IN-BETWEEN MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES:

A Study of the Gendered Identities of Male Environmentalists in Norway

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Abstract

Background. Research on the relationship between gender and environmentalism is increasingly prevalent. Studies on men and masculinities tend to focus on the negative impact of traditional constructions of masculinities on the environment. On the other hand, little research examines the gendered identities of male environmentalists. Moreover, in countries like Norway, where egalitarian values are emphasised, the gendered identities of male environmentalists are currently under-researched.

Research objectives. The objective of this study is to examine the gendered identities of male environmentalists in Norway, particularly their conceptualisations of masculinities and femininities. Additionally, this study aims to explore the connection between the gendered identities of male environmentalists and their environmental engagement.

Data Material and Methods. The data of the study consists of interviews with six male environmentalists in Norway with an organisational, institutional, or political background in environmental engagement. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured. Additionally, autobiographical inquiries were partly used. The data were coded and analysed using thematic network analysis by Attride-Stirling (2001).

Findings. The findings identify two main themes. First, the male environmentalists present various approaches to gendered identities. They construct masculinities through bodies, power relations, emotions, and in relation to femininities. Their constructions of masculinities are situational and contextual and are changing from resistance to engaging with hegemonic masculinities. Most of the men engaged with subordinated masculinities at a young age and developed coping strategies for their subordinated situation. Such coping strategies were to differentiate themselves from hegemonic masculinities and inhabit feminised spheres. However, they engage with hegemonic masculinities at various moments in their life. Second, the study finds a relatively close alignment

between environmental engagement and feminist and queer subcultures. This alignment influences the gendered identities of some of the men. These connections lead them to engage with different forms of masculinities in relation to ecological issues. The masculinities they refer to are ecological masculinities and ecomodern masculinities.

Conclusions. The findings of this study suggest that the male environmentalists' gendered identities are multiple and portray ambivalence as their constructions change from resistance to engagement with hegemonic masculinities. In their engagement with hegemonic masculinities, they depict ambiguity in their egalitarian attitudes. Moreover, the findings suggest that the integration of feminist discourses and queer subcultures in environmental discourses influences the gendered identities of some male environmentalists. The alignment particularly shapes their values on domination over nature and feminist issues, resulting in exhibiting values that refer to ecological masculinities. Further, this integration of subculture in environmentalist spheres may exclude other people that don't identify such spheres and discourses. Further research should investigate the conditions of emerging ecological masculinities and examine the effects of the alignment of feminism and environmental engagement on various gendered identities in more detail.

Keywords: hegemonic masculinities, alternative masculinities, ecological masculinities, environmentalism, ecofeminism, Norway

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The challenge of climate change is one of the greatest that humanity currently faces. Its impact is significant on both human life and ecosystems, posing a threat to the very foundations of our existence (Pörtner et al., 2022). There is overwhelming consensus among climate scientists that human activity is the primary cause of global warming (Cook et al., 2016). According to Climate Action Tracker (n.d.), Norway's efforts to meet the Paris Agreement target are rated as insufficient. Dubois et al. (2019) note that climate mitigation policies lack to address the objective of preserving climate stability to prevent reaching below the 1,5 degrees mark. This is concerning, given Norway's significant role in climate change discourses. The country's economy depends on oil and gas exports and intends to continue extracting gas and oil resources from its shores. As awareness and concern among the global human population increases, climate change denial has also risen among citizens in Western countries (McCright & Dunlap, 2011). This climate change denial trend also applies to Norway and other Scandinavian countries (Krange et al., 2019; Vowles & Hultman, 2021). Such trends contribute to delayed efforts in climate change preservation and global environmental issues (Krange et al., 2019). They have been linked to White men who seek to preserve their traditional lifestyles (McCright & Dunlap, 2000). In addition to climate denial and its gendered differences, a growing global inequality presents gendered differences in responsibilities and vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change. Eagly and Karau (2002) assert a global recognition of men having more significant influences in policymaking. Compared to women, they are dominantly more presented in leadership positions in both global and local governments.

Environmentalism presents gendered differences, with women showing greater presence and involvement in environmental issues, whereas male engagement in climate policies is lacking (Pajumets & Hearn, 2021, p. 311). Within eco-feminist discourses, the responsibility for environmental destruction is attributed to male supremacy, which refers to men being the primary perpetrator of violence against nature (Hedenqvist et al., 2021). However, women in developing countries are more affected by climate crises and environmental disasters. This highlights the need to address climate justice and gender justice (Sultana, 2014). Women in grassroots movements predominately address this combination of social issues (Hedenqvist et al., 2021). Gender roles and gender expectations of people to express behaviour based on femininities and masculinities (West & Zimmerman, 1987) contribute to the problem of climate injustice. Furthermore, in discussions about climate issues, men are less likely to be gender deviants (Swim et al., 2018). Despite a lack of male engagement in environmental issues and their tendency to be gender conform, some environmentally-conscious men are engaged in environmentalism and support feminist ideals

(Connell, 1990). Norway is known to be a country that presents a high level of gender equality and egalitarian attitudes (Repstad, 2005), where environmental identities are integrated into society. Norway provides an exceptional context for masculinity studies and research on gendered environmentalism. However, no research has been conducted on the gendered identities of male Norwegian in the context of environmentalism.

1.2 Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to get a deep understanding of the gendered identities of male environmentalists living in Norway and how their gendered identities stand in relation to their environmentalism.

Environmentalism and climate change denial demonstrate differences in gendered identities and constructions of masculinities among men. This study is important as it examines the complex constructions of gendered identities of men that embody care for the environment. It investigates relationships between masculinities and femininities in the context of environmental engagement.

1.3 Research Questions

How are the gendered identities of male environmentalists in Norway constructed and how do their constructions of gendered identities interact with their environmental engagement?

Sub-Questions

1. How do male environmentalists in Norway define masculinities and femininities?
2. How do male environmentalists in Norway construct their masculinities and how do the constructions stand in relation to their approaches to femininities?
3. What connections and associations do male environmentalist in Norway make between gendered identities and environmental engagement?
4. What is the relation between the gendered identities stand with personal environmental engagement and attitudes of male environmentalists in Norway?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of 9 chapters. Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the thesis, it's background and the research questions. Chapter 2 contextualises this study and reviews literature on the

intersections of gender and environmentalism, with a focus on masculinities and environment, ecofeminism, and climate change denial. It also examines the context of Norway, including Norway's connection to climate change and environmentalism, as well as egalitarian aspects in Norway's society. In chapter 3, I present the theoretical framework of the study, which includes gendered identities with a focus on masculinities and femininities and alternative masculinities. Also, the theoretical framework includes the theories of 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 2002) and 'undoing gender' (Deutsch, 2007), as well as egalitarian perspectives. Chapter 4 outlines the research methods, design, research process, and ethical considerations, while chapter 5-8 present the study's findings. The participant's backgrounds are discussed in chapter 5, while chapter 6 explores their perceptions and associations with masculinities and femininities, followed by their own approach to their gendered identities in chapter 7. Chapter 8 delves into the intersection of environmentalism and gender, exploring how the participants' gendered identities are constructed by this connection. At last, chapter 9 demonstrates the conclusions based on the findings, the limitations, and recommendations for the future.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework includes the concepts of masculinities and femininities by Connell (1995) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), along with the theories of 'doing gender' by West and Zimmerman (2002) and 'undoing gender' by Deutsch (2007). Further, egalitarianism is added as additional concept.

2.1 Gendered Identities

This study draws on the understanding of the term 'gendered identities' as the term recognized the plurality and difference of identities that are shaped by gender roles (Marshall, 1994, p. 112). Gender relations are "the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender" which effect culture, bodily experiences and identities (Connell, 2020, p. 193).

Scholars use the term 'gendered identities' to refer to the concepts of masculinities and femininities interchangeably (Bowl et al., 2013; Paechter, 2003; Stets & Burke, 2000). Gendered identities are not fixed and vary from situation to situation, leading to a multitude of masculinities and femininities (Paechter, 2003). Connell (1990) also emphasizes on multiple forms of masculinities, each constructed through different power structures among men and their varied patterns of personality development (p. 454). Furthermore, femininities and masculinities are not necessarily tied to a specific sex category. In fact, they can be expressed as female masculinities or male femininities (Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021). This research takes into account the relationship between femininities and masculinities, as well as the fluidity of gendered identities.

Femininities and masculinities are formed and performed locally (Paechter, 2003). Local, regional, and global factors all contribute to the construction of masculinities and their effects on each other. Changes in locations and within locations, as well as the predominant gender structure of the location, influence the construction of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, pp. 838-841,849). This study follows the common practice of studying gendered identities through the relational conceptualization of masculinities (Elliott et al., 2022), including hegemonic or non-hegemonic masculinities. Those concepts are constructed within social hierarchies of gendered identities (Connell, 1987). According to Connell (2005), there are various constructions of masculinities in a gender hierarchy, including 'hegemonic masculinity', 'subordinated masculinities', 'complicit masculinities', and 'marginalized masculinities'. These concepts are considered the main types of masculinities. In the following, each of them will be presented.

2.1.1 Hegemonic and Complicit Masculinities

According to Connell (2005), the concept of hegemonic masculinities is based on the concept of hegemony. It refers to a group that "claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Connell elaborates, hegemonic masculinities are formations of gender practices where the patriarchy is socially legitimized and the position of men is dominant, while women and non-hegemonic masculinities are subordinated. Also, constructions of hegemonic masculinities are bound to at a certain point and time. This point is present when a hegemonic status in a gender-related context is occupied by masculinities. The hegemonic status on the other hand can be disputed (Connell, 2005, pp. 76-77). The concept of hegemonic masculinity was used inconsistently according to Martin (1998). In using the concept in masculinity studies, the researchers would indicate that typical hegemonic men hold negative characteristics, such as dominance and violence (Martin, 2005, p.473). On the other side, Connell argues that the concept would not have a fixed character type and would not necessarily be dominant. Moreover, the concept pertains to which masculine character type is dominant in a certain timeframe. Hegemonic masculinities are the act of "grasping a certain dynamic within the social process"(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 841), acknowledging historical changes in the social definition of masculinity. Hence, there is a need to eliminate the use of the concept "as a fixed, transhistorical model" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 838).

In constructions of men's masculinities, hegemonic masculinities mostly serve as a model. Few men construct the hegemonic ideal as most men construct some sort of alternative masculinities. Those can be complicit or resist to constructions of hegemonic masculinities (Courtenay, 2000). The concepts of complicit masculinities are embodied by men who seek to meet the standards of hegemonic masculinities but are not able to live up to those standards to a great extent. They can practice a small part of hegemonic masculinities or do not embody them entirely by not displaying any sort of domination. At the same time, they still profit from a society upholding hegemonic masculinities and the subordination of women (Connell, 1995, pp. 79-80). Thus, men enact complicity by giving consent to hegemonic gender orders which benefits them (Connell, 1987).

2.1.2 Nonhegemonic Masculinities

While concepts of hegemonic masculinities are the model and aspiration many men strive for, they are not necessarily embodying hegemonic masculinities. Within gender hierarchies, nonhegemonic masculinities are subordinated to hegemonic masculinities. Subordinated and complicit masculinities are constructed inside the gender order, while marginalized masculinities are shaped by social structures of class and race relations (Connell, 1995, pp. 78-81).

‘Subordinated masculinities’ are masculinities attached by dominant masculinities to someone that doesn’t comply with or has characteristics that don’t apply to standards of hegemonic masculinities. These masculinities are denied being part of a legitimization of hegemonic masculinities. It usually applies to men with attributes or characteristics that relate to femininities or embody them (Connell, 1995, pp. 78-79).

‘Marginalized masculinities’ emerge in intersection with social structure, such as class, race, and gender. It answers to the relationship of men living under white-supremacist contexts that shape Black and Indigenous people of colour (BIPOC) communities. It influences the constructions of masculinities among BIPOC men (Connell, 1995, pp. 80-81).

2.1.4 Emphasized Femininities

Masculinities stand in relation to femininities. Still, emphasized femininities are under-researched and overlooked in masculinities studies (Hoskin, 2020, p. 2320). In this study, the participants' relationship with femininity and emphasized femininity is analysed to gain insight into their attitudes towards domination and subordination.

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), "emphasized femininities" refers to a concept within the patriarchal gender system. In their formulations, femininities are positioned in relation to and under masculinities. This relationship is founded on the hegemonic aspect of masculinities, which are in direct opposition in conflict with femininities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). Hence, it is important to include femininities for a comprehensive understanding of masculinities. According to Connell (1987), emphasized femininities are understood to conform to the notion of subordination to hegemonic masculinities and are compliant with hegemonic masculinities. By complying with hegemonic masculinities, emphasized femininities ensure a higher position rather than facing social marginalization. Engaging with emphasized femininities by subordinating to hegemonic masculinities means catering to the interests and desires of those hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987, pp. 183-184). This may include exhibiting traits such as female passivity and submissiveness, as well as fostering attributes like caring and emotional attendance to accommodate men’s desires (Korobov & Thorne, 2009). Men’s attainment of conformity to hegemonic masculinities depends on the practices of women conforming to emphasized femininities (Korobov, 2011). In addition, Korobov explores how the reliability of male identities relies on the conformity of women to emphasized femininities. He also examines the impact of women's resistance to conform to these traits and how men may resort to coping mechanisms, such as sexism, to reduce their vulnerability in response (Korobov, 2011). This viewpoint of men being vulnerable to resistant femininities by Korobov implies a perspective of victimhood on men and their masculinities.

The premise of this study is that men's masculinities are not vulnerable to femininities but the two exist in relationship to each other. Femininities influence the constructions of men's masculinities. However, the resistance to emphasized femininity by women may have negative effects on the construction of masculinities. Therefore, my approach to masculinities centers around the idea that men consciously and subconsciously construct their own masculinities, while holding ownership, accountability, and liability to their own constructs.

2.1.5 Alternative Masculinities

The concept of hegemonic masculinities is tied to social constructions, time, and setting (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Social changes make changes in masculinities feasible and introduce new possibilities to reconstruct masculinities (Gough, 2018, p. 8).

In relation to this study, only a few of the countless types of masculinities will be mentioned. A concept of reconstructing masculinities is caring masculinities. This approach creates distinct forms of masculinities that do not involve domination but includes caring and emotional responsiveness, as well as emotional intimacy (Elliott, 2016). Other concepts that play a role in this study are masculinities in relation to environmentalism. Petro-masculinities and industrial breadwinner masculinities are based on hegemonic masculinities where men interact with perspectives that increase environmental destruction and dismiss policies for climate preservation (Daggett, 2018; Hultman & Pulé, 2020; Nelson, 2020). Ecomodern masculinities integrate care for the environment and the responsibility to preserve it while combining their approach with the maintenance of hegemonic masculine gender orders (Hultman & Pulé, 2020; Pease, 2021). Ecological masculinities incorporate emotions, care, and intimacy and seek to dismantle hierarchical gender structures and the domination of nature and femininities (Hedenqvist et al., 2021; Hultman & Pulé, 2020).

2.2 Defining Gendered Identities

In order to gain inside into how the participants of this study perceive and construct masculinities and femininities, the theories of 'doing gender', 'undoing gender', and egalitarianism are utilized as frameworks to define their relationships to gendered identities.

2.2.1 Doing and Undoing Gender

When applying the concepts of masculinities and femininities, the theory of "'doing gender'" by West and Zimmerman (2002) is relevant. Expressing feminine and masculine behaviour and characteristics means doing and enacting gender (West & Zimmerman, 2002). For that reason, I decided to include 'doing gender' in the theoretical framework to lay a basis for understanding masculine and feminine

behaviour. Furthermore, this study finds relevance in the concept of 'doing gender' because it discusses how male environmentalists in Norway display gendered actions not only in their private spaces such as household labour division and parenthood but also in public spaces, such as environmental. The theory of 'undoing gender' was chosen for the study as it addresses resistance and incompliance with reproducing gender (Deutsch, 2007).

2.2.1.1 Doing Gender

The first step in understanding the approach of 'doing gender' is to describe the determination of the terms sex and gender. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), sex is the biological criteria for categorizing individuals as female or male. This classification is socially recognized, while gender is a social construct where person acting upon behaviour that is appropriate and socially expected of the persons sex category. The notion of 'doing gender' by West and Zimmerman (1987) suggests that individuals actively do and produce gender in social relationships and situations. Gender emerges in social contexts both as a reason for the existence of social situations and as a product of social situations. Deutsch (2007) implies that gender is produced by accomplishing masculinities and femininities. The theory of 'doing gender' justifies the legitimization of the gendered division of society. People are aware of the societal expectations of gender-specific behaviour and act upon those expectations, exhibiting either masculine or feminine traits based on their gender. These gendered differences seem to occur naturally but should not be understood as essential, biological, or natural (West & Zimmerman, 2002, p. 13). As essentialists believe, gender roles are presented in a gender binary, such as masculine and feminine (Cheng, 1999). In the 'doing gender' approach, gender need to be constructed and reconstructed ongoingly and is then used to support the essentialist viewpoint of gender division (Deutsch, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2002).

2.2.1.2 Undoing Gender

According to Deutsch (2007), the act of 'doing gender' is not only constructing gender but also being able to deconstruct gender. However, the idea of deconstructing gender has not been discussed. Moreover, it was argued that gender division maintains despite social changes. Consequently, 'doing gender' became "a theory of conformity and gender conventionality" (p. 108). As 'doing gender' means reproducing gendered differences in social interaction, Deutsch (2007) brought up the notion of 'undoing gender' as an alternative framework to 'doing gender' that explains social interaction by reducing and dismantling gender differences. Therefore, the concept of 'undoing gender' is a form of resistance to reproducing gender, gender norms, and gender conformity. It answers to the conformity idea of 'doing gender' (p.122). Here in this study, this concept is used in contrast to 'doing

gender', where gender is constructed in conformity to gender norms, and 'undoing gender' as unconformity.

2.2.2 Egalitarianism

Laws (2022) describes egalitarianism as a belief of equality among people that enables people to live free from oppression. Social structures that exhibit equality are "free from hierarchy in that their rights to wealth or opportunities, for example, are not determined by rank or status" (p. 1). Egalitarianism responds to intersectional inequalities of class and gender and dismantles those. According to Repstad (2005), In Norway, egalitarianism is a core value and is integrated into the society's identity. Aase (2005) describes that the Norwegian society exhibits few economic differences between citizens as it presents reduced class differences. Compared to other countries, different classes, relations, and social hierarchies are not much visible. Aase suggests that the reason behind the increase in social equality among Norwegians lies in their geographical circumstances. Due to poor farming conditions because of the nature in Norway, feudalism didn't develop as it did in other countries (p. 13-14). Moreover, Norwegians' egalitarianism shows in higher gender equality, especially in contexts of division of household labour (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2010). People can exhibit contradictions in their attitudes and behaviour concerning egalitarianism. For example, as Usdansky (2011) outlines, working-class couples can occupy more essentialist ideologies of domestic labour and childcare while unconsciously carrying out egalitarian practices by sharing household work and childcare responsibilities. Higher class couples often hold more egalitarian attitudes, but their everyday practices often contradict these beliefs. Usdansky calls the first phenomenon "lived egalitarianism" and the latter "spoken egalitarianism" (p. 164). As egalitarianism is a part of Norway's image and identities, it is therefore integrated into this study to examine the participants' understanding and reproductions of gender in a social context that exhibits gender equality. For this, the described phenomena of lived and spoken egalitarianism is put into contexts of the participants reproductions of gender.

2.3 Theoretical Application

The study's objective is to understand the participants' relationships to their gendered identities in relation to environmentalism. The concepts of masculinities by Connell (2005) provide a framework to analyse the participants' approaches to gendered identity, masculinities and femininities, based on their unique social and local contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The theories and concepts of this framework - gender as constructions of masculinities and femininities, 'doing gender', 'undoing gender', and egalitarianism – shed light on reproduction, perceptions, and

experiences of gender. These theories and concepts assist to examine men's relationships to hegemonic masculinities and other constructions of masculinities while taking structures of domination within gender hierarchies into consideration. These frameworks are useful in addressing environmental concerns, as the domination of nature is a significant factor in environmental degradation. Scholars recognize a connection between domination of nature and domination of non-dominant gendered identities (Smith, 2001). Therefore, the theory of masculinities by Connell provides a basis for understanding the relationship between masculinities and dominations over nature. Introducing egalitarianism to this study helps to understand the unique relationship Norwegians have with gender equality and gendered differences. Egalitarian gender attitudes reflect an aspiration in people to view humans as equal (Laws, 2022), independently from their gender and sex category. The theory of 'doing gender' aims to clarify how social gender norms generate gendered differences within social hierarchies. It also explains how social expectations influence the reproduction of gender (West & Zimmerman, 2002). Egalitarian perspectives seek to eradicate those norms in gender hierarchies that reproduce gendered differences by approaching gendered identities as equal. Whereas 'undoing gender' addresses a deconstruction of gender and resistance to reproduce gender (Deutsch, 2007), egalitarian perspectives perform a deconstructed perspective of hierarchical gender orders that characterize gendered identities as superior or inferior.

Combining these four theories and perspectives into this framework offers an exceptional analytical framework that assists in understanding the study participants' relationship with gendered identities and social gender orders and how gender is reproduced among the male environmentalists. Constructions of masculinities and femininities and 'doing gender' assist in understanding the reproductions of gender while 'undoing gender' and egalitarianism are the deconstructions of gender and gender hierarchies.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Literature Search Process and Research Gap

In my literature research for this study, I searched for research and publications regarding masculinities, gendered identities, gendered environmentalism, and masculinities that relates to environmentalism. Numerous terminologies are used in research regarding the environment and gendered identities, so I searched for various combinations. Predominately, the terms that were used where 'masculinities', 'gender identities', 'resisting masculinities', 'alternative masculinities'. Those terms were combined with terms like 'climate activism', 'environment', 'nature', 'environmentalism'.

I found that most research about masculinities and environmental engagement discusses 'ecomodern masculinities', and some address 'ecological masculinities' of men's relationships with environmentalism. For finding research regarding masculinities in Norway, I additionally searched for studies in Norwegian, using terms like 'maskulinitet'. Research in Norway that examines masculinities and gendered identities predominately addresses general constructions of masculinities. They are investigating, among others, historical accounts of masculinities, fatherhood, or friendships. Research in other Scandinavian countries discusses the relationship between masculinities and the environment, but these publications address performed masculinities related to environmental degradation, such as climate change denial. Consequently, the gendered identities are under-researched.

3.2 Environmentalism

First, it is essential to note that in this study, the term 'environmentalism' is used to describe values and actions to preserve the general environment, including the climate and animal life.

According to Pepper (1996), social structures play a role in the views of environmentalists. They comprehend how Western society's values regarding nature have contributed to environmental issues. As a result, environmentalism is a "critique of existing society" (p. 10). Environmentalists' values often appear as opposed to conventional values. Such values distinguish nature, humans, technology, economics, and politics. Some of the values that environmentalists portray are the belief that humans and nature are equal, that social hierarchies are unnatural, and that humanity must follow the laws of nature. Further, radical environmentalists believe that a sustainable and eco-friendly society can only be achieved through fundamental social change (Pepper, 1996, pp. 10-13). Climate change has intersectional effects on humans, animals, and the environment. Thus, the

priorities of environmentalists may differ. Some focus mainly on the impact on humans or the environment, while others prioritize the protection of animal life (Lovvorn, 2016, pp. 54,59).

