



Environment & Society



White Horse Press

Full citation:

Agüera-Cabo, Mercè. "Gender, Values and Power in Local Environmental Conflicts: The Case of Grassroots Organisations in North Catalonia." *Environmental Values* 15, no. 4, (2006): 479-504.
<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5982>

Rights:

All rights reserved. © The White Horse Press 2006. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism or review, no part of this article may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, including photocopying or recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission from the publisher. For further information please see <http://www.whpress.co.uk/>

Gender, Values and Power in Local Environmental Conflicts: The Case of Grassroots Organisations in North Catalonia

MERCÈ AGÜERA-CABO*

*Knowledge Assessment Methodologies Sector (KAM)
IPSC, Joint Research Centre, European Commission
Via Enrico Fermi, 1. TP 361
21020 Ispra, ITALY
E-mail: merce.aguera-cabo@jrc.it*

ABSTRACT

Not much attention has been paid to gender in environmental management and decision-making. This article explores how a gender dimension can contribute to the environmental debate by means of a comparative study of three environmental grassroots organisations in the North of Catalonia (Spain). The study shows that gender is significant for distinguishing different priorities between women and men in local conflicts and in environmental interests in general. The analysis of unequal power relations between genders in grassroots organisations leads us to discuss how women have fewer opportunities to influence the environmental debate and to advance their ideas. The concluding thoughts stress the need for developing a gender dimension in environmental management and decision-making, considering the opportunities that are presented by emerging governance practices, and particularly by participatory processes.

KEYWORDS

Gender, values, power, environmental management and decision-making

INTRODUCTION

Feminist historical, anthropological and philosophical research has demonstrated an androcentric¹ bias in the conception of nature and the environment in western culture (Merchant 1995, 1980; Val Plumwood 2002, 1993, 1991).

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the European Commission

Gender neutrality in the concept of the environment also has been questioned from a socio-political perspective. Even though scholars of gender studies have shown that gender differences play their part in perceptions, interests and the values relating to the environment (Rose et al. 1997; Rocheleau et al. 1996), these findings tend to be ignored or overlooked.

Against the background of the theoretical legacy of feminist and gender studies on the environment, this paper presents the results of a comparative study that consists of a gender approach applied to three cases of grassroots movements related to environmental conflicts in Catalonia (Spain). The discussion starts by setting out the conditions in which gender becomes significant for distinguishing between different perspectives on the environment. We hold that feminine and masculine socio-cultural responsibilities and assignments determine major predilections of women and men towards certain environmental problems. The study further discusses the relation between gender in terms of the distribution of tasks and the balance of power in the grassroots movements. Androcentric tendencies in behavioural patterns, personal relations and discursive practices inside the civil movements seem to hamper the participation of women in public discussion about the conflicts. The concluding section discusses how feminist and gender perspectives bring powerful theoretical arguments for questioning the democratic dimension of our scientific-technical and political approaches to environmental issues. The identification of gender biases in environmental management and decision-making should help us reflect on the equity and plurality of our current ways of understanding environmental problems and how we solve them.

METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES

The study's empirical findings come from three cases of environmental grassroots organisations in the north of Catalonia, an autonomous region in the North East of Spain.

All three groups campaign to stop the development of large tourist and infrastructure projects with strong environmental impacts (see Table 1). They principally oppose the Catalan government of Generalitat de Catalunya and, in many cases, other stakeholders involved in the conflicts.

The first grassroots organisation studied, the citizens' movement *Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres*, or 'Civil Platform Against the High Tension Power Line of Gavarres' (case 1), mobilised in 1997–8 against the construction of a high tension power line in a populated area of the province of Girona. The plan for this infrastructure was designed by the electric board FECSA-ENHER and was supported by the autonomous government of Generalitat de Catalunya. Both bodies observed the need for a greater energy supply for the tourist services of Costa Brava during the high season and this prompted them to start the

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

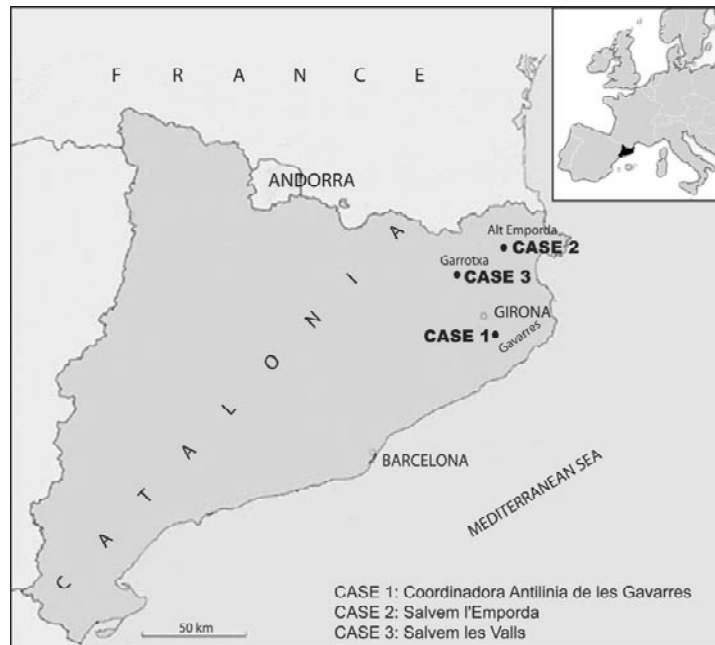


FIGURE 1. Locations of the three study areas

project. However, unclear scientific evidence (i.e. high uncertainty) about the effects of high-tension power lines on health prevailed among citizens. Citizens were concerned about the safety of the installation for their wellbeing. These perceived potential health risks led to the mobilisation of the inhabitants of the villages where the infrastructure was planned. Other negative consequences of the infrastructure also played a role in the mobilisation of the citizens: potential decrease of the quality of life, and negative effects on the landscape in the surroundings of the village and in the natural area of Gavarres.²

Our second case study involves Salvem l'Empordà (case 2), Catalan for 'Save Empordà'. It was founded in 2002 as a citizens' organisation to save the region of Empordà from several projects which were judged to have large environmental impacts. The organisation takes a stand against urban, industrial, agricultural and tourist overexploitation of the region. As such, this group is involved in a rich mix of conflicts. It defies the interests of private enterprise, and on several occasions has also confronted the government of Generalitat de Catalunya and councils of local villages. Current overuse of the territory has already had a strong impact on the life of its inhabitants. Problems include shortage of drinking water and contamination of water coming from golf resorts and industrial pig farming. Strong pressure from the tourist industry in the area has changed the landscape of the region considerably in the past fifteen years. All of these form

