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Organizational Entrepreneurship as Active Resistance: A Struggle Against Outsourcing

David Courpasson
Françoise Dany
Ignasi Martí

This paper aims to contribute to the emerging perspective on organizational entrepreneurship by outlining how resistance to managerial policies and decisions can give birth to alternative organizational styles. Drawing on an in-depth analysis of a personal narrative of an R&D team manager opposition to hierarchical decisions, we link studies on resistance and organizational entrepreneurship to suggest that active resistance, which we define as the capacity to live beyond managerial control to create spaces of creativity and solidarity and alternative modalities of work in an organizational context, can actually contribute to the entrepreneurial process.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial initiatives often occur as unplanned by-products of an organization's deliberate and spontaneous actions (Burgelman, 1983). Building on this assumption, scholars in the areas of entrepreneurship and strategy have focused on the question: What should organizations do to "grant the freedom" necessary for individuals and teams so that they can exercise their creativity and champion promising ideas (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996)? Accordingly, research has focused on how top-level managers work to create and design organizational structures that might facilitate and nourish the emergence of entrepreneurial behavior at different levels (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Miles, Heppard, Miles, & Snow, 2000). This stream of research has shown how, to be innovative and entrepreneurial, organizations must "concede" autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess) and encourage actors to exercise it (Pinchot, 1985; Quinn, 1979) through the organization's structure, culture, resources, and reward systems (Ireland, Covin, & Kuratko, 2009). However, less attention

Please send correspondence to: Ignasi Martí, tel.: 0033472184669; e-mail: marti@em-lyon.com, to David Courpasson at Courpasson@em-lyon.com, and to Françoise Dany at Dany@em-lyon.com.

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has been paid to situations in which managerial powers either do not work to build such supporting organizational structure or—more directly—do not want such creative but unplanned (and hence, disturbing) "by-products" to emerge. Accordingly, we know little about organizational entrepreneurship as expression of transformative and creative efforts confronting the established structures, practices, and strategies (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999; Sarasvathy, 2012) as opposed to a realization of "possibilities articulated in management strategy" (Hjorth, 2012, p. 171). Such situations and efforts are the focal point for this study. We argue that entrepreneurship should not be reduced to a concession granted by top managers, and endorsed and shepherded by middle managers (Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, & Hornsby, 2005). It can also be viewed as operating within the dominant strategic order but ignoring or subverting it, therefore potentially transforming accepted "recipes for success" (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). By deviating from the established path, individuals can create alternative visions and modalities of work. Thus, while much effort is devoted to understanding the suppression of "resistance to change" (Dent & Goldberg, 1999), our objective is to clarify how, in organizational contexts characterized by hierarchical nondistributed structures, acts of resistance can generate spaces of creativity (Hjorth, 2005; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009), where individuals can discuss, debate, and contribute to certain decisions through the production of new and credible knowledge. The shift in research direction suggested in this paper supports the view of resistors as entrepreneurs characterized by counterproposals (Ford, Ford, & Amelio, 2008). Productive acts of resistance (Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2012) also contribute to structure and express workers' lives, rendering them self-defining and self-preserving (Selznick, 1992). Thus, we aim to contribute to an alternative definition of organizational entrepreneurship as a significant process of active resistance opening avenues to previously unexplored practices (de Certeau, 1984). Rather than view these initiatives as merely oppositional, our analysis regards them as new opportunities to organize and, therefore, as privileged loci from which to observe entrepreneurship in action (Gartner, Bird, & Starr, 1992).

Drawing on an in-depth analysis of a personal narrative, we focus on a research and development (R&D) team manager who struggled for 2 years to break free from managerial decisions that conflicted with his own values, posing a moral dilemma for him. Where many studies analyze such struggles as reactive and oppositional, we take a different view. We seek to highlight the opportunities for alternate corporate decisions provided by these conflicts (Ford et al., 2008; Hodson, 2001). More specifically, the subject of our study felt a strong moral obligation to act according to his own values at work, but without clear roadmaps in mind. Deeply committed to his organization, he felt that corporate policies that were supposedly intended to benefit the firm in fact prevented him and his team from doing their job properly. In response, he began taking initiatives with the hope of introducing alternative practices. He was driven by the need to reconcile his deep moral convictions with those actions he felt best promoted both his own self-concept and the future of his team. Confronting those conflicting demands spurred him to act in a way that was to provoke significant changes in the firm and to impact individual destinies, and hence, we argue, constitutes a type of organizational entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Perspectives

Entrepreneurship

Research on entrepreneurship has exploded over the last three decades, introducing a broad spectrum of topics from various perspectives (Busenitz et al., 2003; Rindova, Barry,

& Ketchen, 2009). As Aldrich and Martinez (2010) point out, existing research has extended our knowledge in numerous areas. These include: the creation of new organizations (Gartner, 2008); high-growth firms (Delmar & Wennberg, 2010); innovation of new markets, products, and services (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009); and the means by which employees recognize and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Studies like these combine to portray a rich picture of entrepreneurial phenomena.

Building on and departing from the pioneer work of Burgelman (1983), entrepreneurship scholars have also advanced our knowledge of how individuals or groups within an organization instigate renewal or innovation within that organization or create new ones (Dess et al., 2003; Floyd & Lane, 2000; Sharma & Chrisman, 1999). This body of work has spawned substantial empirical and theoretical arguments about the role that top-level managers must play in order to promote entrepreneurial behavior (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Miles et al., 2000). The general consensus is that they are responsible for building a "pro-entrepreneurship" organizational architecture; i.e., a supportive structure (Covin & Slevin, 1988; Miller & Friesen, 1984) that encourages work discretion and autonomy (Hornsby, Kuratko, & Zahra, 2002) and adequate reward systems (Kuratko, Montagno, & Hornsby, 1990). The core message in this work, despite arguing that entrepreneurship comes from everywhere, conveys a top-down image, and places organizational design—specifically regarding structure and control mechanisms—at the core of corporate and strategic entrepreneurship (Foss, 2011; Heller, 1999).

