I have argued that women demonstrate gender differences in leadership styles; however, a gender balance has the potential for greater social change and environmental justice outcomes. Social change, in relation to the performance of grassroots participatory democratic engagement, is a strategy practiced by professional and voluntary women. This finding is a compelling insight to this study. Further, a gender balance pertaining to passive strategies of voice, silence and empathy has the potential to address unjust structures and bring about a social change. As participant’s identified gender differences and a gender balance, this in turn, reveals contradictions. According to Dion, women and men ‘think differently’, in that ‘Women have an ability to compromise a bit more. Particularly, in the climate movement’ although, this is not entirely gender specific: ‘I couldn’t say that the skills differ between men and women’. Moreover, Dion argued for a gender balance that integrates the skills of men and women: ‘...men and women think differently about things, but it’s useful to have a gender balance’. Juliet identified her NGO office as ‘female-dominated’, but that their proactive gender diversity recruitment strategy endeavours to recruit more males: ‘...we get excited when boys apply for a volunteer role or a paid role in the office because we want to get more gender
balance...’. Women, thus, identify gender differences but also seek a gender balance. This finding conveys the value of both men and women’s competencies, for gender is an active process of doing masculinity and femininity (Butler 1990, 2004, 2008).

However, a gender balance is complicated by the patriarchal control of organisations and a dominate social elite within industry and politics. Women experience gender as a barrier and enabler to their activism within grassroots and professional capacities. This is because some women were deliberately placed on panels to create the idea of gender equity that does not necessarily exist. It is questionable whether placement is due to proven prowess and merit. In regard to gender differences, Linda described herself as a token woman: ‘I was there as the token woman because they didn’t want the panel to be all male...I’ve taken on the role of creating gender balance on panels or representative bodies, because we’re still male-dominated in the environment field’. Although Yvonne argued that climate change has opened up opportunities for women, gender is a factor on panel placement: ‘often I’m the only woman on a panel or a committee...’ Maxine added that corporate boards are male dominated and that there are usually no women speakers on climate panels: ‘...where are the women speakers?’ While on panels, participants’ exercise agency and competency through prowess and merit, which undermines gender stereotypes and labels of female incompetency. Panel placement thus far shows degrees of women’s inclusion and exclusion.

Further, a gender balance is a strategy of volunteers and employees that symbolises the unity of men and women in their work relations whilst emphasising diversity. My argument, therefore, is that the movement would be more effective through the deployment of a common ground grassroots approach that unites the strategies of men and women towards a collaborative social change objective. Nonetheless, in environmental organisations, as in other organisations, women struggle with gender biases (Punch 2005; Segal 2007; Connell 2009; Yoder et al. 2011). Such biases position women as ‘the outsider’ within a masculinist culture. Hence, participants’ experiences are defined by gender-specific barriers and enablers.
Part 2. Negotiating labels of female incompetency, activism, age and culture

An insight from this research is that women struggled with labels of female incompetency, activism, age and culture within the discourses and contexts of the environmental movement. Labelling dynamics reflect women’s struggle to deal with ‘the boys club’ and gendered tokenism. Studies have considered women’s struggle with such tags and classifications (Blackstone 2004; Maddison 2004; Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010); however, no research to date reveals the intersection of such findings. Participants identified labels specific to their organisations and activism. The label of ‘activist’ is a challenge for women’s engagement. For Catherine, the male mining panel labelled the activists as ‘loonies’. A male panel, thus, reflects the attitudes of men in power towards the women themselves and as activists. Additionally, Tanya highlighted gender and activist specific labels, concerning: ‘behaviour’, ‘adversarial’ and ‘appalling’, whereby women politicians were labelled ‘communists’ and ‘tree huggers’. Ruth illustrated that in mainstream society, the Greens were viewed to be ‘pretty marginal, a bit whacky’, and ‘kooks’ and ‘chain themselves to trees’. My findings show that labels associated with activism and gender place women in a complex position to perform agency and competency (Zucker 2004; Barry 2008; Duncan 2010; Ussher et al. 2011). Nonetheless, labels were accommodated and resisted by participants.

Age and gender were perceived in terms of barriers and enablers of which women resisted and accommodated. In regard to resisting labels, some participant’s identified age as more of a barrier than gender. Young and older women struggled with such intersections. In a televised media event, Wendy doubted that she would be taken seriously as a young woman lacking expertise among a panel of experts: ‘I was more conscious about my age, potentially my cultural background, not so much my gender...I felt much younger...our voice is less legitimate because we are less informed or have spent less time being experts’. Hence, age was perceived to be more of a barrier than gender, although the struggle with competency was identified, which suggests further complexities. The idea of being an outsider was also a cultural issue; as someone from a CALD background, this could ‘potentially’ hinder Wendy’s inclusion. As an older woman, Maggie perceived herself to be the outsider in corporate meetings, although she was an expert on climate change: ‘...if I’m asked
to address corporate meetings the men don’t talk to me afterwards...If I was still pre-menopausal and attractive I could get away with it, but now I’m not, I’m part of the wallpaper. As ‘the outsider’, Kate is often the only young woman in regional LGA meetings, yet insists on being included: ‘I am the only woman around the table of 40 men, they’re at least 30 years older than me, and I have insisted on a seat at the table...They found that challenging...’.

In conservative LGAs, Margaret criticised the council as ‘totally a boys club’, and also perceived women Councillors to be ‘token women’. In a meeting, Maxine, who was ‘the only woman around the table’ who was labelled a ‘bright girl’ by a male opposition politician ‘from the country.’ These examples additionally confirm that urban and regional politics is male centric (Poineer 1990; Teather 1992; Alston 2003, 2006; Pilgeram 2007; Isla 2009; Alston 2011).

A social hierarchy characterised by a dominant masculinist elite in industry and politics, therefore challenges participants’ exercise of agency and competency. Further, women’s competency is underestimated in work sites that endorse cultures of patriarchy and structures of hierarchy. Women struggled with the patriarchal control of their organisations. Maxine criticised the conservative gender politics of eNGOs in that Parliament was ‘traditional’, ‘blokey’ and composed of ‘old White men’ who are ‘largely conservative’ and ‘absolute chauvinists’. Hence, women struggled with ageist, organisational and activist labels. Nonetheless, labels were resisted through merit and prowess along with active performances of masculinity and femininity. Such challenge undermines ‘the boys club’ and tokenism.

The patriarchal control of organisations and the dominance of social elites in governance and industry is, therefore, an obstacle for women activists’. In their active negotiation of gendered and power, women demonstrate strategies of accommodation and resistance. Maggie resisted ecofeminist labels yet identified as a feminist activist and biologist, advocating a radical women-led revolution: ‘...we need a revolution. I don’t mean blood and guts but I mean a revolution...it’s usually the women who induce changes and revolutions’. Although Maggie esteemed women’s social change leadership, she also criticised the way women have given up their power and let men run the world: ‘women are very intelligent, they’re very good at conflict resolution, yet somehow we’ve given up our power...’.

Jennifer, an ecofeminist activist, struggled with ‘the boys club’ and stereotypes in Parliament, but, like Maggie, argued for more women in political leadership positions: ‘When we get more women into leadership, we will get used to hearing women, hearing their
voice, seeing them give leadership and then some inconsistencies would fall away’. The patriarchal control of organisations as well as women’s struggle with dominant social elites thus far presents a challenge for women’s voice; however, women-led strategies have the potential to bring about a powerful social change.

**Questioning traditional gender roles**

An insight from this research is that male role models play an important role in care giving, which challenges assumptions of women as caregivers and men as dominating nature (Merchant 1996; Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997; McNay 2000, 2003; Leach 2009; Meynell 2009). Participant’s identified with role models in professional and grassroots contexts. As a feminist, I contend that when men support women in their work, this enables women to perform multiple roles and achieve a work/life balance. Examples illustrated the importance of male role models in the lives of women, and enabling their work/life balance. Findings challenge gender stereotypes and perceptions associated with traditional roles. Marsh and Musson (2008) concluded that Telework provides a space for men to adopt emotional discourses and practices traditionally associated with working mothers. In my research, Gillian commented on gender differences but added that her husband is ‘equally’ committed to gender justice, who performs homecare duties and is also an activist. Despite differences, men environmental activists are challenging the same power as women campaigners: ‘there’s a gender issue there, but women tend to be more caring. But look at these men who are challenging that same power. My husband would feel just as strongly about the issue of women...’.

Stacey’s husband was a paternal role model whose homecarer role enabled a work/life balance: ‘I’m a strong role model for them and their father is a strong role model for them as well. They see he is a carer as well; it’s not just the mother who’s a carer’. In her critique of the Liberation movement, Joan questioned why men were neglected from childcare duties: ‘Women could work and that there would be childcare- but also that men would be involved in what we consider to be women’s work...’. Thus, a gender balance is a key strategy. Men’s role in the domestic sphere improves women’s work/life balance.

My findings undermine the idea that the domestic homecarer role is a female versus male role (Merchant 1989, 1994; Plumwood 1997; McNay 2000, Baxter 2000; Meynell 2009). Participatory accounts revealed that men also embrace feminist
approaches and environmental activism, which supports the findings of Connell (2005) but also challenges MacGregor’s (2006) hypothesis that environmentalism is patriarchal and male-centric. Drawing upon women’s comments, at a domestic level, the support of men partners evidently enables participant’s to juggles a work/life balance and perform their activist tasks.

I have argued that a maternal nurturing identity influences the professional and grassroots roles of participants; however, studies have reviewed the maternal role in largely motivating the grassroots activism of voluntary women (Barry 2008; Unger 2008; Brueckner & Ross 2010). Historically, women have been over-represented in the unpaid domestic role as homemaker and carer (Mellor 1997; Salleh 1997; Baxter 2000; Pocock 2003; Burn 2011); nonetheless, grassroots mothers have played an integral role as activists arguing for social and environmental justice issues within glocal feminist environmental campaigns (Shiva & Moser 1995; Buckingham-Hatfield 2000; McPhillips 2002; Shiva 2005; Oppenheimer 2008). Consequently, there has been less focus on the maternal role as a rationale within professional advocacy. Merchant (1996, 1994, 1989) had reviewed the historical associations of Eve and women in nature plus the problematic assumptions of women as caregivers and men as dominating nature. Further, ecofeminists rejected the idea of an inherent maternal essence along with the fixed nature of gender roles (Leach 2009, Meynell 2009, McNay 2003, 2000).