TABLE 1. The features of the conflicts according to the grassroots organisations

Case 1 Coodinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres	Case 2 Salvem l'Empordà	Case 3 Salvem les Valls
<i>Description</i> The grassroots movement opposes the construction of a high-tension power line to provide the Costa Brava with more energy. A number of pre-littoral villages are strongly affected by this electricity line.	<i>Description</i> The grassroots movement resists projects to develop golf resorts, residential and tourist urbanisations, pig feeding farms, ports, aerodromes, wind power parks and new industrial areas in the region of Empordà.	<i>Description</i> The grassroots movement opposes a project to build a road and a tunnel crossing a Pre-Pyrenees natural area and a typical landscape.
<i>Social and Economic Impacts</i> • Health risks. There is important scientific uncertainty about health risks associated with magnetic fields. The grassroots movement is concerned with the possible development of cancers in people living close to the high-tension power line. In particular, people who already have cancer or heart problems run even higher risks due to the proximity of magnetic fields. • Decrease in quality of life. Noise produced by the infrastructure/ Degradation of vegetable gardens in the vicinity of the high tension power line/ Anxiety as a result of uncertainties about the health consequences of the infrastructure/ Breaking up of landscape.	<i>Social and Economic Impacts</i> • Decrease in the quality of life. Soil water contamination (nitrates) from pig macro-farms and overexploitation from golf courses reduce availability of drinking water/ Noise produced by aerodromes/ Breaking up of the landscape etc. • Negative effects on local identity. Degradation of the rural and natural landscape of Empordà/ Degradation of social cohesion in the region.	<i>Social and Economic Impacts</i> • Decrease of the quality of life. Noise/ air contamination/ destruction of the landscape. • Economic impacts. Negative effects on the development of emerging nature tourism/ Negative effects on agriculture due to the potential changes in land use. • Negative effects on local identity. Degradation of the local identity of Garrotxa, strongly symbolised by the natural landscape.
<i>Ecological Impacts</i> • Impacts on the landscape and the natural area of Gavarres; and increased fire risks.	<i>Ecological Impacts</i> • Soil-water contamination and decreased water supply due to golf resorts and pig macro-farms. • Urban and industrial projects have an impact on the connection of natural parks and natural coast site. • Wind power parks change birds' migration.	<i>Ecological Impacts</i> • Negative consequences of a new road construction for local fauna and flora. • Potential changes in land use. • Potential air contamination and its consequences.

Source: Author's processing of information provided by organisations' representatives and from grassroots organisations' websites.

pressing ecological problems from *Salvem l'Empordà*'s point of view. Since its beginning, the organisation has opposed the unsustainable character of the *Empordà* development model and has demanded that the Catalan government come forward with an overall plan for the region.

The third and last organisation considered in this study, *Salvem les Valls* (case 3), translates as 'Save the Valleys', and started its activity in 1994–5. The organisation mobilised against the construction of a main road and a tunnel, which would cause ecological problems in a valuable nature area in the region of Garrotxa (Pre-Pyrenees). The Catalan government of *Generalitat de Catalunya* promoted the development of the road infrastructure, arguing the necessity to improve access to Garrotxa, a mountainous and interior area of Catalonia. This part was perceived as too isolated from the rest of the region, entailing problems for its economic development. Faced with a number of adverse effects to the natural area if the project were to start, the grassroots organisation took a conservationist position, arguing for the ecological importance of the valleys. Even though the main reason for the organisation's opposition to the planned project was an ecological one, it also pointed to potentially detrimental social and economic effects, such as a decrease in quality of life, and a threat to the strong identity of the area among its inhabitants. Overall, the building of the road has been described as a problem for sustainable development of the area, and therefore its necessity has been questioned by the members of the organisation.

The methodology used for the study of the three grassroots organisations was mainly based on field research. We contacted each grassroots organisation and held an in-depth interview with its representatives. In cooperation with the representatives, we developed a comprehensive questionnaire used for both female and male members. In total, 108 completed questionnaires have been returned. When distributing the questionnaires, our aim was not to obtain a representative sample, nor a random one. Instead, our strategy was to secure the views of the active participants of each organisation. We maintained that their opinions would be more reliable and more significant for the overall situation. This strategy had the consequence of limiting the number of questionnaires collected. Nevertheless, the approach of the study was qualitative and there was no intention of providing robust statistical data.

The questionnaires included a wide range of questions, from those asking for opinions about the conflict over matters concerned with the organisation of the grassroots movements, to enquiries about general concerns for the environment, environmental lifestyles, or general perspectives on environmental policy-making. Because the questionnaires were elaborated after collecting information about the organisations, and after interviews with the representatives of each organisation, enquiries were formulated after considering the characteristics of the organisations and their campaigns, and some questions varied between organisations. Diverse techniques were used, such as structured (closed), semi-structured (open) and Likert-type scale questions.

ANALYSIS

When Does Gender Become Significant?

The original reason for mobilising and campaigning appears to be decisive for each grassroots organisation's orientation. Following an analysis of the three cases and their features, we established two basic orientations in the movements: one we call experience-based orientation and the other ideology-based orientation.

Three elements in the results of the enquiries are key for establishing each orientation and the significance of gender: the sociological profile of the members, their previous experience in ecological organisations, and the perception of environmental problems as ideological or as having a real impact on the wellbeing of local people.

In referring to ideology-based organisations, we mean those local civil movements where ideological and political perspectives on the environment and the area's development lay at the root of their mobilisation and campaigning. In contrast, experience-based movements are those where personal and collective negative experiences about local environmental issues prevailed for mobilising citizens. Each type of organisation has shown diverse tendencies in relation to the gender dimension. The experience-based orientation reveals that gender is important for identifying different perspectives on different conflicts. The ideology-based orientation shows gender imbalances in the composition of the organisation.

Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, case 1, illustrates what we call an experience-based organisation. The original argument for opposing the infrastructure was the potentially negative effects of magnetic fields, compromising a healthy environment and the quality of life. As the organisation developed over the years, it incorporated other reasons of a more ideological and political nature into the discussion. The unsustainable nature of the development model was also focused upon. The justification for the high tension power line was that it would meet the greater energy needs of the Costa Brava, which was seen by the organisation as an already over-exploited tourist area and therefore unsustainable. By adding ideological and political arguments, the organisation gained a stronger position in its negotiations with the government. This was a learning process for its participants. There were hardly any ideological or political motives in the initial mobilisation of the citizens. The infrastructure was putting the well-being of the inhabitants of the area at risk – essentially an experience-based argument for opposing the construction of the power line.

The grassroots organisation of Salvem les Valls, case 3, appears to be ideology-based. Since its beginning, this organisation saw the project it opposed as an unsustainable model of development. The construction of the main road and tunnel was perceived by the members of the organisation as an urban attack on rural and natural areas. The members of Salvem les Valls are not only inhabitants

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

TABLE 2. Elements for defining experience-based and ideology-based orientations of the organisations

Sociological profile of the members of the organisations

	Case 1 (Coordinadora Antilf- nia de les Gavarres)		Case 2 (Salvem l'Empordà)		Case 3 (Salvem les Valls)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>Age Distribution</i>						
20–30	2	3	5	9	7	5
31–40	---	2	4	4	5	8
41–50	7	2	8	7	---	2
51–60	4	3	2	1	---	1
61–70	2	6	---	---	---	---
71–80	---	2	---	---	---	---
Don't answer	---	---	1	2	1	3
<i>Education Level</i>	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Basic/primary	6	7	---	6	---	2
Secondary/professional	3	2	6	6	3	6
High	6	7	14	11	10	11
No answer	---	2	---	---	---	---
<i>Total of members interviewed</i>	15	18	20	23	13	19

Previous experience in organisations

Previous experience in...	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Ecologist Organisation	1 of 15 (7%)	2 of 18 (11%)	7 of 20 (35%)	10 of 23 (43%)	4 of 13 (31%)	6 of 19 (32%)
Political Party	1 of 15 (7%)	4 of 18 (22%)	5 of 20 (25%)	8 of 23 (35%)	3 of 13 (23%)	5 of 19 (26%)
Local Organisation	9 of 15 (60%)	11 of 18 (61%)	14 of 20 (70%)	12 of 23 (52%)	6 of 13 (46%)	9 of 19 (47%)
Other	3 of 15 (20%)	2 of 18 (11%)	7 of 20 (35%)	3 of 23 (13%)	5 of 13 (38%)	4 of 19 (21%)