Moreover, while attention to the creation of such organizational architecture is important, it neglects the complex work and the variegated nature of entrepreneurs as well as their very capacity to create their own areas of autonomy and spaces for creativity and innovation (Rindova et al., 2009). In contrast, recent developments by entrepreneurial scholars in different traditions (Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009; Gartner, 2012; Pardo, 2005; Spinoza, Flores, & Dreyfus, 1997) put forward an alternative view. Organizational design, coordination of skills, and strategic discourse and incentives—regarded as means to elicit and support entrepreneurial behavior—are instead viewed in this burgeoning scholarship as tools that situate entrepreneurship within the dominant order of management. These new studies depict entrepreneurs as in(ter)ventors (Steyaert, 2011) who work to discover and exploit new potential (including that which is intended to encourage entrepreneurial behavior) rather than follow established strategies set by management. We aim at contributing to these ongoing conversations by showing how, by resisting, entrepreneurs can be seen as making a difference in the world (Baker & Pollock, 2007; Calás et al.) by dislodging or rearranging existing organizational structures and practices (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999).

This literature also challenges the view that entrepreneurship must be characterized by processes that build, concede, or grant autonomy. Instead, these studies direct careful attention to the different motives for resistance activities and processes (such as contesting managerial decisions, demanding greater autonomy, and breaking free from existing constraints) through which these activities may spur entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Martinez, 2010; Hjorth, 2005; Rindova et al., 2009). With a few exceptions, the questions surrounding such concrete activities remain understudied (Hamel, 2000). However, such processes can provide a lens for observing the creation of alternative paths, practices, and structures (Rindova et al.; Steyaert & Katz, 2004).

In this paper, we build on and aim at contributing to this perspective by arguing that organizational entrepreneurship is the activity through which certain people establish spaces for resisting company policies in places designed for compliance. The connection with studies on resistance is immediate: If we define resistance as the capacity to create a "breach in the self-evident" to contest the "obviousness that imposes itself uniformly on

all" (Foucault, 2002, p. 226), then organizational entrepreneurship can be defined as the production of *heterotopias* in constraining places that allows for different forms of organizing (Gartner et al., 1992). Following Foucault, heterotopias suppose the contestation of the "space in which we live" (Foucault, 1984, p. 179) as well as the dominant patterns of thinking in this space so as to generate and expand transformative ideas. Organizational entrepreneurship as resistance can be conceived then as juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces and sites that are in themselves potentially incompatible forms of organizing.

Resistance

Existing literature classifies resistance into two basic types. In the first, individuals who feel oppressed contribute to their own situation (Haugaard, 2009, p. 241) rather than try to escape it (Cudd, 2006). This perspective implies that individuals contribute to hegemonic forms of power without searching for alternatives (Gramsci, 1971; Lukes, 2005). The second category concerns individuals who do resist, but in doing so accept their collective destiny without changing the political configuration of their organization (Scott, 1985). As Žižek (1989) observed, simply resisting or criticizing certain discourses does not prevent people from usually toeing the line. In the same vein, Fleming and Spicer (2003) note that cynicism becomes an ideological force because actors refuse to believe that they are victims of ideological obfuscation. But cynicism also hampers a person's emancipatory potential: Awareness of an unbalanced power structure and recognition of the inequity of some managerial practices may contribute to trivializing the latter and making them feel more acceptable. The literature strongly concurs that it is easier to comply (Willmott, 1993) or to resist passively while pretending to comply (Fleming & Sewell, 2002) than to overtly resist. Therefore, scholarly attention has been drawn to covert and subtle forms of resistance (Scott, 1990; Thomas & Davies, 2005) rather than to more overt ones. Yet, recent work has shown how overt forms of resistance can be despite the fact they might alarm and disrupt organizations, productive and creative (Courpasson et al., 2012). Moreover, theories of oppression suggest that certain arrangements lead people who feel powerless to participate to varying degrees in their own oppression (Allen, 2008; Burawoy, 1979; Gaventa, 1980). As a result, scant attention has been paid to concrete solutions to escape such oppression, particularly in highly constraining organizational contexts. The general consensus is that relatively few individuals are capable of "serious resistance" (McFarland, 2004). Because resistance is still usually regarded as oppositional, scholars tend to assume that it runs counter to organizational interests (Ford et al., 2008) and generates more problems than solutions. Another factor contributing to the dominant view of (workplace) resistance as futile in fostering change stems from the prevalent concept of change. Much of the literature views change as the business of top management (Dent & Goldberg, 1999), which has the power to encourage, accept, or reject it (Ford et al.). Little attention is paid to other potential instigators. Not surprisingly, research also suggests that in situations where change is considered unlikely or where negative repercussions are expected, workers will not choose to express dissent (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003) or voice their concerns (Hirschman, 1970).

Organizational Entrepreneurship as Resistance

Framing organizational entrepreneurship as resistance, we move away from "managerial views" (Hjorth, 2012) of entrepreneurial phenomena that emphasize opportunities

(Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) and organizational design (Foss, 2011; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). Instead, we argue that the challenge for scholars of organizational entrepreneurship is to understand the processes by which some individuals do engage in intra-organizational struggles, defying the laws of organizational inertia (Aldrich, 2011) and its multiple forms of control despite both the uncertainty of success and the risk of dismissal or stigmatization (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Ford et al., 2008). Furthermore, this view of entrepreneurial phenomena, rooted in what is called the European School of Entrepreneurship (Hjorth, Jones, & Gartner, 2008; Welter & Lasch, 2008), suggests that the development of organizational entrepreneurship rests upon a "tactical-marginal art of self-formation immanent to the process of creating space for actualizing new ideas" (Hjorth, 2005, p. 417). Organizational entrepreneurship is the tactical invention of new practices, thanks to the production of energy that is likely to change one's life and differently organize the social and working environment (Gartner, 2012). The organizational entrepreneur generates new practices by utilizing the "cracks in the surveillance of the proprietary powers . . . creating surprises in those cracks" (de Certeau, 1984; Hjorth, 2005, p. 391).

