How can an activist organisation that adheres to feminist values and engages in antisexist actions strengthen masculine domination within itself? Based on an ethnographic investigation into the anti-globalisation group Les Désobéissants (The Disobedients), this chapter examines how masculine domination hierarchises the activist space and how this activist space reconfigures the relations between men and women. By combining the contributions of the sociology of social movements and gender studies, it shows how the sexual division of activist labour and the pervasiveness of sexism in activist circles consolidate male power and privileges. But this domination does not apply equally to each woman and each situation and is not without limits. Female defections and microresistance introduce fissures in the rock of masculine domination.
CHAPTER 8

Ordinary Resistance to Masculine Domination in a Civil Disobedience Movement

Manuel Cervera-Marzal and Bruno Frère

EXTRALEGALISATION AND TERRITORIALISATION OF SOCIAL CONTESTATION IN FRANCE

Since the start of the 2000s, a dual tendency has affected social movements in France: the extralegalisation of their repertoires of action—which increasingly depart from the framework of the law, and thus distinguish themselves from legal contestation as well as protests, strikes and petitions; and the territorialisation of their causes—which distinguish themselves from traditional socio-economic causes, which had to do with the employee and the preservation of jobs. These two tendencies are at work within civil disobedience collectives, which have proliferated over the past 20 years.

At the turn of the 21st century, this type of public, extralegal and non-violent collective action gradually gained ground as one of the privileged

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modes of contemporary contestation. You can, of course, find the
underlying causes of this at the end of the 1950s, in particular in the first
political actions of Lanza del Vasto’s Communauté de l’Arche in 1956,1
the creation of Action Civique Non-Violente2 in 1957, the “manifesto of
the 121” against the Algerian war in 1960, the Fight for the Larzac from
1971 and the birth of the Movement for a Non-violent Alternative in
1974. But at that point the movement was still comparatively insignificant
and was eclipsed by other grammars of contestation—socialist ones in par-
ticular. After the “golden age”3 of the 1970s, the withdrawal phase of the
“nightmarish” 1980s affected the non-violent movements of the time to
the same degree as it did other struggles.

It was only through the revival of social movements at the end of the
1990s that, parallel to the decline of traditional modes of action (a fall in
the rate of unionisation and the number of strike days, a rise in abstention,
a loss of belief in the efficacy of protests), civil disobedience really began
to flourish. The term spread along with the phenomenon itself. This mode
of action was increasingly valued, giving rise to the emergence of several
collectives (Act Up in 1989, the squats of the Droit au Logement from
1993 onwards, the Faucheurs Volontaires d’OGM in 2003, Jeudi Noir in
2006, etc.) which orchestrated its first moments of glory (a giant condom
on the Concorde obelisk during World AIDS Day in 1993, the disman-
tlting of the Millau McDonalds in August 1999).

During the same period the name “civil disobedience” saw growing suc-
cess: it began to be used as a label for practices that had existed for a long
time but which, until now, were not recognised as such. The spread of the
label “disobedience” was accompanied by the invention of multiple vari-
ants: “civil disobedience”, “ethical disobedience”, “civic disobedience”,
“pedagogical disobedience”, “institutional disobedience”, “professional
disobedience”, “individual disobedience”. This shared vocabulary of “dis-
obedience” helped bring together practices that had previously been igno-
rant of themselves—as forms of disobedience that did not speak their own
name—and ignorant of each other—because they were unable to relate to
the same symbolic identity. The signifier “disobedience” and the semantic
field that accompanied it conferred a shared identity on disparate experi-
ences: “we are all disobedients”. This self-reference prompted previously
scattered practices, experiences and organisations to group together in a
single entity, for example the three “Disobedience Forums” organised in
the town of Grigny beginning in 2011, which brought together dozens of
actors that had come to understand themselves using this label.
Examples of civil disobedience show that a growing number of activists no longer hesitate to cross the boundaries set down by the law. Their civil disobedience also largely goes hand in hand with the territorialisation of political causes: organisations as diverse as Greenpeace, the Confédération Paysanne, the Faucheurs d’OGM, the Déboulonneurs and Résistance à l’Agression Publicitaire all defend, in their own way, another way of living on the land—one that is more respectful of the environment, of biodiversity and of environmentally friendly agriculture. In the same way, do the members of the Réseau Education Sans Frontières (Education Without Borders Network) not agitate to put an end to an identity-based and nationalistic conception of the French territory? Do Jeudi Noir and Droit au Logement not seek to remove urban space from property speculation in order to place it at the service of those with poor housing and the homeless?

Finally, practices of civil disobedience are characterised by a third feature: the horizontalisation of organisational forms. These movements systematically denounce party hierarchies and union bureaucracies, which are considered obstacles to effective democratic mobilisation. But are these extralegal and territorial mobilisations as horizontal as they claim? We propose to approach this question by concentrating on the case of relations between men and women in a civil disobedience collective that is actively struggling against the Notre-Dame-des-Landes airport and in the Nuit Debout movement in Paris.

This chapter ascribes an important place to analysing masculine domination within the activist space. But far from demanding a sociology of domination that may occlude subalterns’ critical capacities, it ascribes just as important a place to the strategies of resistance that women deploy—both in order to foil the sexist behaviour of some male comrades and to destabilise the gendered division of activist work. We draw pragmatic attention to the emancipatory practices of the dominated (Boltanski 2011). These emancipatory practices can be grouped schematically into two categories: “big resistance”—collective public action—and “small resistance”—individual, concealed action. Given that the first is almost always considered more noble and more effective than the second, we must acknowledge what a bold move the editors of this collection have made in writing, at the end of the introduction, that “we must no doubt change our perspective and seek less the ‘Grail’ of a possible new utopia than daily forms of struggle against injustice”. It is to this change of perspective that we will try to be faithful.
PRESENTATION OF THE FIELD

Is a collective that intends to fight for the emancipation of women really emancipatory for those for whom it struggles? Long victim of a certain disinterest, the question of the relations of domination in activist organisations has been the object of growing interest for at least a decade (Fillieule and Roux 2009; Dunezat and Galerand 2013; Jacquemart 2013b). This questioning has emerged out of the encounter between, on the one hand, the sociology of social movements and, on the other, the sociology of social relations between the sexes (Kergoat 2012; Bargel and Dunezat 2009, p. 249) and studies on gender (Fillieule et al. 2007; Bereni and Revillard 2012).4