My accounts reveal a compelling intersection of emphasized and resistant forms of femininity. Women actively constructed their roles within the social contexts and discourses of activism, but also identified gender differences, which reveals contradictions. Although participants’ identified a maternal nurturing insight to their activism, their subjectivities were strengthened by strategic actions. My findings reveal a compelling intersection of emphasized and resistant femininities. Barbara identified her Indigenous and feminine subjectivity in regard to a ‘nurturing’ and ‘mother earth angle’ that was connected to ‘the bush appreciation, my Indigenous part...’. The idea of an Indigenous identity as core to one’s activism adds a new dimension to this analysis. This example also shows that women identify with emphasized and resistant femininities in their activism. Additionally, Maggie argued that women and men possess different strengths: ‘Women can incorporate both the right brain where feelings and intuition and the left-brain together and multi-task. Hold a baby on one hip, stir the soup with another and organise a campaign with the
phone on your ear’. This shows an essentialist position; however, Maggie further argued that women are competent and agentic performers who need to exercise their power and resist male power: ‘women are very intelligent, they’re very good at conflict resolution, yet somehow we’ve given up our power...We’re not into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act’. Hence, it is the hands of women activists to challenge men’s power through social change strategies. This account reveals an identification with emphasized and resistant forms of femininity. Maggie added that the nurturing ethic of mothers is integral to a grassroots-women-led initiative: ‘We're voting for milk for children. That’s got nothing to do with political lines. It’s across the board, because we’re nurturing and understand the intrinsic value of life’. Hence, motherhood is a rationale for activism, but not all women in my study are mothers.

**Demystifying gender assumptions**

I have considered that mothers and non-mothers along with some men adopt a nurturing identity and common ethos in their advocacy within the social and natural world. The social change agenda of Tanya, who did not have children, was shown by a critique of ‘absolute power structures’ in favour of ‘communalism and less consumption’, along with a sustainable ethic of care for future generations. Women without children advocate their concern for human and nonhuman species (Mellor 2002; Doyle 2005; Horton 2006; Kuletz 2009; Mellor 2012). Young women were equally passionate about a climatic catastrophe in their advocacy. Wendy drew upon technical and literacy skills and plans to work on international campaigns: ‘I have unique strengths...writing skills, online campaigning. I would like to take the skills from Australia, and see how things could be changed’. Consequently, a maternal-nurturing ethic is not strictly a practice of mothers with ‘biological’ children.

My research has demonstrated that the men partners of participant’s adopt a nurturing identity by performing homecare duties and environmental activist campaigns. Such findings challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Some women disputed the idea that men are less empathetic towards the environmental issue, although gender differences in terms of empathy and emotion were found. Findings on male emotionality, rationality and behaviour challenge essentialist assumptions that women or mothers have a special connection to nature and that men do not. Overall, a gender balance has been advocated as the key strategy to integrate
the competencies of men and women in collaborative campaign efforts. Thus, a maternal or nurturing ethic is not essentially ascribed to mothers, for it is constructed by participants in their activist strategies and subjective empowerment. This supports the dualist critiques of Plumwood (1997, 2002, 2006, 2009) and Salleh (1997, 2003, 2010) pertaining to men/women, masculinity/femininity and science/nature binaries.

An insight from this research is that women struggle to cooperate with men in power, especially those that oppose their social change objectives; however, women work well with men grassroots activists that embrace a Greens feminist ethic. Connell (2005) found that Australian men grassroots activists rejected hegemonic masculinity in favour of a Greens feminist justice ethic. I have also found that this ethic extends to women’s engagement with men who similarly pursue social change agendas through grassroots participatory democratic engagement in paid and unpaid work. Heidi argued that women and men eNGO employees cooperate in environmental campaigns, whereas the patriarchal structure of universities dominated by ‘egotistical’ men scientists is a problem towards targeted solutions. Additionally, Heidi’s experience of being a woman, as an ‘outsider’, who endured bullying and sexism within scientific academia indicates that a masculinist culture is a challenge for women’s inclusion. For Heidi, ‘a boys club’ was found in academic conferences but not in eNGO conferences: ‘...the academic community and work places, they are different. With men making their way up, I don’t think merit is acknowledged...it’s a boys club. It’s a lot of conferences...We hold a bi-annual conference, and that’s a great networking experience’. A common ground grassroots democratic ideological approach, moreover, is a strategy to unite the goals of women in their work engagement as well as social relations with men.

An additional insight is that women’s agency and competency within environmental activism is downplaying assumptions that leftist green politics is male-centric (Mellor 1993; McPhillips 2002; Rankin & Gale 2003; Salleh 2003; MacGregor 2006; Mellor 2009; Salleh 2009, 2011). Ecofeminist writers observed that environmentalism, as an androcentric (or male-dominated) position, displays sexist tendencies and overlooks gender specificities (MacGregor 2006). MacGregor (2006) argued that feminism has had a contentious relationship with left-green politics, often relating to the failure of male-dominated perspectives and movements to acknowledge feminist concerns. On this point, my participant’s detailed their struggle with a masculinist culture pertaining to ego, misogyny, chauvinism and
conservative attitudes. However, because participant’s report that grassroots men activists embrace a Greens feminist ethic and that they work well with some of the men, such findings undermine the contentious relationship within left-green politics. Further, this supports my argument of a greater gender balance that integrates masculine and feminine approaches in the environmental movement.

Part 3. Intersections of feminism in the Women’s and Environmental Movements

My research reveals intersections, insights and contradictions in feminism and environmental movement scholarship. I found that some women identify as ecofeminists but others reject ecofeminist labels. The analysis reveals gender differences along with findings that reject the idea that women are treated differently to men. Although Deborah rejected the idea that she was treated differently as a woman, her interview showed that men dominate salaried climate advocacy and women dominate voluntary ‘green home’ programs: ‘I think climate change attracts men to the economics...I find the biodiversity side more interesting’. Amy, who is active in Greens election events, adds that women dominate election campaigns and men dominate off-peak season campaigns, which illustrates further differences. Such findings reveal contradictory insights to the literature (Rankin & Gale 2003; Mellor, 2007, 2009; Salleh 2009, 2010, 2011).

Participants’ acknowledge the legacy of feminist movements and the opportunities available to women nowadays; yet, there is some criticism. Older women, like Margaret, Jennifer, Barbara and Maggie were active in the Women’s and environmental movements of the sixties and seventies. This activism is continued in current feminist and environmental campaigns. For Margaret, the Women’s Liberation Movement educated women that they had the choice to be mothers. Margaret articulates how ‘the role of mother’ inspired her ‘feminist and environmental campaigning from the 1960s to the 1980s: ‘The peace movements were on, environmental movements were on. I was involved with community management committees. Women’s Refuge, Family Support. I’ve got three children. When they were young, I was the President of the Preschool Committee’. Similarly, younger women pursue social change in current feminist and environmental
campaigns. NGO advocate, Juliet, also views herself to be activist ‘actively engaged’ in community campaigns: ‘I’d consider myself to be an active citizen and actively engaged in society and issues I feel passionate about…’. Furthermore, passion motivates participants’ activist engagement.

Clearly, the actions of women activists are renewing both the feminist and environment movements, while empowering their subjectivities. Such insights support Maddison’s (2004) findings on young Australian women’s activism in university networks and community collectives, whose participation is revitalising the Third Wave Movement. Such active engagement shows that feminist movements have not hibernated nor are in a state of abeyance (Freeman 1973; Taylor 1989; Grey & Sawer 2008; McLellan 2009). Taylor (1989) argued that movements hibernate during periods of low political activity; however, I have found that even in highly politicised and non-politicised environs, women argued for reform. Whatever the social, cultural or political situation, women remained passionate about change. Participants’ agency and competency through empowering performances illustrates that there is indeed a feminist environmental movement in 21st century Australia.

Non-receptive environments do not necessarily hinder motivation or performances, for women’s protest voice of resistance remains strong, even in overtly masculinist cultures, as with ‘the boys club’ and tokenism. An insight from this research is that employees and volunteers struggled with tags of gendered tokenism within environmental panels and meetings. This suggests that ‘professional scientific men’ are still perceived to be more competent and agentic than grassroots women (Brown & Ferguson 1995; Culley & Angelique 2003, 2010; Hosey 2011). On the other hand, salaried and voluntary women demonstrated merit and prowess through academic competency and political lobbying, which disputes gender stereotypes of ‘female scientific incompetency’ (Risman 2004; Young & Hurlic 2007; Blackwell & Glover 2008; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009; Spratt & Sutton 2009). Hence, grassroots activist wisdom entails practical knowledge, whereby skills were acquired through experience rather than prior expertise (McPhillips 2002; Maddison & Scalmer 2006).

The interviews revealed praise and criticism towards Women’s and environmental movements. However, studies have focussed on the positive outcomes of feminist campaigns, such as the landmark Women’s Liberation Movement, in enabling women’s work/life balance (Gardiner 1995; Cockburn 2000; Maddison
In my results, Greens, grassroots and academics argued that historic feminist actions enabled their performances at work, but there were some shortfalls. Within organisational hierarchies, Jennifer argued that it was ‘disconcerting’ that women’s pay was still below men’s, which was ‘unacceptable in the 21st century’. Joan criticised the Women’s Liberation Movement as advocating for women in the paid workforce and neglecting the role of stay-at-home mothers: ‘...even though I call myself a feminist... the stuff we wanted in the 60s and 70s hasn’t turned out the way we thought...’. Barbara additionally criticised the Liberation movement for neglecting the contribution of men and heterosexual identities, while being dominated by lesbian women. Furthermore, Joan criticised both the Green and Women’s Movements for not including men, while acknowledging her partner’s key domestic role that enabled a work/life balance: ‘in the green movement, I’m resistant to seeing it as feminist work because it should be everybody working; focusing on feminism hasn’t got us where we expected to be, so we need to make it broader’.