Ideological/ Experiential perception of environmental problems

Question: 'I don't know a lot about environmental problems. What worries me most is what happens in my village and how this affects the quality of life of people close to me' (*)						
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly disagree + Somewhat disagree	5 of 15 (33%)	10 of 18 (56%)	17 of 20 (85%)	22 of 23 (96%)	13 of 13 (100%)	15 of 19 (79%)
Somewhat Agree + Strongly Agree	10 of 15 (67%)	8 of 18 (44%)	3 of 20 (15%)	1 of 23 (4%)	---	4 of 19 (21%)

* Numbers between brackets indicate the percentage of women/men giving the specified answer for each organisation, and aim at facilitating the interpretation of the table. Readers should consider the limited statistical significance of percentages given the small number interviewed in each sample.

from local villages, but some are visitors or people with a second residence in the area, with many of them originating from Barcelona and its suburbs. In contrast to the profile of the members of the previous movement, *Salvem les Valls* has an important percentage of men and women who have previous experience as activists in ecologist organisations. The organisation has used a conservationist rhetoric in public discussion about the construction project. Common ways of demonstrating have been the organisation of popular walks in natural areas that will be affected by the road and tunnel and the distribution of posters portraying picturesque landscapes of the region. In addition, the organisation drew up a list of animals and plants that would be endangered by the road construction. All these activities point to an ideological organisation. Yet, *Salvem les Valls* has also used the argument from quality of life – apparently a more experience-based argument, though for them, it also has an ideological dimension. The organisation's idea of quality of life underlines the social benefits of living in a natural environment, and it questions the potential benefits flowing from increased economic resources. In contrast to *Salvem les Valls*' perspective, two organisations of businessmen and local governments³ support the construction of the road, particularly for reasons of economic development of the region,⁴ which they see as also having benefits for the local inhabitants.

Salvem l'Empordà, case 2, also has important aspects of an ideological organisation. This organisation was initially linked to an ecologist NGO, IAEDEN,⁵ which called upon citizens to act against projects with detrimental environmental effects in the region of Empordà. The ecologist inheritance is shown by the previous involvement of its members in ecologist organisations; members also have a significant experience in political parties. But even though *Salvem l'Empordà* has been essentially an ideology-based organisation from its beginning, it has also mobilised around a number of important issues that are experience-based. This assessment is significant for understanding the importance of gender in the opinions of its members.

The organisation was founded with the main objective of forming a strong alternative to the business developers, and to meet the interests of local inhabitants, including not only ecologists, but also farmers, hunters, landowners, etc. The ecologist NGOs' call for action coincided with the interests of ordinary citizens who were already seeing negative consequences from agribusiness, urban sprawl and increased tourism. Problems included water shortage and water contamination. As these problems affect local inhabitants in their daily life, they have been instrumental in the organisation's acceptance among the people.⁶ The local newspaper often carries articles about the organisation and its activities; indeed, the organisation has somehow developed into a consultancy body for residents of the area: when citizens oppose a particular project in their village, they turn to *Salvem l'Empordà* for advice and support. Sometimes they even join the movement.

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

Looking at the sociological profile of the members of the three grassroots organisations, we found that more women take part in those organisations that have experiential reasons for campaigning. The results of the questionnaires further indicate that gender becomes significant for the opinions of women and men when the organisation is experience-based, e.g., Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres or when the organisation has experience tendencies in the reasons for mobilisation, e.g., Salvem l'Empordà.

First, the organisations with mobilisation reasons based on experience have a higher number of women activists than those with mobilisation reasons based on ideology. In general, civil movements have low levels of female participation, although gender balance is greater than in political parties or traditional ecologist organisations (Caiazza and Barret 2003: 13; Walsh 2001: 135–6; Boetzkes 1998: 166; Mohai 1997: 216). Of the three cases studied, women and men are nearly equally represented in Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres and in Salvem l'Empordà, both of which have experience-based reasons for mobilisation. By contrast, the ideology-based movement, Salvem les Valls, shows a lower involvement of women.⁷

Second, when we look at the sociological profile of the women (see table 2), most women in the experience-based movements are middle-aged or older. These women probably have rather traditional gender assignments and responsibilities in their private and public lives. In the case of Salvem l'Empordà (case 2), women appear in nearly all age ranges, but they are particularly numerous in the range between 41 and 50 years old. Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres (case 1), the organisation with most experiential reasons for mobilisation, seems to appeal to women with primary, secondary or professional education. The participation in ideology-based movements appears to be more attractive to people with a high educational profile and who are young in age. This is particularly true for the women in Salvem les Valls (case 3): they are not only the youngest activists, but also the most educated.

Third, the questionnaire asked members of the organisation their initial and current reasons for joining the group. In experience-based movements, the main argument of their female members for taking part in the organisation was to counter negative effects on the wellbeing of people. In the case of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, for example, women greatly stressed health risks to account for their membership (see table 3).⁸

Looking at the reasons for mobilisation in the ideology-based movement Salvem les Valls, we found that women have a strong tendency to give ideological arguments for their activism. All women in the organisation affirm their *opposition to the model of development*. The same goes for the men. They also choose this same ideological argument for mobilisation, although in lower numbers. Other reasons for joining, such as *defending the territory from aggression* or the *negative effects on the landscape* – which, to some extent, are experience-based reasons – are less likely to be mentioned by women than by

TABLE 3. Reasons for mobilisation of the members polled*⁹

<i>Reasons for mobilisation (ordered by preference)</i>	WOMEN		MEN	
	Initial	Current	Initial	Current
Case 1 (Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres)				
1. Negative effects on health	12 of 15 (80%)	11 of 15 (73%)	12 of 18 (67%)	11 of 18 (61%)
2. Opposition to the model of development	9 of 15 (60%)	10 of 15 (67%)	10 of 18 (56%)	11 of 18 (61%)
3. Defending the territory against aggression	7 of 15 (47%)	6 of 15 (40%)	9 of 18 (50%)	7 of 18 (39%)
4. Negative effects on landscape	7 of 15 (47%)	6 of 15 (40%)	5 of 18 (28%)	7 of 18 (39%)
Case 3 (Salvem Les Valls)				
1. Opposition to the model of development	13 of 13 (100%)	12 of 13 (92%)	14 of 19 (74%)	16 of 19 (84%)
2. Defending the territory against aggression	8 of 13 (62%)	8 of 13 (62%)	12 of 19 (63%)	13 of 19 (68%)
3. Negative effects on landscape	7 of 13 (54%)	4 of 13 (31%)	11 of 19 (58%)	9 of 19 (47%)
4. Negative effects on quality of life	6 of 13 (46%)	6 of 13 (46%)	9 of 19 (47%)	10 of 19 (53%)

* Each of those questioned had to indicate three of the reasons for which he/she joined the organisation. Numbers between brackets indicate the percentage of women/men who selected each of the options. Percentages aim at facilitating the interpretation of the table. Readers should consider the limited statistical significance of percentages given the small number interviewed in each sample.

men. This finding corresponds with the sociological profile described above for the female members of Salvem les Valls: high educational levels and young in age (see table 2).