Gender relations are revealed with particular salience through the way in which an organisation shares out the tasks necessary for it to produce and reproduce itself (McAdam 1992). The question of the sexual division of activist work arises even more acutely in the case of feminist organisations, since they claim to take male–female inequalities into account (Charpenel and Pavard 2013, p. 263). Now sociologists of activism know that a proactive policy to feminise management can bring about perverse effects such as the stigmatisation of “quota women” or the burnout of managers submitted to a vocational ethic of total engagement (Avanza et al. 2013). Thus, collective adherence to “feminist” values does not prevent the Movement of Young Socialists or SUD Etudiants from falling into the gendered political socialisation of its members5 (Bargel 2005). Which again raises the initial question: how does male domination operate in an organisation that is nonetheless clearly sensitive to this problem? How, despite its “progressive” character, does a collective vigorously reinforce social relations between the sexes (Falquet 2005; Galerand 2007)? This chapter emphasises two explanatory hypotheses: the reproduction of the sexual division of activist work (1) and the persistence of a sexist organisational culture (2). These phenomena generate various reactions on the part of the activists (3). Male domination does not act in the same way for all women or in all situations.

The chapter is based on an ethnographic study of a collective of activists that supports civil disobedience, Les Refuseurs. Founded in the mid-2000s, this organisation brings together 50 regular activists—of which a “hard core” of 20 members put in more than ten hours a week—and 7 half-time employees. Each year this collective organises around 40 civil disobedience actions, which are defined as consisting in collective, public,
extralegal and non-violent activity. Strongly inclined to mediatise their actions, the collective is the object of frequent reports in the mainstream broadcast media and the national press. It is an alter-globalist organisation that places the struggle against sexism at the centre of its concerns. Belonging to this collective in “the space of the women’s cause” (Bereni 2007, p. 23) translates into regular actions against “publisexism”, the editing of a brochure dedicated to the history of feminist struggles, participation in protests to defend the right to abortion, the creation and distribution of feminist stickers and collaboration with other organisations for the defence of women’s rights such as La Barbe, Femen and Osez le Féminisme. Regularly staging theatrical actions with Sauvons les Riches, the Déboulonneurs and the Confédération Paysanne, the Refuseurs collective subscribes to what Irène Pereira (2010) calls the “Nietzschian Grammar” of the radical left.6

The members of the hard core are mostly students or young graduates aged 20–32. The students all work (generally half-time) in parallel to their studies. The active young people are in an economically precarious situation (whether unemployed, temping, on short-term contracts, or doing internships) and only have a small amount of money in a bank account by way of economic capital. On the other hand, they almost all have a high level of objectified cultural capital via a university degree (either already obtained or in the course of being obtained) in social sciences—the only exceptions being an engineer and an unemployed person who stopped studying after the baccalauréat. A third of them have signed up to, or tried to sign up to, a higher education course in political studies. Generally part of a heterosexual couple without children, they rent studios in the Paris suburbs. Their parents are engaged in neither politics nor trade unions but vote for the left and work in public education, healthcare or the cultural sector. This “core” (a term used by the informants themselves) of 20 activists is made up of an equal number of men and women. All are perceived and perceive themselves as white so that race relations make themselves feel less within the collective than at its external border (Roediger 2007). For three-quarters of the hard core’s members, engagement in the Refuseurs is their first involvement in an activist organisation. All have already participated in protests and signed petitions. But during interviews, they quickly clarify that these modes of action seem “insufficient” to them, which justifies turning towards civil disobedience, judged more “effective”. 
Our fieldwork was carried out openly and for explicitly academic reasons. When one of us got in touch (via email) with the collective and in a first face-to-face meeting (in a café) with its founder leader and two of his colleagues, he presented himself as a “doctoral candidate in sociology” keen to observe the concrete practice of civil disobedience. The request (“to observe the operation of your collective while participating fully in your activities”) was immediately accepted, and it was agreed that we would stay for as long as necessary. During the first three months, we focused on relations between the Refuseurs and their adversaries (political and economic leaders, law enforcement). Gradually our focus shifted towards the social relations internal to the collective, that is, the relations between activists.

The 18-month participant observation (from October 2012 to March 2014) finished with a series of individual semi-structured interviews with ten members of the hard core. Lasting an average of two hours, they were conducted during the final four months of the study, mostly at the interviewees’ homes. These interviews were an opportunity to discuss the members’ ideas and practices in a more focused way. We benefited in particular from comparing the field observations with the perception the activists had of their organisation. These interviews also allowed us to build up a complete picture of the activists’ sociodemographic characteristics.

The division between women and men plays a central role in the organisation’s current incarnation. But the ethnographic data show that the groups of men and women are not homogeneous. Each exercises (or is subjected to) male domination in their own way. Studying the different forms of domination separately leads to a reification of borders that are in fact porous, and to erase the points of intersection between the patriarchal system and other phenomena such as racism (Crenshaw 1991; Delphy 2008), capitalist exploitation (Kergoat 1978) and lesbophobia (Wittig 2001). Careful to reconstruct reality in all its complexity (see e.g. Chauvin 2011), this chapter attempts to integrate the logics of sex with those of class, race, sexuality and age.

“Angels Have a Sex”: The Sexual Division of Activist Work

Officially, the division of work among the Refuseurs is egalitarian and democratic. When the activists were asked “how are tasks distributed in the group?”, they responded almost unanimously: “according to each person’s
tastes, desires and competencies”. We insisted on knowing whether “cert-

ain tasks are reserved for women or are more often done by them?” Eight

of the ten interviewees responded that they were not. Four of the five

women interviewed added that their organisation defended feminist val-

ues; something the men did not mention.

Under the impetus of Thierry, its leader, the collective regularly carries

out actions to deface sexist posters. Again at Thierry’s request, the collec-
tive’s artist—a 22-year-old man—has produced stickers in defence of the
right to abortion, and a sympathiser—a 25-year-old junior doctor, who
does not participate in any civil disobedience actions—has written a
50-page tract entitled Putting an end to sexism. The cover of this small
book does not carry its author’s name but rather that of the collective,
which makes this woman’s theoretical work invisible.

While the comments collected through the interviews present activist
work as shared out in an egalitarian fashion, observation in the field reveals
the gendered character of this distribution. The Refuseurs continue to
assign traditionally female tasks—domestic and affective—and positions—
subaltern, devalued and invisibilised—to women. It is this discrepancy
between the actors’ discourses and the investigator’s observations that we
must attempt to explain. The idea that the choice of “non-violence” might
immediately neutralise the effects of patriarchal logics is widespread among
the Refuseurs. But in this instance adherence to the feminist cause pre-
sents no obstacle to male domination. In the activist space, women thus
revert to the competencies acquired within the family sphere and educa-
tional institutions.