Thus, the question we pose in this paper is: How can an individual create zones for active resistance in the workplace, and how does the work performed in these zones affect the individual and the company? In other words, how do ideas, practices, and knowledge that spring from acts of resistance transform the working relationships among team members and between teams and upper management? We explore these questions with a detailed narrative of the struggle of an organizational entrepreneur who, deeply committed to his organization, felt that the value system promoted by his superiors—supposedly for the good of the organization—hampered his and his team's ability to perform optimally. As a result, he took numerous initiatives to contest a managerial decision. Debates, discussions, and controversies that resulted between colleagues and with the hierarchy will provide a lens through which readers can view the company policies and the effects of this employee's resistance on the organization and certain individuals within it.

Research Design, Data, and Methods

To explore organizational entrepreneurship as resistance, we focus our empirical efforts on personal narratives (Atkinson, 1998; Denzin, 1989; Gartner, 2010). Studying past instances of resistance poses difficult methodological challenges, as it requires detailed descriptions of the process of resistance. The critical challenge is to look beyond the formal description of events in order to understand how they are subjectively lived and interpreted by actors in a given context. Indeed, resistance is a situated phenomenon, and contextually sensitive data are necessary to appreciate the meaning that the resisters themselves apply to their own acts. This is particularly important for entrepreneurial processes in the workplace, which entail events that are based on job-related values. Whereas case studies on resistance require access to numerous sensitive data, it is often risky for resisters to speak publicly about their past or present activities. Documents are not always available to researchers and questions abound regarding the validity and comprehensiveness of the data. Retrospective narratives of former resisters cannot be taken at face value, if only because they will likely be suspected as possible "ex post inventions" (Straughn, 2005, p. 1619). The validity challenge is all the more critical when "heroic tales" describe the actors as valiant knights struggling against illegitimate or unjust forces. The story we tell in this paper is not an exception.

Data

Despite these potential limitations, our story is interesting for two reasons. First, the data were collected from a 3-hour interview with our protagonist, "Jacques" (not his real name), who provided a detailed retrospective account of his experience. Such rich personal data are not so easy to collect. While we can neither verify the accuracy of Jacques's statements nor challenge the analysis of his experience, he provided extensive details characteristic of a coherent account. An additional and rather unusual point of interest is that the subject provided a 22-page written account for our study. This document contained both factual information and a personal analysis of his experience and its consequences for him and his team; in particular, the question of whether and how he should exit the company at some point. This text is part of the creative dimension of his story as it allowed him to express his thoughts and doubts. It was written over a 3-month period and edited numerous times. We got access to the last version of this text.

The second benefit of our method is that personal narratives provide a valuable approach to the study of key events (such as the one we examine in our paper) and relationships in the life and career of an individual (Becker, 1963; Cotton, Shen, & Livne-Tarandach, 2011). The distinctive advantage of such an approach is that it portrays the actor in all of her complexity and provides a sense of personal continuity over time by means of the person's "autobiographical reasoning" (Bluck & Habermas, 2000) or "autobiographical memory" (Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Furthermore, we seek additional support for the coherence of Jacques's account by collecting more solid records (Denzin, 1989). Accordingly, we collected different sorts of documents: 52 e-mail exchanges between Jacques and one of the authors of this paper between February 2009 and January 2012; company documents provided by Jacques; copies of letters, leaflets, and other e-mails received or sent by Jacques; and Jacques's assessment documents. Letters as well as e-mails that were exchanged frequently between Jacques and the other protagonists actually give a dual character to the structure of our data by showing Jacques's respect for the facts, even though his retelling of the events may "heighten the entertainment value of the story or the social prestige of the narrator cum protagonist" (Straughn, 2005, p. 1620). Such duality is also valuable in portraying organizational entrepreneurship as a complex phenomenon involving numerous parties rather than an isolated act. The purpose of Jacques's account in this paper is to draw attention to "what seem like petty acts" (Ewick & Silbey, 2003, p. 1331). Therefore, while we acknowledge that accounts relayed after the fact may be incomplete and subjective, they are nonetheless indispensable in complementing other data and study elements that cannot be easily identified in written archival documents (Straughn, p. 1620), or studied as events unfold, when participants may be reluctant to incur the risks associated with sharing an ongoing experience. During the interview process, Jacques was asked to narrate the salient events and turning points of his private and professional lives and then questioned according to the interview guide devised for this study. This guide aimed to explore specific circumstances surrounding key moments of the resistance, crucial actions and decisions, further developments and consequences of Jacques's activities, and his professional environment. The interview was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim, producing 50 pages of notes to analyze. After transcription, it was summed up in a short narrative that we sent to Jacques for validation and further comment if necessary. The narrative is a three-page document containing direct quotes as well as clarifying comments from the research team (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). We also analyzed Jacques's personal history and background, paying specific attention to

how they might have impacted his vision of management and also looking for any instance of activism-related life episodes. The diverse sources of data and means of collecting them, together with our trust in Jacques, gave us confidence in the accuracy of the constructed narrative. We also had the advantage of developing a sufficiently enduring relationship with him to be able to obtain both written empirical elements and personal accounts of his experience over a period of almost 3 years. As the story entails both emotional and objective dimensions, the quality of said relationship is key to understanding the entrepreneurial process as defined in this paper because it is encompassing subversive activities and "manipulative and calculative" strategies (de Certeau, 1984, p. 36, in Hjorth, 2005, p. 419) that require an intimate understanding of the actor's stakes and power relationships with other protagonists.