**Gender equity and Merit**

Gender equity and EEO laws have enabled women in the workplace (Faber 2008; Unger 2008; Connell 2009; Zippel 2009; Antoinette et al. 2011). My results validate this finding; however, I cannot make the claim that women enjoy equality to men within the movement and its organisations. This is due to participant’s experiences of a masculinist culture of work through numerous gender differences. As a result, women are active subjects, but they were also subjected to experiences of domination. Hence, agency and competency is embedded in complex and ambiguous gendered power relations (MacLeod 1992). Despite challenges, women should be credited for their merit, prowess and agency at work through engaging in proactive performances that have empowered their gender identities within activism (Mellor 2007, 2009). Therefore, I have found that gender is an active process of doing whereby women were actively negotiating masculinity and femininity. Such findings on gender as an active performance and empowering engagement strategy supports the position of Butler (1990, 1999, 2004, 2006) and theorists of gender performativity (Parsons 2001; Alcoff 2003; McNay 2003; Jagger 2008; Powell et al. 2009; Phillips & Knowles 2012).
Women identified gendered barriers and enablers in their work/life balance. Agency and competency is not entirely dependent on proactive gender equity legislation, although this undoubtedly enables them. Linda criticised the lack of family measures in her eNGO: ‘...this organisation would like to be family-friendly but is similar to a lot of NGOs, it’s demanding of your time...’. In addition, Helen preferred part-time work but acknowledged the lack of paid maternity leave: ‘...The concerns have been not receiving paid maternity leave and a position to return to after having my second child’. Whereas eNGO women, like, Deborah, commented that flexible structures enabled women to work part-time or from home, which enabled a work/life balance: ‘I do a three day week, I share my job. He does the travel. I have two children now....’. Thus, women’s performances were strengthened by flexible practices that accommodated working mothers, yet there are barriers in adequate maternity provisions.

Academic activist participants’ considered EEO laws that improved women’s status in academia and the professions, but also acknowledged barriers affecting their participation. Yvonne elaborated on the affirmative action in academia: ‘...in academia there is very little blatant discrimination against women. There’s a fair bit of affirmative action...’. Despite this, women academics struggled with gender barriers, Yvonne adds: ‘Women in the upper levels of academia are still very low and lower further up the levels. Something has happened to prevent those women from advancing or else they are choosing not to advance...’. Furthermore, the glass ceiling is still in place, which has hindered women’s career mobility in the upper echelons. In regard to gendered performances, Barbara identified the glass ceiling in eNGOs and that women seeking CEO positions often behave like men: ‘...if they want to be the CEO of an eNGO, they will operate just as ruthlessly as men. Maybe they have to do it even more because there’s still those inherent glass ceilings...’. Women, therefore, adopt masculine as well as feminine strategies, when it evidently suits their agendas. This illustrates that gender is a an active process of doing masculine and feminine performances.

Concerning ‘doing gender’, Maggie advocated a gender equity law across sectors to address glass ceilings: ‘There should be a law that 53% of every corporation, academic, Parliamentary body is women’. Although Maggie argued for legislation to rectify barriers, she also criticised women for not accessing their power: ‘we let the men take over rather than stepping into our own power’. A social
hierarchy dominated by masculine ideologies and patriarchal practices is, therefore, a continuing barrier towards women’s inclusion (Cockburn 1991; Baxter 2000; Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre 2008; Lindsay 2008; Connell 2009). On one level, participant’s endure gender differences and, on another level, they advocate a gender balance, which represents a complex intersection of gender and power within feminist discourses. Participant’s enjoy degrees of gender equity but also struggled with differentiation and marginalisation, which suggests the interplay of the sexual division of labour and glass ceilings. My contention is that gender differences are pressing issues within feminist research (Punch 2000; De Vault & McCoy 2002; O’Leary 2004; Punch 2005; Trede & Higgs 2009).

Part 4. Unpacking a masculinist culture of work and resistant femininities

The patriarchal control of organisations and masculinist social elites

Women’s recognition of the patriarchal control of organisations and the dominance of masculinist elites in industry and governance shows that women experience gender and organisational barriers in their activism. In turn, my participant’s identified gender-specific barriers in terms of the sexual division of labour and a glass ceiling (Probert 2005; Smith & Crimes 2007; Connell 2009; Guillaume & Pochic 2009; Bendl & Schmidt 2010). Additionally, I have developed the argument that women experience gender as a barrier and an enabler within their advocacy. On one level, women achieved status in their organisations, and, on another level, they struggled with labels of female incompetency and career mobility. Hence, gender barriers have prevented the full participation of women in workplaces and environmental movements (Baxter 2000; Storvik & Schøne 2008; Kopecek 2009; Coronel et al. 2010; Jonnergård et al. 2010). Nonetheless, my contention, from the voice of my participants, is that environmental organisations offer more flexibility in supporting working mothers and a work/life balance than the traditional masculine occupations (Miller 2004; (Probert 2005; Hall et al. 2009; Culley & Angelique 2010; Baxter & Chesters 2011)

My results, thus far, illustrate that gender is a barrier and enabler to activist engagement. A gender barrier was men scientists taking credit for the work of
women initially performed on a grassroots level. Other barriers were men resisting women in contexts of ‘the boys club’ and tokenism. Placement of women on climate panels to fill a gender gap suggests a barrier; however, women demonstrate competency and knowledge on panels, which challenges the allusion to equity. Nonetheless, the fact that women struggled with a masculinist culture of work in regard to patriarchy, hierarchy and power, curtails their ability to exercise agency and competency. Hence, women are located in a complex social hierarchy.

Women identify their struggle therefore on two levels; one, the patriarchal control of organisations and two, the dominance of masculinist elites in industry and governance. For example, Maggie’s struggle was complicated by entrenched patriarchal structures within governance, industry and everyday life; however, a pressing concern was that women were not accessing the power at their disposal to challenge men in power. This is surprising for Maggie because women have demonstrated academic competency in grassroots and professional contexts. In addition, Maggie identified the specific strengths of women in relation to a nurturing ethic of care. Maggie also identified as a feminist and physician whose maternal outlook and expertise was a platform to advocate social change and challenge the power of corporations and governments. However, Maggie acknowledged the resistance of men towards her leadership and reforms. In retrospect, Maggie’s interview suggests that, to a certain extent, women are accommodating or accepting a masculine culture in that the dominance of men is viewed to be normal, whereas women’s resistance is not. Thus, gender is barrier and enabler to engagement.

Across my study, I have found that the patriarchal control of organisations, and the dominance of a social elites in industry and politics, in turn, constrains women’s agency and competency in grassroots and professional contexts (Walby 1990; Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Spitzner 2009; Turner 2011; Walby 2011). Moreover, the performance of resistant femininities and academic competency conveys that women are actively negotiating masculine and feminine approaches. Hence, the movement would be more effective by fully integrating women-led strategies. As Maggie had pointed out, ‘women need to access power’, for this is in their grasp, rather than letting ‘men run the world’. Hence, gender is an active process of doing and subjective engagement in the location of the ‘I’ in one’s identity (Butler 1990, 2006, 2008; Phillips & Knowles 2012).
My objective of investigating patriarchy, hierarchy and power is validated by the way in which women resist and accommodate dominant notions of masculinity (along with femininity) in their environmental and feminist activism. Within feminist intersections, the gender-specific barriers women struggle with provide context to the sexual division of labour and glass ceiling effect. ‘The boys club’, tokenism and gender differences are examples of gender barriers and masculinist elites. However, the glass ceiling is not necessarily specific to environmentalism, but rather the institutions within which participant’s work, such as Parliament and academia. It is experienced more by salaried employees than volunteers. This suggest that employees struggle more with exercising their agency and power. Parliament was particularly critiqued as ‘a boys club’ by Greens politicians. Additionally, women across sectors identified dominant masculinist practices, reminiscent of ‘the boys club’, in their negotiations with politicians and in their diverse sector negotiations.

I found that glass ceilings and prejudices pervaded universities and conservative eNGO. This demonstrates that a sexual division of labour is still an issue of differentiation. Linda criticised conservative eNGOs for the lack of gender reforms: ‘we’re not great on gender politics and justice issues’. Such examples contrast with the non-hierarchical, egalitarian and apolitical approach of the grassroots along with their feminist ideology. This suggests a difference in work relations, professional engagement and competency in paid and unpaid contexts. Although academia and Parliament have equity laws, gender and organisational barriers have prevented women from advancing. Men’s dominance in organisational leadership as well as social elites is a challenge for women’s agency and competency. In contrast, a strong female presence in grassroots and professional contexts confirms that the glass ceiling is not uniform across environmentalisms.

**Contesting the patriarchal control of organisations versus social class distinctions**

Traditionally, ‘a boys club’ is associated with social class distinctions and hegemonic ruling class masculinity (Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Penner & Toro 2007; Gregory 2009; McDonald 2011). Most of my participants were from middle class backgrounds and are therefore informed by similar levels of knowledge and status. My interviews importantly reveal that it is the patriarchal control of the organisation that is being contested- not the patriarchal versus class control.
Nonetheless, participants’ experiences of a masculinist culture, in terms of ‘a boys club’ and tokenism, indicates that dominant practices and cultures of hegemonic masculinity are barriers to women’s participation in organisations (Connell 1995, 2005; Poynting & Donaldson 2005; Pilgeram 2007; Donaldson 2009; Phillips & Knowles 2012).

I have found that middle class women play a strong leadership role in the Australian environmental movement. Studies have identified the middle class characteristic of social movements, but the contribution of Australian women salaried and voluntary environmental activists is lacking analysis (Eder 1996b; Plumwood 1997, 2002, 2006; Carter 2007; Sptizner 2009; Cockburn 2012a & b). Although Cockburn (2012a) reviewed peace movements to not be classist, she found that intellectuals, professionals and students were the core campaigners. Such categories represent the middle class. Grassroots women volunteers, in this study, are largely from the middle classes with most possessing tertiary qualifications and employment in the professions. This challenges perceptions that activists may be largely working class women (Brown & Ferguson 1995; MacGregor 2006; Faber 2008; Unger 2008). Nonetheless, working class women have played a bold courageous role in glocal grassroots environmental justice movements (Krauss 1993; McPhillips 2002; Barry 2008; Mellor 2009; Irwin 2010; Salleh 2011).