Buying materials, preparing and serving meals, tidying and washing up
are carried out by women in the vast majority of situations. Men look on
passively, remaining seated at the table or at their computers. Most mem-
bers of the group have, however, absorbed certain essential feminist val-
ues. Thus is it not unusual for the activists to call out their male counterparts
with a “that’s ok guys, take it easy! doesn’t it bother you that it’s only
women who clean up?” But these remarks generally fall on deaf ears. We
should also note that the men are never overtly accused of “sexism” by
their female colleagues. The latter do not employ the feminism advertised
by the group as a lever with which to react to the behaviour of the men.
The avoidance of this denunciatory vocabulary is probably linked to the
difficulty of accusing activists who dedicate part of their personal time to
ripping up sexist advertisements of “chauvinism”. This semantic prohibi-
tion also leads one to ask whether, paradoxically, the accusation of sexism
might not be less utterable in organisations that represent feminist principles than in other organisations. What is more, this lack of propensity to approach the problem allows the women to preserve the sense of their commitment and the unity of the collective.

Some of these domestic tasks are subaltern tasks. This is true of cleaning the premises, which a woman does by herself for an entire day because the leader of the group asked her to. Most tasks involving implementation fall to women while the men monopolise decision-making functions. The latter determine the collective’s agenda themselves (which actions? on what subject? with what demands?) and its political line (management of the Facebook page, supervision of the pamphlets and books edited by the collective). Thus, the collective’s feminist discourse is essentially driven by male activists and, in particular, by the collective’s leader. Yet when the leader issues an order to restock, it is generally women who go to the suppliers to collect the goods. In an interview, a young activist told of her weariness at being regularly asked to do this kind of work, then added “And that, similar anecdotes, they are true for other girls. The personal sacrifice for the collective is often female”.

The allocation of women to subaltern tasks results in part from the fact that the five members placed highest in the organisation’s hierarchy are all men. Their average age (30), higher than that of the women in the hard core (23), reinforces this asymmetry of power. The men’s domination is thus partly mediated by the age gap. It is also mediated by the difference in activist capital since, among the Refuseurs, men have superior credentials when compared with the women who, as a consequence, experience a feeling of illegitimacy and incompetence (Rétif 2013).

But the sexual division of activist labour is a deeper phenomenon than just the male monopolisation of decision-making roles because, even when activists in the hard core are confronted by men who have arrived in the group more recently—and so are younger, less embedded and, in theory less legitimate than them—they often find themselves in a subaltern position.

One case was regularly an exception: Ryan, aged 27, is systematically assigned to tasks involving implementation. Even when surrounded only by women, he never takes a decision or gives an order. On the contrary, he dedicated himself to unappealing tasks, such as tidying up equipment, and we often observed him implementing orders passed down by his female colleagues. Ryan is the only member of the hard core who has grown up in a rural setting and who does not have a university degree. His brother
is unemployed and his parents retired. His subaltern position in the Refuseurs attests to sex-based domination being interwoven with social relations of class. This co-construction clarifies the relationship between Ryan and his female colleagues, to whom he is often subordinated, while at the same time the leader consults him before taking certain important economic decisions.

By generally delegating “dirty jobs” (Hugues 1962) to women, men can freely attend to tasks experienced as more fulfilling. During an informal conversation, a female activist from the hard core thus confided in that she was “fed up of running everywhere to go and find equipment while Thierry is there reading quietly or crowing to the journalist from Canal +”. In an interview, another female activist, who had also been closely involved for several months, said that “Thierry thinks that he can assume all the responsibilities for himself, and so he only offloads things that irritate him: packing bags, going to suppliers. He’s never proposed that I do the scouting for an action. Maybe he thinks I don’t know how to. Or it’s something he enjoys”.

Though it is known that a gender gap exists in a general sense in protest organisations (Bereni et al. 2008, p. 155), this lesser engagement of women cannot be found among the Refuseurs. As it happens, the latter are not absent from the organisation but their participation within it is made invisible. They constitute half of the hard core and around 50 of the regular activists. Within the hard core, the female activists interviewed say they dedicate on average ten hours a week to the Refuseurs, which is equivalent to the average rate for men. They are thus just as numerous and active as men. By contrast, they are assigned to tasks in the shadows. While the female activists prepare meals, do the shopping and go to collect equipment, the men reply to the media, debate with the police and post pictures of their faces on the website.

The political strategy of the Refuseurs rests in large part on their media visibility. To make up for the weakness of the activist force, they stage theatrical actions capable of catching the camera’s eye and thus that of viewers too. Aware that certain images now spread more quickly over the internet than through television channels, the Refuseurs systematically distribute their actions online, in the hope of “creating buzz”. Thus each action is filmed by at least two cameras: that of a journalist and that of a “video-activist” (Cardon and Granjon 2010, pp. 93–109). The video-activist is a member of the Refuseurs. They always dedicate a few minutes to questioning another activist about the motives for and demands of the action,
who thus takes up the role of spokesperson. According to our calculations, the task of the video activist is fulfilled in 84% of cases by a woman, while the spokespeople are men in 81% of cases. In an almost systematic way, activists placed in front of the camera are men and those placed behind the camera are women. This unequal distribution of media visibility confirms Mary B. Parlee’s (1989) observation that activist work is structured so that the role of attention getting, socially reserved for men, gives them voice, while women’s role of attention giving orients them towards valuing the tasks carried out by men in different ways, in particular through attentive listening in meetings.

The Refuseurs also repeatedly assign women to relational activities. During actions, one activist exposes himself more than the rest of the group by fulfilling the “first role”: it is he who scales the façade of the embassy to unfurl a giant banner or who handcuffs himself to a lorry transporting radioactive nuclear waste. This role is the most exposed to police repression: it is this activist that law enforcement tends to arrest first. To look after the safety of this activist, another activist serves as his “guardian angel”. In one of the Refuseurs’ internal documents, which serves as a practical manual for new activists, Thierry writes that the “guardian angel role” is to “reassure the activist […] Because if the activist ‘cracks’, because he is scared, or cold, or is too bored while remaining ignorant of everything that’s going on elsewhere, he is susceptible to giving in to the adversary’s orders, to decamp, to adopt problematic behaviour (panic, aggressiveness…). […] His moral comfort, as much as his physical comfort are thus essential. So the guardian angel is not just going to inform him, but also take care of his physical comfort, by providing him where possible with water, with food, by pulling up his collar if he complains he is cold and that his arms are trapped in an armlock (metal tube), etc.”. The guardian angel thus puts their charge at ease. If need be, they even help them go to the toilet. This task very clearly belongs to the domain of care (Brugère 2011). It is carried out by women three-quarters of the time. Although angels in theory have no sex, they do have one among the Refuseurs, and it is female. We should add that this role is undertaken by retired women in more than half the actions, even though they are few in number and do not belong to the hard core, since they only participate in actions sporadically.