Finally, the study of organizational entrepreneurship as resistance poses the difficult challenge of balancing the two possible foci of inquiry: the dominant managerial representation on the one hand, and the entrepreneurial effort to create alternatives within that dominant order on the other. To that end, we have utilized diverse and numerous internal documents and conducted additional interviews in May, June, and December of 2013 with other actors who either may have been affected by Jacques's action, 3 years after Jacques's departure or have been direct protagonists in Jacques's struggle, such as his direct boss, whom he overtly opposed and who forced Jacques's eventual resignation. Through these documents and/or interviews, we attempt to understand any unintended consequences of Jacques's nonconforming acts upon the company after his departure. The first of these interviews was with Sophie, the former Human Resource (HR) Manager at Jacques's plant, who left the company in February 2010, 9 months after Jacques did. Two other interviews were conducted with two former members of Jacques's team: Phil, the engineer; and Max, one of the technicians. Phil left the company in 2012 for personal reasons. Max still works there and agreed to testify about the workplace transformation that he attributes to Jacques's struggle. We also conducted an interview with Michel, Jacques's former boss, in December 2013; now retired, Michel could provide a view from the hierarchy about the struggle and its influence (or lack thereof) over the organization of R&D in the company. All interviews have been tape-recorded and transcribed. They provide interesting insights into the effects of Jacques's resistance on the company, clarifying how the process of organizational entrepreneurship impacts others.

Data Analysis

Jacques's story can be structured according to three major episodes of resistance that characterize his struggle between personal values and organizational demands. We have consequently analyzed our data according to these milestones. This relates to our definition of organizational entrepreneurship as an ongoing process "that follows the distribution of gaps and breaches and watches out for openings" (Foucault, 1984, p. 105) in order to dislodge or rearrange existing organizational structures and practices (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999) and generate new modes of organizing and new relationships (Gartner, 2012; Gartner et al., 1992; Rindova et al., 2009). According to this approach, entrepreneurial processes are "constituted by connected, heterogeneous practices, a form of social creativity that changes our daily practices and our ways and styles of living" (Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009, p. 194). Through the three major episodes along which we code our data, we have identified four categories of analysis that allow us to understand Jacques's resistance as an ongoing and unfinished work in relation to external objects and people (see Table 1): (1) trigger of resistance—specifically, the change in Jacques's environment that prompted him to object to company policy. This is important because the

Table 1

Categories and Subcategories of Analysis of the Three Events

Events	Categories	Subcategories	Quotes
1994: Letter to HR	**Trigger of resistance**: the method for firing people	Showing explicit indignation	"I found it was outrageous . . ."
	Main activity: writing and sending a letter	Expressing values. Confronting management	"I decided to write an open letter . . ."; "I felt like forced to do something against these practices . . ."
	Interactions	Support and solidarity	"The unionists were thrilled . . ."; "People started to know me better . . ."
		New relationships within the company	
	Problematic	Enacting personal values	"I felt I had no choice, I could not let things go, that was a personal matter . . ."
2004: Outsourcing production of technical materials to China	**Trigger of resistance**: absence of good reason to outsource; Political concerns with China	Showing disagreement with objectives	"I just could not find good reasons to move part of the production of these elements to a Far East country . . ."
	Main activity:	Sending e-mails to all actors involved in the decision and implementation	"I knew all the people involved more or less . . . I quickly expressed my dissenting views to them, looking for reactions"
	Interactions	Provoking a dialogue based on economic arguments	"I know what I am talking about too!"
		Offering alternative solutions	"I explained that we could do otherwise for less!"
		Using managerial language	"After all I am a manager myself, I could use these words and figures that are always center stage in company communication . . ."
	Problematic	Dealing with a split between being a Human Rights militant and occupational requests	". . . I cannot leave my personal values and options at the gate of the company . . ."
2006: Outsourcing R&D activities to India	**Trigger of resistance**: creation of a new activity "out of the blue"	Showing disagreement with objectives and methods	"I was even not informed in the first place . . . that was coming out of the blue . . . that was unacceptable . . ."
	Main activity	Silent refusal	"I did not reply for several months . . . I was really disappointed by their methods . . ."
	Interactions	Exchanging technical and economical arguments	". . . I had numerous arguments . . . they never replied in terms of technical and economical matters . . ."
		Pressures from management	"I was harassed by my boss . . ."
		Finding support	"The Lab team was clearly behind me, but that was not my intention . . ."
		Strategy of self-protection	"Union representative . . . also to avoid personal sanctions, for sure . . ."
		Decision to exit	"I had no choice eventually but to leave the company . . . I was kind of pushed . . . but that was truly my decision"
	Problematic	Making a definitive choice between occupational and personal values	". . . It was the second time; I had to realize that I was against these corporate strategies . . . to face the incompatibility . . ."

entrepreneurial process in our story starts with Jacques's refusal to comply with company policy—itself an affirmation and an "active response" (Hjorth, 2012); (2) main activities that illustrate his claims to management; (3) interactions created by Jacques's activity, as well as the content of and additional parties to these encounters; and (4) the "problematic" category that synthesizes the episode from the perspective of Jacques's subjective interpretation. Specifically, this category aims to clarify Jacques's struggle to reconcile his workplace demands with his internal moral code. The researchers decided this category was necessary not only to address the struggle as creation of new spaces and alternate business practices, but also because Jacques's creation results from disagreement on company values. Such creation in our case refers to postponing the corporate project for more than 2 years, and ultimately refusing to do that which he deemed morally unacceptable.

These four main categories are then split into subcategories meant to provide a detailed description of Jacques's actions in the workplace during his struggle and the reaction of his working environment. The drawing of the categories and subcategories and the coding of the data were conducted by individual researchers as well as jointly by the research team. The team met numerous times to create constructs and assess the fit of the emerging categories. These iterative discussions helped to refine the subcategories and to define and delimit the emerging theory (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). The narrative exposed in the following section follows a chronological logic. Table 1 illustrates the categories of analysis that are consistent with the view of organizational entrepreneurship as a working and interactional process of resistance, based on the capacity of a given actor to create space to contest managerial decisions and offer alternatives to these decisions.