3.3 The Interactions of Gender and Environment

Gender and environment interact on different levels. In my literature research, I identified three areas where gender and environment intersect. One area depicts how gendered identities influence environmental issues, such as constructions of masculinities that either contribute to environmental degradation or solution finding. This is discussed in subchapter 3.3.1 'Masculinities and Environment' and subchapter 3.3.4 'Gendered Climate Change Denial'. Another area presents the intersections of the effects of climate change, which is presented in subchapter 3.3.2. The third area is about the feminist discourses that evolve around the negative impacts of gender hierarchies on the environment. This is discussed in subchapter 3.3.3.

3.3.1 Masculinities and Environment

Much research on the relationship between masculinities and environmental issues often highlights the adverse impact of certain masculine practices and behaviours on the environment, including those that contribute to higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Practices that are harmful towards the environment can be meat consumption or driving fossil fuel cars (Mertens & Oberhoff, 2023; Nelson, 2020). Such practices are taken up by men who interact with hegemonic masculinities (Daggett, 2018; Nelson, 2020). The term 'petro-masculinities' is used to describe the idea of masculine behaviour being tied to environmental degradation practices. Daggett (2018) elaborates that ''petro-masculinities'' draw upon ideals of hegemonic masculinities. They appear in societies with patriarchal social structures that strive for hegemonic masculinities and relate to fossil fuel consumption. Constructions of hegemonic masculinities require the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels in order to achieve hegemonic masculinities (p.32).

'Ecomodern masculinities' refer to masculinised environmentalism. It combines environmental practices with performing masculinities (Hultman, 2013). Because of the dependency of hegemonic masculinities on economic growth, men who refer to hegemonic masculinities reject growth limitation that ensures environmental preservation (Daggett, 2018), such as limited energy and meat consumption. Men that resonate with hegemonic masculinities and care for the environment refer to 'ecomodern masculinities' as they believe economic growth and environmental preservation can be achieved simultaneously. This concept of masculinities entails promoting technical solutions and

being market-oriented in solution findings (Dockstader & Bell, 2020; Hedenqvist et al., 2021; Hultman, 2013).

Furthermore, Hultman and Pulé (2020) introduce ‘ecological masculinities’ as a response to the constraints ‘ecomodern masculinities’ creates. To “transition from hegemonisation to ecologisation”, ‘ ‘ecological masculinities’’ exhibit global responsibilities to the preservation of the environment and the consequences of environmental degradation. Men engaging with such masculinities value and prioritize emotionality, relationality, and connectedness to nature. Moreover, they condemn economic aspirations such as economic growth and consumption (Hultman & Pulé, 2020, pp. 484-485; Pulé & Hultman, 2021). The formulations to conceptualize ‘ecological masculinities’ by Hultman and Pulé (2020) are a recent attempt to ‘ecologize’ masculinities. In my literature research, I could not find much research and case studies that examine ‘ ‘ecological masculinities’’ in praxis, except for one case study about an eco-commune in Estonia conducted by Pajumets and Hearn (2021). The men that live in this commune reject Western traditions of overconsumption and capitalism. In their aspirations to be attuned to nature, the participants’ relationship to nature is characterized by equality.

3.3.2 Climate justice

Climate justice is the understanding of the social effects of climate change. There are social issues that present intersectional factors and overlapping social status such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. The effects of climate change particularly affect women in countries with entrenched patriarchal structures. They bear the burden of its effects and are at a higher risk of experiencing its consequences. (Nagel, 2012; Sultana, 2014). Women in developing countries, such as Bangladesh, are particularly exposed to the consequences of extreme weather events, such as floods, due to domestic responsibilities and cultural expectations (Nagel, 2012).

The consequences of climate change can potentially reinforce gender and power dynamics. The phrase "No climate justice without gender justice" was coined during a protest in 2007 to highlight the importance of acknowledging the gendered implications of climate change (Sultana, 2014). Nagel (2012) sheds light on the disparity between wealthy and impoverished countries. According to Nagel, rich countries possess more resources to tackle the effects of climate change, whereas developing countries lack the resources to adapt to changes. Nagel emphasizes that wealthy nations should agree on their responsibility for the increasing greenhouse gas emissions due to industrialization. However, they fail to take responsibility for providing financial support to underprivileged countries in dealing with climate change (Nagel, 2012).

3.3.3 Ecofeminism

Feminism that includes environmentalism is known as ecofeminism. In the 70s, when the term emerged, the idea of ecofeminism led to the environmental movement (Connell & Pearse, 2015). Ecofeminist seeks to bring attention to the destructive system that incorporates male domination over nature (Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013, p. 250). According to Connell & Pearse (2015), this movement was predominantly composed of women and associated womanhood with nature. Connell and Pearse introduce Elizabeth Gould Davis' ecofeminism, which explores the differences between males and females in relation to environmental issues. According to Davis, masculine traits contribute to environmental pollution, whereas women are characterized as nurturing, promoting growth and preserving ecological health (Connell & Pearse, 2015). In Connell's (2017) analysis, ecofeminists view men as dominant, aggressive, and violent, which conflicts with women's nurturing and peaceful relationship with the environment. However, Connell (2017) suggests abandoning essentialist views and acknowledging how masculinities contribute to environmental destruction, in order to promote power-focused masculinities. Ecofeminism connects patriarchal social systems that are based on men's domination over women with the patriarchal domination of nature. Feminists create various approaches to ecofeminism, discussing how these dominations occur and which measures to undertake (Merchant, 1992; Smith, 2001, p. 314). According to early ecofeminists, replacing the patriarchy with an egalitarian ecological social system is necessary in order to achieve environmental preservation. This system, so they say, should have feminine characteristics (Connell & Pearse, 2015, p. 105). However, political leaders, typically male, are often unable to act effectively regarding environmental issues due to systemic domination over the environment, animals, and women. Ecofeminists intend to dismantle this systemic problem (Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013, p. 250-251).

3.3.4 Gendered Climate Change Denial

The rising awareness and discussions of action plans to combat climate change accelerate conservative attitudes and ideals that show an increasing dismissal of the climate movement, especially among elites and general society (McCright & Dunlap, 2000, 2011). Climate change denial has become a countermovement against climate change policies and action, in which conservatism and right-winged attitudes plays a significant role (McCright & Dunlap, 2000). Scholars connect this movement with white men, calling it the "conservative white male effect" (Krange et al., 2019, p. 1). The conservative white male effect is partly explained by the patriarchal system that keeps a higher proportion of men in positions of power. This dynamic motivates them to preserve the status quo and resist policies that could potentially disrupt their privileged positions in society (Krange et al., 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2000, 2011). However, Krange et al. (2019) suggest that this phenomenon

of climate change denial is part of a more extensive complex of resistance to social movements, and not solely explained by an aspiration of men towards powerful positions.

Moreover, right-winged individuals throughout society deny climate change when their political views and identification are threatened (Krange et al., 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2011). Climate and environment preservation, as well as global environment policies oppose a threat upon the essential elements of conservatism, for example personal freedom, free market, wealth and property rights (McCright & Dunlap, 2000; Meyer, 2015). McCright and Dunlap (2000) outline that counterarguments to climate policies circle around the threats possible policies can bring to economic growth and unregulated economic markets. Consequently, conservatives fear state regulation and, specifically, a state-regulated economy caused by environmental policies. Among several other opposing arguments, the conservative movement questions the trustworthiness of research that confirms global warming, claiming the reports by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) were falsified and critical views were undermined. On the other side, the movement counterarguments with advantages that potentially occur if global warming exists (pp. 511-514).

3.4 Norway's Relationship with Environment

There is a lack of academic research on gendered environmental issues in Norway. However, NIKK Magasin, a newspaper by the University of Oslo, has published articles exploring the intersections between gender and environmental discourse in Norwegian contexts. An article by Breengaard and Oldrup (2009) discusses consumption and climate mitigation, highlighting gender differences. The article reveals an imbalance in the contribution made by men and women towards climate mitigation, and how climate change affects men and women differently. The authors imply men who tend to drive more cars and fly more than women, which would make men greater environmental sinners than women. On the other side, women would tend to choose public transport and reconsider their usage of cars (Breengaard & Oldrup, 2009). Regarding food preferences, men would eat more meat than women, while women would reduce their meat consumption more likely (Lindstad, 2009). Beekun & Westermann (2012) compared Norway and the US about the relationship between spirituality and ethical decision-making. In terms of ethics, the results show that Norwegians are more ethics-oriented than Americans (Beekun & Westerman, 2012)

Norway is often recognized as a country that values gender equality and presents significant contrasts in its approaches to gender-related issues and equity in comparison to the United States (Hofstede et al., 1984). Regarding gendered equality issues, Norwegian households have higher equality between men and women. For example, compared to countries like Germany (Bringedal, 2011), around 50% of households practice traditional tasks division in their homes (Bergsvik et al.,

2016). Based on this context of accounts of higher gendered equality in Norway and the lack of research conducted in Norwegian gendered environmental contexts, I decided to conduct this study in Norway.

3.4.1 Norwegians and Bergensers Concern for Climate Change

The biggest city in Western Norway is Bergen, known for its high amount of rainfall. Bremer et al. (2020, p. 5) document a culture of local identity based on the rainfall in Bergen, as the city's image is built upon the intense rainfall. Climate change has already shown an increased impact on the west coast of Norway. More landslides, stronger winds, and heavier rainfall has developed over the past years and are expected to increase further (O'Brien et al., 2004; Sygna et al., 2004). Political and public awareness of climate change has risen after extreme natural events and seasonal changes became noticeable (Bremer et al., 2020, pp. 7-8). In a survey conducted in Norway, 93% of the participants believed climate change is occurring, while 4% denied its occurrence. Norwegians exhibit cognitive dissonance of having a social identity to be close to nature and climate-friendly while being unable to contain emissions and fossil fuel exports (Steentjes et al., 2017). Despite intentions and plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Norwegian government expressed their plans to continue extracting oil in the next decade as long as demand is present in the world market (Cross, 2021). To put this into context, the country has a strong economic connection to oil and gas production as the financial wealth of Norway is built upon and dependent on exports of oil and gas resources (Cross, 2021; Østerbø, 2014). In 2020, the number of direct and indirect employments in Norway's oil and gas industry was around 160 000.

The Vestland county municipality is one of two counties with most of these employees as residents. While Bergen is the main capital of the Vestland county municipality, a significant number of citizens in Bergen and the countryside of Bergen work directly or indirectly for this industry. For example, Bergen is the centre for providing maintenance work for oil platforms (Norskpetroleum, 2022; Østerbø, 2014). As Krange et al. (2019) explain, when implementing climate policies that affect life and work situations, it also opposes a threat upon those people's lifestyles and traditional work positions. This threat can lead to oil workers defending and justifying their lifestyles, aiming to preserve their "identity forming in-group beliefs" in order to keep their beneficial economic positions, which can lead to denying climate change and rejecting climate policies (p. 3). Austgulen and Stø (2013) find that climate change scepsis isn't widespread among Norwegians. However, having a look at the election results of the 2019 election in Bergen municipality, the numbers tell differently. Miljøpartiet De Grønne (the Green Party) reached 9.9 %, while folkets parti/FNB (the People's Party) earned 16.7 % in the election, being the 3rd strongest political party in Bergen (NRK,

2019). The folkets parti originally aimed for cutting the street toll regulations that mostly affect cars that run on fossil fuel, but the party extended their political positions as they added positions of climate change policies. Those position include a sceptical approach towards climate change and climate policies by rejecting them and planning on supporting the oil and gas sector in the future (folkets parti, 2021, p. 14). These results indicate that ideal of climate scepticism or climate denial is more presented as suspected.

4. Research Methods and Design

This chapter provides transparency on the research design and its epistemological foundation. The philosophical approach to research is based on interpretative social sciences and acknowledges that personal interpretation of reality is omnipresent and created by people and their perceptions. This research aims to understand the gendered identities of male environmentalists in Norway and the relationship between their gendered identities with gendered environmentalism. Therefore, this direction of the study is connected to the assumptions of reality described by Neuman (2014) as the assumptions match the research focus. Those assumptions show three approaches, the positivist, interpretative and critical approaches. Positivism is primarily used in quantitative research as it seeks to find universal laws in science and nature, is value-free and objective, and aims to predict and control phenomena (Neuman, 2014, p. 97; Ponterotto, 2005).

In comparison, the interpretivist approach seeks to explore social action in social settings and focuses on studying contexts of human interaction, such as conversation and written texts. Hence, this approach is primarily used in qualitative research. Interpretivists incorporate values as they assume they are omnipresent in people and researchers. Therefore, it is key to reflect on the personal values, perspectives, and feelings in the research process (Neuman, 2014, pp. p. 103-105). Furthermore, the critical approach to social sciences draws on the interpretative approach and adds up some perspectives, such as feminist analysis or conflict theory. Instead of solely focusing on understanding the status quo, the critical approach takes up a more active role in research and aims to change the status quo. By challenging peoples' perspectives and questioning the deeper structures of people's understanding, it seeks to reveal "underlying sources of social control, power relations, and inequality" and transform the social orders by bringing them to light (Neuman, 2014, pp. 108-109).

This study focuses on understanding the participants' perspectives and their reality, which relates to the nature of social reality. Neuman (2014) displays the nature of social reality within the interpretative social science approach as people's subjective experiences that gain meaning while interacting with other humans (Neuman, 2014, p. 102). As this study explores the meaning and perception of male environmentalists on their approach to gendered identities, I decided that a qualitative approach is suitable.

Concepts of masculinities and femininities hold structures of hierarchies, domination, and subordination. Environmental domination and destruction are perceived to come along with domination by certain masculinities (Pulé & Hultman, 2021). This study discusses such topics and seeks to understand male activists' relationship to gender orders and gendered identities. The critical approach aims to uncover social relations and power relations and "strives in contexts in which

people try to resist or reduce power distinctions and domination" (Neuman, 2014, p. 115). Therefore, I chose to incorporate this approach in my research by asking the participants critical questions about their gendered position in society in relation to femininities, questions about gender equality, and hierarchical gender orders. In addition, I address the social contexts of the participants as contextualizing finding is key in critical social science.

4.1 Study Area

The research took place in Western Norway, focusing on the under-researched topic of gendered identity and environmentalism in Norway. Unlike other Western countries, Norway has a distinct approach to gender equality due to its egalitarian attitudes that impact social relations and interactions. As there was no prior research on the gendered identity of Norwegian men, particularly male environmentalists, I chose to conduct this study in Norway.

4.2 Research Method

The study aims to understand the male climate activists' perception of their gendered identities, so conducting face-to-face interviews was appropriate. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), an interview in a research setting would be "an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 149). Interviews create a setting and opportunity for the researcher to gain insights into participants' perspectives and experiences, whereas the researcher aims to understand them. Conducting interviews is an effective way to get a deeper understanding of how the participants approach their gendered identities and the connection between their gendered identities and their environmental activism.

Skovdal and Cornish (2015) outline that by conducting interviews, development workers can understand how to match their programmes and projects with the local people's ideas and how to respond to their concerns. They can gain commitment and support for the citizen's programmes and projects by understanding the citizen's points of view (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015, p. 57). As mentioned before, there are gendered differences in how people approach the climate issue, as well as a lack of research in Norway about these differences. The aim is to gain an understanding of the citizens' points of view, ideas and concerns in order to be able to create programmes and projects that enable their support (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015, p. 57). Therefore, I decided to interview male environmentalists in Norway on their gendered identities to understand how these differences apply to and effect their reality and how they approach gendered identities.

I decided to conduct qualitative interviews with open-ended questions, as the participants could "use their own words […] to discuss topics", which offers the possibility for the participants to explore the personal meanings of their experiences and thoughts (Yin, 2011, p. 135). In that way, I was able to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perceptions and meanings. This research method provided me a platform to interact with the participants and facilitated a conversation dynamic that allowed discussions on the subjects and meanings of the participants. Additionally, I was able to ask further in-depth questions to get a more detailed understanding of their meanings. Also, it allowed them to communicate personal definitions about the topics, formulate and express their points of view about meanings and definitions and clear out misunderstandings. The interviews were semi-structured which gave me the possibility to prepare general question about the subjects in advance.

Furthermore, the order of the themes during the interviews was important. First, I asked the participants questions about their current activism, followed by autobiographical questions about the history of engagement for the climate and environment. I chose autobiographical questions to lay a foundation for the participant to draw possible connections between their activism and their gender identities by inducing their memories of context and reasoning for environmental engagement by recalling their past decision and events. After that, I asked questions to understand their definitions and concepts of their masculinities and their approach to femininities. Finally, the participants were inquired to assess whether they see any relation between activism and gendered identities (Appendix 1).

4.3 Data Collection

The recruitment process started before the summer vacation in 2021. At the beginning of the recruitment process, I planned to interview 10 to 15 participants. To get a detailed understanding of male environmentalists and their gendered identities, I decided to formulate a broad criterion for participation. I recruited participants when they presented the following: 1) they were male and over 18 years; 2) either have been active for the environment or climate issues in a political or organisational setting; or are doing actions in private spaces for a positive environmental or climate contribution. I defined private spaces as places or situations where participants would take action that was not in a political or organisational setting, but in a private setting, for example, household practices or mobility adjustments. From my professors, I received contact information from two people that were interested in being gatekeepers for my study. I contacted both via e-mail. I met with one of them to discuss the details of my research. The person agreed to be a gatekeeper, but the contact faded afterwards. With the other contact person, e-mails were exchanged. It also faded away but was re-established later in the recruitment process in October. This contact person agreed

to be a gatekeeper and was searching for participants in the environmental organisation they are related to.

Furthermore, I contacted ten different environmental organisations, institutions and political parties in Western Norway via E-mail and Facebook Messenger. I provided them with an informational letter in English with basic information about the research and ethical clearances (Appendix 2). In that way, I was able to find three gatekeepers in total that helped me find participants. Additionally, the gatekeepers got a digital poster with an overview of the information about the study to share with the potential participants (Appendix 3). I also searched for participants in several Facebook groups about climate activism, activism, and environmentalism by providing information about the study and the poster. All participants contacted me individually through the contact information they got from the gatekeepers or the poster. In total, nine people contacted me, and seven of those participated in my research and conducted interviews with me, of which I included only 6 in this study (Table 1). I chose to exclude one of the participants as his climate action and environmentalism differed considerably from the other participants' approaches.

Further, the names I gave the participants are based on their age range. Names with the letter J at the beginning are young adults. The letter M represents middle age and O older age. The participants contacted me with the understanding that I conducted a study regarding climate activist, as this was the term I used when recruiting. Later in the process, I changed the term from "climate activists" to describe the participants as "environmentalists" as most of the participants not only were active in climate cause, but also for other environmental issues such as the destruction of animal lives.

Table 1

Background of the participants

Participant	Age range at interview	Type of engagement
Jan	20s	Organisatoral, political
Joakim	20s	political
Jakob	30s	Organisatoral, political
Magnus	40s	Organisatoral, unpolitical
Martin	40s	Organisatoral, unpolitical
Odvin	50s	Organisatoral, unpolitical

4.4 Interview Process

The interviews were conducted from September to the end of November in 2021 with a total of seven interviews. Most interviews lasted approximately one hour. The longest interview lasted two hours, and the shortest 50 minutes. All the participants lived in Bergen and close to Bergen. I conducted interviews individually with six out of seven participants in the city of Bergen. We met at different locations, such as cafes in the city or reserved rooms at my university. For one participant, I conducted an online interview via an internet calling platform. All interviews were recorded with the participants' consent using a recording device.

Each interview proceeded differently. Initially, the vast majority of participants displayed interest and curiosity towards the interview and the topics that were discussed. They expressed an interest to learn more about the study and engage in a discourse with me. Certain individuals possessed pre-existing ideas regarding the themes, whereas others had not yet formed any ideas and opinions regarding their gender identities. Some were quite talkative, and others more reserved. All of them were cooperative and open to talk about the subjects. In the end, all of the participants engaged in a conversation with me regarding the correlation between gender and climate activism. However, I encountered some individuals who were unwilling to discuss the idea of gendered environmentalism or any connection between gender and the environment. Despite their reluctance, they still engaged in a conversation about the subjects.

4.5 Process of Data Analysis

The data consisted of six individual interviews that were recorded with my password-protected phone. The recordings were kept on a laptop that was protected with a password until it was transcribed. Once it was transferred to the laptop, it was deleted from the phone. To transcribe the interviews, I used the program otter.ai, an artificial intelligence program that converts audio files into written documents. The transcriptions produced by the program otter.ai has shown some errors that made manual correcting of the transcriptions necessary. For this step, the program Inqscribe was used.

To follow the interpretative approach of this study, the data was coded and analysed with an understanding of the reflexive thematic analysis approach by Braun et al. (2019) and the thematic network analysis tool by Attride-Stirling (2001). The thematic network analysis tool provides a profound description of the steps that lead to creating themes. I decided to focus my analysis on these two approaches because I wanted to incorporate the reflective aspect of Braun et al.'s (2019) analysis approach and the structural networking of themes from Attride-Stirling's (2001) analysis

tool. During coding and data analysis, while following the reflexive thematic analysis method by Braun et al. (2019), researchers constantly reflect on and question their own theoretical assumptions. They also make analytical decisions and actively engage with those. To conduct this approach, a level of transparency, coherence and consistency is needed. The themes that are identified in this approach are "creative and interpretative stories of the data". The researcher actively and subjectively identifies and retrieves themes through engagement with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594). In this chapter, I provide transparency regarding the analytical process by outlining the tools I used and the steps I took to formulate the identified themes. Additionally, I will explain my interpretations of the data throughout the process.

First, the goal was to get familiarised with the data. Braun et al. (2019) explain the familiarization process as becoming immersed in the data by studying the data, making notes and connections. Following this process, I familiarised myself with the transcribed interviews, and made notes about the content, noticeable connections, and ideas. Furthermore, the coding process was predominately approached inductive. Terry et al. (2017) outline an inductive approach for identifying themes in the coding process as data-driven and focused on the meaning of the data. At the same time, the approach might not be entirely inductive as the researcher approaches the data with preconceived viewpoints and needs to identify relevant criteria to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun et al., 2019; Byrne, 2022).

To address the research questions, I identified three criteria based on the study's objectives before the coding process. The identification of the criteria was the first step of using the thematic network analysis tool by Attride-Stirling (2001): 1. coding the material, (a) "devise a coding framework". The criteria for the coding framework were 'gender identities', 'environmental engagement', and 'gendered environmentalism'. The next step was (b) "dissecting the text into manageable and meaningful text segments" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 390). The text was dissected within the three pre-established categories. The text sequences of the category 'environmental engagement' were not coded but merged and summarised for each participant. As Attride-Stirling (2001) didn't elaborate on detailed steps for the coding process, I chose to use semantic and latent coding inspired by (Braun et al., 2019). The categories 'gendered identities' and 'gendered environmentalism' were coded independently. First, the text of the interviews was separated into quotes and integrated into a table with two additional columns for the semantic and latent coding (see Table 2). The semantic codes were created close to the meaning of the participant language, while the latent codes present a deeper, more conceptual level of the content of the quotes (Braun et al., 2019, p. 853). Inspired by Ando et al. (2014) physical approach to coding, the generated codes were printed out and collated within the codes.