Beyond this simple role, it is also women who, on a daily basis, maintain activist cohesion and conviviality. It is not unusual for some of them to bring a cake (to “home-make”) or drinks, or for them to take charge of
the infirmary. Parties are always initiated and organised by them. On the tragic death, at 30, of one of the hard core’s members, it was again two women—even though they had only recently arrived in the organisation—who liaised between the deceased’s family and the Refuseurs so that the latter could attend the funeral. The maintenance of emotional ties thus principally falls to women (Robnett 1996).

The tasks assigned to the female activists are also the least socially valued. These activities are invisibilised and, as a consequence, do not deliver the symbolic rewards attached to being a spokesperson. Cleaning or washing up earns a discreet thank you at best and, more often, an indifference towards these “dirty jobs” (Blais 2008). Female activists are thus less symbolically prestigious (Bargel 2009), and they are less financially prestigious too, since for equal work female activists are paid less than male activists. Half of the 20 hard core members are women. Within this hard core, however, the narrow circle of seven people that the leader has chosen to “compensate” only includes two women (or less than a third). Men do not work more than women, but more of them are remunerated. This pay discrimination signifies that part of women’s work is carried out for free.

Here the activist work of women is the object of male exploitation. The term exploitation is even better suited to the case of the Refuseurs because an important part of this work consists in running their shop selling activist products. Several women dedicate their time to going to get goods from suppliers, to dealing with clients’ problems, to preparing parcels and then sending them to clients—and all without remuneration. The income from this commercial activity (around 5000 euros a month) is transferred in the form of salaries to five men and two women. But during the work meetings that happen every Wednesday afternoon in the place where the goods are stored, the number of female activists is equal to the number of male activists. In interviews, several non-salaried female activists and members of the hard core complained about this exploited work, in which they say they have been involuntarily “involved”.

It is important to note that while subaltern tasks are almost exclusively assigned to women, not all activists are subjected to them in the same way (Dunezat 2004). The example of Catherine is revealing. Aged 52, she is an illustrator and owner of a five-room apartment in the centre of Paris. When a collective decision displeased her, Catherine did not hold back from making this known. And she regularly boycotts the leader’s orders. She is the only female activist to practise such insubordination. Besides, Thierry rarely leaves her to do unappealing tasks, more often reserving...
these for the novice female activists. And occasionally, Catherine begins initiatives that bring the rest of the group along with her. This capacity for bringing others along with her is obviously connected to her profession, her experience, her age and her family background. Catherine possesses a vast amount more social, activist and economic capital than her male and female colleagues, who are on average 26 years old, have recently embarked on their activist careers and live in rented accommodation. In an informal discussion during which was made this observation, Catherine responded, by way of explanation: “aside from my mother, no one has ever given me orders!” Her biographical characteristics give her leadership abilities and predispose her to a critical relationship to hierarchy—male hierarchy included. Thus, the singular position Catherine occupies within the Refuseurs seemingly invalidates the claim of male domination. In reality, this “negative” case does not fundamentally throw the patriarchal logic into doubt. It simply indicates that, to avoid a binary conception of the social, sociological analysis must connect the factor of sex with those of social class and age, as theories of intersectionality suggest (Chauvin and Jaunait 2012). Understood through this lens, Catherine’s case demonstrates a certain “elasticity of gender norms” (Bargel 2005, p. 42).

Lastly, we should note that, as we are going to clarify in the following section, the activists share neither the same experience nor the same impressions when it comes to the place of male domination among the Refuseurs.

“AH, WOMEN…”: AN ACCOUNT OF ORDINARY SEXISM IN THE ACTIVIST SPACE

Beyond the gendered division of activist work, the observation of internal interactions also allows ordinary sexism with a strong presence in the group to appear. Persistent chatting up, sexual allusions, paternalist sobriquets (“my beautiful”, “my pretty”), sexist jokes and ambiguous comments (“inappropriate”), an activist who was the object of such comments told us) on clothing all constitute daily symbolic violence which effectively reduces women to an inferior position.

The semi-structured interviews conducted with activists suggest that persistent chatting up, paternalism and sexual harassment principally come from the most experienced activists, as if seniority conferred a “property right” over women. On the other hand, misogynist jokes and comments...
seem to come more from the novice activists. At the start of 2014, for example, an activist posted on his Facebook page an image of a worker in blue overalls leaning on an enormous several-thousand-page book. The man is consulting this book, entitled *Manual for understanding the woman*, in an inquisitive way. This sexist caricature reinforces the idea that there exists an “incomprehensible” universally shared female identity. An activist from the Refuseurs sent an acerbic response (as a Facebook comment) to the activist who posted this image: “THE woman … I’m going to confess something to you, we are many…”. A man—one of the oldest members of the Refuseurs—added the following comment: “Remove this image, it’s ridiculous”. The most politicised activists have generally internalised the taboo on sexist humour.

Another scene proceeded in the same way and concerned choice of vocabulary. While a 20-year-old student participating for the first time in a Refuseurs action spoke about the “whores” of the Bois de Vincennes, his use of this term was immediately corrected by one of the collective’s leaders: “Here [implicitly ‘in our organisation’], we say ‘sex workers’, not ‘whores’!”. The words used thus vary depending on the individual. They also vary depending on the situation. When men are alone, they refer to some of their female colleagues using adjectives—“hot”, “pain in the arse”—that they never use in the presence of women.

Sexist behaviour is accompanied by verbal violence against female activists. According to our calculations, women were interrupted four times more than men during meetings. And when a woman was cut off, it was, almost always, by a man (Monnet 1998). This situation is a painful experience for some. In an interview, one of the activists spoke about it in terms of “violence”:

I still don’t know what I actually think about all that. But if there is violence in the group it’s going to be easy for me to judge, and I think there is far too much of it! But as a result I see that it generates it in me too. Because in my way of responding when a guy cuts me off — “no but François, wait, I’m speaking” — I do myself violence by daring to say that, I do myself violence by coming to terms with having said it. I think it’s violent, so I’m not at ease in this situation.