Analysis and Findings

When the first author met with him in April 2009 for a 3-hour interview, Jacques, 53, was head of one of the R&D departments within a European aeronautics company called "Aero" in this paper. At that time, Jacques was about to leave the company after a long and exhausting struggle against a managerial outsourcing project. The researcher had originally met him at a conference within a union meeting in Paris in December 2008 titled, "Resistance in the Workplace." After the researcher gave his presentation, Jacques asked whether his own situation might be of interest for the project he had mentioned. Jacques had written a 22-page document telling his story and expressing opinions about the stream of events. He sent the text to the researcher in December 2008 under conditions of strict confidentiality. The researcher read the text several times. He exchanged e-mails with Jacques over a period of 3 months before meeting with him in April 2009 with a specific list of questions to address during the interview, such as how Jacques's educational and personal background had impacted his vision of management. It also aimed to collect any additional facts not mentioned in the text and to better grasp Jacques's subjective analysis of this experience.

Jacques described himself as having been a loner in school: very shy, generally calm, and "easygoing." He said he did not keep up with any friendships from his school days. Jacques also said he had always been more comfortable "obeying orders" than raising concerns by resisting and had never viewed himself as a political activist in the past: in his youth Jacques had no inclination to participate in political activities. Yet, Jacques explained that after his father's death in 1986, he needed to "do something to get over it . . . I wanted to do something useful, to 'leave a mark'." He mentioned his

father's death several times, both as a trigger and as an explanation for his workplace activism: "It was the death of my father that forced me to do what I do."

The interviewer learned that Jacques had in fact a long history of involvement in diverse organizations with a rather explicit political agenda, indicating a likely connection between his private "political" engagements and his active resistance at work. He joined the Human Rights League in 1987 and became head of its local office in 1992, a position that lasted 5 years. He had also been involved in some Greenpeace actions in the 1990s.

Jacques started his career in 1979 at "Aero" when he was recruited as a draftsman in a research laboratory. He was quickly given new responsibilities and in 1984 was put in charge of technical development of the hydraulic jack, a crucial component of the Airbus A320. He soon became highly respected within the firm and the industry as a specialist in flight control technologies. In 1997, he became head of one R&D team, referred to in this paper as "the Lab."

The experience he wanted to share with the researcher on this occasion was his last refusal to outsource research to India. His struggle started in 2006 and lasted until he left the company in mid-2009. He had spent more than 2 years resisting the hierarchy's decisions and policies and managed to delay the implementation of the outsourcing project. His behavior during this time was that of an organizational entrepreneur (Hjorth, 2005, 2012): he began to craft specific actions in response to his environment; discuss and share his vision with team members, management, and other company employees; and live according to his values. Initially, he had no specific alternative in mind, but his resistance would *de facto* generate alternatives to the company's dominant strategic story, creating spaces for discussion and critique beyond the control of corporate management, that would affect the company after his departure. The following section describes three episodes that exemplify Jacques's propensity to resist management. The first two—a letter to the HR manager protesting the firing of employees and his objection to the company's policy of progressively relocating material to China—set the context for the third, the outsourcing to India, which is the focal point of our narrative.

The Context of Jacques's Resistance

A Letter to the HR Manager. In 1992, Jacques found the first occasion to stand for his values at work. That year saw record-breaking job losses in France, especially in the aeronautic industry. In total, more than 55,000 people in the industry were laid off that year. Industry practice was to terminate employees swiftly with no advanced notice. HR managers wanted to "clear off the shop floor," according to Jacques, so as "not to create a bad atmosphere, you know, lay off people still in the corridors, gossiping and stuff . . ."

Many corporations used taxis: people were summoned to HR departments, given their termination notice, and immediately put into taxis with their belongings and sent home. Jacques could not accept this process. He told us:

> It was outrageous to me; people were informed on Monday morning that they were on the dismissal list, and at noon they had to clear off. So I wrote a letter to the HR Director, an "open letter" from a Human Rights activist, and I sent it to him immediately.

The letter, dated May 3, 1992, expresses vehement indignation from the standpoint of values without addressing the economic reasons for the decisions. The letter reads:

> I cannot conceive that my action as an activist stops at the firm's gates. The latter is part of society and my role is to highlight when human individual rights are attacked . . . how can we describe how the numerous people dismissed have been treated on April 27? . . . Can we imagine that . . . in a modern corporation, employees are considered as machines that we can get rid of instantly . . . ? April 27 is a "Black Day," and I rise up against these practices. . . . What misdeeds did these people commit to be locked out?

He was convinced that human beings were being treated as "dogs that you throw away by kicking them." More importantly, it forced him "to do something" because to him "it was unbearable to feel that those people were literally kicked off the premises." Jacques finished the letter with some advice, which we believe adds a rather interesting nuance to this event:

> Treating people like "hardware" will result in people behaving like "hardware" . . . but THE RICHNESS OF THE FIRM IS ITS ABILITY TO THINK.[1] I do hope that you shall do your best to make such dismissals more humane in the future.

Jacques took a personal risk as he signed the letter. He said that he felt obliged to react to this mistreatment of others although he was not personally affected by the layoffs. His objection was not to the dismissals *per se*, but to the manner in which they were carried out, and at a deeper level, the unacceptable feeling that a failure to react in such a situation would result in an unbearable split in himself between his "outside" belief system (which had never been made explicit at work) and the rules that he was compelled to follow in the workplace:

> In any case, I told myself that it was not possible for me to simply do nothing. It was so . . . unacceptable what they were doing. What was the purpose of my involvement in the Human Rights League and other humanitarian causes if I did nothing about such outrages within my own company? It would be meaningless unless I stopped all that . . .

Unions applauded his initiative and asked him to post the letter in all of their offices, although Jacques's activity was not primarily motivated by typical union arguments. Nothing would happen anyway; the management remained silent. But Jacques's image in the firm changed. He said, "That was a starting point for me. I got the first true signs of sympathy from numerous colleagues." This did not change Jacques's behavior or job performance. He remained committed to his work, trying to develop good relationships with his colleagues and superiors.