Table 2

Example of quotes with semantic and latent coding

Quotes	Semantic coding	Latent coding
We could say that it's masculine to do hard work.	P1 associates masculinities with hard work.	Association with masculine bodies, hegemonic masculinities
Rambo, thinks like that, that's masculinity.	P1 thinks Rambo is masculine.	Plurality masculinities, hegemonic masculinities

The codes were merged into simple themes before creating clusters of basic, organised, and global themes. First, I used the latent coding to guide the merging, but many codes had to be re-evaluated as I noticed that the codes' meanings weren't precisely suitable for the established codes. So, new themes were selected using the semantic codes to find appropriate meaning and new latent coding. Those themes were organised into basic themes, organising themes and global themes. I present this by utilising the third step of the Attride-Stirling (2001) thematic analysis tool "constructing the networks". The basic themes are derived directly from the quotes through semantic coding. The data's similar meanings or characteristics were grouped together using latent coding, resulting in organised themes and a "cluster of similar issues" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 388-389). Eventually, those organised themes were summarised into global themes and demonstrated the meaning of the organised themes as a whole. The next step of the tool is to illustrate the networks in a non-hierarchal web-like representation (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). I transferred those network presentations into tables to provide a structured overview of the themes (Table 3 and 4).

In the next step, I revisited the themes and had to make minor adjustments. Step four was to "describe and explore the thematic networks". When analysing the data, the thematic networks worked as a guiding tool through the data by helping me interpret the meaning of the data. To achieve this, I reviewed the themes and revisited the quotes from the primary data source to grasp the context of the fundamental themes. Revisiting the quotes enabled me to develop a comprehensive understanding of the themes. Additionally, I analysed the data through the lenses of the approaches introduced in the theoretical framework. Finally, in the last two steps, I summarised the thematic network and analysed the patterns that emerged according to the research questions. This can be found in chapter 6, 7 and 8.

Table 3

Organizing of themes with the category 'gendered identities'

Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Reproducing doing gender	Defining gendered identities	Associations with masculinities and femininities
Egalitarian approach		
Plurality of negative constructed HM	Hegemonic masculinities vs emphasized femininities	
Positive constructed HM		
Dichotomy feminine masculine		
Masculine feminine bodies		
Dichotomy caretaking emotional vs unemotional violent		
Being a man	Doing gender of masculinities	Personal approach to masculinities and femininities
Freedom from societal expectations		
Undoing gender/ doing gender ambivalence		
Refusal to incorporate hegemonic masculinities	Approaches to bodies	
Subordinated masculinities		
Coping strategies to refusal of HM		
Moment of engagement with masculine bodies		
Resentment of HM	Power relations	
Coping strategies		
Moment of engagement with power relations		
Masculine autonomy		
Caring masculinities	Incorporated femininities	
Valuing femininities		
Negotiation of emotionality		

Table 4

Organizing of themes with the category 'gendered environmentalism'

Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Concern for environment is not gendered	General associations	Connections, associations and ideologies about gendered environmentalism
Egalitarian approach		
Gendered participation		
Gendered values		
Gendered interests for environment		
Linkage feminism and environmentalism	Combination of progressive social politics: Gender and environment	
ecofeminism		
queering		
Excluding others		
Rejecting conservative countermovement	Rejecting the other side	Personal environmental and gendered identities
Rejecting male environmental destruction		
Rejecting Norwegian climate change denial		
Rejecting striving for economic wealth		
Being open to new experiences	Alternative aspirations	
Change of system		
Creating communities		
Caretaking of nature	Embodying femininities	
Preferring the feminine		
Caretaking is doing climate justice		
Being masculine while environmentally friendly	Aligning with hegemonic masculinities	
Working with the system		
Lack of concerns for older generation	Generational differences	
Lack of concern for young males		

4.6 Quality Assurance of the Research

In qualitative studies, it is crucial to examine aspects such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability to ensure the research's quality (Shenton, 2004; Yilmaz, 2013). To provide credibility, it is essential to present a thick description of the study's context and situation. Additionally, accuracy is crucial when presenting and describing the participants' experiences.(Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010; Yilmaz, 2013). In an attempt to achieve credibility, I described the data collection and interview process in detail. I outlined reflections on the process as well as changes within the process to be transparent about my choices. Additionally, the bias influences credibility (Tracy, 2010), which I am addressing for transparency in chapter 4.7 by reflecting on my bias.

Transferability can be established when data collection and analysis methods are suitable for the research matter, comparable to other studies that investigate similar topics and when the research context is transferable to other participants or contexts (Shenton, 2004, p. 64; Yilmaz, 2013, p. 320). Studies addressing masculinity in connection with environmentalism have been used in various procedures and methods, from analysing articles (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014), to ethnographic studies with participant observations (Bridges, 2014). To gain deeper insight to the gendered identities of men and their approach to masculinity, some prior studies conducted qualitative research choosing the method of in-depth interviews, for example a study by Bach (2017) or Heikkilä and Hellman (2017). Following the same approach, I decided on using this method to establish transferability. The study by Bach (2017) examines the gender identities of men in Denmark that are in a position of non-dominance as they are responsible for childcare, while their female partners are the main breadwinners. Heikkilä and Hellman (2017) examine the masculinities of male preschool teachers in Sweden who are positioned as a minority in a predominately female work field. Both studies are relevant as they research gendered identities and investigate their conflicts with hegemonic masculinities. Also, the participants of my research are active in environmental spheres. In such spheres, exhibiting domination and inhabiting dominating positions are considered unfit (Hultman & Pulé, 2020). These non-dominant contexts create conflicts with hegemonic masculinities and position the participant of this study in similar contexts as the masculinities presented in those studies. Further, the study may be transferable to other male environmentalists living in egalitarian Western countries, such as Scandinavian countries.

Dependability is established when the content of the findings is consistent with the research data and when the research procedures and methods are stated clearly and in detail (Shenton, 2004; Yilmaz, 2013, p. 320). To ensure dependability, I described and documented the steps I took and strategies I conducted during research, as well as changes I had to make during the process.

Confirmability is achieved when the readers of the study can reflect on the research process, including choices of methods and analysis and the choices of interpretation which aims on enabling the reader to judge over the trustworthiness of the study themselves (Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010). In order to ensure the ability to judge the confirmability, I have offered a clear and detailed description of all the steps taken, along with the justifications for each.

4.7 My Role as a Female Researcher Interviewing Male Participants

The researcher's role involves examining how their involvement influences the research setting (Yilmaz, 2013). As a woman interviewing men, the interview dynamic is affected by gendered

differences as I am a gendered subject myself interacting in a gendered setting (Pini & Pease, 2013). Pini & Pease offer a depiction of those influences. They explain that relationship dynamics can reinforce gendered relations in research settings. For example, female researchers can encounter situations where they must be caring, empathic, attentive, and understanding. In those gendered structures of interaction, questions regarding gender identities and feministic views can make participants uncomfortable. This gendered relationship dynamic eventually enhanced my role as female researcher to do femininity and act according to gendered expectations (p. 95-96). At times, the participants shared their feelings and worries in relation to the subject matter of gendered identities and climate change. I encountered different situations in which I was positioned to enact doing femininity as some men would react to gendered interaction by offering me "emotional confessions" as they perceived me as "container of emotions" (Pini & Pease, 2013, p. 29). For example, a participant got emotional while talking about hopes for the future and environmental destruction during the interview. I had to display doing femininity to make the participant "feel at ease" (Pini & Pease, 2013). I made sure to create an environment where the participants felt free to decide how much they wanted to share and frequently told them they are free to stop the interview, skip a question or correct their answers if they needed it.

Further, the role of the researcher is to ensure an unbiased understanding of the participants' insights and meanings (Yilmaz, 2013). Considering my gender role, gendered experiences, and feministic values, I am biased in gendered social interactions. Therefore, I had to reflect on my preconceptions and assumptions, such as preconceptions about masculinity or femininity that influenced the study. To do so, I became aware of the effects on the relationship between the participants and myself. This approach is characteristic in interpretative social science as Interpretive researchers assume that their values are integrated into the research and play a role in every context (Neuman, 2014). I reflected and integrated my values and assumptions into the research process. I was open and transparent with my values and preconceptions and specified my intention to understand the participants' perceptions and perspectives about the research topic.

Additionally, as I partly followed the critical approach (Neuman, 2014), I asked critical questions with a feministic perspective. During the discussion, one participant showed discomfort towards feminist views and even repelled them. It was evident that bringing gender into the context of environmentalism made him uneasy. In the context of this, I made sure the participants felt comfortable in this situation, as I communicated the voluntariness of the participation and answering of the questions.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Oancea (2013), researchers are responsible for making ethical decisions when faced with ethical questions that arise during the research process. It is important to examine and question these ethical concerns thoroughly. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were carefully followed. I followed the ethical guidelines provided by the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committee. To ensure that ethical standards were met, I obtained ethical approval for this study from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) (Appendix 4). For the recruitment process, the organizations and parties received an informational letter that NSD approved. It elaborated on the ethical aspects of the study (Appendix 2). Later, each participant received this letter personally. According to Mackenzie et al. (2007), it is essential that the participants have complete knowledge of the risks, benefits, and purposes of the research. Before the interviews, I discussed the researc context with each participants, including the purpose, use, privacy, confidentiality concerns, the option to withdrawal, as well as other ethical considerations. This laid the foundation for the participants to provide their consent with their full understanding of the research contexts. The participants gave written consent with permission to record the interviews. Towards the end of the interview, I informed the participants about their right to withdraw from the study, change their responses, and obtain their identifiable data. After transcription of the interviews, I deleted all identifiable information about the participants and gave them pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. I stored the audio recordings on a password-protected computer and deleted after finishing the transcription and analysis of the data.

5. Participants' Background of Environmental Engagement

During the interviews, one of my research focus objectives was to gain an understanding of the participants' involvement with the climate and environmental causes. They shared their motivation and influences for working with the environmental cause. This section focuses on presenting each participant and the foundation and background information of their activism and involvement. It serves as a foundation for understanding their relationship with gendered environmentalism. Most participants share that they have had higher or leading positions in the political and organisational engagement they follow.

5.1 Martin

Martin is a man in his 40s who was politically active in environmental causes. At the same time, he was and still is volunteering for a political party and environmental organizations. Besides general volunteering tasks, Martin took action in public and private spaces. In public spaces, he has participated in a few demonstrations, mostly about animal rights, and is active by writing and debating publicly in social media and newspapers. As for mitigation practices in private spaces, Martin reduces his consumption, chooses public transport over car or plane, eats vegetarian and is conscious about waste. He got interested in environmentalism through his past research in natural science. He also mentioned the media as an influence. His most significant motivation for doing environmental action and activism is his interest in nature and his concern and empathy for the endangered diversity of animals on a micro and macro level. He connects this concern to climate issues, as animals are vulnerable to these changes. Also, he mentioned gaining a more extensive social network as motivation to be active in environmental organizations and politics. Martins' general values also play a role in his motivation for activism. He explains that his incentive to "do the right thing even if it's not popular" appeared natural to him to join the environmental cause.

5.2 Magnus

Magnus is a man in his 40s who has been politically active for many years. He approaches the climate issue with the incentive to make profound changes like changing the law. So, he chose the path of political involvement instead of activism. His mitigation practices include using alternatives to driving a car for transportation, reducing his travels, reducing meat consumption and other goods, and choosing more sustainable hobbies. In Magnus young adulthood, he took part in demonstrations against the destruction of the natural ecosystem and ended up researching the social effects of the nuclear catastrophe. He travelled to see the world and gained an inside perspective of social issues.

His personal experiences, along with reading books and staying informed about climate and environmental issues, as well as his role as a father and desire to be a positive role model, have all contributed to his motivation to work towards combating climate change.

5.3 Jan

Jan is in his 20s and is part of political and environmental organizations. He got involved in climate activism through friends and the school strikes that started in 2019, initiated by Greta Thunberg and the Fridays for Future Movement. Since then, he has been participating in protests and demonstrations. In terms of mitigation practices, Jan reduces his general and meat consumption, is conscious about recycling and uses public transport or a bicycle instead of a car. Jan believes communication and discussions are core tools to work for the climate cause and rejects violence. He has been mobilizing more of his friends to join in his fight against climate change as one of his motivations for being a climate activist is being part of a social group, a *"unity",* that evolves together and shares experiences in the fight for something *"bigger",* climate change mitigation. He is part of an alternative queer and young environmentalist scene. The city's lifestyle motivates him to be environmentally engaged, which is why he enjoys living there. He identifies with the 70s environmental and civil rights movements and wants to "continue the fights we've had since the 60s and 70. Further, he believes that his lifestyle choices are intertwined with his approach to climate activism and action, such as purchasing second-hand clothing.

5.4 Jakob

Jakob is in his 30s and is politically active in the environmental cause. For his personal mitigation practices, he mentioned preferring public transport, being conscious of consumption, reducing meat consumption and communicating and debating the problems of climate change in his social environment. Jakob's reasoning for working for the climate cause is his desire to *"do something else than the majority".* He explains that his climate activism is part of his identity that developed with influences of his family's interest in the environment and his upbringing close to nature. His father, in particular, has been concerned about different environmental issues and the systemic effects of climate change, which has been a topic of discussion in his upbringing. Other influences on him were children's TV series and reading, through which he managed "to engage emotions" for the climate cause. Growing up in a place he describes as "the heart of the oil production", the people in his social circle primarily worked in the oil industry, greatly influencing his social environment. Interacting with them convinced him that it's impossible to convince people with debates into climate action but by

creating *"more own ownership to change*". His choice of approach is to be a role model and inspire others to engage with mitigation practices by presenting which side-benefits they have.

5.5 Joakim

Joakim is a man in his 20s who is active in the climate cause in the student environment. As for mitigation practices, he mentioned reducing his consumption, being conscious about waste and using public transport. His approach to environmentalism is unpolitical as the organization he's part of prefers to present itself as unpolitical, so he's not debating climate change politically and stays impartial. Joakim's influential figure in the climate cause is his father, who has raised his awareness of environmental issues. Eventually, he learned more about the effects of climate change by conducting literature research. After this, he felt like he had to change his private life and act upon his values.

5.6 Odvin

Odvin is a man in his 60s. He is part of two environmental organizations and is not politically active. Further, he has taken part in civil disobedience in different European cities, which were rather peaceful. Other mitigation practices he does are writing and challenging newspapers and authorities to reflect on their approaches to the climate issue. His motivation to be active draws upon his feeling *"of connection with other creatures"* and the deep empathy for the suffering of animals *"even down to insect level"* and humans. Odvin doesn't consider public demonstrations like the demonstrations initiated by Fridays for Future as valuable and effective for increasing attention to climate change. He prefers to do climate action that is more "rebellious", *"radical",* and *"more disruptive"* to be heard.

6. Perceptions of Masculinities and Femininities

This chapter presents the first global theme 'associations with masculinities and femininities' of the first category 'gendered identities' of the findings (see table 3). First, the organising 'defining gendered identities' examines the participants' associations with gendered identities through the lenses of 'doing gender', and 'undoing gender'. Chapter 6.1 discusses this. The latter section of this chapter delves into the participants' interpretation of masculinities and femininities through the images they created. This is elaborated in chapter 6.2 and serves as the organising theme 'hegemonic masculinities and emphasised femininities'.

Approaches and constructions of gendered identities are fluid and changing in various environments and cultures, creating a multitude of femininities and masculinities (Connell, 2005; Connell, 1990; Paechter, 2003). With this in mind, I approached the interviews with the participants. In this chapter, I aimed to get an overview of their understanding, interpretations, and comprehension of masculinities and femininities within their local and cultural context. This chapter serves as a foundation for the next chapter, the personal approaches to masculinities and femininities. Additionally, I present a conclusion of these findings chapter at the end of this chapter. This serves as a foundation to analyse and gain insight into the participants' personal approaches to masculinities and femininities.

6.1 Understanding and Defining Masculinities and Femininities

First, it is important to mention that the participants' understanding of gendered identities doesn't necessarily reflect their preferred approach and view of society. Moreover, they present a definition based on social expectations and construction as they understood gender as constructed within the society and resonated with the idea that masculinities and femininities are socially constructed, like West and Zimmerman (1987) demonstrate in their "'doing gender'" approach. For example, Jakob says: "*We are all gendered, very much so. The social gendering is everywhere all the time".* He shows awareness of the 'doing gender' within society. Jakob refers to changes to constructions of masculinities. He highlights the influence of groups in society on the man's approach to masculinity, emphasizing that masculinity can be *"quite different from person to person"*. This idea reproduces conceptual differences of hegemonic masculinities, the understanding that definitions and models of masculinities are changing and varying on a society-wide level (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 838). Most of the participants acknowledged reproductions of gender in social contexts and interactions. For example, Jan said:

> *„Differences come mainly to these kind of societal roles men and women have. […] boys, for example, are taught to play with trucks and cars and things like that, they're kind of like these*

interests are planted in them from an early age. While the girls are more, like dolls and taking care of little animals and stuff. And I mean, I guess it's fine, but the person should be like, able to explore for themselves and choose themselves what he likes. So, you should as a parent give your child the option to choose whether they want to play with dolls or trucks. It should be a choice. […] I think it's more like people choose what society often wants them or these expectations, what the society expects them to choose. They don't want to go against the grain, and a lot of people end up choosing something they don't like" (Jan, 20s)

Producing and "creating differences between girls and boys and women and men" is the act of 'doing gender'. When those differences are constructed, they enhance essentialist ideas of gender by using physical features to define appropriate behaviour or attributes in social settings (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137). While acknowledging the influence of society on the construction of gender in individuals, the participants prefer egalitarian perspectives to gendered interests. When Jan says that interest should be a choice and not determined by a socially constructed gender, he refers to the egalitarian idea that humans are equal as their interests aren't defined by gender.
As the participants describe their associations with gendered identities, some refer to essentialist thinking, linking gender with natural determination but arguing that these perspectives are outdated. For example, Odvin said: *"That is kind of Stone Age thinking"* (Odvin, 60s), as Martin says:

"Maybe I maybe we shouldn't use those words, actually. Because they are maybe a bit 18 hundred way of thinking. […] Because I think it's just something in people minds. Of course, it's hormones and things like that, biologically […] I think we shouldn't think so much about gender, in a perfect world, but people are people, human are human, gender is a biological thing […] It doesn't mean that much to me" (Martin, 40s)

In Martin's elaborations, he attempts to undo gender and resists the idea of reproducing gender in social interaction, workplaces, and environmental contexts. While presenting their perceptions of gender that society provides them with, egalitarian perspectives influence the participants' overall understanding of gender. Throughout the interviews, the participants outline their egalitarian views and referred to undoing gender to some extent and situations. This is taken up again in later chapters.

6.2 Pictures of Hegemonic Masculinities and Emphasized Femininities

To get a sense of the participants' understanding of masculinities and femininities, I asked them about their associations with these concepts and their understanding of what traits are considered masculine and feminine. Additionally, I inquired about their understanding of how these constructs are formed. The participants describe how they perceive masculinities, in what relation it stands to

femininities, how it presents in bodies, and finally, how a dichotomy of femininities and masculinities presents. It is important to examine how the participants portray masculinity and femininity, as it provides a foundation for understanding and analysing their individual perspectives on masculinity in the following chapter. Therefore, this chapter concludes with a summary of how the participants' depictions of masculinities and femininities.

6.2.1 Plurality of Hegemonic Masculinities

While each participant had different pictures of masculinities, some of them share similar images and associations. The term "stereotypical masculine" or "stereotypical man" was often used as a construction of masculinities based on the participants' understanding of societal expectations. In the context of the fluidity and plurality of masculinities (Connell, 1995), the participants associated the dominant idea and image of hegemonic masculinities in their cultural and local context with a stereotypical man. Even though each participant has an individual understanding of masculinities, they share a common understanding of hegemonic masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest hegemonic masculinities are produced by narratives of mass media or the state and images of masculine characters. The participants' depiction of hegemonic masculine ideas refers to movie characters or historic pictures. For example, Martin described masculine men with "Rambo" and "machine gun". According to Anderson (2014), Rambo is a movie character who presents a stoic man committed to violence and weapons. Other terms and associations that arose in the interviews in connection to masculinity were "hunter" (Odvin, 60s), "alpha ideal" (Jakob, 30s), "macho man" (Magnus, 40s), and "toxic masculinity" (Jan, 20s). Jakob says:

> *"Your sort of create a very archetypical idea of what to strive for in that kind of alpha and male masculinity or toxic masculinity and other new perspective, but the alternative is not that defined, which makes it for many [man], maybe more, harder to grasp: what does it mean to be a mother man? And if you're not the alpha dog, what are you?*" (Jakob, 30s)

Jakob refers to the ideal of alpha men as the hegemonic masculine ideal in society. Russell (2021) demonstrates, alpha masculinity and machismo are forms of dominant masculinities and stand, similar to other masculinity concepts, in opposition to other identities. These dominant masculinities are performed by taking and imposing leadership over other parties or identities and, therefore, in opposition to each other (Russell, 2021). This opposition can be performed as, for example, 'alpha male' versus beta male, which would be a natural urge to lead or rule over betas or non-Alphas (Ging, 2017). Like Jakob, the participants associate masculinities with hegemonic practices based on domination over other gendered identities. Yet, those constructions of hegemonic masculinities do not represent their personal ideals of masculinities. In an attempt to identify other masculinities that aren't based on domination, Jakob mentions a type of masculinity that incorporates femininities

when he says “mother man” which can be understood as a man that incorporates masculinities as well as caregiving. By doing so, Jakob intends to broaden his perspective on masculinities with an egalitarian understanding of manhood, including childcare. Also, Jan associated hegemonic masculinities as harmful and “toxic”, he says:

> *“Toxic. […] It's something we talk a lot about in my party, my organization. […] It's very tied to feminism, and the whole fights, like for women. […] I mean, masculinity isn't itself a negative thing. But it has become that. I mean, males take a lot of space in society in general and take up all the leader roles. […] I think it's a genuine problem. You're talking about, like, 50% of the population, which are women are about half the population. They kind of don't get to do as much as to fulfil their potential in society because men take a lot of space and see themselves as like the rightful owners of society almost.” (Jan, 20s)*

Jans associates masculinities with “toxic”, which is understood to be hazardous and harmful. In contrast, ‘toxic masculinities’ demonstrate harmful practices towards others, such as the oppression of non-hegemonic men, women or queer people (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Waling, 2019). The reason he describes the negative connotation of masculinities is the effects those masculinities have on other gendered identities, such as inhabiting most of the powerful spaces in society. Yet, Jan argues, *“masculinity isn’t itself a negative thing”.* Scholars have been criticizing the negative depictions of hegemonic masculinities that refer to violence, unemotionality and non-nurturing (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), which Jakob attempts to respond to by referring to “mother man”.