From this analysis, and always considering the statistical limitation of the study already mentioned, we might conclude that gender appears to be a variable for differentiating biases in the perceptions of conflicts, particularly when the wellbeing of people is affected. This is demonstrated in the experience-based organisations. In the case of the organisation mainly driven by ideology, women do not show interests based on experiential reasons for mobilisation. Gender is significant in the sense that women are less numerous and because of their younger age may have fewer gender responsibilities in their daily life.

What are the main gender interests of women in relation to the environment? In what sense does gender influence such interests? What explains the gender imbalance in the composition of the ideology-based organisation?

Gender Influences our Environmental Values

Above we pointed out that the organisations with an *experience-bias* attract women for whom gender entails a set of responsibilities and roles in their everyday private and public life. In 2004 in Catalonia 50.8 per cent of women were in the workforce compared to 71.3 per cent of men. Regional statistics from 2003 show that the time women and men invested in everyday activities was distributed differently, and that such distribution corresponded to their different gender roles and responsibilities. On average, while 45.74 per cent of men spent 8.26 hours daily in paid work, 29.86 per cent of women spent 7.06 hours per day in such work. Results were significantly different when observing daily time invested in the household and the family: 73.21 per cent of men participating in such activities declared that they invested 2.14 hours on average, while 91.62 per cent of women invested an average of 4.37 hours daily in household and family activities (source: IDESCAT). We argue that gender responsibilities and roles are linked to social and cultural assignments about femininity and masculinity, and these, in turn, profoundly influence male and female perspectives on the environment.

The questionnaires to the three organisations also included questions about interest in environmental concerns in general, not specifically relating to the local conflicts. Even though the answers of the interviewees appeared to be biased by the organisation's reasons for mobilisation, important similarities in the answers of women and men in experience-based organisations lead us to conclude that gender differences play their part in general environmental concerns.

The results of the questionnaires of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres (case 1) and Salvem l'Empordà (case 2) reveal gender biases in interests in the environmental issues of health risks and maintenance of quality of life (Table 4).

In the case of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, women have a strong interest in health risks generally, but this concern with health is equally important for men. In this instance, the local conflict over magnetic fields influences their opinion. Nevertheless, in the case of Salvem l'Empordà, the females also have a strong concern for health risks in comparison with the opinions of the male members. In this case, health risk is not a priority of the local conflict.

In both organisations women give very high priority to their concern for the negative consequences of environmental problems on the quality of life, whereas men have a lower priority. This leads us to consider this issue as another significant gender biased interest in general environmental concerns.

In fact, the gender bias observed in our study of grassroots organisations in the North of Catalonia has already been observed in other gender studies. Most empirical research concurs in establishing that women have more interest in environmental problems that have negative effects on health and security, and this is particularly the case where there are local conflicts (Caiazza and Barret 2003: 9; Boetzkes 1998: 165; Mohai 1997: 215; Brown and Ferguson 1997:

246; Blocker and Eckberg 1997: 849, 1989: 591; Davison and Freudenburg 1996: 306). Research conducted in Spain, studying the role of women in three grassroots organisations campaigning against waste disposal, also concluded that women tend to have an interest in the environment as a result of specific worries about health, the well-being of family and relatives, and an affection for the place (Brú-Bistuer 1996: 119). Other studies conducted in public opinion polls have also shown that women tend to be more concerned with environmental risks and tend to perceive less the benefits of our highly industrial and developed societies. (Satterfield et al. 2004: 118; Dietz, Kalof and Stern 2002: 12; Finucane et al. 2000: 170; Boetzkes, 1998: 165; Davison and Freudenburg, 1996: 306; Flynn et al. 1994: 1101; Gutteling and Wiegman 1993: 445).

A number of studies have explained the diverging gender biases in environmental risk perceptions with the hypothesis that men usually have a higher education and also more technological knowledge. However, other studies have contradicted the idea of better-educated men perceiving more clearly the risks of environmental problems (Hayes and Tariq 2000: 442; Finucane et al. 2000:

TABLE 4. Health risk and quality of life as environmental concerns which present a gender bias in experience-based organisations*

	Case 1 (Coordinadora Antil-lania de les Gavarres)		Case 2 (Salvem l'Empordà)		Case 3 (Salvem les Valls)	
<i>'Health risks' is what worries me most about environmental problems'</i>						
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly disagree + Somewhat disagree	1 of 15 (7%)	4 of 18 (22%)	3 of 20 (15%)	7 of 23 (31%)	5 of 13 (39%)	6 of 19 (32%)
Somewhat Agree + Strongly Agree	13 of 15 (87%)	14 of 18 (78%)	17 of 20 (85%)	16 of 23 (69%)	8 of 13 (62%)	13 of 19 (68%)
I don't know/ No answer	1 of 15 (7%)	---	---	---	---	---
Other	---	---	---	---	---	---
<i>'The reduction of quality of life is what worries me most about environmental problems'</i>						
Strongly disagree + Somewhat disagree	2 of 15 (13%)	4 of 18 (23%)	1 of 20 (5%)	6 of 23 (26%)	2 of 13 (15%)	3 of 19 (16%)
Somewhat Agree + Strongly Agree	13 of 15 (87%)	12 of 18 (66%)	19 of 20 (95%)	16 of 23 (70%)	11 of 13 (85%)	16 of 19 (84%)
I don't know/ No answer	---	2 of 18 (11%)	---	---	---	---
Other	---	---	---	1 of 23 (4%)	---	---

* Numbers between brackets indicate the percentage of women/men selecting each of the options. Percentages aim at facilitating the interpretation of the table. Readers should consider the limited statistical significance of percentages given the small number of people interviewed in each sample.

160; Gutteling and Wiegman 1993: 444). For instance, some have argued that such an assumption cannot explain why female scientists show higher perceptions of environmental risks than their male counterparts – e.g. in the case of nuclear technologies (Barke et al. 1997: 170–1). Moreover, others have found that white men with higher education show the least concern about environmental risks¹⁰ (Finucane et al. 2000; Flynn et al. 1994). The authors attribute this to a sociological typology of white and higher educated men traditionally holding power in society. Therefore, they are inclined to perceive environmental risks derived from science, technology and industry to a lesser extent (Dietz, Kalof and Stern 2002: 11; Finucane et al. 2000: 161; Flynn et al. 1994: 1107).

The analysis of the Catalan case studies and the various bibliographies about gender bias in environmental concerns lead us to think that gender strongly influences the value system that governs citizens' perceptions of the environment. Femininity and masculinity represent a particular cultural and social dimension of rules and roles shaping the personal and interpersonal experiences of women and men. The socio-cultural dimension of femininity presupposes a set of attitudes and skills commonly linked to a woman, and a set of social responsibilities to be assumed. Conversely, masculinity also implies certain attitudes, skills and responsibilities attributed specifically to men. It would be naive to ignore profound transformations in gender relations in recent decades in western societies that have had important effects on modifying many of the assumptions about femininity and masculinity. However, the education and socialisation of women and men continues to be gender embedded, which unavoidably has effects on the development of each person's life. Moreover, in our culture the idea persists that some gender assignments are *essential* to the nature of women and men, obscuring the fact that they have been culturally constructed and have a social function.

Gender assignments for women include the role of caretaker of their relatives, of people close to them and of society in general. Even if many women are not mothers or have no childbearing responsibilities, the role of caretaker is culturally related to their gender, and is even considered as properly belonging to the nature of woman.¹¹ Such a socio-culturally assigned role helps to explain gender biases in environmental concerns. Responsibilities for the well-being of the family and people close to women may explain their interest in health risks and quality of life, and the higher perception of environmental risks in the face of technological and industrial developments.