Contesting the Increasing Production of the Firm's Technical Material in China. In 2004, Jacques was head of one of his company's three R&D departments. Ten engineers and 17 technicians worked in the Lab at that time. Top management then decided to relocate some of their operations to China and sent Jacques a list of materials to prepare to transfer. In response to this information, he sent an e-mail protesting this decision (dated April 15, 2004) to the China project director, with copies to the technical director and to the head of the division in France. In recalling the reasons for such reaction, he told us that he "couldn't accept that we were relocating parts of our job to Chinese factories." In the e-mail, Jacques explained that he "was obedient" but that he "strongly disagreed

1. In capital letters in the e-mail Jacques showed to the researcher.

with the decision." He told us that in this occasion, he opted to argue his case from an economic standpoint:

> I gave figures demonstrating that the transfer of materials to China would result in higher costs for the division (the head of the division later confirmed I was right by the way), and in addition we had 500 plans to translate into English for the Chinese to work on. . . . It was an enormous task, which would involve great costs to the corporation.

Jacques expressed his feeling that while managers might have valid reasons for the relocation, alternatives should have been considered. Furthermore, he believed that while the decision makers were certainly interested in the task at hand, insufficient attention was paid to how this transfer would affect the goals of the company and its subunits. Accordingly,

> I suggested a more progressive translation schedule in order to check the work of the Chinese and distribute the job over a longer period of time, in order to reach the famous 500 plans in 2006 . . . I also took the examples of specific pieces produced in our British factory to demonstrate that, given the number of pieces produced on a yearly basis, if we were producing the pieces in the French factory, we would gain 1.3 million Euros—for only one piece!—and one million for another. I suppose the corporation agreed to pay more when the pieces were produced in England. I suspect that they did that in order to save tax money because England's rates were low. I never mentioned countries in my message, only the codes of the pieces, so as to let them guess where they were produced . . . a bit hypocritical, I admit.

Although Jacques's true motives for this action stemmed from ethical and political considerations, he chose instead to frame his argument in economic terms. According to him, this was a purposive effort to "speak to managers in their own language" while engaging in what he saw as active resistance as opposed to the more passive forms suggested to him by some colleagues. He stated the belief that "passive resistance is very negative" and even "dishonest," equating it with the playing of tricks.

Jacques used economic parlance and arguments on purpose, although his resistance was driven by an unbearable divide between his values and the actions he was expected to take. "My former self-image as defender of Human Rights got kind of activated. I told to myself that it is not possible to work with Chinese firms . . . managed by former or even current apparatchiks." Once more, he felt obligated to resist a policy that he regarded as wrongheaded and destructive primarily from a moral standpoint, though he chose to make his case in economic terms.

These two episodes give us some insights into Jacques's beliefs and values. First, Jacques sees business as an integral part of society. According to him, decisions made by company management should therefore be evaluated according to criteria that are not exclusively economic. What is more, his initiatives suggest he contests, in a rather tactical manner, the assumption that managers are the depositary of unique knowledge. The two episodes, despite the 12-year lapse, are hence linked: Without the distrust in management in 1992 and his active stance and encouragement from the labor unions, he would not have become as active in contesting the increasing production of technical material in China. Second, we clearly see in these episodes that Jacques is able, when needed, to mobilize a repertoire of values and managerial knowledge. He understands that he operates within a landscape in which a particular strategy dominates and thus, any effort to open new spaces and bring different practices entails the breaching of that management strategy. The process of resistance described below illustrates how such knowledge is put into action.

Resisting the Outsourcing of the Lab

In June of 2006, Jacques's boss informed him of the firm's intention to create the Far East Design Center in India (FEDC[2]), another R&D center that would directly compete with Jacques's team and perhaps encroach upon the Lab's activities. Jacques's greatest worry was not that the FEDC was intended to become the corporation's central R&D center but the expectation that he would contribute to the increasing dismantling of French industry by helping this new unit to develop.

Jacques was expected to provide ideas for the launch of FEDC activities. "I didn't respond," he said. For the rest of the year (2006), the bosses continued to seek input from Jacques. He gave no response until December, when he officially declared his refusal to "transfer the knowledge of Lab to this FEDC." He refused to get in touch with people at the FEDC or go to India to work with them. He explained his position in several letters to the hierarchy. His first reason concerned the management of competencies. He wrote in an e-mail to the management:

> Up to now, we used external resources such as interim employees in the event of work overload. We could sometimes keep the best of them and renew the workforce. With FEDC, this will no longer be possible. The Lab in France will progressively dry up and disappear, as we will have transferred all of our knowledge to FEDC. This is all the more worrying because the average age at the Lab is forty-seven and the youngest team member is thirty-six.[3]

From this moment on, Jacques felt harassed by Michel, his immediate superior, who in an interview conceded that Jacques's refusal had "created a shock in the management team." Michel added:

> This FEDC was sort of an obvious decision for us . . . discussed numerous times in the executive committee. We have never thought someone could be opposed to that! The strategy was based on a 2 years' discussion with Indian partners so we were sort of trapped by our own convictions. . . . He took us out of our certainties, but we were really angry to waste time and be obliged to talk with teams, frankly. . . . He had his own way to intrude into the managerial prerogatives that we really disliked (. . .) Yes he was intrusive, strategy was not his business we thought . . .

Jacques consequently met with the HR manager in March 2007, reasserting his position and stating that "Even a threat of dismissal won't change [my] mind." In the spring of 2007, a higher-up tried to convince him to accede to management, but Jacques remained steadfast. He felt obliged on this occasion to deny the charges of racism that some bosses had begun to level at him due, he supposed, to his opposition to the project in India. In May of 2007, the R&D director chose the first research topic to officially launch the FEDC. Jacques assigned one member of his team to work with the FEDC after receiving assurance from him that he was comfortable doing so. He said: "That was a way to show that I was not in a systematically destructive or opposing mindset. I could understand their objectives although I did not share them."