Ecofeminists additionally argued that a working class activist environmental struggle has been complicated by issues of race and gender (Epstein 1993; Mellor 1993; Bell 2008; Rainey & Johnson 2009; Wilson et al. 2010). Although participants’ identify a cultural identity, this is largely related to their experiences of gender and the active performance of masculinity and femininity. The intersection of gender and power, moreover, encompasses the core struggle towards inclusion. Further, women struggled to negotiate their gender identity because of the power of men. Some women identified with cultural issues in terms of race and ethnicity, but overall this was not a core experience of marginalisation. Nevertheless, women detail where one’s ethnicity or CALD identity was relevant. As an Asian person, Wendy argued that social change activism was a deviation from family norms: ‘It hasn’t been a huge a barrier for me, but to get involved in activism as a young [Asian] person is culturally difficult, it’s not the normal way to pursue your life path’. In addition, Maxine comments on the dominance of ‘Old White men’ in Parliament’. This shows an intersection of race or ‘Whiteness’ with age and gender dynamics.
Although women are labelled by men, in turn, women label men. Gender specific labels are consequently being accommodated and resisted.

**Academic competency and resistant femininities**

My participatory accounts demonstrate the academic environmental competency of participants along with their practice of resistant femininities. For example, women’s merit and prowess, as evidenced in their leadership strategies, undermines men’s ‘competitive’ approach to leadership. Participants’ agency and competency in similar or even the same roles to men, in turn, represents a threat to men’s dominance and male privilege. Studies have assessed the way privilege is associated with men in positions of power, authority and responsibility (Frenkel 2008; Kroll & Robbins 2009; Kuletz 2009; Shepard & Corbin-Mark 2009). Although men dominate key decisions in the politics of gender and the environment, women show leadership and prowess in paid and unpaid capacities, as Linda argued: ‘...we would be more effective if we had more women involved in senior leadership roles in the environment movement’. Linda added that a male centric approach contrasts with women-led strategies: ‘We have a culture as a movement and in the paid funded organisations of combatativeness and competitiveness and underminingness...we [women] would be less likely to behave that way and more likely to build more consensus and more collaboration’. Hence, women’s agency and competency as well as egalitarian approaches that advocate ‘more consensus and more collaboration’ has the potential to challenge masculine structures within the movement (Eyerman & Jamison 1989; Mellor 1997; Punch 2005; MacGregor 2006). Women’s academic competency evidenced in diplomatic negotiation skills, consequently, challenges men’s authority and shows that ‘the boys club’ and gendered tokenism are not fixed.

Academic competency is performed by grassroots and professional women. This undermines assumptions of scientific expertise being a male domain (McPhillips 2002; Culley & Angelique 2003; Settles et al. 2006; Blackwell & Glover 2008). Volunteers and employees show academic competency through written and oral skills, time allocation and prioritising, campaign strategy, technical and web literacy, academic and professional competency plus political literacy. A rigorous skills-set demonstrates participants’ professional and practical engagement, as Yvonne conveys: ‘To be effective, need to communicate well in written and oral form...’. Gillian adds: ‘Communication is important, not only the spoken but also
written...In my activist role, you are talking to the public, politicians; communication is important’. Dion elaborates on specific skills that strategize the academic competency of activists: ‘...we’ve written grants for our climate group. Those communication skills are critical. Our group has different skills sets...’.

Further, women’s academic competency is learned through practical activist experiences plus formal professional training (Maddison 2004; Salleh 2011). Additionally, grassroots activists and salaried advocates demonstrate superior intellect in their lobbying techniques and formal negotiations, which undermines perceptions that activists lack ‘the scientific credentials’ (Barry 2008; Unger 2008).

In support, McPhilips (2002) viewed Australian women anti-toxic waste grassroots campaigners as front line heroes whose acquired knowledge without formal training empowered their confidence to challenge industry bodies and governmental authorities. Culley and Angelique (2003, 2010) identified the technical competency of grassroots women anti-toxic-waste activists in the Three Mile Island movement in regard to acquired knowledge rather than expert training. Maddison and Scalmer (2006) esteemed the practical knowledge and wisdom of Australian activists in their field experiences, where knowledge was learned through diverse campaign initiatives, as peace marches and protest demonstrations. Drawing upon theory and practice, my findings undermine perceptions of female incompetency, while downplaying the myth that the grassroots women are less knowledgeable.

Evidently, women are exercising power and performing resistant femininities, which locates their agency and competency within environmental activism (Leahy 2003; Gow & Leahy 2005; Mallory 2006). The competency of salaried and voluntary women is through their negotiations with politicians and industry executives, who are largely men. Yet men’s resistance towards women’s leadership is a gender barrier and hinders their inclusion (Cockburn 1991; Young & Hurlic 2007; Unger 2008; Burn 2011). Moreover, gender relations and power dynamics were accommodated and resisted by my environmental activists. Despite the performance of resistant femininities, issues with patriarchy, hierarchy and power underpin women’s struggle with a masculinist culture of work. Maggie commented that women have been instrumental in social movements but their success is clouded by men taking credit, yet argues for a radical change: ‘I was deposed in my organisation by hierarchical males who were jealous of me. I hate hierarchy...we need a revolution’. Concerning a resistance strategy to male institutionalise dominance, the ecofeminist project,
therefore, aims to turn the discourse against patriarchy into a type of ‘resistant femininity’ (Leahy 2003). In my study, not all women experience patriarchy and hierarchy as a constraint. Some academic and eNGO women identify hierarchy as providing structure to their organisations whereas most of the grassroots women advocate resistance towards hierarchy. Further, men’s power in the patriarchal control of organisations and dominant social elites is the biggest obstacle to women’s reforms in professional contexts and everyday life contexts.

Within gendered power relations, I have developed the argument of Connell (1995, 2002a, 2005, 2007) and others (Donaldson 1993; Donaldson & Poynting 2007; Donaldson 2009) that masculinities and femininities are plural and subject to diversity and change. The performance of resistant femininities confirms my position that men’s power is being challenged within a social hierarchy. Women performed gender by deploying masculine and feminine approaches in their organisations. Within the politics of gender and the environment, my results show that women’s identities are being revitalised by negotiating with men but also resisting patriarchal and hierarchical structures that oppose their reforms. Hence, gender is an active performance shown by the way participants are locating the ‘I’ in their identity by performing masculinity and femininity and initiating social change (Butler 1990, 2006, 2008).

**Challenging insights to gender, power and social change theories**

The research reveals challenging insights to how participants’ activist engagement is destabilising gender norms along with hierarchy, patriarchy and privilege. The social change and environmental justice agenda of participants is shown by the way women perform masculinity and femininity plus exercise power while striving for climate reforms. This is practiced through local campaigns, running stalls and community talks. This involves challenging those in political power, industry and business. A finding is that women possess revolutionary aspects in their vision for the social and natural world. Maggie had argued that a grassroots-women-led ‘revolution’ was necessary for broader change to occur: ‘I don’t mean blood and guts but I mean a revolution...I believe in educating people and then they get out in the streets...it’s usually the women who induce changes and revolutions’.

The national elite of dominant men in industry was identified as hindering women’s agency and competency. For example, the power of the Greenhouse mafia
was Penny’s obstacle towards social change: ‘It’s the greenhouse mafia. Creating change is going to take an absolute ground swell of people to stand up to that mafia and make them not be the ones with all the power, for us to sort of get change’. Additionally, desired change was difficult through the resistance of men in Parliament to Greens’ politicians advocating sustainable and climate reforms. Tanya identified power as a ‘corrupt force to reckon with’ but admitted that as a politician, she had some power: ‘... whether I like it or not, I do not like dealing in power, but I have some power...’.. The agency and competency of participants is shown by accessing power in order to achieve change. This involves women’s active resistance to dominant masculinist social elites in industry and governance.

Strategies of accommodation and resistance towards social change involve women exercising their own power but also challenging institutional power, such as the police and governmental authorities. Accommodation was shown by conservative versus radical resistance strategies. Women took part in tough dialogues by indirect protest, where communicational skills and collaborative discussions towards change were favoured over ‘confrontations with the police’. Alternatively, radical resistance involved protests and direct challenge, such as civil disobedient strategies and ‘getting arrested’ for the cause. Greens politician Stacey was part of a group where 130 people were arrested outside Parliament: ‘I went to Canberra and was part of a protest where 130 people got arrested outside Parliament House...’. There is an interesting power dynamic here when politicians - people with political power are exercising the laws of the land but also challenging it. However, participant’s also resisted direct confrontational approaches, as Abigail elaborates: ‘It takes courage to do it...I find it intimidating to interact with the police in that way. I went to climate camp, and I couldn’t participate in sitting on the road because I didn’t want that interaction with the police’. Rather Abigail advocates social change through a collaborative communicational strategy: ‘...I don’t think social change is more likely to come about because of those actions. It’s more about talking to people, standing for something...’. This approach involved accommodating to one’s environment. Accommodation is a conservative approach, but such strategies do engage the opposition to consider climatic reforms.

Thus far, social change is a strategy that unifies women in paid and unpaid sectors of environmental advocacy, and strategically symbolises women’s agency and competency. For Gillian, the Federal government’s policy and close relationship
with big industry is the biggest obstacle for the social change agenda of activists: ‘...the government’s policy is the biggest barrier, and their very close relationship with the big industry. The smaller companies don’t seem to get any say...maybe the residents have more power than small industries, because they can get together’. Hence, local campaigners have the power to collectively argue for change. Moreover, social change, as a strategy practiced by professional women is a compelling finding, for studies have focussed on social change as a grassroots strategy (Aitchison 2011; Schlembach 2011; Singh & Burnes 2011; Sheridan 2012). Social change ambitions unify the advocacy of grassroots and professional participants, despite some differences in work practices. A common ground activist approach is fittingly strengthened by integrating social change and environmental justice worldviews and actions in movements.