Above we explained how the sociological profile of the female members of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres (case 1) and Salvem l'Empordà (case 2) might account for gender as an important factor in their environmental awareness. By contrast, female members of Salvem les Valls (case 3), who are younger and university-educated, mainly showed ideology-based interests in the environment, even more than their male colleagues. Results in table 4 again show that women's and men's answers in this organisation are very similar. Female and

male members of *Salvem les Valls* have a strong awareness of environmental problems impacting on the quality of life. This is a reason for mobilisation in the case of the local conflict. The health risk is not a reason for the mobilisation of the organisation. In this case, women and men show a similar awareness, which is also similar to males' answers in the experience-based organisations.

This factor is not necessarily an indication of *Salvem les Valls* representing gender-neutral values about the environment. In fact, conservationist values in the organisation's discourse refer to issues of public life that traditionally have been in the sphere of male responsibilities. Moreover, the low representation of women in this organisation could mean that traditional androcentric predominance in territory and environmental management and decision-making is reducing the interest of female citizens for such issues. Indeed, feminist and gender researchers have demonstrated androcentric biases in the composition and working of the spheres of science and policy, and the negative effects for access of women to both domains of power (Walsh 2002: 1; Waylen 1998: 5; Rose 1994: 71; Fox Keller 1992: 18–21; Harding 1991: 1).

In the case of Catalonia the limited role of women in environmental decision-making is illustrated in general by their low representation on governmental bodies and in particular by their weak participation in some thematic issues of discussion in Catalan Agenda 21. Environmental decision-making frequently takes place at the local level, for which female representation in councils is a significant indicator. Currently women make up only 10.1 per cent of mayors and 23.33 per cent of town councillors of Catalan municipalities (source: Institut Català de la Dona). The Catalan Agenda 21 (A21Cat), which has been promoted by the regional government of Generalitat since 1998, pointed to the need to reach a gender balance in political decision-making and in scientific and technological spheres. Nevertheless this commitment was forgotten in the composition of the sessions of discussion, which considered issues traditionally biased by a male predominance. For instance, the general and territorial sessions entitled 'territory and mobility', which considered urban and rural planning, showed a significantly lower participation of women (3 women versus 20 men in the general session, and similar inequities in most territorial sessions).

Women are Supporting/Women are Leading: Confronting Scenarios of Gender Power Relations in the Grassroots Organisations

As explained above, authors of gender studies found new social movements to be particularly important for the political involvement of women at a local level. Grassroots movements appear to involve women more than those with traditional and hierarchical structures, such as political parties. For instance, toxic waste activist organisations have a very high participation of women (Brown and Ferguson 1997: 241), not common in ecologist organisations. Probably, these environments not only offer a suitable structure for women's involvement, they

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

also are the arena in which their gendered interests are much better represented. For instance, we have observed how the emphasis on environmental health risks and quality of life, which are significant aspects of women's environmental concerns, coincides with the programme of the local movements in this study.

However, gender scholars have also signalled the gender inequities that continue to exist inside the new social movements: women still continue to be less numerous in such environments, nor do they appear in positions of power in the internal structures of these organisations. (Walsh 2001: 24; Boetzkes 1998: 166). Higher education, higher income and the occupational status of men have been identified as important factors that explain their higher political participation (Burns et al. 2001: 359–60; Mohai 1997: 231). In particular, higher education and occupational status guarantee the skills and knowledge necessary for leading roles, and they also imply a major public acceptance. The burden of household and family responsibilities plus paid work explains also the lower representation and lower active engagement of women in civil organisations (Burns et al. 2001: 359). Finally, the time-consuming maternal responsibilities of young women have been seen as hampering the involvement of women in social and political activities (Burns et al. 2001: 359). Others have argued that gender power relations in the private and in the public sphere are transferred in the gender division of activities, responsibilities and power roles of the grassroots movements (Burns et al. 2001: 359–60; Walsh 2001: 1; Boetzkes 1998: 166).

The analysis of the cases considered here has shown that the lack of time due to gender responsibilities, or their level of education and the occupational status, are not sufficient to explain the obstacles to the active participation of women in grassroots organisations.¹² Nevertheless, the grassroots movements appear to constitute complex areas of gender relations that form a transition between the private and the public sphere. In these contexts, women and men tend to take on different tasks according to their traditional gender roles. Moreover, areas of power are mainly gender-biased, with men being mainly involved in leading and representative activities while women tend to be in the supportive roles.

Table 5 illustrates the distribution of roles between genders in the three organisations described in the following paragraphs.

Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres (case 1) is an example of an organisation where women have been mainly involved in the supporting activities. Their role in leading and representation has been minimal. The organisation is headed by a board of directors who defined the role and the public representation of the organisation in the process of the conflict. The other members have participated in decisions through sporadic general assemblies and have been particularly active in supporting activities, such as the organisation of demonstrations, protests and popular actions, or activities relating to public information and raising awareness of citizens. The board of directors consists of three men and one woman who, since the beginning, was involved in the opposition to the infrastructure. Two of the men on the board of directors have an important

TABLE 5. Distribution of tasks between genders in the organisations

	Case 1 (Coordinadora Antilnia de les Gavarres)		Case 3 (Salvem les Valls)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>Leadership and public activities</i>				
Member of the board of directors	1	3	1	5
Negotiation processes with the authorities	---	---	1	8
Contribution to technical studies	---	2	1	3
Contribution to juridical processes	2	3	---	5
Writing to newspapers	2	4	4	9
<i>Supporting activities</i>				
Participation in demonstrations	12	11	11	14
Support tasks in communal activities (excursions, communal meals)	5	1	7	10
Public information and raising of awareness	3	4	6	8
Organisation of activities (conferences...)	4	5	6	6
TOTAL of women/men interviewed	15	18	13	19

Case 2 (Salvem l'Empordà)

<i>Activities</i>	Women	Men
Representative and formal part time jobs	2	1
Commission of Economy	1	1
Commission of Technical and Legal Activities	5	---
Commission of Actions	3	6
Commission of Public Information	1	5
General Assembly	15	14
Occasional Activities	13	13
TOTAL of women/men interviewed	20	23

representative role, often appearing in the mass media as representatives of the organisation. As such, the public sees mainly the male leadership, while the women of the organisation are mainly active in supporting activities such as organising demonstrations and communal activities.

The low female representation in leadership activities is particularly striking, since health safety has been particularly identified as a female environmental concern, both in this study and in general bibliographies. The profile of the male members of the steering committee points to higher education, important professional status and previous experience in civil organisations. These, together with their role as founders of the organisation, are factors determining the position of the leaders. A significant number of women state that they took

part in founding the organisation, but they have lower educational levels and professional positions that do not require leadership knowledge and skills. However, women with higher education, socially well-regarded professional positions and with experience in local organisations, were already well-represented in the first year of the organisation's existence, but they still do not have a leadership or representative role. Therefore, structural gender inequities in education and labour do not fully explain low female participation in positions of power. The study of similar organisations, such as grassroots movements against toxic waste disposal, showed several examples of movements led by and mainly composed of women. In these cases, the activists were middle class housewives with no political experience (Brown and Ferguson 1997: 242). In these particular movements, the low male presence resulted in women's political empowerment.