Further, Jan ties his association of masculinities with feminist causes. Feminist discourses regarding ‘toxic’ masculinities attempt to promote constructions of ‘healthy masculinities’ by seeking to raise the consciousness of social and political issues and encourage men to reflect on their own responsibilities when embodying masculinities, as well as dismantling and rejecting the social gender order (Berggren, 2014; Waling, 2019). Throughout the interview, Jan outlined the great influence feminist causes have on his attitudes, values, and gendered identity as he seeks to reproduce non-toxic masculinities (see chapter 7.3). More of the interplay between feminism, gendered identities and environmental engagement is explained in chapter 8.3.1.

6.2.2 Emphasized Femininities: The Opposition

Emphasized femininities are constructed within a patriarchal gender order, subordinated to men and compliant to the gender order and men’s domination. Thus, dominant masculinities are created in opposition to emphasized femininities (Russell, 2021). The participants associated femininities with “*traditional role models*” (Martin, 40s), which was understood as opposition to masculinities, taken

up by Joakim: "*When I think about masculinity, I think about men, like a man opposed to a woman, that's the first thing I think*." (Joakim, 20s). Opposing manhood to womanhood, the participant refers to the dichotomization of genders by essentializing male-female differences (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). Russell (2021) suggests the female-male dichotomy is recognized by a more significant part of society and is culturally created.

6.2.3 Bodies

Male bodies were used to define an inherent connection with men's masculinities. Connell (2005) outlines the essentialist understanding in society of male bodies that would be the root of true masculinity. The participants showed those understanding as well. They established an approach to masculinities by incorporating bodily traits in their reasoning for constructing masculinities. Therefore, the most prevalent association they made was being physically active and strong. For example, Jan connected masculinity with being a *"stereotypical masculine man who is strong", and* Magnus thinks that *"masculine is maybe being a gym junky, being very kind of self-conscious of being a big strong muscular man."* Martin described these efforts to people as "*overdriver*" (Norwegian word for exaggerating), which has the meaning in Norwegian that the action is executed to a too great extent. Martin assumes *"that not being afraid of working hard with the body and get dirty, that's also masculinity*", similar to Jan, who presents the perspective of a society where masculinities would be associated with being outside and "chopping wood". Sport, body-building and exercise have been socially connected with men's bodies and masculinities (Connell, 2005, p. 35). Thus, the participants attach strength to men. Joakim negotiates his association of strongness and emphasizes an egalitarian argument. He says: he still genders strength nevertheless:

> *"a women could be strong as well, of course. I don't think that's just a man. […] I wouldn't say if you say strong, it's like a masculine trait. I guess then if a woman is also strong, that kind of is a masculine trait. But I would say, I think you can be strong as a feminine trait as well. […] But, I wouldn't say strong is like, necessarily just a masculine trait. Because strong is like- maybe strength is more of a masculine trait than a feminine trait" (Joakim, 20s)*

Joakim was the only one who connected strongness with femininities but didn't explain further what being strong and feminine means to him. Yet, he still genders strength as he tended to frame strength as masculine. Another participant explains his association with feminine bodies, he says:

> *"I consider the feminine as more open to your own fragility, you know what I mean. Not afraid to show weakness. Something like that."* (Magnus, 40s)

The participant refers to the characterization of emphasized femininities that embody weakness and fragility and comply with the hegemonic standard of masculine bodies (Connell, 1987; Schippers, 2007). The participants portray men that engage with hegemonic masculinities to be strong, muscular, and hardworking. This characterization of femininity and weakness stands in subordination to an idea of superior, hegemonic masculinities. It reproduces the idea of a hierarchal structure among masculinities and emphasized femininities in relation to bodies (Connell, 1987). Another association between bodies and women that were mentioned was female appearance. Jan describes femininities with women that grow out their hair, while Martin mentions gendered fashion aspects. He says it would be feminine *"dress like women, maybe, with skirts and things like that"*. Appearance and fashion highlighting femininities have been understood as opposition to hegemonic masculinities and attributed to female bodies while wearing uniform and simple colourless clothes has been attributed to masculine bodies that enact dominance (Barry, 2018).

The participants' overall description of feminine and masculine bodies refers to the dichotomy of male and female bodies and the patriarchal gender order. Feminine bodies perform subordination to masculinities by performing weakness and fragility, whereas masculine bodies embody strength and domination over femininities.

6.2.4 Caretaking and Emotionality vs. Unemotionality and Violence

This section addresses the dichotomy of feminine and masculine traits depicted by the participants in more detail. It deals with the essentialist assumptions of femininities and masculinities. A picture of opposite poles shows up, on the one side caretaking combined with emotional connectedness, on the other side violent behaviour connected with emotional detachment.

Hermanns and Mastel-Smith (2012) suggest that caretaking would not have been universally defined. On the one side, caregiving is framed as an act of giving support to others "that have physical, psychological or development needs" (Drentea, 2016, p. 1). Giving and receiving care creates emotional intimacy and connectedness between humans, provides positive emotions, and positively affects self-esteem (Hanlon, 2012, p. 137).

Despite those benefits and because of hierarchical gender orders, caretaking is allocated to femininities in a patriarchal social system (Korobov & Thorne, 2009). The participants mentioned this connection often when outlining their associations. For example, Jan says:

> *"But I think I mean, traditionally speaking, women are seen as like the caretaker of the child, for example, they birth the child, and therefore they should take care of it or be like the main role while the father should be out and hunting, for example. I mean, this is a very traditional*

> *primitive hunter gatherer type of family structure. But I guess that way, it's kind of ingrained. Like, basically, since the beginning of time, it's been like that, where the woman usually is the one who takes care of the child historically speaking, as well. But I think that's kind of unfair, even though it's like a very old kind of norm. But I think it should be a lot more balanced. Both the mother and the father should take care of the children as much. I think both father and mother are equally important in the child's life" (Jan, 20s)*

Jan refers to the essentialist argument to describe the gender division of childcare when he affiliates female bodies performing childbirth with a responsibility to do childcare. At the same time, he doesn't believe this is true and presents an egalitarian approach to childcare, arguing that also fathers have importance in taking care of children.

Besides being emotionally responsive, taking care of someone meant childcare to Martin:

> *"Maybe to be a sympathetic person. To try to be that. That is something that could fit feminine people. You know, listen to children, care of children" (Martin, 40s)*

Taking care of children is usually referred to as parenting, not specifically as caregiving for others in need (Drentea, 2016). Despite this, Martin and Jan associate childcare with being carried out by feminine people. On the other hand, Magnus referred to fatherhood and childcare as related to masculinities. According to Hermanns and Mastel-Smith (2012), caregiving has an emotional component. Caretaking originates from caring for others which follows to having an affectional commitment to the well-being of another (Pearlin et al., 1990). In terms of motivation and emotional connection to the act of caretaking and the person in need, affection, love, empathy, and compassion are ingrained into the act of caretaking (Hermanns & Mastel-Smith, 2012). The participants also showed an understanding of femininities based on a relation between emotional responsiveness and caretaking, as they combined terms like "*sympathetic*" and *"care of children"* (Martin, 40s)*, "compassionate"* and "*emotionally receptive"* (Magnus, 40s) or "*warm"* and "*caring"* (Odvin, 60s). Magnus notes: *"Feminine traits, that's more kind of a compassionate, more emotionally receptive".* On the contrary, Odvin lays out that *"it is true for men as well"* to have warm and caring sides, but it is restrained by "*social acceptance".* He says:

> *"I have this feeling that girls allow themselves in the communities to, it's easier for them to show care for, for instance, animals. Men tend to be kind of "Yeah, okay, but…". I'm not sure of this, but I was born in the 50s, and I have this, it was not so usual and not very much accepted for a man to go for a walk with his baby and rolling the baby." (Odvin, 60s)*

Odvin's views on constructed femininities and feminine approaches to caring are based on an egalitarian argument as he believes caring is something women would "*allow themselves*", thus

socially constructed. Even though Jan points to the equal importance of both parents to the child and uses egalitarian arguments for childcare, his first association of caretaking to the biological aspect of birth, which is representative of essentialist views, stands in contrast to Odvin‘s association.

The participants describe the opposition to emotionally receptive as emotionally closed off, related to masculinities. Magnus explains, his social environment in his upbringing was shaped by machismo. Machismo is a construct of masculinities where the social the norm among men is to maintain an appearance of denying emotionality and eradicating emotional expressions. This construct refers to hypermasculinities (Russell, 2021). Martin elaborates:

> *“Masculine in the worst cliché as kind of maybe not being very emotionally open or expressive. I also found kind of of-putting in a way, that people would be closed off to the emotional side and the tough guy ideal”* (Magnus, 40s).

Those concepts of masculinities denying emotionality refer to hegemonic masculinities. Courtenay (2000) outlines characteristics hegemonic masculinities demonstrate, such as emotional control and denial of vulnerability and weakness. Such behaviours have impacts on mental health and can cause depression (Courtenay, 2000, p. 1389; Emslie et al., 2006). Jan is aware of the implications, he says:

> *“I mean, there's definitely issues facing men as well. I think men have a lot of pressure on them in society. And we also need to think about that because I mean, a lot of men don't really talk about their feelings much or are very often like emotionally closed.”* (Jan, 20s)

Detachment and dissociation of emotions relate to violent behaviour. A study conducted with male offenders with anger issues found that those who lack attachment to their emotions have more aggressive and violent behaviour (Roberton et al., 2015). Violence and risk-taking behaviour are associated with masculinities (Connell, 1995, pp. 68-69; Courtenay, 2000; Hedenqvist et al., 2021). Odvin depicts similar as he says:

> *“Sadly, it’s a bit like power or power, strength, and domination. […] Because mostly, it is men who are violent. Sadly, it is mostly men who are violent to women and children and even nature and even animals. I'm really furious about that.”* (Odvin, 60s)

Odvin refers to the essentialist idea of violence in men and masculinities. By negating and rejecting this association, he separates himself from such behaviour. Moreover, he expresses his anger about violence enacted by men, which influences his approach to environmentalism. This is discussed in chapter 7.3 in more detail.

6.2.5 Conclusion

The participants' perspectives on gendered identities are shaped by their social environments and the social gender norms that are predominant in their embedded society. They provided a depiction of masculinities and femininities based on their understanding of societal expectations of gender. At the same time, those normative depictions they present do not reflect their opinion of gendered identities as they refer to egalitarian perspectives to disengage with those hegemonic depictions of masculinities and femininities.

In the depictions of masculinities by the participants based on their understanding of social norms, masculinities are understood as dominant and destructive towards other gendered identities. The participants' associations with masculinities are congruent with the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities display social power and authority (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The stereotypical male images the participants portrayed, like alpha men, macho men or archetypical, varied in terminologies and showed a plurality of masculinities as illustrated in the concept of hegemonic masculinities. But eventually, their associations demonstrate masculinities as dominant and based on superiority over other social figures. The perspectives they draw on present patriarchal hierarchies and essentialist ideas of gendered identities in the form of hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities. Their understanding of masculinities correlates with the concept of hegemonic masculinities as they refer to the idea of hegemonic masculinities performing authority over subordinated nonhegemonic forms of masculinities, creating a hierarchy of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

7. Personal Approach to Masculinities and Femininities

This chapter examines the global theme 'personal approaches to masculinities and femininities' of the findings category 'gendered identities'. First, the organizing theme 'doing gender' of masculinities' negotiates the construction of masculinities and femininities through the participant's approaches to 'doing gender'. Further, the global theme 'approaches to bodies' discusses resistance and moments of engagement with hegemonic standards of bodies by the participants. Their approaches to power and dominance illustrated the organizing theme 'power relations', followed by a discussion of the participants' approaches to femininities and emotionality, depicting the organizing theme 'incorporated femininities'. At the end of this chapter, the exception of the participants is presented.

The participants' elaborations demonstrate how gender influences them in social situations and how they approach these constructions of gender with their ideals, behaviour, and practices. Though not explicitly asked what gender they identify with, during the interviews, all participants expressed that they identify with the male sex category, their cisgender. Some examples: *"I don't know why exactly, but I just do identify as male at the end of the day"* (Jan, 20s); *"I am a man"* (Martin, 40s); *"maybe a bit too classic man"* (Magnus, 40s); *"that is part of what the man that I want to be is"* (Joakim, 20s); "*now I'm a big man"* (Odvin, 60s).

All participants identify as male. However, their approaches towards masculinity and femininity vary in detail but share some similarities. In this chapter, I present how most participants refer to resisting reproductions of hegemonic body images, hegemonic ideals of dominance and power, and hegemonic ideas of masculinities. Generally, they rejected the heteronormative conception of "stereotypical man", which refers to their understanding of the hegemonic masculinities that are predominantly present in their social contexts. Jan said: *"I realized I don't really want to be labelled as this stereotypical man"*. Magnus said: *"But the masculine I've definitely felt like is not something I want, […] I felt an aversion to the overly masculine, definitely."* (Magnus, 40s). Additionally, one participant demonstrated other values and attitudes towards hegemonic masculinities than most of the participants which are presented in chapter 7.5.

7.1 The Relationship to 'Doing Gender'

In the 'doing gender' approach, people are either conforming to gender norms, or refusing to comply with them (Fenstermaker et al., 2002). According to Deutsch (2007), the idea of 'undoing gender' relates to a resistance to gender norms and conformity. While the participants had an understanding of the general construction and performing of gender norms and 'doing gender' in social situations,

they either resisted to relate to these gender norms or even expressed a desire to undo gender in their personal approach.

At first, Jakob expressed the subconscious level of 'doing gender', he says: *"I have an idea of what masculinity can be perceived in society as a whole, but I never think too much about what I'm doing is masculine, or not. It's never really been important"* (Jakob, 30s). Jakob is aware of a gendered society. The doing of gender in society is accomplished by enacting masculinities and femininities (Deutsch, 2007). As Jakob isn't aware of the process of actively producing gender in social contexts, yet he underlined his desire to be free in constructing his idea of gendered identities, detached from societal expectations, he says:

> *"And also, especially how freedom, personal freedom is connected to it, which for me, is important part of the gender identity, and to be free of others perceptions about my gender, and what they expect from me. Their expectations can limit my freedom. And I don't like that. […] It gives me more freedom in my life to be rebellious against the tropes and stereotypes. And I find it very entertaining to challenge others' ideas, and, and I like to do it, also, because I think it's important to challenge the stereotypes. And I've felt confident enough to do it. And also, just the pure spite of doing something other than what's expected."* (Jakob, 30s).

'Doing gender' means acting upon societal expectations of their own gender. Jakob's desire to enact in society without gendered expectations demonstrates dismissal and rejection of reproducing gender. His aspiration to seek freedom in gender reproduction is constructed in unconformity to gendered expectations within society, hence, relating to the approach of 'undoing gender' by Deutsch (2007).

Martin seeks out similar but produces an ambivalence, he says:

> *"I have an ironic distance to it. […] I could see it, but I could laugh about it. I don't take it [masculinities] that seriously. […] Because I think it's just something in people minds. Of course, it's hormones and things like that, biologically, but we shouldn't be that "opttatt av det" [concerned with it]. […] It doesn't mean so much to me. But when I am just a man then I guess I've been evolving like a man a bit."* (Martin, 40s)

Martin is aware of the reproduction of gender in society but dismisses this production of gender in social relations, stating it is unnecessary to engage with its gendered identities and behaviour. He refers to rejecting the notion of doing gender. Despite this, he outlines his reproduction of gender, creating an ambiguity between his attitude towards 'doing gender' and his behaviour and reproduction of gender in social contexts.

7.2 Participants Approaches to Bodies

The meanings of the depictions of hegemonic masculine bodies demonstrated by the participants have significance in their lives. Their depictions influences how they approach masculinities and femininities. It has an impact on their relationship to concepts of masculinities. In this chapter, the participants generated two approaches, creating two groups. One approach was enacted by Magnus, Jakob, Jan, and Odvin, who resist engaging with masculine body standards, whereas Martin and Joakim resonate with masculine bodies. This chapter discussed the ways the participants resist hegemonic norms of masculine bodies, as well as how they engage with them.

7.2.1 Resisting to Embody Masculine Bodies

Body practices are linked with identities of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 851). This is subject to the participants' understanding of hegemonic masculinities (see chapter 6.2.3). Magnus, Jakob and Odvin resonate with a resistance to produce masculine behaviour. Instead, they chose to do physical activities (drama, gymnastics) that aren't considered masculine. During their childhood, Odvin and Magnus interacted within hegemonic masculine environments where they encountered situations that were transformative in their development:

> *"I was always very small. The tiny guy. And I was a year younger than most when I went to school, so I was always way behind and very small physically. And then we had to play all these sport like rugby, very kind of physical sports. And I hated all of it because I couldn't need this. I did know where I was - below everyone else -physically."* (Magnus, 40s)

Connell (2005) elucidated that young men become a part of the institutional setting of construction of masculinities when joining a sport. Odvin had similar experiences, he says: *"when I was a kid, I was very thin and small. And I was bullied."*. As being tough, strong, and big is expected to be sought after by masculine men, both participants couldn't hold up to these hegemonic standards of masculinities. Their bodies and bodily capabilities were subordinated to hegemonic masculine images of bodies as feminine bodies are considered to be weak and smaller and subordinated to hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987; Schippers, 2007). When Odvin and Magnus could not reach masculine standards of body performance, they presented feminine attributes which positioned them outside of hegemonic masculinities. Moreover, men who exhibit feminine characteristics and are non-compliant to standards of masculine bodies refer to subordinated masculinities (Connell, 1995, pp. 78-79). For Magnus being subordinated to hegemonic masculinities meant opting for hobbies and interests that were not in line with masculine performance:

> *"So, in the end I didn't really - I never aspired to any kind of ideal. I think, I found out through that, that I had to do other things. I was kind of interested in theatre and drama and music,*

and there, masculinity didn't really mean as much or was as important. So, I guess in a way I ignored it or avoided it or deliberately just tried to not play into that stereotype. But I was surrounded by it. I definitely noticed that I don't or didn't deal very well with very macho man. No. I guess I've got some sort of -I think I've got some automatic ways of dealing with that. I try to avoid those figures." (Magnus, 40s)

In his childhood accounts, he discusses his nonconformity to traditional masculine norms, particularly in his preference for sports that don't necessarily emphasize physical strength. This reflects an understanding of the concept of subordinated masculinities. As a man, not adhering to these standards puts one in a position where they are socially denied to claim hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Connell, 2000). Furthermore, nonconformity can mean harmful consequences to those men. As for a society characterised by machismo, nonconforming men can be met with contempt and disdain by men who embrace machismo (Russell, 2021). They can be exposed to social exclusion from groups and face bullying or physical harm if they can't conform to hegemonic masculinities (Korobov, 2011). Odvin's experiences correspond to these consequences when he disclosed that he was bullied at a young age. Boys who can't conform to those hegemonic standards of masculinities and are excluded from masculinised spaces opt for inhabiting places that are feminised (Renold, 2004, p. 252). Inhabiting feminised places appeared to be a coping strategy for the participants' subordinated position. This shows when Magnus chose hobbies that move in feminised spaces. Similar to Magnus, Jakob engaged with feminized spheres in sport-related contexts and wasn't part of masculinized spheres. He says:

"When I said I was training silks, people where are asking more questions about why compared to when I was just, I'm running. And they're like "yeah sure great, you're running'. And I think that is because that was considered to be a more feminine sports compared to running, for example. But personally, I don't care." (Jakob, 30s)

Jakob's choice of hobby was training aerial silks, a form of acrobatics, which Jakob describes as a predominately "feminine sport". Being non-compliant and choosing hobbies and spaces that are considered feminine means being nonconforming to hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995, pp. 78-79; Renold, 2004, p. 252). Performing gender in nonconformity stands in accordance with the idea of 'undoing gender'. 'undoing gender' is evoking a resistance to gender norms (Deutsch, 2007), which refers to the participants' approaches to hegemonic masculinities. This shows explicitly in Jakob's approach to gender norms when he says:

"Oh, yeah, definitely, yeah. There are a lot more interesting. And also find it more interesting during that kinds of sports, also, because I know it would provoke someone. […] *I find it funny because I just find it interesting. I like to do what few people"* (Jakob, 30s)

Engaging with 'undoing gender' and being nonconform to gender norms is a behaviour that opposes gender stereotypes (Deutsch, 2007, p. 122). 'Undoing gender' corresponds to Jakob's reasoning to enact nonconforming sports to masculinities with a rebelliousness to conformity. Moreover, another form of coping strategy for men who perform non-dominant masculinities and move into feminine spheres is to establish an understanding of difference, differentiation and othering of their masculinities. This allows them to back control and superiority over their narrative (Emslie et al., 2006; Renold, 2004). As Jakob likes *"to do what few people do",* he establishes differentiation to those hegemonic masculinities as his coping strategy. Other participants like Odvin and Jan enact othering to hegemonic masculinities as well. For example, when Jan described his male peers, he indicated othering and differentiation. He says:

> *"I think a lot of these men I'm describing, don't really know themselves, or they're kind of afraid to explore different things. I think I would just be more open minded to different things and ideas."* (Jan, 20s)

Physical strength and fashion determined Jan's approach to masculine bodies. Jan's appearance and clothing style was a way to express his gendered identity. He presents an androgynous appearance and explains he lets his hair grow long in order to *"express himself",* as well as being perceived as a man even though it's breaking social norms in terms of gender expression:

> *"I think, I mean, being androgynous you kind of break the social norms. I mean, it's not really socially normal. It's not in the law or anything, but dressing even more- It's typical for a woman for example, growing out your hair. I mean, it's a lot normal now, but before it was kind of even looked down on, a lot of the time. So, for me, just dressing, I guess. In my fashion, the way I look, that's where I want to be most androgynous"* (Jan, 20s)

Jan is part of a queer community which influences his androgynous appearance, as queer communities challenge conventional gender dichotomies (Renold, 2004). He also states that most of his friends are women. Men who refer to non-hegemonic masculinities find comfort and identification within feminised social environments (Renold, 2004). Jan's differentiation to hegemonic masculinities led him to seek solace in non-hegemonic masculine spheres. Although he is part of a queer community, he repeatedly expressed his identification with being male and heterosexual.

7.2.2 Moments of Engagement with Masculine Bodies

Despite a resistance to engage with hegemonic masculine bodies, the participants mention developments of behaviour that represent a moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinities.

The moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinities is a moment where a boy, or in this case, the male participants, would take up "the project of hegemonic masculinities as his own" (Connell, 1990, p. 459). Odvin's coping strategy of being subordinated as a young man physically led him to engage with hegemonic masculinities. He says:

> *"And now I'm a big man, and maybe because I was bullied, I do have a black belt in Taekwondo, self-defence fighting strategies. And I have this in me that I would like to protect. Because now I can protect the ones who are being bullied, even animals. I sometimes dream that I protect the woman I love and kids. Why is that? Is this instinct? I don't know. At least it is in my power to do something to protect. And usually, I protect against men. Why is that? Because most mostly, it is men who are violent. Sadly, it is mostly men who are violent to women and children and even nature and even animals."* (Odvin, 60s)

The notion of protecting women reinforces patriarchal ideals of women as the weak gender. By wanting to fight against violence by protecting others, he inhabits masculinized spheres as well as performs hegemonic ideals of masculine bodies doing martial arts. Thus, Odvin's coping strategy for his non-hegemonic subordinated masculinity as a young man was to refer to hegemonic masculinities at a later age. This refers to his moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinities. By doing so, he enacts the notion of 'doing gender', acting based on gendered expectations on hegemonic standards of masculinities by engaging with masculine body practices that seek to protect the weak sex, reproducing patriarchal ideals on women and domination of women (Connell, 1987). Further, he presents an understanding of masculinities and violence and women's connection to nature as understood by ecofeminists which is elaborated in chapter 8.4.1.