An egalitarian ethos and undermining hierarchy and elitism

Participants’ egalitarian ethos as well as egalitarian principles within organisations enable the performance of participants. Egalitarianism enables the performance of women in organisations- but it is also an ethic that women practice in their activism and everyday life contexts. Hence, egalitarianism empowers women’s activism. As an approach, it contrasts with ruling class masculinity and dominant power relations that are elitist. Egalitarian ideals are in stark contrast to hierarchical structures and patriarchal cultures. Moreover, an egalitarian ethos enables women and men to collaborate, despite some differences in behaviours and practices. Such insights have the potential to transform movements whilst empowering the agency and competency of women activists. Hierarchical structures have been reviewed as patriarchal with men in positions of power (Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Spitzner 2009; Walby 2011). Although my participants experience hierarchy, in the form of masculinist elites, they also resist male power, through the performance of resistant femininities (Plumwood 1997; Leahy 2003; Mellor 2009, 2012).

In my results, women’s resistance to hierarchy and bureaucracy was evidenced by adopting egalitarian approaches in their organisational operations, as Abigail pointed out: ‘If you want to turn it into a bureaucracy, go somewhere else. We try and be egalitarian...’. Abigail adds that resistant strategies through egalitarian approaches enabled women and men to cooperate despite some men wanting to dominate, ‘...there is a more egalitarian feeling about men in the progressive
movements. But not always, they can be dominant or have difficulties in their personalities...’. Further, the incorporation of egalitarian ideals helps to undermine the patriarchal control of organisations and dominant social elites.

Participants’ viewed hierarchy to be a barrier or an enabler, which reveals further contradictions and insights. Women resisted or accommodated hierarchy, for some viewed it as a constraint, whereas others viewed it as necessary for internal structures. Even though resistance towards hierarchy is a feature of social movements (Eder 1996a & b; Hawkins 2006; Doyle 2008); my results reveal that hierarchy is not entirely a barrier. Linda argued that eNGOs are hierarchical unlike the grassroots, which contrasts with perceptions. Academics, Yvonne and Anna, explained that hierarchy is necessary for complex university structures, and that women have achieved career mobility through competency and merit. Anna highlights her personal resistance to rigid hierarchies, ‘I’m not very good with hierarchies. I trample it!’, but added that hierarchy is necessary in university structures, ‘You’ve got formal hierarchies and informal hierarchies. I see them both working together’. Further, the agency and competency of women through proven prowess and merit undermines hierarchy. Linda criticised her eNGO for a lacking a culture of positive feedback although merit and competency was recognised: ‘Everyone I’ve worked with here has great skills and experience... merit is recognised...but there’s not a culture of positive feedback’. Nonetheless, women continue to endure glass ceilings and the sexual division of labour because men dominate decision-making and organisational hierarchies. Maxine argued that women are acquiring executive roles in the ‘masculine corporate world’, but ‘they are entering a culture that is male dominated’, for the glass ceiling is still in place; however, as a Greens politician, her goal is to resist men’s power through policy reform: ‘...My being in Parliament, trying to change laws; I am not so much an idealist that I think we are not up against it, when it comes to an overpowering corporate dominance’. Hence, the power of corporations is a pressing barrier to activists’ reforms. This is experienced at an organisational and movement level.

Grassroots women viewed hierarchy as a barrier in their negotiations with government officials and industry executives. At an internal grassroots organisational level, hierarchy was rejected hierarchy in favour of ‘consensual’, ‘collaborative’, ‘egalitarian’ and ‘apolitical’ approaches. The focus on a grassroots participatory democratic approach presents a compelling interplay of hierarchy within internal and
external structures of the movement. Greens women rejected hierarchy in favour of grassroots participatory democracy at a party level as well as in their parliamentary negotiations. Jacqui identified hierarchy as more of an issue than gender in politics and that the party’s grassroots principles sharply contrast to mainstream politics: ‘the Greens do not operate that way. Everything is grassroots and locally done...’.

However, the Greens party is an interesting amalgam because they try to operate with a minimum of hierarchy, but in Parliament or Councils, they have to deal with some very aggressive masculinist behaviours. Consequently, Australian environmentalism is characterised by complexity. On one hand, organisations adopt egalitarian approaches, and, on the other hand, hierarchical approaches prevail. My participants’ agency and competency has been evidenced by their resistance and accommodation towards the patriarchal control of their organisations and the dominant masculinist elites within industry and governance.

Concluding statement

Evidently, Australian women activists have made an amazing contribution to the environmental movement. Gender is a performance and an active process of doing, which was shown by participants’ resistance and accommodation towards dominate power relations and ruling class masculinity (and femininity). Women performed gender in a range of ways- some in a conscious way; others focussed more on strategic approaches for the environmental movement. Partly the choice depended on their previous history, such as their commitment to feminism, and partly it depended on the type of organisation they were in or role they were playing. In hierarchical environmental organisations dominated by masculinist elites, women developed strategies for dealing with it, such as, being like the boys, challenging hierarchy, or adopting (eco)feminist principles. In political meetings, some participant’s dressed and behaved in masculine ways. For eNGO advocate, Deborah, wearing a suit was essential for being taken seriously in meetings with politicians or industry executives. In flatter and more inclusive organisational structures, women operated well with men that adopted a similar ethic. However, women struggled to communicate a Green agenda in organisations dominated by masculinist social elites. When there is a hierarchy, some women played the merit game. Although women endured gender barriers, such as sexism and misogyny, they also adopted strategies
to resist this. Women exercised their own power while challenging the patriarchal control of organisations and governing social elites. This represents resistant versus emphasized femininities. Professional and voluntary participant’s embraced grassroots democracy in their social change resistance to ‘the Greenhouse mafia’. The reference to ‘the Greenhouse mafia’ contextualises women’s struggle with a national elite of men in industry. However, women’s resistance to masculinist elites within activism destabilises the idea that movements are in abeyance. This research has contributed knowledge to social change and environmental justice scholarship as well as environmental and women’s movement studies.

Labels of gender, activism, age, culture and incompetency were accommodated and resisted by my participants. The intersection of such labels additionally demonstrates that experiences can be gender-specific and gender-neutral. This also confirms the complexity and ambiguity of a gendered culture of work. Strategies of resistance and accommodation were demonstrated by radical and conservative approaches, such as civil disobedience and collaborative communicational strategies of being silent and quiet. I found that a peacemaking versus war model that involves passive resistance is a viable activist strategy (Warren 1999; Cockburn 2012). Women’s leadership and prowess within academic roles, consequently, undermined labels of incompetency. I have found that a nurturing ‘maternal’ ethos was a motivator to participants’ professional and voluntary roles. Studies have focussed on the role of mother as a motivator within grassroots activism. However, a nurturing ethos was endorsed by non-mothers too; such as women without children, the men partners of women, and some of the men activists’. Overall, participants’ encountered gender as a barrier and an enabler within everyday life. Within social contexts, women struggled to collaborate with men in bureaucracy and governance, yet communicated well with men that adopted a Greens justice ethic. Such findings challenge ideas that environmentalist movements are male-centric and lack a feminist agenda. Thus, participants’ agency and competency was illustrated by their negotiation of masculinity and femininity as well as identifying with the barriers and enablers that affect their social change and environmental justice ambitions. Hence, gender is an active process ‘of doing’ and ‘reworking’ notions of masculinity and femininity through resistance and accommodation. If organisations had a more flatter and inclusive structure, such as parliaments and councils, it is feasible that a greater social change would be realised.
References


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1 Plumwood’s 2009 and 2008 texts were posthumously published as the author unfortunately passed away in February 2008.


Appendix 1.

Biographies and Sociological Snapshots:
An introduction to my participants

Group 1- Greens party

The majority of participant’s sourced from the Australian Greens hold salaried positions within the party. There were also volunteers. For example, 8 work for the party on a salaried capacity, with 2 politicians, 2 administrative staff and 4 locally elected government councillors. The other two are volunteers actively involved in community campaigns. The Greens were a key source due to their policies and philosophical worldviews on the social and natural world. The party has strong policies on social justice and gender equity along with principles on grassroots democracy, consensus building and active collaboration. All of the Greens participants conducted voluntary work. The following accounts are coded by pseudonyms, but the experiences of individuals are authentic.

Group 1.a- Greens- Politicians (Salaried): Jennifer, Maxine, Amy, Margaret

Jennifer

To begin with, Jennifer works in Greens politics in a paid and unpaid capacity. She possesses extensive activist experience in advocating for women’s rights as well as social and environmental justice issues, ranging from the 1960s to the present day. She comes from a politically active family, has an Honours degree, and also possesses academic work experience. Jennifer lives with her partner in an urban residence, she has 3 adult children, and is in the age group of 55-59. More recently, she has been active in campaigns against new coal-fire powered stations in favour of the implementation of sustainable renewable energy technologies. As a self-identified ecofeminist, she recognised the contribution of Australian women activists in anti-nuclear protest movements of the 1980s, such as the U.S. War bases at Pine Gap and Cockburn Sound in the Northern Territory.
Maxine

Maxine who also works in a salaried capacity within Greens politics, similarly conveys her extensive activist experience. She also comes from a politically active Leftist-leaning family. Maxine has a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree, is in the age group of 40-44, and lives with her partner in a progressive urban suburb. At university, she participated in political campaigns, including: ‘pro-choice’, Indigenous deaths in custody, rainforest logging actions, and the financial burdens on young female students exploited in the sex work industry. Maxine contends that men dominate politics and the conservative stream of the eNGO movement. This contrasts with the Greens advocacy of gender and climate reforms.

Amy

In the third biography, Amy works for the Greens in a salaried capacity and describes her role as 24/7, which includes a mixture of administrative and activist campaigns. She is in the age group of 25-29, has a sociology degree, and resides in a socially progressive inner-city suburb. Although she is paid for her administrative duties, much of the campaign work is performed afterhours on an unpaid basis. In similarity to the other participants, Amy has taken part in feminist and environmental activist campaigns. In turn, her Green consciousness was inspired by her parents who had designed an eco-sustainable childhood home. As a teenager, Amy’s concern for Third World poverty and deforestation motivated her towards studying a sociology degree. She also pursued campus activism and became knowledgeable on conservation, biodiversity and organic food ventures. Thereafter, Amy worked in environmental advocacy roles in NGOs and government departments. Such experiences increased her competencies. Further, Amy’s activist background and belief in Greens policies, namely Women’s rights, Indigenous rights, forest preservation, nuclear issues and biodiversity, compelled her membership to the party.