Salvem les Valls (case 3) has a similar unequal gender distribution of roles among its members, particularly in powerful positions, even though women enjoyed higher education and have experience in local associations, NGOs, ecologist organisations or political parties (see table 2). The organisation's internal structure is similar to that described above; but in addition the members are geographically spread mainly over the area of Garrotxa and the city of Barcelona. As a result, general assemblies have been more difficult to call together and therefore the board of directors plays a crucial role in leading the organisation. The questionnaires revealed that five men and one woman sit on the board of directors, but when the organisation appears in public, it is always represented by a male person.

The strong unequal gender distribution of power roles in the organisation is partly explained by the initial development of the organisation. Salvem les Valls' representative – a middle-aged man employed in a council and resident in the province of Barcelona – reported that in the beginning of 1995, the organisation consisted mainly of male members. The questionnaires' results confirmed that most women started taking part in the organisation only in the last few years. However, Salvem les Valls has been active for almost a decade, and in the course of those years, the organisation's structure and leadership has undergone changes, as a result of some members' fatigue and an influx of new members. Even so, the transition of power has only slightly modified the male predominance in the movement. Women continue to be less numerous and continue to have lower representative and power roles. The Salvem les Valls' representative phrased it in the following way: *'In the last few years, there has been an important influx of active women (...) but it is difficult for them to take responsibilities at a leadership level'*.

From the questionnaires we learned not only that men are dominant on the board of directors but also that the organisation's male members played important roles in public and leadership activities. Men have been the ones negotiating with politicians and following the lawsuits. In addition, they have also been more

active in taking initiatives such as writing opinion letters to newspapers. Set against these male activities, women across-the-board reported being involved in support activities such as demonstrations and other popular activities, just as in Coordinadora Antilnia de les Gavarres (case 1). Women were also said to have played an important role in organising and developing internal activities, such as taking care of communication between the members.

Gender inequities in private and public life may provide an explanation for the gender bias in the distribution of power-related activities in the organisations. The features of the organisations lead us to think that unequal gender distribution of power roles within the organisations find their origin in and are maintained by the predominance of a male-orientation in the internal and external development of the organisation, resulting in a particular androcentric scope of relations that hampers the political empowerment of women.

Some authors claim that in gender-mixed organisations women have more limited opportunities for expressing their opinion and for taking leadership roles (Burns et al. 2001). Both movements of Coordinadora Antilnia de les Gavarres (case 1) and Salvem les Valls (case 3) are mixed in terms of gender. However, this does not mean that they are gender neutral. The traditional androcentric character of private and public spheres is upheld in the organisation's internal functioning by the leading position of men. This male-dominant environment sets the norm for certain types of behaviour, personal relations and discursive practices that involve unequal gender relations of power.

Clare Walsh studied the creation of masculine and feminine domains in public life, particularly in ecologist organisations. She demonstrates how, in public mixed arenas, discursive practices are adopted that are associated with middle-class male speakers, even though the relations between the organisation's members are considered to be gender-neutral. She adds that in these gender biased contexts '... women's public rhetoric is more likely than men's to be fractured by competing, often contradictory, norms and expectations and ... this fact, in turn, has implications for the way in which women are perceived and judged by others, as well as the roles they are assigned within the public sphere' (Walsh 2001: 1).

The case studies provide us with examples of particular gender power relations between the members of the organisations. For instance, one of the members of Salvem les Valls (case 3) made the following remark:

In general, in the discussions about the present and future initiatives of Salvem les Valls women tend to have a more reasonable, tolerant and flexible attitude. Painful disagreements and criticism resulting from internal conflicts have been mainly caused by men with attitudes that are much more sectarian, aggressive and not open to dialogue. Even so, women have been more in the background; Salvem les Valls has been headed by men. (Member of Salvem les Valls, man, 36 years old).

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

The gendered attitudes carefully described here imply different ways of handling disagreements and problems. The situation, as described by one member, shows the transfer of gender roles from the private sphere to the public arena: just as in family life, women feel more responsible for avoiding conflict and crisis in personal relations between the members of the group.

However, this situation is not only significant from the perspective of gender roles, it also discloses that women have unequal opportunities in the political framework of the organisation. The attitudes attributed to men allow them to maintain strong leadership and decision-making positions. Moreover, the androcentric attitude that characterises the situation defines the implicit patterns to be followed for power position and relations in the organisation.

The grassroots movements' relations are usually seen by its members as gender-neutral, which implicitly contributes to the disempowerment of the female position. Irrespective of some exceptions, women and men deny any gender bias in the activities or in the leadership; moreover, the mere reference to gender differences and inequity is felt as an accusation by a number of members:

'When running a marathon, men arrive first. Does this have a relation with the activities that are being done in the movement, you think?' (Member of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, man, 49 years old).

'I have no problems with being a woman' (Member of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, woman, 42 years old).

'I think that gender differences exist on the labour market, but not in social movements' (Member of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, man, 44 years old).

'I don't think there are differences resulting from different sexes. We can all participate in the same way' (Member of Salvem les Valls, woman, 23 years old).

'In an organisation like Salvem les Valls, gender is irrelevant' (Member of Salvem les Valls, woman, 24 years old).

The pattern of gender described above does not fully apply to Salvem l'Empordà (case 2) and this may be significant for understanding women's political empowerment.

Several female members of Salvem l'Empordà commented upon the division of tasks and upon the way women are perceived in the public domain:

'(...) Maybe men are expected to have a greater role that involves risk, strength or physical effort' (Member of Salvem l'Empordà, woman, 43 years old).

'I think that being a woman creates a distance and even mistrust with conservative men in villages (...).' (Member of Salvem l'Empordà, woman, 50 years old).

'I would like to think that there are no gender differences but I think they do exist. Unfortunately, in our society men are considered more seriously than women'
(Member of Salvem l'Empordà, woman, 40 years' old).

The results of the questionnaires also lead us to conclude that in Salvem l'Empordà, just as in the two other organisations, men and women each have preferences for a certain type of task (see table 5). However, I will argue that a number of circumstances in the organisation favour a leading role for women that opens up a suitable platform for triggering their political and ecologist activism.

The first unusual feature of Salvem l'Empordà in comparison with the above-described grassroots movements is the gender composition. In general, women in this organisation have higher levels of education and are more numerous in older age groups than men (see table 2). These educational and demographic conditions seem to favour their adopting leading positions in the organisation. The leadership of this organisation is structured somewhat differently from the ones described above. The civil movement is organised in small groups called commissions, each responsible for a particular task: one for economic tasks, one for technical and legal issues, and one for tasks related to public information, etc. Apart from the weekly meetings of each commission, there are plenary sessions every week that take broad decisions and discuss the commissions' work. In particular, these assemblies seek agreement by consensus on the position the organisation should adopt in each conflict.

Until now, the grassroots movement has been represented in public by a man and a woman. Two part-time jobs for organising the routine activities are filled by women. The legal and technical commission consists mainly of women: they are architects, lawyers, environmental scientists and geographers, who apply their knowledge and skills to the activities. The two female representatives of the organisation said that the legal and technical commission has a major role in defining the organisation's strategic position in the conflicts: *'The technical and legal commission analyses the projects, drafts legal complaints and defines the direction in which the organisation should evolve'*. This situation gives women an important role in leading the movement. Moreover, according to the study, the women of the organisation attend the general assembly, which is the decision-making forum, in great numbers. This fact seems to demonstrate that a strong presence of women in leading and public roles is an incentive to political action for other women in the organisation. Apart from our own study, other studies have also shown that female leadership in political environments tends to attract the activism of female citizens (Burns et al. 2001: 360). This fact is not only important in the context of civil movements, but may also be significant for the development of inclusive and non-gender-biased political practices in participatory environmental management.