Moreover, Magnus reflects:

> *"I definitely felt like this is - the older I've gotten, the more I felt like maybe it's becoming a parent, I felt some need to be able to demonstrate to my kids things. Whether it's like being involved in politics but also just at home being able to fix things and build things. And this is some weird need I've had to prove something, without ever thinking. If I didn't do it would have felt less like a man. […] If I haven't used time in building. But for me, that's a sense of accomplishment. The more I can control my life around me, or the more I can this kind of great sense of achievement, if I can fix something or build something."* (Manus)

Magnus acknowledges and describes to engage with masculine body standards. Magnus moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinities appeared when he stepped into his role as a father, performing body practices as a medium to engage with masculinities. His reasoning to enact masculine behaviour was to not feel "less like a man", which stands in contradiction to his incentive

and prior display to undo gender and to not strive for hegemonic masculinities. He creates an ambivalence between his egalitarian attitudes and his aspiration to not follow hegemonic masculinities with his behaviour that refers to a reproduction of hegemonic masculinities and 'doing gender'. Furthermore, Jakob refers to an engagement with hegemonic masculinities although he was moving in feminized spheres, and despite his resistance to engage with hegemonic masculine sports, he says:

> *"There is, of course, it's also easy to say when I'm running or training, I feel masculine, but I never think explicitly about it. […] I always consider myself to be male, but masculinity has never really been much. Not really something I've been talking about with friends or family"* (Jakob, 30s)

There is an ambiguity in his statements about preferences to follow activities that challenges traditional gender roles and a lack of identification to masculinities. At first, Jakob explains his preference to pursue (feminine) provoking activities and not comply with social expectations of his gender. Later, he refers to gendered physical activities that make him feel masculine and engages through his body with masculinities. He expresses conflicting approaches about engaging in physical activities that make him feel masculine and his attempts to undo gender. Similar ambivalence appeared in the interview with Martin, who believes society shouldn't be concerned with gendered identities as it wouldn't be essential nor applying to him. He articulates to have evolved into a traditional man and gendered his own physical activities:

> *"But when I am just a man, then I guess I've been evolving like a man a bit. […] I do things that is normal for men to do like I like to work in the garden, and I don't like that much to do things in the house, making food or something. So, that's not something I have planned to do, but it's like that. So, I'm typical - maybe a traditional man like that."* (Martin, 40s)

For Jan, presenting an androgynous appearance and engaging with non-hegemonic spheres did not influence his desire to be and be perceived as a man. He says:

> *"but I still want to be a man or seen as men by people. […] I don't want to be mistaken. […] I want to people to look at me and think, Oh, that's a dude. You know, that's not a woman"* (Jan, 20s)

He values conforming to the gendered expectations of his sex. Although he was not asked about his sexual orientation, he repeatedly stated his heterosexual orientation. Further, Jan expressed his intention to not reproduce stereotypes of the *"strong silent conservative father"* (see chapter 7.4). Yet, he does seek to be strong and identifies as male, striving to conform to hegemonic standards of

strength and appearing manly, and creates an ambivalence between his intentions and his engagements with hegemonic masculinities. He says:

> *"Well, I do identify as male […] I kind of want to be seen as like, bigger. I want to be tall. And I want to be strong. That's in a very deep way. I don't know why exactly, but I just do identify as male at the end of the day, and I think I want to be or look masculine, I suppose. Even though I don't maybe from the side, like my hair. But I mean, my dad is quite masculine. So, I guess I get it from him and have also like grown up out in the country [side]. So, I've done a lot of like, huge, like men, jobs, I guess you would call it, like chopping wood. […] And I guess I want to be manly, but in like the most untoxic way possible"* (Jan, 20s)

Consequently, like the other participants, Jan engages with masculine bodies and conforms to hegemonic standards of those bodies, reproducing gendered expectations of his gender and performing 'doing gender'.

7.3 Resisting Power and Dominance

In discourses and analysis of gendered identities and gender hierarchies, the influence of power and dominance comes to play. Power relations characterize social structures and gender order. According to Connell (1987), in a society where men relate to hegemonic masculinities, a patriarchal gender order allows hegemonic masculinities to hold power over other gendered identities like femininities, usually by domination. In this section, I examine the approaches to power and dominance by the participants.

Magnus reflects:

> *"In a way, I ignored it or avoided it or deliberately just tried to not play into that stereotype. […] Just bottle your emotions, and always aspire to be the alpha male leader type, which I never felt the need for. […] I've felt always an aversion to very masculine ideals. I've never felt kind of like they appealed to me at all"* (Magnus, 40s).

Magnus resents the picture of an alpha man that Russell (2021) demonstrates as a physically strong man who acts tough and strives to hypermasculine figures. Superiority over inferiority of other concepts of masculinities is desired. Alpha men dismiss femininities and understand masculinities as anti-female and anti-feminist. But the main point of the alpha man image is the idea of unquestioning and unquestioned leadership (Russell, 2021). Striving to attain leadership means gaining power in a particular setting. In that sense, alpha masculinity responds to a hierarchical understanding of masculinities of dominating femininities and non-dominant masculinities (Connell,

1987). While Magnus resents this ideal and presents himself as someone not aiming for this type of masculinities, he still believes he is "*a bit too classical man*". He says:

> *"When I got into my 30s and have a kid, I was very much not obsessed but focused on creating a nest, creating a comfortable home for my family. […] And then security. I was trying to achieve some security and providing for my family. And I felt like that was some need I had"* (Magnus, 40s)

An aspiration to protect and provide as a man refers to patriarchal ideals of domination of women (Connell, 1987). As Magnus had the need to provide for his family, he relates to hegemonic masculinities, whereas fatherhood and creating a family became his moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinities. Moreover, a patriarchal division of domestic labour and childcare reproduces domination over women (Connell, 1987). Magnus states he ended up fulfilling such typical gender roles, he says:

> *"That's the kind of weird thing that after I married and after we had kids, the way my wife and I have fallen into this strange very typical 50s style household, where I'm often working overtime and she's very often - she's working, too, but she end up being the one at home making dinner, when the kids get there, making their lunch for them, going to school. And we renovated our house, then I've taken pleasure in building, renovating, and doing all this very king of physical stuff, that is weird. […] cause I kind of avoided that masculine thing and then found myself kind of fulfilling some of these cliches in a way."* (Magnus, 40s)

Magnus explains that his partnership follows a gendered distribution of household tasks and childcare, as described by West and Zimmerman (1987). Labour division produces 'doing gender' in everyday life situations as the household members do gender by executing household tasks. By doing so, each partner draws upon an essential nature of sex categories (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p. 144). Magnus's argumentation is based on egalitarian attitudes but presents a contradiction between his attitudes and his behaviour that doesn't show egalitarian practices. Thus, he performs a "spoken egalitarianism" (Usdansky, 2011, p. 164). Connell (1987) highlights the control men occupy over the division of labour and the domination of their interests over their female partners to opt out of household labour. This enables men to keep their powerful positions (p. 106). While this doesn't rule out or negate Magnus's share in domestic labour regarding maintenance labour for their home, as he says he is building and fixing around the house, he still highlights the *"pleasure"* in regard to choosing to do this type of work which points to the availability of men to opt-out of responsibilities and choosing labour according to their interests (Connell, 1987).

Magnus doesn't embody hegemonic masculinities himself, but the moment Magnus started to be a husband and father, he engaged with the hegemonic standards of masculinities. He reproduces a gendered social order by enacting traditional division of tasks, for example, leaving the burden of having a greater responsibility towards childcare and general house chores on to the female partner. An ambivalence emerges between Magnus's statement of negating alpha masculinity and preferring a non-dominating approach while engaging with traditional labour division. This eventually reinforces gendered power relations. He enacts complicity to the hierarchy of gender and subordination of women, hence, to hegemonic masculinities and, as a result, engages with the concept of complicit masculinities (Connell & Connell, 2000). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that engagement with hegemonic masculinities at any time implies a maintenance of patriarchy and domination of women (p. 454).

Similar ambivalence applies to Jan's and Jakob's approaches to their own masculinities. As earlier established, Jan depicts an understanding of masculinities based on the idea of toxic masculinities resembling power dynamics. He says: *"it's more normal in society for a man to take more space versus a woman"* and further elaborates:

> *"I mean, I think it's just beyond importance. It's fights, or feminism specifically is a fight that's been going on for, I guess, you could say 1000s of years really, I mean, men have historically been the, like, the most powerful sex and in all leader roles […] in general, men have been the power, powerful or the ones who have kind of controlled everything. So, I think it's a very, like primitive, I think we should evolve or go forward and give everyone the same rights, equal rights. No one should kind of be over the other, you know, discrimination." (Jan, 20s)*

The concept of toxic masculinities deals with acknowledging the damaging effects of dominating masculinities, linking masculinities with violence verbally, physically, economically, and sexually, which usually targets women (Russell, 2021). Instead of striving to achieve a powerful status, Jan emphasizes feminism and the notion of equality between women and men. Further, he says*: "And I guess I want to be manly, but in like the most untoxic way possible".* When I asked him what being *"untoxic"* means, his answer in relation to power and dominance was:

> *"I suppose it would be teaching my children about like the issues, the world, in the world the women are facing and also being respectful to my wife. I don't know, giving her the same opportunities in my own- or in our relationship and our marriage, I guess and not being like the, the silent, strong silent conservative father who is like the man in the house and controls everything makes his wife sit at home and cook, while he goes to work. That's like, not what I want, like the traditional type, family man."* (Jan, 20s)

By being *"untoxic",* Jan aims to achieve an equal power balance in a relationship by eradicating *"traditional"* dominance of a man over his wife. He explains it would mean "*giving her the same opportunities"* as he has. By the choice of his words, Jan creates an ambivalence between his aspiration to achieve a balance of power and which role he would play in this. As he uses "give" as the word of choice, it implies he'd have a decision power and dominance over her opportunities in life. If one person dominates the decision-making power in a relationship, it creates an imbalance of power. Further, Jakob began with a refusal to approach his masculinities based on hegemonic ideas. He says:

> *Well, if you compare it to, to sort of the Alpha idea, I'm not an, and I don't want to be, and I don't care about that kind of ideal for masculinity. So, it's not something to strive for. You sort of create a very archetypical idea of what to strive for in that kind of alpha and male masculinity or toxic masculinity […] And for me, personally, I don't need to define what this is. I like being in this grey area."* (Jakob, 30s)

The alpha ideology stems from the term "alpha", which is used in understanding animal behaviour (Sumra, 2019). This ideology is rooted in natural arguments and reasoning, and therefore is associated with essentialist beliefs. Jakob shows preference to define his approach to masculinities egalitarian, saying he like to be *"in this grey area".* When I asked Jakob if he had masculine traits, he would attach on himself, he answered:

> *"I think it means to be independent, and to solve my own problems, and also to solve the problems of those I care about. Especially the independent parts. […] Going my own ways, doing so essentially, owning and controlling my own freedom, I consider it to be masculine traits."* (Jakob, 30s)

Behaviour portraying independence and autonomy has been associated with masculinities, while behaviour showing dependency was seen in connection with femininities (Lansky & McKay, 1969). In some social constructions of hegemonic masculinities, being economically independent is socially expected for hegemonic masculine men (Connell, 1987, p. 100; Smith et al., 2007). These traditional ideals of autonomy in masculinities are described as masculine autonomy, where self-sufficiency and control are desired. This essentially "reproduce[s] gender hierarchies and men's dominance" and gender inequalities (Elliott et al., 2022, pp. 576-577). This ideal avoids dependency, whereas dependence is attributed to women. Autonomy, on the other side, has been denied to women in some contexts through political suppression and gender socialization (Friedman, 2000).

In the context of masculine autonomy and Jakob's expressions, his self-ascription of independence and control in his personal construction of masculinities constitutes an aspiration to hegemonic

masculinities, although not consciously attempted by Jakob. Eventually, it serves hierarchical gendered dynamics. According to Friedman (2000), feminists argue that a realization of independence occurs with an act of "selfish detachment from human connection" (p.217), though Elliott et al. (2022) and Friedman (2000) emphasize a presence of relationality in enacting autonomy. Jakob indicates a relational aspect with caring and solving problems. On the other side, his desire to be independent and solve problems for those he cares about can create a dependency on those he solves issues. It indicates a subconscious act of taking independence from others and implies an application of domination. In terms of intimate partnerships and domestic labour Jakob says:

> *"Well, to put it simply, if our car is broken, I'm not the one fixing it. That's my fiancée. She is a woman. And I'm perfectly fine with that, because she's way better with cars than I am. I would understand this if someone else would consider that to be threatening as their masculinity because of the whole cultural thing, but I don't care. She's better than me, so why should I care about trying to do something instead of her? Just because of cultural expectations of masculinity when she is better?"* (Jakob, 30s)

Compared to Magnus, who portrays a "spoken egalitarianism" (Usdansky, 2011), Jakob expressed his desire to define gender in grey areas, free from gendered expectation (see chapter 7.1). He argues with egalitarian aspects and portrays his behaviour in his private spaces in line with his values of egalitarianism. But he also examines differently:

> *"When I talk about money investments in the family. I talked about with my father and my brother-in-law, but with none of the women because they're not interested in it. […] I'm sort of also contributing to it with by not talking about money with the women, which is sort of reinforcing the divide, instead of bridging the gap. That can be fixed."* (Jakob, 30s)

His egalitarian attitudes towards gendered identities support his lifestyle in some aspects, but not all. He explains his part of not including his partner in economic matters and discussions. For certain aspects of his relationship with his partner, he is not in line with his egalitarian attitudes, showing a side of "spoken egalitarianism". As he became aware of this ambivalence between attitude and behaviour, he believes it "can be fixed", referring to a possible change in his behaviour. On the other side, he mentions some aspects of domestic tasks that indicate an undoing of gender as they don't portray traditional household division of tasks based on gender roles. Besides those he mentioned, it is unclear whether other household chores are gendered or nonconforming. After all, his approach to doing and 'undoing gender' shows resonance with a resistance to produce gender in social relations as it is consistent with his behaviour in relation to his partner and traditional household tasks division as he dismisses meeting expectations of masculinities to reproduce dominance.

Odvin explicitly states rejecting domination, he says: "*Sadly, it's a bit like power or power, strength and domination. I don't like that. Yeah, because I don't want to be a part of that. I say sadly, because I tried to cultivate feminine qualities".*

As coping strategy, he is incorporating feminine aspects in his behaviour, which is examined in the next section of this chapter. Further Odvin elaborates:

> *"I'm ashamed of being a man because men do a lot of violent stuff and less, women do less of that. The best leaders I have had in my work life have been women. Because they govern from listening and caring more than being dominant. And I hope this will change because I'm not that kind of a leader. And my friends are not. So, let's change this. […] So, I have some prejudice against my own gender."* (Odvin, 60s)

According to Elliott (2016), rejecting domination within the gender order hierarchies is one core aspect of caring masculinities, which will be more elaborated in the next subchapter.

7.4 Relating with Femininities and Emotions

According to Hoskin (2020), the superior position of masculinities over femininities is unrelated to manhood or womanhood. Femininities are independent and can apply to both men and women, which is applied to the participants in this chapter. Domination is central to hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987; Elliott, 2016) and has its foundation in the devaluation of femininities (Hoskin, 2020). The participants express to resent this, for example, by not striving to be an alpha man. Instead of devaluing them, they express a positive approach to femininities by relating to feminine aspects in their gendered identities. To most participants, those femininities apply to mental/psychological aspects, such as emotionality and relationality, and less to psychical elements. Each participant has a different approach to this subject. Some relate to more parts of femininities, others less. Compared to the other participants, Odvin refers to the concept of caring masculinities (Elliott, 2016) as he rejects dominance and incorporates caring aspects in his life and character. He explains:

> *"Masculine is kind of rough and very confident, but it's not like that, I'm not like that. […] I am soft, I cry, I care. […] I try to cultivate being more, exactly feminine, I tried to be what the stereotypical feminine used to be, but I also feel that this is changing. So now many of my male friends are developing more like I try to. I can give my male buddies a long, warm, caring hug. And with several of my male friends, we have sat together crying, because we are struggling, maybe with love or with loss. And, and this is a traditionally female thing and it's not true, because we are like this, also. We are just being taught to hide. And I don't like that. […] And I really try to make around me, to participate in making a warm community […] it's*

easier to find compassion and care and to seek comfort with the feminine than with the masculine, or with men." (Odvin, 60s)

Odvin's approach responds to an integration of interdependence, positive emotions, relationality, and resentment of domination that are embedded into caring masculinities (Elliott, 2016, p. 252). He further explains his experiences with showing empathy and care:

> *"And that is my kind of agenda also to make it more safe for men to show their warm and caring sides, because this is true for men as well. And as I opened, I feel empathy. And I can open that when I feel confident that my male buddies will accept me, even if I am this soft and caring person. My beautiful experience is that when I open up this, they also dare to show me their vulnerable sides and their warm and caring hearts […] I think it is pretty equally between men and women, but it is a different social acceptance."* (Odvin, 60s)

A devaluation of feminine gender constructions and performances maintains gender binaries. Moreover, this devaluation maintains the subordination of femininities to masculinities (Hoskin, 2020). By actively incorporating feminine characteristics, Odvin denies a devaluation of femininities and, consequently, the masculine domination over femininities. Incorporating caring causes men to lose hegemonic masculinities and exposure to the judgement of inferiority by other men (Hanlon, 2012, p. 130). Yet, he encounters situations with men that don't reflect this judgement and articulates his relationship to other men, characterised by caring and emotionality. Hanlon (2012) outlines how caring offers emotional closeness in relationships and illustrates other men's accounts of experiencing good feelings when sharing emotional connections with other men, such as joy, happiness and responsibility (Hanlon, 2012, p. 137). His corresponds to Odvin's positive depiction of caring friendships.

To some degree, Odvin resonates with caring masculinities as practices some characteristics of caring masculinities. The other participants share similar values and practices, but not all of them. For example, some participants discuss their relationship to emotions. Magnus mentions that stereotypical alpha men "bottle [their] emotions". Connell and Connell (2000) point out how middle-class Western masculinities pursue emotional suppression and denial of vulnerability. Magnus, Jakob, Jan, and Odvin try to approach emotions differently than depicted in hegemonic masculinities. For example, Jan says he wants to *"not being like the, the silent, strong silent conservative father"*. Magnus highlights that he "*avoided it or deliberately just tried to not play into that stereotype. […] Just bottle your emotions".* His consideration of emotion challenged was challenged by hegemonic masculinities, he says:

> *"I was always kind of more interested - I was quite open to try and work out where I was emotionally as well. Growing up, that was not always maybe accepted by, especially an older generation of men who grew up with this very rigid idea of what a man is"* (Magnus, 40s).

Masculinities that redefine their relationship to emotions outside of the hegemonic standard of masculinities must reconstruct their relationship to hegemonic masculinities. A study in the UK found men that struggled with mental health issues had to renegotiate their approach to emotion. They faced cultural rejection and "multiple insults to their sense of masculinity" by being viewed as and called sensitive, weak, or being bullied by others when expressing emotions (Emslie et al., 2006, p. 2250). These cultural consequences, bullying and exclusion, were elaborated in section 7.2 where the participants didn't aspire to the hegemonic idea of performative bodies. For the men with mental health issues in the UK, insults to the sense of masculinities led to a reconstruction of their approaches to masculinity by reframing feminised aspects as masculine or defining their identities around difference as resistance to hegemonic masculinities (Emslie et al., 2006). The narrative of difference to hegemonic masculinities is something the participants constructed their masculinities around and refer to resist hegemonic masculinities. Instead of masculinising feminine attributes, they valued them. For example, Magnus says:

> *"I wasn't interested in training, and I was quite open to try and work out where I was emotionally as well […] I think I've always just thought of more deliberately not being, feeling a need to be super masculine. That's been something I've never thought deliberately about myself, being feminine. But I did, in a way, I mean, it just felt normal to me. I grew up with my mother. I grew up with grandmother and her two sisters. So, there was this kind of strong feminine presence that I think was in a way my idea of normal in a way. But they were all very independent women who could seem to be very much in control of their lives […] I felt like if I was gonna get older and wiser, I should also be more open emotionally. I felt like that since I was quite young. So, that's maybe something that's feminine in a way with my identity. Yeah, you could say that."* (Magnus, 40s)

Magnus depictions of femininities based on his female role models refers to valuing femininities which stand in contrast to the hegemonic devaluation of femininities (Hoskin, 2020). Yet, his argumentation regarding his positive perception of femininities resonates with the hegemonic idea of independence. In this way, he refers to the masculinized attribute as feminine and to an egalitarian approach to independence by perceiving independence as ungendered.

Furthermore, Magnus states he sought to work on his emotional development. Developing emotionality corresponds to differentiation from hegemonic masculinities (Emslie et al., 2006). Similar to Jan, Magnus's coping strategy to refer to subordinated masculinities and differentiation

was being part of a queer community. This queer environment offered him spaces outside of hegemonic standards to find comfort in, he says:

> *"I had a lot of friends who were in that world [queer scene], and I think that they would be quite deliberately more feminine in their way of expressing themselves. And so, then there were these kind of masculine ideals at one end, and then you have this strong homosexual community who were very much the opposite, on purpose. And then I found that kind of, I would say, I found a spot in the middle where I didn't feel like I had to be either of those things basically."* (Magnus, 40s)

In their approaches to emotionality, both participants, Jan and Magnus, were influenced with those non-conforming and challenging of dichotomization by queer environments. The challenge of dichotomies that queer communities embody (Renold, 2004) provided Magnus with a non-hegemonic space to associate with. Additionally, he states he found a middle way between both spaces, indicating he also referred to hegemonic society in some ways but didn't elaborate on this further. Jan says:

> *"I think it's built like integrated inside of me to, to be a bit more closed off because have grown up in that kind of environment, but I would try to, like learn to be more open minded and share my feelings. and I guess I mean, we evolve as people I think, and we can change, and I think in recent year or the last like year and a half I have been a lot more open and like yeah, I've definitely talked with my friends a lot more about different things. Like for example, mental health which is really important to talk about. That's the best way to fight against it, or just like I guess make it better, you know, to talk about different things that are happening inside a person's head."* (Jan, 20s)

Yet, Jan identifies his tendency to be "closed off", which relates to hegemonic masculine standards of emotional detachment (Courtenay, 2000; Russell, 2021). Yet, he engages in an environment that challenges his relationship with emotions. Not all participants referred to such emotional aspects of femininities. For example, Martin's relationship to emotions resembles hegemonic masculine approaches to emotions. Yet, he values emotionality. He says:

> *"I like that people do show emotions very quick. It's a part of the communication. Maybe I'm not that good to do it myself, but I think it's good to do it. […] So, I think I could fit into a very traditional role system maybe*." (Martin, 40s)

Martin believes he refers to hegemonic masculine standards in being emotionally detached and positions himself within a *"traditional role system".* He interacts with 'doing gender' when he

appoints this position to himself and acts accordingly to hegemonic masculine standards by being emotionally detached.