Margaret

With nearly 20 years work experience in the Greens, Margaret was a founding member of her local regional group. Currently, she works for the party on a part-time basis in a Public Relations role. She is in the age group of 60-64, has degrees in sociology and health sciences, and has represented the Greens as a political candidate in election campaigns. Having divorced years ago, she identifies
as a lesbian who resides in a regional area with her female partner. Before the Greens, Margaret had a well paid professional job, but had little career satisfaction. Margaret perceives ageism rather than sexism as a barrier in her prior career, whereas the Greens encourage meritocracy. By doing an Arts degree, she identified an interest in social and environmental issues. Joining the Greens was one of the best life changing decisions for Margaret. She grew up in a family involved in left wing politics. Her aging mother is still a role model for social justice, and had formed an Indigenous support group. Margaret identifies as an activist from a young age who participated in movements of the 1960s to 1980s, including the Women’s Liberation Movement, May Day Marches, the anti-Vietnam campaign, peace rallies and anti-toxic waste campaigns. She has worked for the Women’s Refuge and assisted migrant European women. Currently, she runs a support group for aged people.

**Group 1.b- Greens- Councillors (LGA):** Jacquie, Stacey, Kate, Tanya

Jacquie

In the next biography, Jacquie, a locally elected government councillor in the age group of 40-44, who resides in a conservative inner-west urban suburb and is married with children, details her CALD background as inspiring her knowledge of social injustices in the world. Her husband is also of a CALD background, and the support of the extended family network enables her to maintain a work/life balance. In her spare time, she participates in voluntary work and is the chair of multicultural and women-run committees. In relation to her migrant heritage, Jacquie found that the Greens encouraged diversity and inclusion. This is also because the party esteems meritocracy, in that is not necessarily about credentials or who you know. Since joining the party, she has acquired knowledge in political negotiations. Although she does not have a university degree, Jacquie outlines that the Greens grassroots focus, enable women to manoeuvre through loosely formed ranks. Policy is from the bottom-up rather than top-down, unlike many of the mainstream parties.

Stacey

Stacey, a locally government elected councillor, in the age group of 35-39, whose parents were European migrants, resides in a progressive inner city suburb with her husband and three children. Stacey explained that grassroots participatory
democracy aids sustainable outcomes. She adds that Greens politics is characteristic of progressive change, as men and women members have rejected older forms of patriarchal governance. As a full-time mother of young children, who works part-time in the Councillor role, she finds it challenging juggling diverse responsibilities. Nonetheless, flexible Greens structures enable her to bring children to events. Stacey’s feminist activism was exemplified in a women-led anti-nuclear peace march. This action demonstrates the power of women towards change. Although the Greens endorse gender equity, members struggle to implement legislation. Women’s right to perform home births is a contentious policy issue. She works on social justice campaigns, such as disability access issues. As a Greens activist, Stacey critiques the response of major political parties towards climate change, and personally protested at Federal Parliament against new coal fire power stations.

Tanya

Tanya, a locally elected government councillor, in the age group of 60-64, who resides independently in an inner city suburb, conveys how her mobility and progress within the Greens was reminiscent of meritocracy and competency. In retrospect, Tanya entered the party as a shy person with no political experience, but shined through opportunity, merit and dedication, hence, her current councillor position. Tanya comments that illness and poverty plagued her earlier life, which impacted on her struggles at university, although she achieved a degree. She regularly attends climate rallies, and is passionate about social justice issues and Indigenous Rights. Progressive policies in the Greens entail positive gender discrimination, which is why there is a gender mix. However, Greens women endure adversarial negotiations in Parliament. Tanya points out climate and sustainable reforms are underpinned by societies compliant role in a culture of consumerism.

Kate

In the next biography, Kate, a locally government elected councillor of a regional LGA, illustrates that community collaboration, grassroots democracy and consensus building drive Green policies. She is in the age group of 35-39, has a B.A. Communications degree as well as extensive skills in Public Relations campaigns. Specialist niche areas include communications/media, journalism, along with
hospitality and academia. She is an independent/single person residing in a regional location. Her move from an urban location was inspired by the expense of city living and the desire to live in a more nature-based environment. Generally, the constituency has a strong Greens ethic. The successful yet arduous anti-privatisation campaign involved grassroots collaborative engagement with the community. Kate identifies as a feminist, who criticises the ‘blokeyness’ of Local Government politics and the under-representation of women in leadership posts. Notably, the Greens has a higher female representation than other parties. Further, Kate criticises the gender disparity in volunteerism, in how women are expected to do jobs that men get paid for, and actually prefers being paid well for her expert skills.

**Group 1.c- Greens- Volunteers:** Joan, Ruth Joan

Joan, a volunteer Greens party member, who is in the age group of 40-44, and a full-time mother of three, articulates notions of feminism, motherhood, activism and sustainability in her work. She is critical of capitalism and consumerism and presents herself as a maternal feminist with a strong Greens ethic. She is involved in a Greens mothers group advocating feminist and environmentalist issues. Joan resides in a progressive urban city suburb, whose residents are responsive to social and environmental issues. She has postgraduate Arts qualifications and writes columns on a voluntary basis concerning children and sustainability. She actively participates in school committees, community groups and council events. As an ecofeminist activist, strategies of recycling, walking and buyer behaviour are adhered to in order to avoid landfill and contamination of the human to the nonhuman.

**Ruth**

Ruth, a resident of a progressive metropolitan suburb, in the age group of 40-44, is a Greens volunteer plus a full-time professional employee in the Arts industry. Ruth details her passion for social and environmental justice campaigns. An interest in the injustices facing the human and nonhuman world, such as poverty and pollution on a trip to India, inspired her motivation to join the party. Approximately, 3 hours a week is devoted to Greens work and this takes place in the evenings and weekends. As a single person, there is some flexibility in time allocation. In the party, duties include administrative work, including, membership lists, online
forums, newsletters and organising meetings and events. As someone who identifies as an advocate rather than an activist, Ruth quietly participates in the political arena, but prefers the community work to clerical duties. Further, Ruth’s campaigns include heritage preservation, conserving and preserving natural spaces, disability access, multicultural issues and the goal to live sustainability in a densely populated suburb.

**Group 2- eNGOs**

**Group 2.a- eNGOs (Salaried):** Deborah, Linda, Juliet, Heidi, Penny, Mara, Helen, Stephanie, Barbara

The NGO category includes 9 salaried employees and 1 volunteer, although most of the employees perform voluntary work too, which shows flexibility. NGOs are part of the third sector. In general, the third sector includes grassroots organisations, non-profit organisations, community networks and nongovernmental organisations, namely NGOs, INGOs (international) and eNGOs (environmental). These organisations are reputable in addressing environmental and social justice issues. Markedly, the focus here is on eNGOs as a particular category in order to contextualise the roles of my women participants.

**Deborah**

Deborah, a salaried employee, in the age group of 50-54, has postgraduate qualifications in environmental management, and performs bushcare work on a voluntary basis. As a caring mother and professional advocate, Deborah was determined to protect the biodiversity of the natural environment for her children. The fact that she works in bushcare for no payment, signifies that environmentalism is an area of passion. According to Deborah, the eNGO position is not well paid, yet rewarding in work satisfaction and one’s goal towards sustainable technologies. Deborah outlined her work-based skills: scientific knowledge, professional training or qualifications, excellent communicational skills and the ability to negotiate with politicians and executives. It was necessary to be ‘values rather than promotion or money driven’. In meetings, Deborah elaborates on the importance of presenting professional image; hence, a business suit was essential attire. Although Deborah did not identify as a feminist, she recognised gender differences in campaigns.
Linda

In the next biography, Linda, an eNGO employee, in the age group of 30-39, who possesses extensive environmental advocacy experience as well as postgraduate qualifications in science, observes gender-related issues and work-based challenges. Some of the key campaigns are climate change and sustainability, in how does the Australian energy system move from a predominantly fossil-fuel based to renewable energy-based economy? Linda argues that this change needs to happen rapidly, but the problem is ensuring a collaborative transition within sectors that are somewhat hostile to change. Linda’s environmentalism is strengthened by her experiences within the private and public and now third sectors. She ponders that workplaces share commonalities in their quest for sustainable outcomes, yet the strategy differs. A challenge within NGOs is the high workload and expectation to work after hours. Yet the passion for the cause motivates Linda, as it does for other participants. Linda explains that women volunteers lead the grassroots movement, although men dominate decisions within industry and governance, such as, climate panels.

Juliet

The following biography highlights the environmental advocacy of Juliet, an eNGO employee, in the age group of 25-29, a sociology graduate, who works in a paid capacity in environmentalism. Juliet also works as a volunteer on social justice campaigns, in particular, refugee issues. One of Juliet’s favourite campaigns was working with Indigenous Aboriginal women on health issues and gender justice. She adds that activism is a personal and individual choice. With a strong sense of global justice, climate change is identified as one of the biggest challenges facing developing countries, for women are the ones that ‘bear the brunt of it’. Her office is female dominated and a challenge is recruiting males to volunteer roles.

Heidi

Heidi, a scientist employed within an eNGO, who has a PhD, and has worked in academia, evaluates her satisfaction in the NGO versus academic setting. She is single, in the age group of 35-39, and lives with her elderly parents who are European migrants. She had a relatively prosperous upbringing. Living at home has
enabled Heidi to finish her PhD, work part-time and accumulate savings. Heidi claimed that she rejected an academic career due to bulling from male scientists. Critically, the male dominated arena positioned Heidi as an outsider who was not included in decision-making. Additionally, NGOs are dedicated to identifying the causes and rectifying problems in the environment. However, within academia, she criticises that there is more of a focus on publications rather than environmental solutions. In a biodiversity capacity, she works with endangered species, ecological communities plus ecosystems. Advocacy is a core component of her role, yet Heidi aims to bring more science into it. She adds that NGO can be competitive, but esteems her NGO for its flexibility, independence of campaigns and decision-making as well as its excellent scientific and advocacy reputation in the community.