Beyond interruptions when speaking, women are more often victims of aggressive comments than their male counterparts. Julie, a member of the hard core, told us the following story:
During a training course, we debated in groups about whether, in order to protect animal rights, we would be prepared to throw fake blood in the face of a celebrity wearing a fur coat. There were two guys who were kind of clichés of guys, and who said that they wouldn’t. The first said that he himself eats animals. And the second said that the struggle for animal rights is not his priority at all. Except that, obviously, neither of them knew, and I didn’t either at that time. So I started to try to explain that culturally chucking fake blood over someone, it’s true that for one thing it’s a personal attack, which I’d refuse to do, but by contrast you could perhaps try to propose sessions for hair removal from their coat or something else. And suddenly, I hadn’t even finished, I hadn’t said anything, I hadn’t even had the time to say all of that, suddenly you have a guy who jumps in the air shouting [she rises out of her chair to mimic the activist] “yeah no but waaaaaaaiiiiiitttt you have no right not to do it!!!!” He really took it personally. And since it was a little puny guy, he didn’t dare attack the two monsters who had said “I eat animals” and “it’s not my priority”. So you see it was easier to take it up with a woman. And for a moment I was really taken aback.

Some days earlier, in front of me, Julie had already told this story to Mathieu—another activist from the hard core who, unlike me, was present at the time. Visibly traumatised by the event, Julie spoke to Mathieu:

Julie: Last weekend I really felt attacked by the anti-speciesist guy.

Mathieu: Er … when was that?

During the workshop on violence and non-violence. When you proposed the scenario of a minister who’s wearing fur, and you asked if we would be prepared to pour fake blood over him, I said that I wouldn’t do it and that I thought it was violent. When I started to justify myself the guy attacked me, saying that he had gone along with the other situations, that I couldn’t say that. And he hadn’t yelled at the other two guys. It was easier to take it up with me.

Mathieu: Oh but no it’s tactlessness on his part, he didn’t want to attack you but just make you understand that anti-speciesism and the fight against fur isn’t something secondary, that it’s a vital struggle.

This exchange reveals a gap in perception between Julie and Mathieu, linked to their respective sex. Mathieu seems to have forgotten the scene (“Er … when was that?”). By contrast Julie, who felt the need to share her feelings (it was she who raised the subject), repeated twice that she had been “attacked”. She underlined the sexist character of the verbal aggression: two other activists were more firmly opposed than her to the throwing
of fake blood, *but* the “anti-speciesist guy hadn’t yelled at the other two guys”, because they were “guys”, and it was “easier” to take it up with a woman. Rather than agreeing with Julie’s judgement and condemning this sexist behaviour, Mathieu sought to minimise the gravity of the act (“it’s tactlessness” and not an “attack”) and to excuse its perpetrator (“he didn’t want to attack you but just to make you understand the importance of anti-speciesism”). This difference in experience is linked to the position that each occupies in contemporary patriarchal society: women are subjected to, feel and, sometimes, denounce domination exercised by men. By downplaying their participation in this domination, male activists avoid an individual challenge that could potentially destabilise their political engagement (Jacquemart 2013a).

We should clarify that, placed in a similar situation, not all women experience things in the same way. The remarks made on encountering sexist behaviour often come from the same activists. Those most inclined to make men aware of their sexist attitudes have all had relatively long activist careers. For most of the female members, the Refuseurs is the first activist organisation they have been part of. This is not the case for Julia (26, a librarian), Diane (24, a doctoral student in philosophy) or Camille (21, a student at Sciences Po). These three activists are *both* the most critical of male domination in the Refuseurs and the most politically experienced. The interview carried out with Diane reinforces the idea that, rather than merely a correlation, there is a causal link here. When it comes to “persistent chatting up” by some male activists, Diane confirmed: “I had never experienced that before. And I have seen many organisations!” These three women’s previous activist experiences (in student unionism, international solidarity and the environmental cause) seem to offer them a point of comparison from which to critique sexism. As well as being the most politicised activists, they are also the most academically qualified in the group.

The group of men is no more homogeneous than that of women. It is crossed by relations of domination, which are principally founded on differences in media-related capital, activist capital and age. Thus, most prerogatives and privileges are concentrated in the figure of the leader. He is surrounded by a narrow circle of five collaborators, who are themselves superior in relation to the rest of the male militants. From the heterogeneity of the male group (and of masculinities) stems the existence of several ways of dominating. For example, while the leader does not hesitate to give orders to the women, the novice activists have a less directive attitude: they are content to leave the women to take on unappealing jobs in their place.
The male group is also crossed by a divide centred on sexuality. The Refuseurs have developed a discourse firmly committed to the rights of homosexuals. They collaborate with Act Up Paris and they make and distribute stickers on which the slogans “Yes to marriage for all” and “A gay marriage is better than a sad marriage” are written. But in an interview, one female activist (Camille) told that:

You know, when we went to Notre-Dame-des-Landes to spend the weekend at ZAD, in the evening we were all sleeping in a big house. And at one point we had a debate, I don’t know if you remember? It was: “Would we be prepared to kiss someone of the same sex for the purposes of activism?” [she stresses “for the purposes of activism”]. “Not for nothing, ok – for an activist aim!” All the men replied “no, that would bother me”, and all the women replied “yes”. We had a clear example of male sexism, of domination, and of the idea … [she does not finish her sentence].

Sexist and heteronormative behaviours are embedded in the very body of individuals and manifest themselves physically via, as it happens, a feeling of shame and/or of disgust at the idea of kissing another man (Bourdieu 1980, p. 88). The anecdote recalled by Camille reveals that, beyond the sexual division of work (women agree to complete a task that the men refuse to do), a heterosexual normative principle shapes the reactions of male activists. For their part, women declare themselves prepared to kiss other women. This difference in attitude shows the tight link between heteronormativity and male domination: the rejection of the homosexual allows for the assertion of the male gender (Borrillo 2000, pp. 17–18). The stigmatisation of people who defy the stereotype of the “true” man (homosexuals, effeminate men) allows one to be reassured of one’s own “normality” (Carnino 2005, p. 46).