Further, Jakob also repels the notion of devaluing femininities by protesting the idea of being insulted for having attributed feminine characteristics. Instead, he interprets this as a compliment as an act of resistance to societal expectations of his gender. He states:

> *"It has never been important for me to be perceived as masculine. But at the other side, on the other hand, if someone were to tell me that I am feminine, I would of principal and of spite, consider it as a compliment. But I would think about both what does that mean?"* (Jakob, 30s)

Jakob, who moved within feminized spheres such as aerial silks aerobics, acts in non-conformity with hegemonic masculinities by engaging with feminine-associated sports (see chapter 7.2.1). Also, he states to like "*to do what few people do*" which refers to acting non-conform and social expectations, thus, appealing to 'undoing gender' (Deutsch, 2007, p. 122). Here, he refers to 'undoing gender' when he resists the notion of devaluing femininities and the masculine idea of rejecting femininities in their gendered identities, which is expected from men embodying masculinities (Korobov, 2011; Russell, 2021). Later, he presents a different picture and argument. He says:

> *"Because I consider myself as male, I'm also expected to be masculine. But I think there's quite a lot of overlap between the feminine and the masculine. And so therefore, I would not be insulted. But as a male, it would be, it would be odd for me to say: "Yes, of course, I'm feminine." Because we are expected to and taught to consider yourself to be masculine, first, and partly feminine. But not too much."* (Jakob, 30s)

Despite Jakob's relation to 'undoing gender' by stating his non-conformity to gender roles, he says it would be "odd" for him to attach feminine attributes to him. He indicates his conformity to social expectations of masculinities. His approaches create an ambiguity between doing and 'undoing gender'His reasoning for valuing femininities and *"not be insulted"* is the *"overlap between the feminine and the masculine"*, referring to an egalitarian perspective on gendered identities. He answers to this ambiguity b relating to egalitarian arguments, he says:

> *"The entire problem with it's so it's so polarized, the question is polarizing. I'm sort of so used to this grey area thing. And so, by answering it, I'm sort of been forced into providing it to a stereotypical idea of the genders. Well, I'm better at talking about feelings than my partner, for example, which might often be perceived as a more feminine trait than masculine, for example. So, I'm always the one forcing it. Also, then everything that is connected to a relationship, I'm the one lifting the important and sensitive conversations and talking about*

feelings and that entire aspect. Which for many would be considered feminine. But for me, it's not about femininity or masculinity, it's about being a good person." (Jakob, 30s)

It was uncomfortable for Jakob to answer the question as he prefers an egalitarian perspective when he says, *"it's not about femininity of masculinity, it's about being a good person"* (Jakob, 30s) to be emotional in relationships. His approach to femininities is ambivalent. On the one side, he states feminine attributes would compliment him and indicate to value femininities. Conversely, he refuses to actively attach feminine attributes to himself. Instead, he prefers an egalitarian approach. However, he also refers to fulfilling expectations of his gender, which he seems to intend. By doing so, he prefers to be judged by society according to his gender and as inferior by other men (Hanlon, 2012, p. 130). Thus, he doesn't aspire to resonate with femininities. He chose the path of going gender by conforming to the social expectations of his gender despite sharing his aspirations to reject those expectations. Through the lens of egalitarianism, he performs a contradictory approach understood as "spoken egalitarianism" (Usdansky, 2011), as he holds egalitarian ideologies but practices a more nonegalitarian approach by conforming to hegemonic masculine standards.

7.5 The Exception

In his approach to gendered identities, Joakim predominately refers to an interaction with hegemonic masculine standards. He was the only participant who did not relate to resisting masculinities and did not present attributes of subordination to hegemonic masculinities in his approach. About being a man and masculine, he says:

> *"I don't think it's anything that I go around trying to do, trying to be like these things. […] I think that's more like ingrained into, I guess, just the way I think, the way I act. It sorts of feel like a compass or something. So, I wouldn't say like actively proceed, trying to appear like strong or courageous, it's not something I try, it's just something I think when I'm making decisions. […] And of course, that means, I guess, working out and stuff like that. It may be the closest thing to 'trying' that to do, but I wouldn't say like other than that I would try to go around being masculine. It's just something, as I said, it's more like attached to how I think and more on a deeper level and not something that I go on making decisions and trying to be masculine."* (Joakim, 20s)

Joakim strives for hegemonic masculinities. When I asked him what masculine traits he has, he said:

> *"If being strong is a trait, I think, I think I'm above average in that. But that's just strong strength and there's also resilience […] meeting challenges head-on, not being too afraid of risks and I also identified with that."* (Joakim, 20s)

Joakim's description of his masculinities meets the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities, which are identified as the opposition the other participants strive for, despite engaging with hegemonic masculinities in certain areas. Joakim is striving for bodily strength and chooses risk-taking behaviour, both associated with hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Connell, 2000; Courtenay, 2000) and doesn't position himself into "othering" masculinities (Renold, 2004, pp. 251-254) compared to the other participants.

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8. The Participants Relationship with Gendered Environmentalism

This chapter discusses the findings of the participants' relationship to gendered environmentalism (see table 3). The first two chapters present the global theme 'connections, associations and ideologies about gendered environmentalism'. Chapter 8.1's organizing theme "general associations" demonstrates the participants' various depictions of gendered environmentalism. The second organizing theme, 'combination of progressive social politics: gender and environment' is presented in chapter 8.2 where I discuss the participants' associations with environment and feminist discourses, ecofeminists perspectives, queer movements and the exclusion of moderate people. Chapter 8.4 examines the environmental gendered identities the participants resonate with, which is the second global theme of the organization. Lastly, an additional chapter touches on generational differences, as the participants often referred to those.

8.1 General Associations with Gendered Environmentalism

This chapter discusses different associations and connections made by the participants. Firstly, I present the participants' perceptions of an egalitarian non-gendered concern for environmental issues, followed by gendered interests the participants notice when being environmentally active.

8.1.1 Non-Gendered Concern for Climate Change

The participants believe that being concerned for climate change and for the environment is not connected with gender, nor femininities or masculinities. For example, Martin says:

> *"In itself, I don't think it's masculine. It has nothing to do about male things in itself because it's a human thing, I think. It's like asking the bottle: Are you male or female?"* (Martin, 40s)

Joakim explains his concern as a result of his upbringing and universally for society:

> *"My concern is based on knowledge and research. So, my concern about climate change stems from the knowledge and not because I'm a man. […] I think they would definitely be right, saying that's something that a lot of females do. But if they said, being concerned about climate change would be a feminine trait, I would not agree with that at all. I think, acting upon knowledge is just universally and shouldn't be associating with femininity or masculinity. Yeah, that's just common sense"* (Joakim, 20s)

Martin's and Joakim's approach to their concern for climate change stems from egalitarian perspectives of humans being equal (Laws, 2022) when they say concern is not gendered but "*common sense*" and *"a human thing",* as egalitarianism perceives humans as equal. Moreover, they refer to 'undoing gender' as they seek to deconstruct gendered aspects I relation to environmental

engagement. Same as the others, Jan has an egalitarian approach to a concern for climate and arguments with the effects of climate change on a society where gender doesn't play a role, he says:

> *"A connection between my climate activism and my gender identity? Yeah. I don't know. I mean, I think it comes back to the fact that I think everyone should be active in this like, despite been- it goes beyond gender identity, I think. It's a problem that concerns everyone in society, whether you're rich or poor, or you're a man or a woman or whatever, you identify as, and yeah, race also, whatever, anything. Just the fact that you're human, this is going to concern you, […] you should feel obliged to fight against it and fight for the good of everyone else like humanity in general, too."* (Jan, 20s)

Despite the belief that climate change should concern people independently from gender, the participants acknowledge gendered participation in climate activism, recognizing more women being active than men. Joakim presents an explanation for why few men participate in climate activism and what is different about him. He says:

> *"And those concerns are rooted in, I guess, what I mentioned earlier with how I learned about climate change from my family. And I don't think that all men have that. They have parents without those backgrounds. And so, it's not something they encounter too much in their childhood. So, I think that's why maybe me instead of other people, or other men, because I've been concerned about these things for a very long time. And I don't - I think if people were presented with the facts, that more men and women would be more engaged and more concerned*." (Joakim, 20s)

While being concerned for climate issues, Joakim perceives a difference between him and other men. He believes his exposure to climate issues in his childhood differentiates him from other men. He does not connect climate concerns with masculine identities or gendered identities. Moreover, he presents that developing such a concern depends upon exposure to climate topics and access to information during a person's upbringing. His approach to environmental concern refers to an egalitarian perspective and 'undoing gender' when he refers to his understanding of engagement that is dependent on access to facts and upbringing, not on gendered identities. When I asked him which information and facts he had access to that other men didn't have, he wouldn't know the answer as it is *"kind of hard to answer"*.

8.1.2 Gendered Interests of Environmentalism

In the prior chapter it was mentioned that the participants perceive an imbalance of men and women participating in environmental and climate contexts. For example, Joakim says:

> "*In my age group, it's like maybe 80% are women, 70-30 or 80-20. So, it's definitely the vast majority of the people that I encounter in different organizations, here in Bergen, most of the people there are female."* (Joakim, 20s)

As no study represents numbers on gendered participation differences, the numbers Joakim mentions stand for his personal perception and experiences when interacting with environmental organizations and institutions. Yet, scholars explain a refusal of men interacting with environmentalist spheres with performing masculinities. Certain conceptions of masculinities, such as hypermasculinities, are not represented in environmentalist spheres. They resist climate action as they associate such spheres with femininities that threaten their masculinities, which they seek to preserve (Pajumets & Hearn, 2021). Consequently, men chose products and actions that reinforce climate destruction. On the one hand, Martin resists associating concern for climate change with femininities of masculinities, yet he outlines a gendered aspect, he says:

> *"I could, of course, see, because if you see these typical gender icons, or pictures, then of course it's old thoughts about male should get to kill animals and driving noisy cars. And that's not typical woman to do. So, that's the easy association that the culture has given me."* (Martin, 40s)

Martin prefers an egalitarian approach to climate change concerns but can identify masculine practices interacting with environmental destruction. He highlights that those associations are based on cultural expectations of genders. Yet, this association and depiction do not reflect his own approach to gender and environment as he chooses perspectives of egalitarianism.

Furthermore, approaches to climate engagement and climate change policies are gendered. Swim et al. (2018) present studies regarding climate change policy arguments. Women hold more ethical/justice arguments that are considered with femininities, while the science/economic arguments are chosen by men that uphold masculinities. Ehrtmann et al. (2019) address how approaches to interests and vocational choices show gendered differences. For example, a meta-analysis presents studies that showed that men prefer to work with objects and have more realistic and investigative interests. At the same time, women's preference lies in working with people and having more interest in artistic, social and conventional domains (Su et al., 2009). In Joakim's associations with gendered environmentalism, he perceives similar differences in arguing for climate activism. He says:

> *"I would say in a general sense that- It is, at least from my observation- men are generally somewhat more sceptical than the women are. I feel like most of the women at least that I've met through my work have been more idealistic than the men. […] those I do meet, most of*

> *those that are idealistic, are female. […] But those women that I've been working with are like they're starting like good initiatives that do not necessarily- they may bring- make 20 people aware of a problem, but they don't cut any emissions […] The male colleagues I meet […] are more realistic than the woman."* (Joakim, 20s)

Realism and idealism have been associated as two opposing ontological entities (Stepanich, 1991). In literature, idealism-realism debates have been viewed as gendered where male realistic approaches dominate the standard of writing, whilst idealistic female approaches are trivialized and demonstrated as inferior to realism (Maier, 2004). In the context of environmentalism, Joakim observes such gendered differences based on idealism and realism. He positions those entities in contexts of gendered binaries while attaching idealism to women and realism to men. His perspective resonates with the gendered differences in other contexts, for example vocational choices and interests where women chose more idealistic artistic work fields, and men present work interests that are realistic and investigative (Su et al., 2009). Furthermore, Jakob identifies gendered differences in approaches to finances related to climate change. He says:

> *"Since we're trying to figure out those terms masculine, to work with technology and technological solutions to climate change, economic perspectives, while the less consumption parts might be considered more feminine. I think it might be connected to the traditional ideas of man working economics, etc, and woman, more the traditional idea of the woman"* (Jakob, 30s)

Swim et al. (2018) found a connection between men who enact masculinities relating to economic arguments. This connection is taken up by the descriptions of industrial/breadwinner and ecomodern masculinities (Hultman & Pulé, 2020) as they connect performing hegemonic masculinities with environmental decisions. Those concepts of masculinities approach environmental decisions and general lifestyle decisions based on economic aspects. There are two depictions of the participants demonstrating men's masculinities and their relationship to the environment. One deals with behaviour and attitude that enact masculinities and refers to practices that cause climate and environmental degradation, such as consuming meat and driving fossil fuel vehicles. The other picture demonstrates attitudes towards climate policies that integrate efforts related to masculine elements, such as economic-oriented decisions, which refer to characteristics of ecomodern masculinities. Ecomodern masculinities combine upholding the status quo of increasing economic growth while attempting to find solutions to environmental problems that do not disturb their lifestyle and economic growth (Dockstader & Bell, 2020; Hultman & Pulé, 2020).

As the participants outline connections with masculine and feminine constructions of gendered identities and environmental issues and policies, they argue with a non-gendered perspective on

environmental aspects. They intend to approach environmentalism as egalitarian while negating gendered environmentalism. They create ambiguity when they present gendered aspects that relate to environmentalism, such as masculine environmental destruction or the inclusion of economic efforts attributed to men. Yet, when outlining their connections with gendered environmentalism, it represents perspectives through society's lens and does not reflect their attitudes. Thus, they negate this connection, argue with egalitarianism, and prefer perspectives that refer to it.

8.2 Gendered Progressive Social Politics and its Exclusiveness

This chapter presents the second organizing theme 'combination of progressive politics of the global theme about the connections with gendered environmentalism (see Table 3). It deals with the relationship between feministic and environmental discourses and the effects this liaison has on people that present other values.

8.2.1 A Liaison of Feminism and Environmentalism

King and Plant (1989) argue that misogyny and environmental destruction appear together. They reinforce each other, which presents in a system of domination over women and the environment. It leads to a necessity for ecological feminism and feministic ecology. (King & Plant, 1989; Plumwood, 2000, p. 151). During the interviews, some participants connected directly or indirectly with environmental engagement and other social causes like feminism. Jan elaborates on discourses within his environmental organisation, outlining that it *"is sort of very tied to feminism, and the whole fights, like for women".* He says: *"climate change activism is very tied to other societal issues, you know, like inequality, the pay gap and racism as well, I think, in many ways".* Further, Magnus describes discourses within his environmental organisation, he says:

> *"We've tried to have some debates […] about racism, about treatment of immigrants, and the treatment of minorities, and the treatment of young women […] We keep a distance from acts of racism." (Magnus, 40s)*

He formulates a clear integration of socially progressive discourses in the organization he's part of and further, he provides his personal perspective. He says:

> *"We're still breaking the glass ceiling when it comes to women's rights. And then there's this whole wave now of other genders or non-gender specific, that is something that in a way I have a very good understanding of myself, and then I can see that being the next wave of acceptance that we're gonna have to try and get to happen, achieve. […] I feel it's deeply connected to dealing with climate change, and that naturally that also deals with a lot of other progressive social politics. I would be surprised, I mean, it doesn't seem to exist this kind*

of ultra conservative green politics. I don't think that's happen anyway. I think socially progressive and progressive on climate change seem to be a natural kind of union there. I haven't been aware of any parties anywhere in the world that are hardlines against, for example, homosexuality, or other social issues, and are for protecting the climate […] So, I feel like it's a natural alliance in a way." (Magnus, 40s)

This natural alliance Magnus describes shows how other social causes are intertwined with the climate cause. He mentions the fight for women's rights and gender equality, as well as rights for queer communities and employs those feminist perspectives. This liaison between feminism and environmentalism has been recognized by scholars and explained by ecofeminists (Connell, 1990; Hultman & Pulé, 2020; King & Plant, 1989; Stoddart & Tindall, 2011). Hultman and Pulé (2020) depict a variety of ecofeminist perspectives. One perspective of ecofeminism is viewing nature and womanhood as an integral unity. Odvin and Joakim recognize this unity when they connect environmental aspects with femininities. Another perspective Hultman and Pulé (2020) offer is what Magnus identifies as *"a natural kind of union"* of progressive social discourses and environmental discourses. Instead of focusing on essentialist views on femininities and the environment, Magnus's point of view puts political and social discourses to his attention. According to ecofeminists, this union is necessary to gain new elements of insight and development in environmental contexts as political leaders, usually male, have a limited ability to act (Hultman & Pulé, 2020; Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013). According to Mihailov and Sakelarieva (2013), the limitation stems from the notion of structural domination over the environment, animals and women by a system made by and for men, which ecofeminist perspectives aim to reject and dismantle. They view this system as a system of dichotomies, female-male, and seek to abolish it (p. 250-251).

Dismantling dichotomies is a notion queer movements take up as they challenge those dichotomies and dualistic hierarchies by "queering" nature with questioning the status quo and "polysexual scrutiny" (Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013, pp. 482-483; Sandilands, 1994, p. 20) Hence, not only general feminists, but also the queer movement moved environmental discourses and policies forward. Like Jan, Magnus was part of a queer community as a young adult. He says he has *"a very good understanding*" of the queer movement. The movement influenced both participants and their approaches to the environment and gendered identities. Jan's engagement is tightly connected to the values and identities he shares with his different friend circles. He explains:

"Yeah, queer, as you can say, and also, artsy type of alternative scene […] in general, in that scene, people are a lot more aware and they take a lot more action against climate change compared to the more normal kind of group of people in society, the ones who more just follow a normal sort of life journey. […] I mean, to start with my gender identity, I don't think I

would be the way [I am] now, if I wasn't a part of the scene, and if I didn't meet the people I met. And, I mean, the way it effects my climate activism, it's kind of like just natural, you know" (Jan, 20s)

The "queering" (Sandilands, 1994) of Jan's environmental engagement and groups affected his approach to gendered identities and personality. Jan's experience within the queer community reflects the perspective of Sandilands (1994) about the influence queer presenting people have on the environmental movement. He outlines:

"[It changed] in the way that I just became more aware of how I was or how I am, and the way I act as a male, I guess., I haven't dressed like this my whole life, either. If you saw me three years ago, when I went in, like 10th grade, I would be much more like the stereotypical guy. I mean, short hair, certain type of style as well. I only had guy friends at the time. […] But then, since I have questioned both my gender and my sexuality since. And that's something I've thought about quite a bit, and that's, I guess, because I'm in this kind of, like, more gender, or queer scene in Bergen, and surrounded by those type of people who are like most of my friends. I mean, it's changed me, I think. I've just been more much more exposed to just all these different people and different mindsets and opinions and everything. And, you know, I've taken these things. I could have never been as like this exposed or, experienced all these different things if I still, for example, went to school in a countryside, then I'll probably just do some stuff, and then getting off this job and just, you know, whatever. […] I've learned a lot. […] I think that's really important to like, go out, go out of your comfort zone. And just become exposed to many different people and points of view." (Jan, 20s)

The influence of the queer community in Bergen was significant to Jan as his identity changed to the extent that his appearance changed into more feminine-presenting hair- and clothing style, as discussed in chapter 7.4 about the participants' relationship with femininities. Despite being influenced by the queer community, his gendered identity presents on a system of dichotomies as he made it clear he identifies as male and a man. He reassessed his values and mindsets and concluded that the feminism and the queer and environmental movements he's part of had moved him toward progressiveness and open-minded interaction with social issues. Further, the discussed liaison of environmentalism with feminism and queer movements influences participation in environmental movements within society which will be discussed in the next section.

8.2.2 The Exclusiveness of Environmental Engagement

In discussion with Jan about the feminist ecological engagement, he argues that it's a *"subculture to be a climate activist"*. He reflects on the position of this merge of movements with society and how it affects others who aren't part of the subculture to join. He says:

> *"[It's] kind of a counterculture thing. So, I guess, let's say you are in the scene, it's much easier for you to actually be a part of the climate activist thing, because it's so tightly connected to alternative culture. And then let's say you're, for example, you're just a regular guy, the way I would describe like shorthair, white guy, just living life, this person can be very much like very interested in climate change activism and want to be a part of it, and also very concerned for climate change, and but then, kind of struggle actually doing something because it's kind of hard to get into the scene, like, 'Oh, these people will they accept me, I'm kind of like, not quite like them. They're very different from me. So, maybe that would like push someone away from participating in climate activism. Because climate activism, it just attracts a very specific type of person. I mean, I guess like myself, like my friends, like the people I know. If you go to a demonstration or protest, it's mostly people from the queer community, or people who are part of a subculture, like alternative people, and if you're not a part of a subculture like that, it's much harder to get into it, even though you should."* (Jan, 20s)

Jan describes the linkage between groups of the environmental movement with groups of the queer movement, which Jan explained to have overlaps of both groups with members participating in the other group. At the same time, he believes this linkage of both movements causes a closedness towards people who don't share the same values and identities. Those people can be (political) moderate people that don't identify with subgroups or unconventional lifestyles and perspectives and are resonating with mainstream positions. Also, people that exhibit oppositional identities, values, and attitudes can be repelled by this liaison of feminism and environmental discourses. In chapter 8.4.1, the participants elaborate on a picture of people expressing opposite values and in-group beliefs concerning climate engagement. The opposite is portrayed as conservative White men denying climate change and prioritising monetising natural resources through environmental destruction.

Krange et al. (2019) highlight the relationship between climate change denial and resisting changes in society. The attitudes of conservative men that deny climate change are part of a larger complex of resisting changes in societal conditions and refusing a variety of social movements that support changes, like cultural diversity or gender diversity (Krange et al., 2019). The separation of two opposing political identities is creating two camps. On the one side, progressive feministic gendered identities combined with environmental identities, and on the other side, conservatives with anti-

feministic worldviews and climate change deniers (Vowles & Hultman, 2021). The participants identified his group of climate change deniers as their political opponents and opponents regarding attitudes towards gendered identities. This closedness and exclusiveness, Jan assesses following: "*It should be for everyone. It shouldn't be like this closed community".*

Consequently, these combinations of political identities produce a division between conservatives and progressivists as these groups of people exclude each other which eventually reinforces climate change denial among conservatives who repel feministic perspectives and can't identify with certain sub-cultures. The same applies to moderate people who aren't necessarily conservatives and care about climate and environment but are too mainstream in their attitudes and values that they do not fit into such sub-cultural environments.

8.3 Negotiating Environmental Gendered Identities

This subchapter discussed the participants' engagement with various gendered identities that relate to the environment. First, the participants outline their opponent of climate change which is constructed with hegemonic masculinities. The next subchapter depicts the participant's alternative aspirations to the status quo. Finally, the personal approaches to masculinities are outlined where I analyse which masculinities resonate with the participants.