Penny

Penny, a Campaign Coordinator of an eNGO, who has a degree in environmental science, in the age group of 25-29, is single, and resides in an urban city suburb, outlines her passion for people power in initiating social change. She emphasises the activist ideology of her organisation that relies on the skills of its volunteers. A challenge is the lack of financial resources. For example, being an activist in a not-for-profit organisation entails that much of the funding comes from membership donations rather than corporate sponsorships or governmental subsidies. According to Penny, the eNGO has a gender mix, although men dominate management. She has worked overseas for feminist organisations targeting women impacted by climate change and renewable energy. This position involves office work and a range of field activities. It is not a typical desk job. Activities include community events, street theatre, media and public relations, Parliamentary meetings as well as negotiations with diverse sectors across the movement. Penny adds that ‘being a people person helps in such a role’, as well as having scientific knowledge.

Mara

The final eNGO participant is Mara, a Director of an eNGO, who resides in a regional city with her partner and two children, is in the age group of 30-34, and has a PhD in English. She assesses the long working hours during international climate negotiations. Although campaign deadlines can be stressful, the passion for the work
and being part of a mutual and symbiotic team is very fulfilling, Mara pinpoints. Mara aims to protect what is left of the astounding diversity of life on earth. In addition, Mara possesses a wealth of knowledge pertaining to paid and unpaid roles. She has held executive posts in forestry, marine conservation and climate change. She adds that the NGO movement is driven by grassroots networks. In the grassroots, boundaries are set according to individuals’ availability. Hard work is required; however, there is little economic support. Critically, the grassroots includes ‘difficult’ individuals, yet eNGO participants, notably its paid climate campaigners, were esteemed as ‘encouraging and warm’. There has not been the same degree of ‘nastiness and bickering’, Mara sums up.

Helen

Helen, an urban resident who possesses a PhD and is married with two children, and is in the age group of 35-39, comments on her climate advocacy in paid and unpaid capacities. She is a former director of an eNGO, leader of a local climate group and recently secured a scientific advocacy position. As a grassroots activist, she organises rallies and protest events. As a self-identified maternal climate activist, she values the contribution of the women’s movement towards gender equity legislation and a work/life balance. Historically, Helen has sought part-time roles within environmentalism that are flexible and supportive of her maternal role. Her community voluntary group has been instrumental in designing a legislative bill to Federal Parliament. They have also initiated community climate action plans, educated children about biodiversity, and formed childcare groups that educate anti-toxic waste management in the use of play equipment. The appointment as a scientist is an opportunity to focus on academic and research solutions to the climate debate, whilst strengthening her activist agenda within professional and grassroots contexts.

Stephanie

Stephanie, who works in the financial department of an independent eNGO, in the age group of 30-34, a resident of a socially progressive suburb, and has a finance degree along with a partner but no children, contends that she was bored with commerce and wanted to apply her skills to the environmental movement. She has
worked as a volunteer in bushcare. This position involves linking economic agendas to climate change reforms. She describes herself as an armchair activist, and articulates that advocacy is challenging because some industries are reluctant to change to Green technology. Although there is an element of chauvinism in the workplace and that she is unaware of formal gender policies in place, Stephanie views her work site as non-discriminatory. Overall, men and women share an environmental consciousness and green ethos in their agendas.

Barbara

Barbara, identifies as an Indigenous Aboriginal with mixed European heritage, who possesses a PhD in politics, in the age group of 60-64, is married with an adult son and resides in a peri urban fringe location. Barbara has worked in diverse leadership roles within paid and unpaid capacities of environmentalism. In a sense, the colour of the Australian landscape reflected her spiritual reckoning, as an Indigenous woman, along with the rejection of European colours. She outlines her feminist activism of the late 1960s and 1970s, along with current environmental justice campaigns. As a feminist participant in left-wing university politics in a small Australian city, she critiques that the Liberation Movement was dominated by lesbian women, which has made it difficult to address heterosexual issues. Feminism is described as having 300 different varieties, as there are with eucalyptus trees. She has also rejected academia in favour of environmental consultancy work. Barbara was active in anti-toxic campaigns that targeted women’s reproductive health rights along with the rejection of patriarchal systems of medicine, such as baby bottles.

**Group 2.b- eNGOs (Volunteer): Eileen**

Eileen, a volunteer of a non-profit eNGO, in the age group of 60-64, who has postgraduate qualifications in an agricultural discipline, articulated her eNGO advocacy in the Pacific Islands. As a White middle class woman nearing retirement with adult children whose husband works in the legal profession, her work ethic was motivated by goals of sustainability and permaculture, as well as refugee rights in the Asia-Pacific region. Her organisation is developing strategies to help Pacific citizens adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change in their environs. In turn, Eileen identified a strong patriarchal culture in everyday Island life; however, education was
empowering women to participate in global debates. Eileen attended the Copenhagen conference in 2009 with the Pacific delegation that included women leaders. She described her role as silent yet supportive, as her team was there to support to the voice of the Pacific on the world stage. Critically, this event was a draining experience, as it was difficult to consolidate cultural identity and future survival with the dogmatic approach of politicians in their lack of formal policy resolve.

**Group 3- Grassroots**

**Group 3.a- Grassroots (Volunteers):** Dion, Jessica, Shelley, Gillian, Wendy, Catherine, Abigail

In the grassroots group, all are volunteers, but also talk about their salaried work in environmentalism and other work sectors. It is intriguing for an organisational study to draw upon such diversity within salaried and voluntary capacities. It was initially predicted that these participants were more likely to identify themselves as activists, yet biographies reveal that the term ‘activism’ is fraught with some ambivalence.

**Dion**

Dion, a grassroots advocate who works in a salaried capacity as an environmental scientist in a government department, has a PhD in science, and is in the age group of 25-29. Dion is the most highly educated member of her department, as most have Honours or undergraduate qualifications. Dion has been classified into the grassroots group because she is a leader in the movement and is more passionate about her voluntary work; climate change grassroots activism is her core ambition in life. As an employee of a large department, the workplace is hierarchical. The job is very much 9-5 with flexible days and good working conditions. This enables Dion to devote additional time to grassroots campaigns. She avoids the term activist for the negative connotations it has in the community. Dion adds that men and women possess certain strengths and that there should be a gender balance within organisations that enables such competencies to improve the movement.
Jessica

Jessica, a volunteer leader of a grassroots organisation, in the age group of 45-49, who is married with three daughters, has a degree in landscape architecture and works as an independent contractor, comments on empowering internal communicational strategies that counter negative forces within the environmental movement. The organisation has worked hard to counter hierarchical structures. The group is apolitical and non-aligned and listens to diverse members of the community, whereby favouritism is avoided. Being a mother motivated her climate activism. As a feminist, she entered the workforce after the Liberation movement and acknowledges the achievements of feminist activists, although women still receive less remuneration. In turn, the support of her husband enables a work/life balance.

Shelley

Shelley, a volunteer of a grassroots group, who is divorced with four teenagers, in the age group of 40-44, resides in a southern metropolitan suburb, emphasises that her advocacy was connected to a Christian perspective versus state-centric approach, her maternal role and concern for the planet. She expresses the difficulty of having lived in a domestic violence relationship. However, being a full-time mother, activist and part-time undergraduate student has renewed her sense of identity and purpose. Shelley has actively lobbied churches and politicians to partake in climate campaigns. Shelley contends that climate change action needs to start from the grassroots, in that the community needs to work locally and collectively in order to achieve sustainable goals. Furthermore, Shelley adds that localisation needs to occur in grassroots communities run by mothers, where bonds of friendship and neighbourhoods can act as quiet yet poignant forces of change and resistance.

Gillian

Gillian, a grassroots action group leader, in the age group of 60-64, who is married and lives with her partner in the Western metropolitan suburbs, has 2 adult children, has an educational scientific background, locates her activism in social justice and climate change campaigns. She is a Greens party member and believes they are the key initiators towards social and environmental reform. She has
participated in grassroots campaigns for over 20 years. Nearing retirement, Gillian works in a full-time yet unpaid capacity within the movement and part-time as an educator. She is passionate about her unpaid work and enjoys spending more time on grassroots work. The organisation structure is fairly flat and non-hierarchical along with an equitable gender mix. As an older person, she does not identify ageism as an issue, rather surprisingly the group has many retired participants.

Wendy
Wendy, of a CALD (Asian) background, in the age group 20-24, is single, an economics university student and resident of a northern urban metropolitan suburb, articulates that she has been working with young people around the world to take action on climate change. As a young person advocating for climate justice, she is passionate about engaging the youth in the movement and has participated in international conferences and community action events, mostly on a voluntary basis. For Wendy, issues of age, less experience and knowledge and potentially being of a CALD minority can be more of a barrier than gender.

Catherine
Catherine, a climate grassroots activist who works part-time in an educational capacity, resident of a socially progressive urban suburb, who lives with her partner and two children, in the age group of 55-60, discusses the importance of her local group in addressing climate action awareness. Her current part-time paid position in the public sector focuses on implementing biodiversity programs within classrooms. She has worked as a school teacher although her specialist niche is special needs children. Sexism was identified as an apprentice teacher, who was not recruited due to being labelled a feminist and a trouble maker. Although her grassroots group is dominated by mothers, fathers play a strong role in advocating a sustainable future for their children. Catherine’s paid role is viewed as secondary to her climate activism as well as the role of raising children.

Abigail
Abigail of a CALD background and a grassroots climate activist leader of a faith-based organisation and works part-time in social work, in the age group of 50-
55, who is a grandmother and resident of a western metropolitan suburb, outlines her social justice, religious ethic and climate campaign work over the last 20 years. Most advocacy roles have been unpaid and range from advocacy for refugee rights to movements towards peace, anti-nuclear, environmental justice and global climate reform plus fair trade. Abigail outlines that wealthy states should take responsibility for carbon emissions that affect developing countries. She ponders the Global North (affluent) and South (poor) divide. In her faith-based networks, there is a high number of female volunteers, yet most senior decision-makers are men, namely the cleries. Negotiations within sectors is challenging, however, the reality of climate change is forcing people to reconsider their everyday lives and environs, she adds.