During a weekly Monday meeting on May 15, 2007, for the first time, Jacques addressed the question of FEDC cooperation (or lack thereof) with the entire Lab team (35 persons). He explained his reluctance to work with the FEDC and got the full support of his team, which—with the exception of the one assigned to work with them a week

2. This is a code used to protect anonymity of the company.
3. Excerpt from a letter to the Production Director of the company.

earlier—unanimously refused to collaborate with the new group's engineers. The news of this collective stance seemed to slow the FEDC's projects for a few months. From that moment on, the Monday meetings were devoted primarily to issues relating to the outsourcing. In his personal narrative, Jacques writes:

> Monday meetings were a one- or two-hour privileged moment during which we could freely share our concerns regarding FEDC; of course some colleagues would never speak out but others became progressively engaged and even enthusiastic about addressing alternative methods for working with Indians without relinquishing our own jobs.

On January 22, 2008, Jacques discussed his objection with his boss at his yearly assessment meeting. No explicit mention was made of working with FEDC as an objective for 2008. However, Jacques' boss noted in the written comments that "This refusal could alter future career developments."[4] This was the first time that a direct threat was used in writing to force Jacques's compliance. In the interview, his boss told us that he was explicitly urged by the Vice-President of R&D to "shut Jacques up" and he added, "I definitely tried." With an important project scheduled to begin in mid-2008, Jacques's bosses explained that the Lab was obliged to collaborate with the FEDC for reasons of "development budget"[5] and that they would not permit Jacques, in words of his former boss, to "intrude into managerial prerogatives." They threatened to transfer the project to one of the company's other R&D centers if Jacques's team refused to cooperate. Jacques realized that he was in a stalemate. He did not have the power to stop the project. If he continued to hold out, his entire team would be affected. This issue, discussed at the Monday meetings, was starting to divide the team, as Jacques notes in his narrative:

> I felt some team members were increasingly uncomfortable opposing FEDC. They feared for their own jobs. Others explained to them that their jobs were insecure anyway. . . . at some point I did not have to intervene anymore.

Jacques discussed the threat at a mid-year meeting with his immediate supervisor (July, 2008). He raised the possibility of seeking another job to avoid "hampering future developments of the company" while staying true to his values by not accepting work with the FEDC. The reaction of his boss was surprisingly friendly: He even modified Jacques's words by commenting, "OK, so you want to have another job."[6]

Jacques had predicted early on that the conflict with his superiors would intensify. Therefore, he took some initiatives likely to support his struggle. In November 2006, he ran as a candidate for substitute representative of the Works Council. Although he was not a union member, he beat an active unionist with 90% of the votes. He admitted that he had decided to run for office because the elected position would give him legal protection as a personnel representative. Another critical benefit of this position was to allow Jacques legitimate access to specific company documents that could prove useful in his struggle. Once elected, he became the Secretary of the Council, and thus was the one who took notes and wrote reports of the meetings. In his campaign literature, he wrote: "The Works Council is consulted to give its opinion: Good, I want to give my opinion!" Becoming a council member also allowed Jacques to break free of the constraint to preserve secrecy

4. Excerpt from the assessment document, 2008.
5. However, Jacques showed his boss the figures seen at the Works Council meeting of October 3, 2007, clearly indicating that the cost of external service providers was less than 1% of the overall development budget.
6. According to Jacques's written narrative, these were the words used by his boss at the end of the interview.

that he felt as middle manager. This enabled him, in his words, to "root out the evil" and take what he called a "radical position, engaging his own personal values." He also had access to the Council's offices where people would meet him to discuss their concerns. Jacques mentions in his written narrative that certain office hours would be used by colleagues to discuss how the process was evolving, and that the HR manager also visited on occasion under the pretext of addressing Council and management issues.

Late in 2006, Jacques started to refine his arguments against the FEDC project. As stated above, his first concern was that if all the research projects were subcontracted to India, he would have no opportunity to recruit new technicians to "inject fresh blood" into the Lab. Another worry was that he wasn't initially told of the creation of a new team in India—information he regarded as critical to his job as a manager. He tried to understand why the firm had decided to create and develop the FEDC without telling him. He was convinced that it was not for reasons of improving quality and wondered whether the decision resulted instead from a belief that the high number of Indian engineers at the U.S. headquarters was an asset, as the job market for such specialists was poor in the United States. He stated that, "In France it's different. We have a long tradition of training the best engineers, so we don't need the Indians. . . ."

He eventually learned that the fundamental reason for the creation of the FEDC was a late-2005 agreement between the corporation and India stipulating that the country would buy planes from the company in exchange for the relocation of part of the firm's R&D and production operations. While Jacques acknowledged that the terms of the contract were fair, he disapproved of this matter of international policy. His personal objective was to save employment and preserve the quality of production for which he was accountable. Jacques's struggle with management involved some high stakes: Union representatives feared that outsourcing the Lab would halt R&D in France and eventually lead to the closing of all French sites. He stated, "From late 2007 on, the news of the existence of FEDC has spread like wildfire. The whole company knows, and the big boss is obliged to come and explain what is going on. . . ." As a Works Council member, Jacques asked many questions, especially at the extraordinary meeting which the Council had requested and the boss had agreed to attend in October 2007. But when the boss did not respond to specific questions regarding costs and choices of investment, Jacques decided to seek the information through the people he knew in the Finance Department. Two personal acquaintances working in this department agreed to provide information that could help support Jacques's arguments. In his written narrative, Jacques stipulates that, "I did not obtain that information through treachery or illegal behaviour. I was entitled to it as a council member, although nobody had been interested in it previously."

Jacques then tried to convince his team members during Monday meetings and other colleagues at different occasions that the issue at hand was strategic and concerned everybody in the company. But he said to the researcher:

> I am not a militant anyway. This is my personal stance, and I don't want people to feel obliged to follow me on that route . . . if only because I may be wrong.