8.3.1 Rejection of the Opposite Camp: Power, Violence, and Climate Change Denial

The human-induced climate change epoch is described as the "Anthropocene". It ascribes the responsibility for the destruction of nature to men, creating a connection between violence and men within environmental contexts. Magnus states his environmental orientation. He says: "*I'm a pacifist. I don't want to achieve climate change, or fight against it, with violence or anything. I want peaceful protests and demonstrations"* (Jan, 20s). Men who relate to pacifism resist and undermine hegemonic masculinities (Courtenay, 2000, p. 1393). By choosing non-violent approaches to environmental action, Jan resists masculinities that engage with dominance and violence. Magnus outlines the form of masculinities in relation to violence against nature. He says:

> *"I've never purposefully drawn a connection, but if you consider like the classic idea of what pumping millions of barrels of oil in the ground is very kind of masculine act in a way, even though there's women who work in that sector as well, there's something very brutal and kind of domineering about this idea of tapping the worlds resources and pumping in all up and burning it and I find that kind of quite masculine […] The kind of type of person who is very much against the green movement, the kind of pro oil, pro industry sort of type, I would consider very masculine. I would define most of them as very masculine men who kind of out*

there saying: "We gotta keep drilling for oil" sort of attitude. So, in that sense, there's a connection that I'm quite happy to also be an activist against that sort of masculinity because you have to be that kind of person to wanna keep pumping oil." (Magnus, 40s)

Magnus connection with masculinities and environmental destruction relates to violence as he perceives it as brutal and domineering. His perspective is consistent with thoughts on masculinities and environmental destruction by scholars (Connell, 2017; Connell & Pearse, 2015; Hultman & Pulé, 2020). Connell (2017) points to this picture presented by ecofeminists of men being naturally violent, aggressive, and dominant, opposing women's nature being peaceful and nurturing towards nature and the environment. On the contrary, Connell (2017) advises stepping aside from essentialist thinking but acknowledges the influences masculinities have on destroying the environment, which is an instrument to achieve power-oriented masculinities.

Ecofeminists intents to dismantle the 'male system' and believes the social order will recover into a natural state (Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013). As Magnus connects masculinities with action that destroys the environment, he separates himself from such ideals and connects those ideals with a particular group of people. He explains what scholars define as conservative White men who express climate change denial and engage with petro-masculinities (Daggett, 2018; Nelson, 2020). The participants' identities as environmental activists are impacted by their perception of this group of conservative men that aspire to such destructive attitudes, behaviour and considered masculine practices towards nature and the environment (Hultman & Pulé, 2020; Krange et al., 2019; Mihailov & Sakelarieva, 2013). Throughout the interviews, the participants demonstrated conservative men as their opponents in the fight against climate change, which I call "the opposite camp" in this chapter.

"Yeah, I guess I did, because I do have this image in my head of who is the, who is our opponent to the climate change. Who is our opponent. Who is our, not the enemy, but who is that kind of opposite to the climate change and that, if I would have a person's face in my head, it would immediately be a man in a suit who is like 55/60 years old and a CEO of some kind of industry. Do you know what I mean? That's basically the enemy. So, in a way, yeah, there's definitely a masculine connection to […] so, I think there has always been this masculine image of leading that kind of change in the world, a big business. Definitely. And it's still that, it's still like that, that major oil companies who are not doing anything about climate change, are all still basically run by men. I guess I take it as a given that that's the person I'm debating against, or that's the opposition to what we're trying to achieve politically." (Magnus, 40s)

This other camp the participants are "debating against" is described as older privileged men who are against environmental movements and efforts to combat climate change. McCright and Dunlap

(2000) illustrate this countermovement in relation to conservatism and right-winged attitudes towards climate change and policies. The participants follow this perspective as scholars connect this movement with White men. They acknowledge the power structures that ensure destruction and domination over nature and its resources. Looking at Norway, the trend of conservative men enacting climate change denial also applies to Norwegian conservative people (Krange et al., 2019). Participant Martin acknowledges this phenomenon but doesn't consider it to be a social issue in Norway. He says:

> *If you look at the people that is negative to 'energiwende' [energy transition], it's old people, it's maybe males, and it's in the countryside. The last people that the new information will reach […] But I don't think it's a very big issue in Norway anyway. If you are not an old man in the countryside. So, I don't actually think it's a very big problem, the male things. I don't think modern intelligent men would think that: "Mh, I eat meat just because it's so manly, so masculine to do it".* (Martin, 40s)

On the contrary, other participants like Magnus, Jan and Odvin tend to recognize this trend as problematic and integrate it into their approaches to climate activism. When Magnus talked about his opponent and the picture that arises of old White men in power, he put this notion into the context of the political party in Norway that is now called folkets parti, formerly FNB, (party against street tolls; street tolls called "bompenger" in Norwegian) that identifies with and promotes climate change denial (folkets parti, 2021). Magnus says:

> *"This one party called the people's movement against bompenger who I would consider, despite having two women members, I would consider them a very masculine party […] this constant kind of degrading, racist, and sexist attitude, specifically against young women, is negative politics at all […] Basically, if you are a young woman and even worse, if you are a young woman with a minority background, then you're a target immediately and you cop it much worse than everyone else if you take part in public debates about whatever, climate change, whatever"* (Magnus, 40s)

Magnus explains how his organization was standing up against targeting of women in these spheres. He positions himself against such attitudes and actions and considers men who show this behaviour to be masculine. Beyond that, he outlines the connection of environmental contexts with feministic and progressive issues, which is discussed in chapter 8.5.1.

Furthermore, economic aspects play a role in environmental decisions and attitudes. In Norway, financial stability is tightly connected to the gas and oil industry, leading to the many oil workers needing to preserve their economic benefits when threatened by climate change policies (Cross,

2021; Krange et al., 2019, p. 3; Østerbø, 2014). The White male conservatives under examination strive to increase their wealth, as Hultman and Pulé (2020) explain and establish ties between industrial breadwinning masculinities and masculinities that cooperate with fossil fuel extraction and identify with economic-based attitudes and vocations. Further, those presenting industrial breadwinner masculinities are taken up by individuals who practice hegemonic and patriarchal ideals (Hultman & Pulé, 2020). When Jan described the other camp, the other type of man he didn't associate with, he specifies economic interests among these men as the main ambition for their life choices. He says:

> *"I also think that in male groups in general, and friend groups, it's they like the directions they choose and or the direction they choose to go to in life in general is like very money based, like I said previously. They kind of just want to cement their position in life, in society, and just earn as much as much money as possible and get a family and all that. So, they don't really think about like the greater issues facing society. I think there's like the various like, specific type of person who isn't like my scene or the climate activist kind of area, and the left side politics and stuff like that. […] While the people at the top who are mostly men who are very like economically minded, they're narrow minded and only think about like the now, they don't really think about the future. So, they just think about earning money and the choices they make. The choices they make are based on like, how can they earn the most amount of money. And those choices are usually have very big climate consequences. Those are the people we have to get to, you know, the people at the top who actually are responsible for these things."* (Jan, 20s)

When Jan associates male peers with striving for economic wealth and differentiates himself from them, he refers to a resistance to economic efforts aspired by industrial breadwinner and ecomodern masculinities (Hultman & Pulé, 2020).

Despite refusing to relate to alpha male masculinities that offer powerful and economically beneficial positions in life, Magnus inhibits a powerful function in his job and engagement. He says: "*Sometimes I see it as ironic because I'm becoming that part of society. Like I'm not in a suit and I'm not a CEO, but I'm still kind of- I'm a man in a kind of traditional sense."*

Magnus has an inner conflict and ambivalence about his identity as a man as he is aware of the destructiveness of men in powerful positions and of his own male privileges that are similar to the aspirations those White conservative men chose in life, as described as the other camp. He attempts to correct his identity. He says:

"At some point - and I've thought lately, the best thing that could happen with my political engagement is that I could walk away from it all, and hand it over to the next generation. And then, I'm finished, you know. My efforts aren't necessary anymore. In a way that would be good. And the sooner the better, so that i get out of the way. But if I get to the point where I'm actually in the way, that's the danger, that you end up being the generation that is running everything and stopping progress." (Magnus, 40s)

As his identity is divided, he decides on fighting against those attitudes and powerful positions by working to the point his efforts and privileged position become obsolete.

8.3.2 Aiming for Alternative Aspirations and Values

When the participants rejected the opposite camp and their lifestyles, some formulated alternative approaches to their values and life within society. For example, Jan differentiates himself from conservativism, he says:

"I mean, I think it's just I'm more open. There's this whole thing openness to experience. […] My mother and father were also really open to new experiences, and that kind of went over to me. And I just love meeting new people and being a part of something bigger in a community." (Jan, 20s)

Other participants offer their perspectives on changing the system. For example, Jakob explains:

"We're still trying to work within the system, and voting for political parties, and buying and selling stuff within the same system. But the system is broken. It doesn't really work. […] we need to change the system, so the easiest choices, and the most sort of the logical choices are also the ones that are most environmentally friendly. But right now, that's essentially impossible" (Jakob, 30s)

While Joakim doesn't elaborate on how the system should be changed, others do. Similar to Jan, Odvin prefers communities and presents his vision of alternative green living styles. He says:

And I really try to make around me, to participate in making a warm community. […] So, I think that creating and cultivating and developing these warm communities is a major important part of the green shift that we will have to see. Because now, we are not looking for more consumption and being comforted by buying things and having beautiful and expensive houses or boats and cars and all that stuff. The most important things in life are not things. And when we understand that, we can also as a society rest assured, that even if we don't have this growth in capitalistic economy, we can still have growth in human welfare,

> *and in fellowship, and taking care of each other and sharing and making a community where everybody can rest assured, even if you lose your job, you will be okay. You will not be hungry, and you can borrow the things you need. And there are people here around you that can support you in whatever is going on. So, without this, it feels very important to keep your job, to make money, to expand your consumption and economy.* (Odvin, 60s)

His narrative evolves as an answer to the problems of consumption and an economic-oriented society. Consequently, Odvin and Jan's illustration of their attitudes and ideals resonate with a rejection of the concept of industrial breadwinner masculinities and its goals to preserve a system built to give them power and economic prosperity. They prefer to live in green communities built on care, friendships, and solidarity, aiming to distinguish consumerism. The concept Odvin promotes relates to eco-communes that usually live off the grid. Pajumets and Hearn (2021) present a study about men that live in an eco-commune in Estonia. Those men showed to reject Western capitalism and exploitative Western traditions. They chose a life based on an equal position towards nature instead of superiority by, for example, ecologically and sustainably farming. They highlight that those eco-communes can "lead to the end of patriarchy" as the issue of domination of nature and woman is addressed by approaching nature and humanity as egalitarian (p. 315-316). Those ideals the eco-commune executes are sought after by Odvin, who envisions a society engaging with those standards.

As illustrated, hegemonic masculinities like the industrial breadwinner masculinities aspire to economically beneficial positions (Hultman & Pulé, 2020), something the men in the eco-commune in Estonia didn't pursue. They chose family and friendships over careers and dismissed consumerism (Pajumets & Hearn, 2021). Odvin emphasizes the same ambition as he aspires after *"growth in welfare*" instead of economic growth, consumerism, and society focusing on communities and care. This aspiration resonates with ecological masculinities as it seeks to transfer a hegemonic masculine society into an ecological lifestyle. In order to achieve an ecological lifestyle and social system, a transition from a hegemonic social structure to a non-hegemonic social structure is necessary. Ecological masculinities resonate with such a transition (Hultman & Pulé, 2020).

Moreover, the accounts of the other participants, Jan and Magnus, to prefer non-violent approaches to nature and differentiation to economic aspirations resonate with ecological masculinities. To exhibit care for the environment and seek non-violent approaches whilst resisting economic efforts and a system that strives for economic growth resonates with ecological masculinities (Hedenqvist et al., 2021; Hultman & Pulé, 2020).

8.3.3 Embodying Femininities in Environmental Engagement

Some participants shared their opinion about femininities and the environment. They connected womanhood with general caretaking and caretaking in contexts of environmental concerns. Jan says: *"women focus more on taking care of the earth and actually think about, like, issues in society".* Further, Joakim suggests:

> *"I'm not sure if it's, it might be under the caretaking trait, I'm not sure, but I see that a lot of more women are keeping plants and stuff like that and their growing their own crops inside their apartments and stuff like that. Which is a somewhat sustainable thing to do actually because you grow your own food. Maybe you can associate that with being like taking care of others and taking care of something that. My example with plants, I know absolutely zero men that grow their own crops inside their apartments."* (Joakim, 20s)

What the participants allude to is the perspective of ecofeminism that links womanhood to nature. This perspective assumes that women would have a greater consciousness of the environment compared to men, engaging in the growth and preservation of ecological health. In contrast, men are assumed to be hostile towards nature. Ecofeminists believe women have an extended responsibility to nature and an innate caretaking nature (Arora-Jonsson, 2011; Connell & Pearse, 2015; Hultman & Pulé, 2020). Hultman and Pulé (2020) describe this as essentialist interpretations that dismiss and believe in ecofeminist perspectives beyond essentialism and binary thinking. Binary interpretations of the environment create a picture of two opposites: women with preserving and growing nature in opposition to men and destruction of nature. Connell and Pearse (2015) point to criticism that the link between women and nature serves patriarchal ideas. Thus, by linking womanhood with nature, the participants reproduce those criticised patriarchal and essentialist ideas, like Joakim, who assumes growing plants might be a part of taking care of womanhood. At the same time, he doesn't identify with the notion of taking care of plants. But instead of separating himself from any feminine association with nature, he outlines another identification with care, he says:

> *"If you think of it as taking care of someone close to you. […] I would do that because for me cutting my emissions will contribute to a tiny little part to mitigating climate change, that would be positive for all those animals that are affected by climate change. So, I feel a sort of moral obligation to them because they are often overlooked in our society, and our economy doesn't really incorporate them into any of our decision making. So, I would feel like that is a part of my climate change activism and the trait of caretaking for, primarily, animals. […] Being kind as related to the part of cutting emissions because we can, that's also the kind of thing to do because we have the opportunity, it's not such a big hassle for us to do it, that's*

kindness and caretaking, it's taking care of not to destroy the animal kingdom and ecosystems around the world." (Joakim, 20s)

Although having prior associations with caretaking attributed to women, Joakim corresponds to nature and taking care of vulnerable animals. He adapts caretaking into his approach to climate activism as he identifies his motivation to do climate activism which is the protection of animals. Further, Odvin can identify with femininities and care for animals as he connects femininity with environmental engagement. He says:

"It's easier to find compassion and care and to seek comfort with the feminine than with the masculine, or with men. And this is also- this is what it's all about. This is also the core of the environmental engagement that I have. I feel protective towards even small creatures. I hope and think that is not because I'm kind of a different matter. I hope that is- I hope that has nothing to do with me. I hope that has nothing to do with the gender thing. I hope that is the common human side." (Odvin, 60s)

In his statement, Odvin approaches environmental engagement as egalitarian, hoping for gender to be irrelevant in this context. Moreover, he hopes that being concerned for climate comes from *"the common human side"*. At the same time, he genders environmental engagement as he links it with femininities which he prefers to seek out. In the interview with Odvin, his approach to environmental engagement and his gendered identity showed a tendency to femininities as his associations lay within the binary. He reproduces essentialist ideas when linking caretaking with womanhood and nature besides his preferred egalitarian viewpoint and creates an ambivalence between his assumptions and ideals.

Further, Odvin's approach to femininities and environment resembles the description of ecological masculinities provided by Hultman and Pulé (2020) when he described that he prefers to foster his male friendships (see chapter 7.4) and emotionality. In relation to relationality, constructions of ecological masculinities prioritise relationality and connectedness with humanity and nature. They seek to interact with themselves and with others with care, which would align with an environmentally oriented lifestyle and ensure a sustainable future (Hultman & Pulé, 2020)

Moreover, Joakim's care for others and animals is related to climate and environmental justice. Many participants generally mentioned the aspect of justice in environmental contexts and show awareness of the global social issue of climate change. For example, Jan says:

"Most of the pollutants are in Western countries, with white majorities, and the biggest companies are usually owned by white people. And climate change, when it does become good or worse, it will mainly affect people in the southern hemisphere, and in countries that

are a lot poorer, like Africa, and South America, and Southern Asia […] the consequences will be a lot bigger than in the West, where we have the means to protect ourselves." (Jan, 20s)

Further, Magnus acknowledges gendered differences to consequences of climate change, he says:

"in those cultures it is that the women suffer most because they're the first to loose access to education, and have to stay at home, and help do housework, or they get in many cultures sold off to bring some kind of income to the family. So there, I mean you see it in countries like Afghanistan or something now, if they're very poor and very poorly established and they fall back into this kind of older form of organizing society, then it's women that really struggle. So, in that sense, if climate change brings about social breakdown, then women are really gonna have it tough." (Magnus, 40s)

The participants recognise the climate justice issues that scholars, especially feminists and ecofeminists, address (Hultman & Pulé, 2020). This issue presents intersectional on various societal levels where women in countries with deep-seated patriarchal social structures bear the most significant burden and are at higher risk of experiencing climate change effects (Nagel, 2012; Sultana, 2014). The participants share the perspective of ecofeminists. They seek to take global responsibility, something other masculinities, such as industrial breadwinner masculinities are unwilling to do (Hultman & Pulé, 2020, p. 480). These perspectives of climate justice and ethical responsibilities are referred as feminine arguments which hegemonic masculinities resist and dismiss (Pajumets & Hearn, 2021, p. 311; Swim et al., 2018). By holding those perspectives, the participants relate partly to feminine aspects within environmental argumentations. Moreover, Joakim draws a connection between this perspective and femininities. He answered the question of how he approaches femininities in his own gendered identity, outlines *"courage"* and *"kindness"* as feminine trait he recognizes within himself. He says:

"I would say, courage and also kindness, because that was also what I said earlier. That, because we can cut emissions, and I'm part of we, then the kind thing to do would be to do to actually do that and not expect others, other people in low-income countries, and expect that those people will cut. We have the biggest opportunity and the biggest consumption. I think that also goes into kindness. […] We sort of have a moral obligation since we can cut, we should cut. […] I really do think we should take the necessary measures. […] . It is probably easier for me to cut my emissions than it would be for someone in a low-income country. I feel like should do what I can." (Joakim, 20s)

8.3.5 Aligning Hegemonic Masculinities with Environmentalism

In their understanding, some participants construct their masculinities as opposed to industrial breadwinner masculinities that are hegemonic in society. In contrast, other participants expressed ideals and notions that align with upholding hegemonic masculinities. For example, Martin says:

> "*We could say that it's masculine to do hard work, to actually come to a place, to just do it. In Norwegian we call it "handlekraft". To handle things. When people that do something for the climate, have "handlekraft", but if you don't do it, you have a loss of it. […] It's the less of "handlekraft" that have brought us there."* (Martin, 40s)

Martin's understanding of "*handlekraft"* and hard labour relates to masculine bodies and the ability to act, which was discussed in chapter 6.2.3. He argues that a lack of *"handlekraft"* and hard labour are causes of lacking environmental engagement from men and young boys. He has a positive approach towards hegemonic masculinities. He assumes that a more masculine ability to act and hard work would contribute to solving the climate issue, which is essentially the opposite approach of the other participants that seek to exclude hegemonic masculinities to combat environmental issues. Further, Martins presents his opinion on the problem of exclusion of hegemonic masculinities from the environmental movement, he says:

> *"You can still drive fast car, that is not much pollution in, and you can eat things that is protein, you can still get the muscles. So, it's not the important things, it's just the from the stone age images. So, I don't think it's a big problem actually."* (Martin, 40s)

Martin's approach to gendered environmentalism dismissed gendered influences on climate issues and movements, as outlined in chapter 8.1.1. Yet, he acknowledges that certain concepts of masculinities influence environmental engagement when he identifies a lack of *"handlekraft"* (power of action) among men who aren't working to preserve the environment, as well as concepts of masculinities that contribute to climate change by a lifestyle that increases greenhouse gas emission, like driving fossil fuel cars. Pajumets and Hearn (2021) address the issue that particular environmentalist approaches lack sufficient treatment of environmental problems by working within the existing system and the status quo that upholds hierarchical and patriarchal gender order and exploitation of nature. Martins approaches the issue, believing it can be solved in line with maintaining hegemonic masculinities by choosing alternatives that aren't environmentally unfriendly. He implies that electric cars could be an alternative for those masculinities. Pulé and Hultman (2021) highlight that this idea corresponds to ecological modernisation politics that suggests innovations and technological solutions ensure economic growth, instead of securitising consumerism and lifestyles. Masculinities that combine such an approach with care for the environment are

understood as ecomodern masculinities (p. 310-311). Jakob's approach has similar characteristics, he says:

> *"But I think it could be more about in what [ways] your perception of femininity or masculinity can affect your interests, and your interests can affect what kind of arenas you feel comfortable in changing the society or affecting it in a green way. For example, economic logic, if masculine, therefore, expected to be more interested in investments, therefore, I am interested and have better understanding of it, and also interested in green stuff. And I connect those because they're part of our identity, and therefore I do different investments with lenses of sustainability."* (Jakob, 30s)

Jakob's identity is shaped by his care for the environment and his perception of masculinities, influencing his interest in making environmental-focused investments. He combines economic growth with environmentalism, hence, interacts with the concepts of ecomodern masculinities. Ecomodern masculinities engage with hegemonic masculinities. Yet, this concept differs, for example, from industrial breadwinner masculinities as it seeks to align care for the environment and global responsibility with economic growth (Hultman & Pulé, 2020, p. 480).

8.4 Generational Differences

This sub-chapter briefly discusses the topic of generational differences as the participants repeatedly brought up the subject. Nearly all participants argued that generational differences cause more or less concern for environmental issues. For example, Jan says:

> *"I would say it's a generational thing as well. I think in my generation people, I guess you could call Gen Z I think I'm part of. […] I can see that there are a lot more people who think about these things, because I guess our generation is the one that is going to be the most affected by these things. And people who are the right-winged kind of man I'm talking about- are often older people who maybe are, for example, owners, or leaders in the big company or things like that. 50 Plus, you know. They don't really care; they're going to die in a few years. So, they just wanted to earn as much money"* (Jan, 20s)

The younger generation argued that their engagement is based on their generation's experiences with the effects of climate change. However, Martin argues that there is a lack of maturity in younger men compared to young girls that would be required to be engaged in the environmental cause. He says: *"It's too bad that they didn't get so many boys joining. […] Boys in that age, they are a bit childish. The girls are more, it's like they are 2 years older, you know, mentally."*

As all age ranges are represented in this study, the participants' decision to be active for environmental causes wasn't based on their age or the age group they're part of. Jan, Odvin and Magnus had similar contexts and reasoning for their climate activism, while all of them are part of different generations. This study doesn't reflect those generational differences among the participants on how they approach their gendered identities or environmental engagement, but rather with individual values and identities, often in relation to their social environment and upbringing.

9. Closing Remarks of Findings

In this chapter, the research questions are answered based on the conclusions of the findings. The first sub-chapter briefly summarises the conclusions of the participants' associations of gendered identities in chapter 6.2.5. The second sub-chapter answers Sub-Question 2 of how male environmentalists in Norway construct their masculinities and how those stand in relation to their approaches to femininities. Sub-chapter 9.3 discusses the participants' associations of gendered environmentalism and gendered identities, followed by sub-chapter 9.4 answers Sub-Question 4 of the relationship between gendered identities and environmentalism. Further, the limitations of the study are elaborated in sub-chapter 9.4. Lastly, the sub-chapter 9.5 that offers recommendation for future research.