What male domination does to activism has now been analysed and can be summarised here: it leads to a sexed division of activist labour and feeds a sexist organisational culture. Given that activism constitutes both a product of and a way of (re)producing gender relations (Bargel and Dunezat 2009, p. 252), the question must also be understood the other way around, in order to analyse what activism does to male domination. This is a question of how the activist space reconfigures the relations of male domination characteristic of contemporary society, because collective action constitutes a “space-time” in which social relations of sex are constantly “replayed” (Dunezat 2006). Activist organisations do not just welcome
people in as they are; they are themselves places of socialisation (Bargel 2008) that fashion their members’ *habitus* through the political training they offer them (Ethuin 2003) or, in a more informal way, through activist sociability (Yon 2005).

Some activist practices help weaken the power of men. Respect for the principle of gender parity prevents men’s monopoly of management positions. Holding non-mixed general assemblies among female activists has produced concrete advances by allowing them to express themselves more freely than in mixed meetings, where the floor is generally monopolised by men (Delphy 2008). The double list of speaking turns (which allows a woman to intervene before a man even if she comes after him on the list) produces a similar result.

Among the Refuseurs, none of these practices has been implemented. The low level of activist experience of most members (both men and women) allows us to see why this is: no one has asked for such feminist practices to be put in place since they simply have no knowledge of them. The male activists do not seem to perceive the domination they exercise. In this respect, collective reflexivity and “gender awareness” (Varikas 1991; Achin and Naudier 2010) are very weak. The few who perceive this asymmetry do not consider it a problem that deserves to be prioritised. They prefer to dedicate their energy to civil disobedience actions, emphasising that when sexism disappears from the whole of society, it will automatically disappear from their organisation. These male activists thus understand feminism in a “humanist” way (Jacquemart 2012) in the sense that, in their eyes, the fight for women’s rights constitutes a subsection of a bigger political struggle. Their engagement does not call gender norms into question. As Alban Jacquemart notes of the Mix-Cité association, the Refuseurs “stand by their feminist commitment, and its coherence, while underestimating, even ignoring, the question of gender relations in the activist setting” (Jacquemart 2013a, p. 57). In this case, male domination is not dealt with (no specifically *feminist* practice has been established in the organisation) and remains barely acknowledged (the men are not aware of the problem or, at best, judge it to be secondary).

Despite their significant cultural capital (which is usually thought to increase reflexivity), the men in the collective do not seem to perceive the domination exercised over the women. In interviews, despite persistent questions on this subject, none of them recognised the gendered character of the distribution of tasks or the male chauvinist atmosphere that pervaded
the organisation. This kind of collective repression allows tensions induced
by the discrepancy between a feminist discourse and sexist practices to be
shrugged off.

Contrary to their male colleagues, the women questioned in interviews
or during informal conversations exhibited greater lucidity. The majority
of them did not seem to see the gendered character of the distribution of
tasks, but taken together they have a clear awareness of the sexist climate
that prevails in the Refuseurs. Several also emphasise that sexism is stronger
within the organisation than outside it.

During a discussion over email, a member of the hard core said: “I
found that it was quite a sexist environment and there were quite a few
remarks that were a bit out of order. It never crossed a red line and it
wasn’t really malicious but it could sometimes bother you. And these
remarks didn’t come from just one person but it was more widespread. […]
By ‘quite a sexist environment’ I mean all those dirty jokes, the chatting
up that’s a bit too strong or persistent, and of course the little expressions
with sexual connotations, with a subtext. This form of sexism is very wide-
spread, it’s even the time where I’ve felt it most in my life. I find it incredibly
paradoxical for an environment that advocates the convergence of strug-
gles. […] When I went to the squat [the group’s premises], I wasn’t too
keen to find myself there alone and I arranged not to go there too much…”.

Another female activist, in an interview: “Real awareness of sexism was
lacking among some of the guys who manage the Refuseurs, of chauvin-
ism, of … I don’t know how to say it. […] I had the opportunity to talk
about it with the other girls and I’m sure that all of us would put it differ-
ently, but I’m sure that there’s a real gender problem, which comes from
some male activists in particular. Of that I’m convinced. And everyone
handles it differently. Some call it ‘harassment’. Others call it ‘flirting’, and
they play along, it gives them pleasure, it’s funny, it’s flattering. But all of
that depends on ‘to what extent you are still under masculine domination
or not’. And all the girls in the Refuseurs that I’ve come across have had
problems. […] So that [harassment] has started to happen quite a lot, it
happens more than once a year…”.

The first of these two women belonged to four different organisations
before rejoining the Refuseurs. But she maintains that she has never
known such a high level of sexism. The second woman confirms this
report, emphasising that “all” the women in the collective have been sub-
jected to “chauvinist” behaviour, even “harassment” by certain “manag-
ers”. In the case of the Refuseurs, what activism does to male domination
thus resembles an amplifying effect. The serious testimony of these female
activists can be placed alongside the sexual division of activist labour
described earlier. These two factors suggest that the activist space conso-
dates male domination. There is no collective discussion space in which
these problems can be brought up and, as a consequence, no practices
have been considered to try to address them.

Which raises the following question: how do these female activists man-
age to hold together both their feminist values and their conscience of the
sexism that prevails within the organisation? According to our observa-
tions, the women do not use the group’s feminist discourse to denounce
the way in which it really functions on a daily basis. Nonetheless, male
domination encounters diverse forms of resistance, which weaken it with-
out attacking it head-on. We will now present the effects produced by the
paradox of a group that openly declares itself feminist while consolidating
the domination of men over women.

“Ciao Guys”: The Critique Through Exit
and Strategies of Microresistance

Although all the female activists questioned were conscious of sexism, they
neither experienced nor perceived in an identical way. Multiple individual
and conjunctural factors have an influence on these differences. Those
female activists who are least integrated in the group, for example, are the
most vulnerable. They are the object of more frequent and insistent
remarks than those female activists who have, for example, a spouse in the
group. The fact of being accompanied by a man seems to constitute a
certain form of protection.

Céline, aged 23 and a member of the hard core, also makes this obser-
vation. She joined the Refuseurs at the same time as her childhood friend,
Daniel, with whom she spends most of her time. In an interview, having
insisted on the frequency of sexist jokes, Céline adds:

But with me it’s a bit unusual, it’s important to say that I have a really good
mate in the group, Daniel. So whatever happens, even if I’m surrounded by
people who I’m not necessarily going to like, well, there you go, I’ve got a
mate who I can cling onto. And often we’re thinking the same thing, and if
we’re not thinking the same thing we end up talking about it. Maybe it’s
also that that allows me to stay, because as a result I have this thing that gives
me my breath back. I’m a bit less targeted than other women. But yes there’s
regular sexism in the sense that there’s a form of constant chatting up.
Céline considers herself less a victim of sexism than other activists. She links this relative tranquillity to the fact that she is close to one of the men in the hard core. Daniel belongs to the male group that dominates Céline’s female group. But as a friend, Daniel is an ally for her—and this despite, or “thanks to”, his belonging to the dominant group. She can, she says, “cling onto” him. Their friendship allows her to “breathe”. This, in any case, is how Céline interprets the fact that she is less a victim of sexist jokes than the other female activists.