**Group 4- Academic activists**

**Group 4.a- Academic activists (Salaried):** Anna, Yvonne, Rachel, Maggie

All women academics work in an environmental paid capacity, yet also perform voluntary work, such as community advocacy. Yvonne conducts free community talks on climate change, and lawyer, Rachel, provides pro-bono services to clients in financial hardship. All are committed to the movement. Gender is an issue in their work. All have PhD’s or higher degrees with two in the scientific field and another in Law and Arts. The fourth, Maggie is a physician. What is notable about these academics is the way in which education is tool to link professional and grassroots environmental advocacy.

**Anna**

Anna, an environmental scientist in senior academia, in the age group of 70-74, lives with her scientist partner in a socially progressive urban suburb. She has two adult sons and is previously divorced. Anna considers the challenges of climate change within the scientific community and public arenas. She comments on the challenges of combining an administrative role with scientific lab-based duties. In the 1970s, all the technicians were female and all the scientists were male, which reflects insights to technical competence along traditional gender lines. This is gradually changing, Anna argues. Within the scientific field, there are the deniers and believers. Even within academia, there is one scientist in her centre that does not believe climate change is man-made. Anna calls him an ‘old fool’. Such criticisms
within the profession make it difficult to convince the public about this issue. This also relates to a lack of knowledge on the science behind it. Unfortunately, most people are interested in consumer or trivia, like the new I-Phone gadget or achieving fame. She adds that people need to realise that science is part of everyday life.

Yvonne

Yvonne, an academic climate scientist, outlines that her goal as a scientist is to contribute towards saving the planet. She struggles to juggle her administrative, climate scientific research and academic/supervisory portfolios. She is in the age group of 50-54, married with two children, and resides in a north-western urban metropolitan suburb. Yvonne comments on how with more experience and wisdom, her position has changed to more of an administrative versus lab-based focus. Her PhD students conduct all of her lab-based work. Concerning community engagement, Yvonne conducts advocacy talks in order to educate the public that climate change is a local based issue. As a scientific committee member, she participates on climate panels and advises governmental policy and NGOs. Yvonne outlines that the positive working conditions in academia have enabled her to juggle domestic and public roles, although there are some gender differences, with men dominating climate panels and membership committees.

Rachel

Rachel is a barrister who has postgraduate qualifications in Law and the Arts, in the age group of 55-59, married with one adult son, resident of a socially progressive urban metropolitan suburb, who works on environmental legislation and a member of an environmental board as well as an academic on environmental law. Her role is to educate the law at a university setting, to work at the Bar (Barrister’s court) for positive outcomes and to advise the professional membership body. Although she does not identify as an advocate, she performs pro bono work. Rachel is interested in pro bono cases where there is a social or environmental justice leaning. Sexism was experienced a few times in the Bar, although Rachel challenged this. In everyday life, Rachel practices sustainability in her home and community.
Maggie

Maggie, in the age group of 70-74, is a grandmother, who has worked across paid and unpaid spheres of the glocal environmental movement. As a physician, her medical professional training provided her with expert knowledge within the fields of medicine, science and biology. This has been an empowering tool for engaging in professional and grassroots negotiations. Much of her environmental work has been performed voluntarily. In retrospect, Maggie rejects labels of ecofeminism but identifies as a feminist activist. She argues that women have let men run the world without accessing the power at their disposal. A maternal identity and acknowledgement of the planet being in a dire unhealthy state in relation to her professional ethic of care encompasses a progressive worldview towards addressing the injustices facing the social and natural world.
Appendix 2.

Sample of Interview Questions

(Note: some of the questions differ depending upon paid and unpaid roles)
The structured to semi-structured interview questions start with a broad question, which is followed with prompted sub questions, as follows:

Group 1 (Salaried) and Group 2 (Volunteers) Interview Questions

1. I would like to start by hearing about your work here (Prompt include: position/length of time/ 9-5/ skills /activities/demographics/ campaigns/ everyday practices)
   • What is your title? What roles do you perform/ paid and unpaid?
   • An activist/advocate? How does that relate to working in the professions?
   • Missions, agendas, goals /barriers and enablers/ gender, sociocultural, political
   • How does this role compare to other duties? Academia/ Other work sectors/
   • Please tell me about some of your key research projects? How do these contribute? Science male- dominated?
   • Conference presentations/ success versus challengers/ public speaking/ skills
   • What are your goals, aims and objectives within the climate movement/campaign?
   • Do politicians, policy makers etc. listen to what you are saying/ who is/not listening?
   • How does the public role relate to other experiences? Community/workplace?
   • As a ‘woman advocate’, what are the issues you face? Gender issues?
   • How does your paid work compare/contrast to your activist/ community role?
   • What is the gender composition of the organisation?/ Power and influence?
   • Please tell me about the leadership structure of the organisation? Are there male/female leaders?
   • Tell me about what the skills, competencies and attributes required?
   • What is your understanding of skill in this role? How is this performed and experienced? In gender terms? What about in the community/workplace?
   • Is a social change required to achieve overall environmental goals?
   • How relevant is social and environmental justice to your work?
   • Do you consider yourself a feminist, ecofeminist? Gender issues?
   • Is the role as mother, wife relevant?
   • Committee membership/ individual versus collective action/
   • Conference events/ success versus challengers/ public speaking/ skills and competencies
   • What are your goals, aims and objectives within the climate change movement/campaign?
   • How does the public role relate to other activities? Community/workplace?
   • Please tell me about the organisation’s leadership structure? How did you perform this?
   • How may it compare/contrast for men and women? Community/workplace contexts?
What sectors have you worked in? Which enjoy most, least. Why? Distinctive? Future role?
What are the challenges facing Australia women? What is their contribution to the movement? What about the barriers and enablers they may face?
Could you describe your strategy of engagement? Diverse sector engagement?
What are some campaigns/projects that you are most proud of? Future campaigns? Preventing this?

2. **What drew you to this role?** (Prompt include: Past/current roles/ paid and unpaid capacity/ motivations towards activism/ purpose/ ideology, ambitions/aspirations)

What motivated your advocacy/activism? Were there particular issues or events?
Achievements to date/future?
What type of response do you achieve in the group/public/community level?
What is the biggest environmental issue you face right now? Community/workplace?
In what way is this being addressed within internal and external group dynamics?
Do you share commonalities with others in your group? Similarities/differences

3. **What are your goals, aims or agenda in this role?** (Prompt include: paid or unpaid, / agenda/ achievement/ portfolio/ reflection on being an environmental activist, worldview/ social change and environmental justice issues/ local versus global participation/ personal versus political/ challenges or barriers/ enablers/ gender and power based dynamics)

What type of worldview do you hold or hope to endorse? How is this experienced?
Does this relate to notions of social change and environmental justice?
Are there any barriers or obstacles may you face? How about motivators or enablers?
How may this role relate to other forms of activism/advocacy, local and global scale?
What are your approaches in addressing environmental issues in the community? And what type of responses do you get? (Commonalities/ differences in workplace/public)
What type of activist approaches or methods are considered? (Workplace/Movement participation/ Social, cultural and political level, issues/contexts)
How is conflict managed? Please give an example of dealing with a difficult person in your organisations, or as an activist in your group or in a field situation?
How is power experienced? In the public/community sphere and in your organisation?
What empowers you? Is there anything that is disempowering? Power-centric?
4. How does the decision-making process unfold in the organisation, workplace, movement? (Prompt include: internal and external elements of influence/ sociocultural and political elements/ who are you accountable to, vice versa / positions of responsibility and authority/ management structure/ sociocultural structure of workplace/movement)

- Who are the decision-makers in your organisation? And what about in the environmental movement? Is it gendered? Do men or women make the decisions?
- Hypothetically, if women made key decisions in the movement, what would be the effect? Would it be stronger or weaker?
- How would this impact upon salaried/voluntary advocates?
- What is the relevance of hierarchy? Patriarchy? Status? A gendered culture of work?
- How do notions of hierarchy/patriarchy/power unfold in the workplace/movement?
- Who are the powerful peoples and what type of position do they hold? Is it gendered?

5. How is good work or success recognised in the organisation? (privilege versus meritocracy/ actual contribution to formal recognition/ promotion/ career goals/ five years-twenty years)

- How is merit and competence/good work recognised in your organisation?
- As a woman, do you feel that you are treated differently for what you can do or how you perform? Please give me an example of when gender may have been an issue?
- Are there any challenges/issues you face? (Now or in the past/ positions of power/ male versus female differentiation/ discrimination/ sexism/ gendered culture of work)
- What is your understanding of networking?

Extra comments/notes
Appendix 3.

Recruitment flyer: Invitation to participate in my study

Ms. Yulia Maleta, a PhD Candidate of the School of Social Sciences /University of Western Sydney and grassroots advocate of ParraCAN/Parramatta Climate Action Network Australia, is recruiting leading, dedicated and progressive Australian women environmentalists to participate in individual interviews, as part of her research study.

All views are valuable and diverse Australian women salaried and/or voluntary environmental advocates/professionals engaged in the interdisciplinary fields of either: climate change action/mitigation; sustainability and renewable energy; biodiversity; social and environmental justice; politics and policy, governance and law; academia; conservation and heritage preservation; nuclear and/or coal debates etc. are encouraged to respond. The research comprehends the challenges and achievements of Australia women engaged within diverse paid and unpaid organisations and communities.

Participation in this modern study may contribute to the improvement of workplace contexts/cultures, the status of women and progressive policy reforms addressing the interrelated social and natural world.

Individual interviews are confidential and anonymous, and any identifying features will be removed from the study.

If you would like to talk more about your experiences in environmental advocacy, please contact Yulia Maleta, the principal research investigator on 0405 399 254 or email y.maleta@uws.edu.au.