CONCLUSIONS: MOVING TOWARDS A GENDER APPROACH TO PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

In the introduction to this paper we suggested that feminist and gender perspectives on the environment may help us reflect on gender biases in the way we currently understand and solve environmental problems, i.e. how we deal with environmental management and decision-making. In the past few decades, as environmental problems have had increasing social and economic repercussions, environment has moved higher up the political agenda. As Ulrich Beck (1992) pointed out, in our highly industrial and technologically developed societies, environmental problems are connected with security, living conditions and health of the population, meaning that we live in what he termed a 'risk society'.

Scholars of governance and environmental risk (e.g. Postnormal Science) have shown the limits of our traditional ways of viewing environmental management and decision-making that uses scientific knowledge as the basis for solving problems. Scientific policy-oriented research repeatedly finds high degrees of uncertainty as to the nature, extent and predictable consequences of complex environmental problems. In addition, several scholars have demonstrated how environmental problems generate a diversity of opposing ideas and values about the development of our societies. A diversity of legitimate perspectives on environmental problems exists and thus a purely scientific approach cannot be the only source for decision-making. Instead, transparent and qualitative decision-making, integrating a diversity of values and perspectives on the environment through participatory processes, is what these scholars propose (Funtowicz and Ravetz 2000: 46–56).

The institutional scenarios for environmental management have also undergone transformations in recent decades. Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) has become an important tool for environmental management in many parts of the world intending to foster participation of scientists, local authorities, stake-holders and citizens. In addition, the guidelines to LA21 include a specific chapter dedicated to gender issues, namely chapter 24 'Global Action of Women towards a Sustainable and Equitable Environment' (United Nations 1992: 220–2).

Notwithstanding these important changes, we should look with a critical eye to inclusive practices in real policy making and management processes. Ten years' experience with LA21 practice shows that participatory processes are not *per se* inclusive of diverse perspectives on the environment (Buckingham-Hatfield 1999: 129, 1998: 215; Evans and Percy 1999: 177). Gender is, in fact, particularly ignored in the context of environmental participatory processes (Corral and Ransom 2002).

This paper has unveiled specific aspects of a gender approach to environmental management and decision-making. We started out by describing the essence of

the environmental conflicts in which gender becomes significant for identifying male-versus-female perspectives on the environment. We have called this perspective experience-based. We also argued that socio-cultural assignments correlated with gender are meaningful for explaining the values that drive our interests in the environment. The socio-cultural role of caretaker has been given as an explanation of the high gender awareness of women about health risks and quality of life arising from environmental problems.

By identifying gender bias in the approach to local conflicts and in environmental concerns more generally, gender becomes relevant in the developing participatory processes for environmental management and decision-making. Nevertheless, the development of gender-mixed participation processes may not, on its own, be sufficient for the disappearance of gender inequity. We have also illustrated how gender is crucial in determining relations of power in gender-mixed movements. Gender roles in private and public life are reproduced within the grassroots movements. Implicit androcentric behaviour in relationships and discursive practices tends to reduce the opportunities for female leadership, and as a result, also decreases the possibilities for women to bring their perspectives on the environment into the discussion. In this sense, the power position of women in the organisation *Salvem l'Empordà* (case 2) has proved to be conducive to the general empowerment of women as activists, illustrating women's empowerment as a potential mechanism for breaking gender biases in public participatory processes.

In conclusion, unawareness of subtle and embedded gender biases in environmental conflicts makes inequity more difficult to identify and to redress. First, we have demonstrated that gender does not determine the fixed opinions of women and men, but gender does influence our everyday life and our perceptions and interests about where we live. Second, we have shown that gender inequity may not be very apparent to most of the participants in the environmental discussion. However, unbalanced positions of power between genders subtly come into being, and define the extent to which women can influence and decide the future of our environment. Taking all of this into account, the idea is not to draw up a list of guidelines that tells us how to apply a gender approach in environmental management and decision-making. However, we can work towards making processes and mechanisms with gender biases visible and showcase practices with gender equality in emerging highly democratic contexts of environmental management and decision-making.

NOTES

This article presents some of the results of an on-going PhD on environmental governance from a gender perspective financed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Ispra, Italy. The contributions of Dr. Josepa Brú-Bistuer and Dr. Silvio

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

Funtowicz, as supervisors of the PhD, Ms. Inge Ceuppens, editor of the text, and Dr. Bruna de Marchi and Dr. Giuseppe Munda, who reviewed a previous draft of this paper, are gratefully acknowledged. Sincere thanks to the members of the grassroots organisations of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, Salvem l'Empordà and Salvem les Valls, and particularly to their representatives, Mr. Joaquim Bosch, Ms. Marta Ball-llosera, Ms. Montse Pascual, Mr. Lluís Benjam and Mr. Raül Valls, for their voluntary cooperation in this study

¹ The concept 'androcentrism', and the related adjectives such as 'androcentric', belong to the field of feminist and gender theory. They refer to the predominance of a socio-cultural stereotype of male – white and educated of middle and upper class – that holds power in society, and that has been and continues to be the model of reference in the development of public life (Moreno 1987).

² When this study was undertaken the high-tension power line had already been constructed. As a result, the interviewed members of the grassroots organisation also reported the negative consequences of the building and working of the infrastructure for the local inhabitants.

³ Comissió de Suport a l'Eix (Commission supporting the construction of the main road) and Comissió de Seguiment de l'Eix (Commission reviewing the construction of the main road) are the two organisations that support the infrastructure (Nel.lo, 2003: 136).

⁴ According to a poll conducted by the council of Olot, the solution of the so-called conflict of Túnel de Bracons was considered a main priority by the citizens of the town. The poll revealed that 56.6% of the inhabitants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the project, while 36.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed with it and 6.4% didn't answer (Nel.lo, 2003: 132).

⁵ The acronym IAEDEN means Institució Alt-Empordanesa per l'Estudi i la Defensa de la Natura (Organisation from Alt-Empordà for the Study and Protection of the Nature).

⁶ The representatives of the organisation Salvem l'Empordà in the interview commented on the importance of the problem of water shortage and contamination for the popular acceptance of the organisation: *'We have said this many times... [the organisation] has been very well accepted because of the problem with nitrates. They [the local inhabitants] have had a serious problem with drinking water. It is very serious, don't you think? You open the tap and you know you can't drink this water. Or you want to boil pasta and you have to use water from bottles. This affects you a lot, and you come to a point you think this is enough'* (Interview with the representatives of the organisation of Salvem l'Empordà, 2003).

⁷ The low involvement of women in the organisation of *Salvem les Valls* was also mentioned by the representative of the organisation and by some female members.

⁸ Also, a more detailed analysis showed us that while education appears to be a factor bearing upon the concern for health risks, gender is a more significant variable. Compared to women, men with higher education were less likely to refer to health risks as a reason for their activism.

⁹ The grassroots organisation of Salvem l'Empordà deals with a great variety of conflicts. Because of that fact the information regarding the reasons of mobilisation is not contrastable with the one obtained from the other two organisations and has not been included in this table.