In this case, the alliance of a woman with a man reduces her vulnerability. Individually, such an alliance can constitute a defensive strategy. But socially, this type of alliance remains a prisoner of relations of male domination since it perpetuates the tutelage of women: the woman is only (better) protected because of her privileged link with one of the members of the dominant group. In the men’s eyes, it is forbidden (consciously or not) to do anything to a female activist who already belongs symbolically to one of them (because she is his friend or his partner).

Whatever their relationship to their male colleagues, all the women in the collective put in place different forms of microresistance. To guard against sexist jokes, some activists anticipate them, not leaving men the time to say them out loud. During an informal conversation, Clémence told us that she had been a victim of the same joke several times. When the members of the Refuseurs mention the need to fundraise in the street, there is always a man to call out in a loud voice: “Great then, Clémence, it’ll be you who’ll take charge of that”. Said in a laughing tone and accompanied by a collusive smile, this calling out, which makes all the men present laugh, rests on the idea that Clémence, because she is a woman, is going to sell her charms to bring money into the common fund. The comparison between femininity and prostitution underlies this chauvinist joke which, because it is presented in a humorous guise, makes acceptable a remark that would otherwise prompt indignation.

Weary of this, Clémence ended up making the joke herself. When the theme of fundraising comes up in discussion, Clémence does not leave the men the time to make this joke. Taking the lead, she herself confirms, swaying her shoulders and chest to mimic an ostensibly alluring attitude: “ok I’ll take care of it”. Through preventative self-derision, she thus avoids being the object of male mockery. When the joke comes from a man, it is a way of inferiorising, even of humiliating. The same joke made by the victim can at first glance be interpreted as a supreme form of alienation, attesting to a profound degree of interiorisation of their inferiority. But
this interpretation seems to miss the strategic charge that self-derision carries. In Clémence’s case, this strategic self-derision can, on the contrary, be understood as an attempt to reappropriate the stigma (“woman = prostitute”). She repeats a chauvinist joke but, in doing so, she denies the men the opportunity to say this joke out loud and, in this way, she begins a process of reappropriating her femininity.

In the same way as Clémence tries to attenuate the effect of ordinary sexism, not all the female activists allow themselves to be assigned to subaltern tasks (see the case of Catherine above). This refusal, though it is generally individual and concealed, is no less real as a result. Some female activists pretend not to have understood the orders addressed to them by the men. Others pretend to have forgotten a task to justify not having done it, they do not answer their phone so that they do not have to receive new orders, they slow the pace of their work when the manager leaves to smoke a cigarette, they hide away in a corner of the premises or they pass unseen and so are asked to do things less often and so on.

This microscopic resistance to the sexual division of labour is principally practised by the least politically experienced female activists, who are also the least disposed to speak up against sexist behaviour and comments (see above). This type of resistance is neither fully conscious nor entirely unconscious since, in interviews, female activists themselves mention being “fed up” of being assigned to “dirty jobs”. Sharing these grievances with sociologists can also be interpreted as a supplementary strategy of microresistance. By uncovering some revealing anecdotes, the activists know that we will potentially make them public and, as a consequence, help them to (d)enounce a form of domination which, until now, has not spoken its name.

These microresistances principally exist in a concealed form. The American anthropologist James C. Scott (2009) and the German historian Alf Lüdtke (2016) have shown, in other contexts, that the felicity conditions for this “infrapolitics of the subalterns” and this “reserve” reside in their capacity to remain hidden. The refusal to adopt an explicit critique of male domination constitutes both their strength and their weakness— their strength, because these strategies are difficult to counter since they are developed behind the backs of those who are dominant; their weakness, because by refusing to declare themselves as such, these resistances do not openly challenge what they combat. They proceed via an oblique path that weakens domination yet fails to attack its roots. From a sociological point of view, it is never a question of deploring the absence of
public or collective resistance or, to put it like Albert Hirschman, the 
absence of voice. The actors’ strategies are constrained by the repertoire of 
action available to them (Tilly 1978). If the female activists do not express 
their critique through voice, this is simply because they do not have the 
opportunity to do so. No time, space or procedure is provided to allow it. 
The female critique of male domination thus oscillates between two atti-
tudes: an apparent loyalty—since the women resist behind the back of the 
men—and defection (Hirschmann 1970).

Parallel to microresistances, defection constitutes the second form of 
resistance to the power of men (Dunezat 2011). During the 18 months of 
participant observation, the hard core of the collective always consisted of 
between 15 and 20 members, among which were an equal number of men 
and women. But an essential difference exists between men and women 
since the former remain with the Refuseurs for two years on average whereas 
the latter leave the group after six months. Put another way, the turnover of 
the female participants is four times higher than that of the males.

Among the Refuseurs, the disengagement (Fillieule 2003; Bennai-
Charaibi 2009) of women is always individual, intentional and, almost 
always, silent. The female activists from the hard core leave without warn-
ing, without explanation and without a trace. Coming across five of them 
again in other activist spaces and conducting a semi-structured interview 
with two others some weeks before their respective departures, we were 
able to collect some corroborating information. These departures were 
both the consequence of male domination—women have no place in the 
group and are informally pushed towards the exit—and a way of resisting 
it—by leaving the organisation, the women demonstrate, albeit silently, 
their discontent.

In an interview one of the female activists confirmed: “In the Refuseurs 
there are loads of little things. It’s the constant little comments about the 
fact that ‘the party after the action allows us to chat up the pretty women 
we have with us’, it’s the inability of many of the guys to do anything other 
than flirt. It’s all of that that means there’s a moment when the girls remove 
themselves. They don’t stay”. With one exception (a move abroad), all the 
activists justify their departure by criticising sexism and expressing a feel-
ing of relegation (“we are never heard”) and exhaustion (“I couldn’t do it 
any longer”) generated by the attitude of their male colleagues.