9.1. Associations with Masculinities and Femininities

This section answers sub-question 1 of the research questions: *How do male environmentalists in Norway define masculinities and femininities?*

The participants' associations with gendered identities refer to 'doing gender' as they perceive gender through the lenses of society and the expectations society produces on people to practice gendered identities based on their sex category. Those associations do not reflect their perspectives as they choose an egalitarian approach to gendered identities. The multiple constructions of masculinities that the participants recognize in society reflect hegemonic constructions of masculinities as they refer to alpha and superior masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities are understood to enact dominance and power over other non-dominant masculinities and femininities, whereas the participants understood constructions of masculinities and femininities within a hierarchical gender order. Those constructions are described with categories of physical and mental/psychological aspects of bodies, emotionality, violence, and caretaking.

9.2 Personal Approaches and Constructions of Masculinities in Relation to Femininities

This section answers sub-question 2 of the research questions: *How do male environmentalists in Norway construct their masculinities and how do the constructions stand in relation to their approaches to femininities?*

The participants' approaches to their own gendered identities are complex and various. Most participants refer to resistance to identification with hegemonic masculinities, as well as a resistance

to ‘do gender’ when they seek to express their gendered identities unrestricted and be unaffected by gendered expectations of masculinities. While 5 of the 6 participants present a similar approach to masculinities, one participant portrays an exception as he doesn’t express and perform resistance to hegemonic masculinities. Masculinities are multiple and complex, reproducing internal complexities and contradictions (Connell, 2017). The participants present internal complexities in conceptualizing masculinities. Their masculinities are situational and contextual as they change and adapt to various situations, and none of the participants refer to all characteristics of a certain construction of masculinities.

The multiple masculinities they interact with are complicit masculinities, subordinated masculinities, caring masculinities, ecological masculinities and ecomodern masculinities. As none of the participants interact with the diverse masculinities to a full extent, characteristics were only present to a certain degree. Their relations with constructions of masculinities predominately changed between resisting and engaging with hegemonic masculinities. Their resistance to hegemonic masculinities is characterized by dismissal of hegemonic values, characteristics, and lifestyles, such as dismissing the detachment from emotions, devaluing non-hegemonic masculinities and femininities, domination over femininities and nature, and conforming to gendered expectations based on hegemonic masculinities.

The participants constructed their gendered identities through the mediums of bodies, power relations, emotionality, and care. Masculine bodies are understood to be embodied through physical activities and bodily experiences that perform body strength and hard work. In contexts of body practices in their childhoods, many participants refer to subordination to hegemonic standards of masculinities as they didn’t conform to masculine body standards. The resistance towards hegemonic masculinities emerged with an unintended position of subordination which excluded them from masculine practices and spheres. This consequently led to an establishment of coping strategies for their subordination, for instance, movement within feminized spheres and differentiation from hegemonic masculinities. This engagement with feminized spheres exposed them to femininities, feminine attitudes and perspectives. Two participants emphasized how their queer social environments influenced their gendered identities as they engaged with femininities. In that engagement, they questioned their relationship to masculinities and developed or intended to develop a non-hegemonic relationship to emotionality to a certain degree.

Also, for one participant, this engagement means expressing himself nonbinary in terms of fashion and hairstyle. Despite this, he and the other participants explain how they seek to be perceived as masculine and perform gender based on social expectations. Moreover, their approaches present an ambiguity between their resistance towards hegemonic masculinities and their complicit behaviour

and attitudes towards hegemonic masculinities. As their subordination was unintended, the participants unconsciously engaged with hegemonic masculinities at other points in their lives. Those moments of engagement were present in most participants but demonstrated in various contexts relating to each participant. In terms of the physical aspects of masculinities, they engaged with hegemonic masculinities through bodies when they aspired to develop physical strength and body performance, such as by working out, doing martial arts, or doing physical work in the garden or house.

Furthermore, their relationship to power and dominance is complicated and ambivalent. As they resonate with resistance to enact power and dominance, they demonstrate notions of domination in relationality with femininities. One participant refers to having the power to choose household labour based on his interests. Another participant corresponds to caring masculinities and relates to incorporate feminine qualities to some extent as consequence to resisting domination. At the same time, he engages with hegemonic masculinities when he executes bodily practices to aspire to a position that enables him the strength to protect others, such as women understood as the weaker sex. Together with their resisting approaches to masculinities, they offered attitudes that resonate with egalitarianism and non-conformity to 'doing gender'. Yet, in the moments they engage with hegemonic masculinities, they exhibit ambiguity and ambivalence with their egalitarian and 'undoing gender' approaches. At least two participants demonstrate correspondence to 'spoken egalitarianism' as they hold egalitarian attitudes but perform gendered practices that engage with masculinities.

In the elaborations of the participant identified as the one exception, he does not resist hegemonic masculinities. He refers to his associations with masculinities as a compass and guidance to perform body practices. Considering this, all participants demonstrate resonance with complicit masculinities at some time or context in their life as they engage with parts of hegemonic characteristics. They either seek to live up to certain hegemonic standards or present behaviour that ensures a beneficial social position enabled through a patriarchal social order.

9.3 Associations of gendered environmentalism and gendered identities

This section answers sub-question 3 of the research questions: *What connections and associations do male environmentalist in Norway have between gendered identities and environmental engagement?*

The participants' associations between gendered identities and environmental engagement have ambiguous aspects. On the one side, they refer to egalitarian viewpoints as gendered environmentalism. On the other side, they refer to gendered aspects of environmentalism.

When associating the environment with gendered aspects, the participants prefer to perceive a concern for the environment as non-gendered. They draw upon egalitarian arguments to negotiate non-gendered environmentalism when referring to a concern for climate as common sense as the effects of climate change and environmental destruction move across genders and classes. However, climate justice plays a role in their associations as the participants recognized intersections between gender and classes in relation to the impacts of climate change. Discourses around the intersection and climate justice are part of the feminist discourses the participants connect with environmentalism, such as ecofeminism and essentialist associations of men's environmental destructions and women's care for the environment. The participants find engagement in environmental issues as gendered and perceive little participation of men in environmental organizations, institutions, and political parties. When associating environmental issues with men enacting hegemonic masculinities, they identify concepts of masculinities that disengage with environmentalism.

Moreover, the participants perceive those masculine concepts as causes for environmental destruction. They create an opposing picture of men and women in relation to environmental engagement. Men's relationship to the environment is characterized either by destruction and domination over nature or by environmental perspectives and attitudes that interact with hegemonic masculinities. Ecomodern masculinities intend to align economic growth with technical solutions for climate change instead of seeking to dismantle a system that is based on domination over nature. Conversely, women's relationship with nature is described as nurturing and caretaking.

The ambivalence the participants portray in their associations shows in their egalitarian arguments for environmental concern and their gendering of environmentalism. On the one side, they refer to a non-existential connection between gendered identities and environmentalism, as well as demonstrating beliefs of a non-relevance of gender discourses in environmental discourses. While on the other side, they draw on doing gender when gendering environmentalism, for example, with masculine violence and feminine.

9.4 The Relationship between Gendered Identities and Environmentalism

This section answers sub-question 3 of the research questions: *In which relation do the gendered identities stand with personal environmental engagement and attitudes of male environmentalists in Norway?*

In terms of the gendered environmental identities, the participants' constructions of masculinities are varied, changing and represent situational and contextual relationality. In their resistance to

hegemonic masculinities, the participants refer to a resistance to hegemonic social structures that perform environmentally destructive masculine practices. As their association with masculinities and nature are characterized by power, dominance, and environmental destruction they resist those masculine constructions. The resistance that the participants demonstrate refers to a differentiation between masculinities of conservatives and the participants. While men that present climate change denial and engage with petro-masculinities. When differentiating, the participants perceived such masculinities as their opponent, which they are debating against. To some degree, some participants' approaches to gendered environmental masculinities refer to ecological masculinities when they seek lifestyles that exclude economic growth when they presented differentiation to economic efforts. One of the participants linked his aspiration for an ecological lifestyle with emotionality, care for each other, a strong welfare state, and limits of consumption and economic growth, referring to constructions of ecological masculinities. Other aspects where they resonate with ecological masculinities are their aspirations for non-violent and non-dominant approaches to nature. In interactions with nature and the environment, some participants relate to femininities as they connect femininity with care for nature. Their reasoning for environmental engagement stems from their care for nature, so they resonate with constructions of caring masculinities to some extent.

Furthermore, their approaches to their environmental identities are influenced by climate justice discourses. They recognize awareness of the intersectional issues of climate change effects and present an understanding of their own global responsibilities. Besides these constructions, not all the participants refer to ecological masculinities. Two of the other participants refer to ecomodern masculinities as they refer to economic growth and technical solution as their preferred choice to approach environmentalism.

In discussions with the participants, a liaison between environmentalism and feminism was identified. Two participants discussed their encounters with feminist discourses and perspectives when engaging with environmental issues. The feminist perspectives influence their approach to gendered identities and environmental issues. Their perspectives on social issues and social progressiveness have developed in those feminist spaces, and they account to be more open-minded. They employ feminist perspectives themselves and argue for environmentalism with feminist views. The places where they encounter feminist discourses are sub-culture communities, such as queer communities, which they believe influences others' environmental engagement. In its progressiveness, climate change and environmental policies can repel conservative people as they threaten hegemonic constructions of masculinities.

On the other hand, for other non-hegemonic constructs of masculinities, this liaison can mean identification with those discourses and communities as the participants found comfort in such

spaces in their resistance to hegemonic masculinities. In contexts of gendered participation, the participants promote egalitarian approaches to environmentalism, arguing that it concerns everyone independently from their gendered identities, presenting their perspectives on environmental concern as egalitarian. When demonstrating the issue of exclusion, they recognize the effects such sub-cultures and discourses can have on moderate people. They argue for environmentalist spheres that address not only sub-cultures but also 'moderate' people that care for the environment but do not identify with subcultures or feminist discourses.

9.5 Limitations

Overall, the study's findings are limited, with a data selection of interviews with only six participants. The participants' perspectives and approaches to the subject matters were diverse and, at times, not comparable as their constructions vary based on their situations and are dependent on context. This sometimes made finding a comprehensive common understanding of their meaning difficult. Secondly, the participants' understanding of the approaches to masculinities, specifically their engagements with masculinities and their coping strategies, could have been richer and more detailed if more in-depth questions had been asked during the interviews. Moreover, I predominately used open-ended questions as research method. In addition, I asked autobiographical questions when inquiring about their involvement with the environment. Connell (1990) conducted the method of autobiographical narratives when examining life-histories of men's masculinities in environmental contexts. In the evaluation of this study, it would have been beneficial to implement this method when inquiring about the participants' gendered identities, as well. This could have aided in evaluating their moments of engagement more extensively, gathering deeper meaning, and gaining a more profound understanding of when and how much they participate in hegemonic masculinities, enabling me to draw more comprehensive conclusions about their resistance and engagement ambivalence.

9.5 Recommendation for Future Research

For constructions of masculinities, the liaison of feminist and environmental discourses can influence men's willingness to participate. Climate change policies that introduce behavioural adjustments can impact constructions of gendered identities as they interfere with masculine practices that are identity-building. People with gendered identities that resist hegemonic masculine practices find comfort in environmentalist spheres as they can be identity-building. In contrast, constructions of hegemonic masculinities resist environmentalist spheres due to a threat to their gendered identities. Considering those interactions of gendered identity building in environmental and climate efforts is

key. People may reject policies that threaten their gendered identities. Investigating how climate policies can address society without threatening gendered identities is essential. To this point, this may be difficult due to the persistence of the interconnectedness between masculine practices and environmental destruction. Therefore, I recommend exploring how and to what extent gendered identities can be influenced to shift from harmful to sustainable practices and constructions of masculinities. Moreover, ecological masculinities portray such masculinities that seek to dismantle patriarchal structures that uphold domination over nature. I suggest researching under which circumstances and contexts ecological masculinities can emerge.

Some male environmentalists in this study refer to constructions of ecological masculinities. They also encounter feministic perspectives shaping their views on masculinities and their approaches to gendered identities. In some situations, they refer to deconstructions of dominance over nature and women. There haven't been many case studies examining ecological masculinities in detail. To investigate how and in what contexts ecological masculinities emerge, I recommend conducting an in-depth qualitative study in an egalitarian country like Norway with men who encounter feministic perspectives in their social environment.

Moreover, the liaison of feministic discourses and the transgressing of spheres of queer and environmental groups and communities can exclude 'moderate' people who care for the environment but who do not identify with the sub-cultures mentioned above. When seeking to address moderate people in environmental policies, I recommend conducting a study examining how this liaison between environmentalists and feminist or queer groups has an effect on 'moderate' people and what perceptions they occupy in relation to this liaison.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Male Environmentalists

Introduction

Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

- Work, education, age, gender, living situation

Climate activism/Environmentalism

How is your connection to climate activism nowadays?

- What motivates you to do climate activism?
- What activism do you do?
- Examples: mitigation practices, demonstrations, petition, communication and education other people about the problem, active in (political) organization, internet activism (social media, podcast, email, etc)
- What aspects in your education/family/friends/social environment has a connection with climate activism?

What is your career as climate activist?

- When did you start with climate activism?
- What was the reason for starting it?
- What period of time in your life in the past has led to your activism? And why?
- What aspects of your education has led to your activism?
- What aspects of your social environment has led to your activism?

Masculinity

What do you associate with masculinity?

- What do you know about different masculinities in general?
- What does masculinity in general mean to you?
- What do you consider as masculine?
- What do you know about different masculinities in relation to climate change, mitigation, and justice?

What is your own approach to masculinity?

- What does being masculine mean to you?
- What masculine/feminine traits do you attach on yourself?
- What behaviour do you have which you would consider as masculine?
- What masculine traits would another person attach to yourself? Someone who knows you good?
- When you think of being an activist, which masculine traits to you think you have, compared to other non-climate activists?
- What worldview or perspectives do you have that you would consider as masculine?
- What ideas and opinion about climate change/activism would you consider as feminine?

FEMININITY

What comes into your mind when you think about femininity?

- What do you consider as feminine /feminine behaviour?
- What do you know about being feminine in general?

What is your own approach to femininity?

- What kind of feminine traits would you attach to yourself?
- And if you would ask other people who know you good?
- What behaviour do you have which you would consider as feminine?
- When you think of being an activist, which feminine traits to you think you have, compared to other non-climate activists?
- What worldview or perspectives do you have that you would consider as feminine?
- What ideas and opinion about climate change/activism would you consider as feminine?

MITIGATION PRACTICES

What comes in your mind when you think of climate mitigation?

How is it with your own mitigation practices?

- What do you think you are doing to contribute to mitigation?
- What practices to you do in private spaces?
- Examples: food, consuming, buying things, second hand, trash division, food shopping, electricity, task division at home, car, clothes, furniture, mobility, travelling
- What practices do you do in public spaces?
- Examples: making awareness, education, being politically active, demonstrations, petition, communication and education other people about the problem, active in (political) organization, internet activism (social media, podcast, email, etc)
- Which one would you like to do, and why do you think it's important?
- Which one do you find useful, with positive outcome?
- What do you think of: cars, e-cars, meat, vegan food, consumption, clothes, furniture, travelling
- What do you think of the idea that some of the mitigation practices are considered to be feminine or masculine?
- Which of the mentioned practices would you perceive as being feminine, which masculine?

INTERACTION ANALYSIS

What kind of connections do you see between masculinities and climate activism?

- What aspects of your and their understanding of masculinity and femininity have been leading you to do climate activism?
- How does your activism change your perspective on femininity and masculinity?
- What would need to be changed in your view on your approach to masculinity and femininity to increase your contribution to climate mitigation?
  When considering your ideas about fem and mas: what parts of your decision to do activism do you find as being feminine/masc?

In what way did your own masc/fem make you do climate activism/ being concerned for climate?

- What do you know about femininity in relation to climate change/climate activism?
- How do you assess your relation to femininity with the background of being an climate activist?
- How is femininity effecting your activism?
- Did your view on feminism change over time in connection to your activism? Since you are active?
- How is masculinity effecting your activism?

Appendix 2: Information Letter for Participation

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

” How do gender identities interact with climate activism”?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to identify the relationship between climate activism and gender identities. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between climate activism and femininity and masculinity, if and how the connection of activism and masculinity/femininity (gender identities) is present by exploring perceptions and ideas of the male activists. Topics that will be explored and asks are the background and reasoning of your activism, your own concepts of masculinity and femininity (like what masculine traits you would attach to yourself), how you are doing climate justice and execute climate mitigation practices in your private and public spaces.

This study is part of the Master thesis as part of the study program Global Development at the Department of Health Promotion and Development at The University of Bergen.

Who is responsible for the research project?
The University of Bergen is the institution responsible for the project.

The student who is conducting the study is Juliana Bürkle. She is contacting environmental organizations, institutions, and parties in Norway for finding participants and provides the organization with information about the study. The supervisor of the study is Sevil Sümer, Associate Professor at the University of Bergen.

Why are you being asked to participate?
For this study, men over 18 years are asked to participate. The criteria for participating are if one of the following aspects can be applied to the participants: The participant is either already active in environmental or climate organization, institutions, or parties, or he considers himself as being active environmentally in any way, or he is taking active steps in private or public spaces to fight climate change or have awareness of climate related issues and is considering taking action in the future. For this study between 10-15 men are interviewed. Environmental organizations have been contacted to find participants. These organizations are asked to help making contacts with possible participants and are providing them with information.

What does participation involve for you?
If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you take part in one face-to-face interview. It will take between 45 to 90 minutes, depending to each situation. The survey includes questions about your background of climate activism, climate mitigation practices in everyday life, masculinities, femininities, and climate justice. Your answers will be recorded electronically

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.
Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).
An access to the personal data will have the student that conducts the study, as well as her supervisor Sevil Sumer.
Names of the participants will be anonymised and replaced with a code. The list of names details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data. The data will be stored on a private computer, locked away and encrypted. The contact details that were received for conducting the interviews will be deleted shortly after the interview. In the publication, the participants will not be recognizable. Personal information will not be included in the publication.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end 30.06.2022. The data will be stored in anonymous form, and all personally identifiable information will be removed or rewritten. Sound recordings will be deleted as the transcription of the interview is completed. The transcription will be stored and anonymized. Any personal data will be deleted at the end of the project.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *University of Bergen,* NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- *The University of Bergen* via *Juliana Bürkle (Student): Tlf.: +4746711965; Juliana.Burkle@student.uib.no. Or Sevil Sümer (Supervisor): Tlf.: +4790097454; sevil.sumer@uib.no*
- Our Data Protection Officer: Olav Rosness
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Researcher/supervisor)

Student (if applicable)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "The interaction between femininity and masculinity with climate action of male climate activists in Norway" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in an interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. *30.06.2022*

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 3: Recruitment Flyer

Mannlige frivillige søkes til forskningsprosjekt

De siste årene har flere mennesker over hele verden blitt mer engstelige for klima, og konsekvensene av klimaendringene. Noen forskere foreslår at det er forskjeller mellom hvordan kvinner og menn tilnærmer klimakrisa. Studie **"Samhandlingen mellom femininitet og maskulinitet for mannlige klimaaktivister i Norge"** ønsker å ta en nærmere titt på mannlige klimaaktivister og deres aktivisme, fra vinkelen maskulinitet og femininsme. Vi ønsker å analysere interaksjoner mellom femininitet og maskulinitet, og klimaaktivisme gjennom å utforske oppfatninger og idéer til intervjuobjektet. Temaer som vil bli utforsket; bakgrunn og resonnement for aktivisme, konsepter for maskulinitet og femininitet, skadebegrensende klimatiltak i hverdagslivet og klimarettferdighet. Denne undersøkelsen er i forbindelse med en masteroppgave ved Universitetet i Bergen, studieretning; Global Development. Frivillige blir spurt om å delta i **ett intervju som varer i ca. 1 til 1,5 time.** Ingen spesifikk forkunnskap om temaene er nødvendig. Intervjuene vil fortrinnsvis være på Engelsk, men deler kan erstattes med norsk om nødvendig.

Hvorfor delta?

- Du kan hjelpe å finne ut om hvordan klimaaktivisme og femininitet/maskulinitet er koblet sammen.
- Du kan bidra å finne nye perspektiver relatert til klima- og kjønnsdebatter
- Du vil kanskje bli mer reflektert over dine egne klimaperspektiver
- Du vil kanskje finne nye ideer for hvordan du kan delta i kampen mot klimaendringene.

Hvem kan delta?

➔ Men over 18 år

Og er en del av **en eller flere** under:

- du er aktiv i en organisasjon, institusjon eller politisk parti som jobber aktivt for klima.
- du ser på deg selv som aktiv deltaker i kampen mot klimaforandringene
- du er aktiv i private eller offentlige arenaer for å forkjempe global oppvarming
- du er årvåken for klimarelaterte problemer og vurderer å delta i klimakampen.

For mer informasjon, vennligst kontakt kontakpersonen din, eller meg via epost: j.buerkle93@yahoo.com eller via tlf: +4746711965

Male volunteers for research project needed

In the recent years more people throughout the world are getting concerned about the climate change and its consequences. Some research suggests there would be differences in how men and women are approaching climate change. The study "**The interaction between femininity and masculinity with climate action of male climate activists in Norway"** wants to take a closer look to male climate activists and their activism through the lens of masculinity and femininity. We want to analyse the interaction between masculinity and femininity and climate activism by exploring perceptions and ideas of the male activists. Topics that will be explored are the background and reasoning of the activism, concepts of masculinity and femininity, climate mitigation practices in everyday life, and climate justice. This study is carried out in the context of a master thesis project within the Masters' program Global Development at the University of Bergen. Volunteers are asked to **take part in an interview for ca. 1-1,5 hours.** No specific knowledge about the topics necessary. Interviews will be in English but can be partly changed to Norwegian if necessary.

Why participate?

- You may contribute developing new ideas related to climate and gender discourses
- You may contribute finding new perspectives related to climate change prevention
- You may be able reflect on your own environmental perspectives
- You may find new ideas for your own contribution to prevent climate change

Who can participate?

➔ Men over 18 years

And have one of the following aspects in your life:

- You are either already active in environmental or climate organization, institutions, or parties.
- Or you consider yourself as being active environmentally in any way
- Or you are taking active steps in private or public spaces to fight climate change
- Or have awareness of climate related issues and are considering to take action in the future

For more information, please contact your contact person of the organization, or me via my e-mail address: j.buerkle93@yahoo.com or via phone: +4746711965

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval NSD

Sikt

Meldeskjema / master / Vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer
212943

Vurderingstype
Standard

Dato
06.01.2023

Prosjekttittel
master

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Bergen / Det psykologiske fakultet / Hemil-senteret

Prosjektansvarlig
Siri Lange

Student
Juliana Bürkle

Prosjektperiode
13.09.2021 - 31.05.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.05.2023.

Meldeskjema

Kommentar
Personverntjenester har vurdert endringen registrert i meldeskjemaet.

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

Endring av prosjektansvarlig og personens kontaktinformasjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert.

Kontaktperson: Olav Rosness, rådgiver

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!