¹⁰ Using similar reasoning, it has been investigated whether the higher environmental risk perception of women can be associated with a major feeling of vulnerability due to a marginal position in society, which is an explanation for risk concern in the case of race and ethnicity. However vulnerability and marginalisation has not appeared to be an element for fully explaining the environmental risk perception of women, as far as gender variables work independently (Satterfield et al. 2004: 126).

¹¹ In this sense see the work of Stearney about the maternal archetype (Stearney 1994).

¹² Very few women of the three movements stated that family responsibilities make their participation difficult (one of the 15 women of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, one of the 20 women of Salvem l'Empordà and none of the women of *Salvem les Valls*). Some women have expressed that work responsibilities make their participation in the grassroots movements difficult, but this opinion has also been mentioned in low numbers (four of the 15 women of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres, five of the 20 women of Salvem l'Empordà and one of the 13 women of *Salvem les Valls*). According to the information provided in table 2, women and men have very little differences in their educational profile in the case study of Coordinadora Antilínia de les Gavarres. Women in Salvem l'Empordà and *Salvem les Valls* have higher education profile than men.

REFERENCES

- Barke R, Jenkins-Smith H, and Slovic P. 1997. 'Risk Perceptions of Men and Women Scientists', *Social Science Quarterly*, **78**: 167–76.
- Beck, U. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Brú-Bistuer, J. 1996. 'Spanish Women Against Industrial Waste: A Gender Perspective on Environmental Grassroots Movements', in D. Rocheleau, B. Thomas-Slayter and E. Wangari (eds), *Feminist Political Ecology* (London: Routledge), pp. 105–24.
- Blocker, T.J. and Eckberg, D.L. 1997. 'Gender and Environmentalism. Results from 1993 General Survey', *Social Science Quarterly*, **78**: 841–58.
- Blocker, T.J. and Eckberg, D.L. 1989. 'Environmental Issues as Women's Issues: General Concerns and Local Hazards', *Social Science Quarterly*, **70**: 3.
- Boetzkes, E. 1998. 'Gender, Risk, and Scientific Proceduralism', *Ecosystem Health*, **4**(3): 162–9.
- Brown, P. and Ferguson, F.I. 1997. 'Making a Big Stink: Women's Work, Women's Relationships, and Toxic Waste Activism', in C.E. Sachs (ed.), *Women Working in the Environment* (Washington DC: Taylor & Francis Publishers), pp. 241–64.
- Burns, N., Scholzman, K.L. and Sidney V. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality and Political Participation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Buckingham-Hatfield, S. 1999. 'Gendering Agenda 21: Women's involvement in setting the environmental agenda', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, **1**: 121–32.
- Buckingham-Hatfield, S. 1998. 'Public Participation in Local Agenda 21: The Usual Suspects', in P. Kivell, P. Robert and G.P. Walker (eds), *Environment, Planning and Land Use* (New York/ London: Routledge), pp. 208–19.

GENDER, VALUES AND POWER

- Caiazza, A. and Barret A. 2003. *Engaging Women in Environmental Activism: Recommendations for Rachel's Network*. Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- Corral, T. and Ransom P. 2002. 'Engendering Local Participation for Sustainable Development', Paper commissioned by UNED Forum as input for the workshop *Gender Perspectives for Earth Summit 2002. Energy; Transport; Information for Decision-Making*. (http://www.wedo.org/ehealth/berlin_engendering.htm) accessed 12/11/2004.
- Davison, D.J. and Freudenburg W.R. 1996. 'Gender and Environmental Risk Concerns: A Review and Analysis of Available Research', *Environment and Behaviour*, **28**: 202–29. (<http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/I913.pdf>).
- Dietz, T. and Kalof L. 2002. 'Gender, Values and Environmentalism', *Social Science Quarterly*, **83**(1), 351–64.
- Evans, B. and Percy, S. 1999. 'The Opportunities and Challenges for Local Environmental Policy and Action in the UK', in S. Buckingham-Hatfield, and S. Percy (eds), *Constructing Local Environmental Agendas: People, Places and Participation* (London/New York: Routledge), pp. 172–85.
- Finucane, M.L., Slovic, P., Mertz, C.K., Flynn, J. and Satterfield, T.A. 2000. 'Gender, Race, and Perceived Risk: The 'White Male' Effect', *Health, Risk & Society*, **2**(2): 159–72.
- Flynn, J., Slovic, P. and Metz, C. 1994. 'Gender, Race and Perceptions of Environmental Health Risks', *Risk Analysis*, **14**: 1101–8.
- Fox Keller, E. 1992. *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death. Essays on Language, Gender and Science*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Funtowicz, S. and Ravetz, J.R. 2000. *La Ciencia Postnormal. Ciencia con la Gente*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Gutting, J.M. and Wiegman O. 1993. 'Gender-Specific Reactions to Environmental Hazard in the Netherlands', *Sex Roles*, **28**: 433–47.
- Harding, S. 1991. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hayes, B.C. and Tariq, V.N. 2000. 'Gender Differences in Scientific Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Science: A Comparative Study of Four Anglo-American Nations', *Public Understanding of Science*, **9**(4): 433–47.
- IDESCAT, Institut d' Estadística Català (www.idescat.net)
 Institut Català de la Dona (www.gencat.net/icdona/)
- Merchant, C. 1980. *The Death of Nature. Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Merchant, C. 1995. *Earthcare. Women and the Environment*. New York: Routledge.
- Mohai, P. 1997. 'Men, Women and the Environment: An Examination of the Gender Gap in Environmental Concern and Activism', in C.E. Sachs (ed.), *Women Working in the Environment* (Washington DC: Taylor & Francis Publishers), pp. 215–39.
- Moreno, A. 1987. *El Arquetipo Viril Protagonista de la Historia: Ejercicios de Lectura no Androcéntrica*. Barcelona: La Sal.
- Nel.lo, O. (ed.) 2003. *Aquí, no! Els Conflictes Territorials a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Empúries.

- Plumwood, V. 1991. 'Nature, Self and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism', *Hypathia*, **6**: 3–27.
- Plumwood, V. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Plumwood, V. 2002. *Environmental Culture. The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, London/ New York: Routledge.
- Rocheleau, D. Thomas-Slayter, B. and Wangari, E. 1996. *Feminist Political Ecology*. London: Routledge.
- Rose, G., Kinnaird, V., Morris, M. and Nash, C. 1997. 'Feminist Geographies of Environment, Nature and Landscape', in Women and Geography Study Group, *Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference* (Harlow: Longman), pp. 146–90.
- Rose, Hillary. 1994. *Love, Power and Knowledge. Towards a Feminist Transformation of Sciences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Salvem l'Empordà. (<http://www.salvem-emporda.org>)
- Salvem les Valls. (<http://www.salvemlesvalls.org>)
- Satterfield, T.A., Mertz, C.K. and Slovic, P. 2004. 'Discrimination, Vulnerability and Justice in the Face of Risk', *Risk Analysis*, **24**(1): 115–29.
- Stearney, L.M. 1994. 'Feminism, Ecofeminism and the Maternal Archetype: Motherhood as a Feminine Universal', *Communication Quarterly*, **42**: 145–59
- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. 1992. Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. New York: United Nations
- Walsh, C. 2001. *Gender and Discourse. Language and Power in Politics, the Church and Organisations*. London: Pearson ESL.
- Waylen, G. 1998. 'Gender, Feminism and the State. An Overview', in V. Randall and G. Waylen (eds), *Gender, Politics and the State* (New York/London: Routledge), pp. 1–17.