In this context, female defection is the outcome of an informal exclu-
sion that, by stifling the voice of women, gradually drives them towards 
the exit. This exit is largely forced but it is also, in one sense, a form of
critique. First because departure is experienced as a way of freeing oneself from an iron grip and demonstrating a disagreement with the group’s sexist functioning. Then because, objectively, these departures deprive the organisation of precious “human resources” heavily invested in domestic and subaltern tasks that are indispensable to its proper everyday functioning. The group’s leader is aware of the difficulties presented by the increase of defections; in an interview, he declared that:

We need to stop losing expertise. It may not be obvious but the people who have done actions pretty well – so who have both had this courage, this willingness to get busted, and who in parallel, as a result, can conceptualise what they’ve done, intellectualise, and so advise other people, adapt to circumstances, transmit, possibly by training – well, it’s rare. And when you have them and you lose them and, well, it’s a huge loss. So now I’ve decided, and it is I, to pay them. […] You want to be super effective and knowing that expertise is difficult to accumulate, well, when you lose someone, you really lose them, and when you don’t have permanent members who can be mobilised immediately, well you’re very weak.

Thierry thus hopes to curb the defections by paying the members of the hard core. As the author of a research dissertation on the political sociology of activism, Thierry knows Daniel Gaxie’s famous article. He knows that devotion to a cause is generally not enough to maintain activist engagement. Engagement is even better able to strengthen itself to the extent that it provides those who engage with individual rewards, both material and symbolic (Gaxie 1977). This is why, by paying some members of the hard core in order to “reward” them (this is the term he uses) for the work they have until now provided for free, Thierry hopes to curb their departures. At the start of 2013, five male activists and two female activists were “compensated” in this way for the time they dedicated to the Refuseurs.

But contrary to Thierry’s expectations, the introduction of salaries did not succeed in reducing the frequency of the departures. The reason is simple: the large majority of defections are of women, which Thierry does not seem to have recognised. By paying mostly men (70% of the employees), Thierry is trying to secure the loyalty of those members of the organisation who were already the most loyal and the least disposed to leave. The plan to pay wages missed its target. By reinforcing the assignment of women to the least remunerated tasks, paying wages in no way impeded the rate of female defections.
Women leave the organisation all the more easily because the cost of their exit is relatively low (Bennani-Chraibi and Fillieule 2003). Female activists are of course attached to the anti-globalist cause defended by their collective. But other than the case of Céline (cf., above, her proximity to Daniel), few emotional constraints weigh on them. Only weakly embedded in a network of camaraderie, their departure thus does not risk breaking apart friendships. In the same way, as most of the female activists are not employees of the organisation, they can leave the very next day, as frequently happens. The men’s dependence on the group is stronger. They are materially (the salary that allows them to live), legally (they are engaged by a written or oral contract) and emotionally (through strong personal links with the leader) bound to their organisation.

The two female activists that Thierry paid from January 2013 are exceptions. When we brought our investigation to a close, in March 2014, they were still members of the Refuseurs even though the other female activists encountered during the inquiry had all left the organisation or would leave it not long after. Selected by Thierry in order to “reward their loyalty” (they are two of the oldest female activists in the collective), they are, in return, “made loyal” by their new salary. However, the transition from the status of volunteer to that of the employee does not change the nature of the tasks to which they are assigned, since one has retained her role as camera operative and the other mostly takes care of purchasing equipment.

Women’s disengagement frees them individually from the weight of male domination that prevails in the organisation. But these departures remain for the most part silent so do not overtly confront the power of the men, which on the whole remains intact. The regular arrival of new female activists in the hard core compensates for the departure of the old ones and preserves the numerical stability of the female workforce. But while the individuals change, domination remains. The speed of the female turnover is underpinned by an individualised critique of male domination. Individual departures put up an obstacle to the development of collective resistance. Essentially, the women do not stay long enough to really create consciousness and develop a female, or even a feminist, form of solidarity.

**CONCLUSION**

Highlighting the gendered character of the activist division of labour makes visible the influence of male domination on the structuring of the internal functioning of the Refuseurs collective. The assignment of women to domestic tasks and subaltern positions is coupled with daily symbolic violence.
While the unequal distribution of tasks is largely unperceived by men and women, the latter have a broad awareness of the sexist comments and behaviour of which they are victims. The feeling of relegation and the difficulty of integrating in the group give rise to strategies of microresistance and the frequent defection of female activists. This critique through exit constitutes a form of individual salvation but impedes the constitution of a true female collective capable of challenging male power and privileges head-on.

These observations invite us to take better account of the way in which the (re)production of male domination in the activist environment advantages men’s careers (Becker 1973). Our investigation suggests that gendered organisational socialisation produces a decisive effect on the trajectories of the activists. While most of the women leave the Refuseurs collective only a few months after joining, the men engage long term. In addition, the men who are most committed obtain a set of rewards (mediatization, financial compensation) and resources (political training by the leader, participation in decision-making) that their female colleagues cannot obtain. On this point, a future study that revisits the activist careers of members of the collective in comparative perspective would allow us to understand the influence of men’s domination on their activist “ascent”.

NOTES

1. Following his encounter with Gandhi in 1937, the philosophy teacher and non-violent activist Lanza del Vasto founded the first rural Community of the Ark in Charente in 1948 on the model of the Gandhian Ashrams.
2. Led by the militant philosopher Joseph Pyronnet, this group of recusants opposed to the war in Algeria (réfractaires) protested several times in front of the prisons where conscientious objectors were being held, despite being banned from doing so. Along with pacifist activist Louis Lecoin’s hunger strike, their actions led to the legal recognition of the status of conscientious objector by the French state in December 1963. See Erica Fraters, Réfractaires à la guerre d’Algérie avec l’Action civique non-violente 1959–1963, Paris, Syllepse, 2005.
4. Thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.
5. Conversely, conservative organisations sometimes encourage emancipatory practices and women’s reappropriation of political activity (Della Sudda 2010; Rétif 2013; Jacquemart 2013b).
6. In order to protect our informants, we have anonymised the name of the group and its members, and we have broken the correspondence between people and their comments, taking care not to let this affect their sociological significance.
7. Five other interviews were carried out with journalists and representatives of partner organisations.

8. The interview agenda included the following series of questions: “Can you describe the internal mode of functioning? How are decisions taken? How are disagreements managed? Who does what in the group? How are tasks shared out? Does sex seem to you to play a role in all this?”.

9. The only two activists who mentioned the sexual division of labour are also the only two who had previously participated in a feminist collective; this supports the hypothesis that activist experience is a decisive factor in the critique of male domination.

10. We did this calculation based on the last 33 of the 40 actions in which we participated.

11. Anti-speciesism is a political movement, started in the 1970s, which is opposed to humanism and rejects the superiority of the human species over other animal species.


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