While he refused to force anyone to join his struggle, it gained support over time. Early in 2008, he became a union member and won another election—as permanent Works Council representative—again with 90% of the votes. Jacques was greatly appreciated by his colleagues. Yet, as he emphasized several times during the interview, he was not the "typical" unionist (at least in his own company and much of France) who would favor "systematic and even violent opposition in any conflict." He was in fact rather critical of this classic oppositional version of unionism and argued that "One cannot be disconnected from the 'normal' activity of your company." He added, "I do not think it's

good that people spend their time doing their unionist stuff." In his written narrative, Jacques mentions that he thinks that his electoral success

> . . . was surely partly due to the numerous conversations—both formal and informal—that I had with people working in the company . . . people really appreciated the new opportunity to discuss strategic issues.

By September, 2008, Jacques's position had become increasingly difficult. His relationships with his bosses were deteriorating. Jacques said that his supervisor came to him every Friday at six o'clock p.m. to put pressure on him, and on one occasion implied that he was a racist: "You bought a Skoda in 1997, so why are you so behind the times with Chinese and Indians?" Deeply offended, Jacques left the office. He told the interviewer later that he found this argument "appalling." In early September, a project involving a new engine mechanism began. Jacques's immediate supervisor told him that "All calculations and plans will be prepared in India. The technical production will be done there as well." Jacques said nothing, realizing it was useless to argue. On October 28, Jacques's supervisor tried once more to convince him to contribute to the FEDC's development. He burst into Jacques's office and accused him of creating confusion in the employees' minds at the Monday meetings, thus signaling their significance as perceived by top management. He told Jacques that they wanted him to head the FEDC and, in contrast to the earlier message that the project would proceed with or without his help, he was now told that if he declined, it would be abandoned, and the entire company would suffer. Jacques wondered if he was only bluffing, trying to make him appear responsible for any negative effects on either the Lab team or the company if the FEDC project did not come to fruition. Upper management eventually tried to force Jacques to defend political positions: At an R&D meeting in November, 2008, the Skoda was mentioned again, this time by the general manager, implying that he was contradicting his own values by buying a foreign product. The pressure was mounting, becoming unacceptable and unbearable for Jacques. Reflecting retrospectively about his own role as Jacques's direct boss during the 2 years struggle, and the pressures and harassments exerted on him, Michel told us:

> You see . . . I have seen Jacques as a "moron" for a while . . . he was messing things up . . . now I am ashamed because he had real hard times and was obliged to leave, partly because of me . . . I was sometimes bluffing, sometimes not, I wanted him to comply . . .

Late in 2008, Jacques sent a letter to the HR manager requesting a transfer within Aero, reiterating the basis of his disagreement with company strategy. He had been struggling for more than 2 years to promote his own values, which were in conflict with those of top management. When no offer was received, he decided to leave the company. In January of 2009, he interviewed for a similar position with a major competitor, a job he was offered and ultimately accepted.

Spaces for Creativity and Critique, Spaces of Solidarity and Emotion

It is interesting to note that while Jacques's relationships with his superiors grew more acrimonious, his colleagues—both union members and other employees—began to mobilize in support of his struggle. As mentioned earlier, he was twice elected by a landslide as the workers' representative. He also had the support of his entire team in officially refusing to work with the Indians following the meeting of May 15, 2007. He described that as "a great moment of understanding and sharing" that would start the practice of

discussion during Monday meetings. In fact, those meetings and the accompanying multiple discussions in the corridors where quickly spotted by top management who was, in the words of Michel:

> Seeing people talking more and more everywhere, and we had no control, how could we? At the same time . . . I couldn't prevent thinking that was sort of nice, the meetings were animated!! . . . We could not have a spy in all these meetings that they had on Mondays and also elsewhere, maybe they were seeing each other at home!

He further admits that the "atmosphere of the firm" was new. In the Monday meetings, people were not only opposing the FEDC decision and questioning the dominant strategy story, but they were also transforming existing conceptions of work and envisioning relations, boundaries, and roles within the firm. As expressed by Michel himself:

> I felt the growing, how can I say, power of these guys who were explaining why they would not do this or that . . . people talking strategy, that was new, really . . . we knew they weren't only criticizing the strategy they were also debating about how to save the Lab and provide the company with better results than the FEDC could provide.

The Monday meetings became spaces for creativity that contributed to crystallize in the very same firm, the juxtaposition of potentially incompatible forms of organizing and interpreting. As suggested by Michel's words—"we had no control, how could we?"—such creativity emerged by utilizing the "cracks in the surveillance of the proprietary powers" (de Certeau, 1984; Hjorth, 2005, p. 391).

Furthermore, the Monday meetings became as well spaces for solidarity and emotion. In the meetings participants became, in Jacques's words, "progressively engaged and even enthusiastic." Thus, these spaces, even if contingent and tentative, served to isolate and "de-integrate" (Touraine, 1995) people from their "normal"—acquiescent—behavior, creating new forms of togetherness between them. Likewise, from the moment Jacques had officially asked to be transferred and refused to head the FEDC, he came to realize that "Handshakes were stronger. People sent me messages of support from all over the company, calling me courageous. They said they would go on strike if the company tried to punish me."

Jacques recalled those signs of sympathy with emotion. For him, they clearly validated his position. Around the same time, mid-2008, several technical executives in the company leaped to Jacques's defense and decided to organize a series of meetings to discuss the company's strategy. Jacques took part in a couple of those meetings. Yet, he ended up thinking that "there were too many diverging interests" despite confirmation that the cost of the FEDC project would far outweigh that of the present organization. This group met three times, until one of the engineers expressed an unwillingness to jeopardize her job. Jacques explained:

> Of course there is a risk in this resistance. If one is not ready to sacrifice his job for his values and principles, he has nothing to do with any kind of political movement . . . This was also a political movement. It was about showing the injustice of hiring Indian engineers while the whole French society pays for educating high-quality engineers that my company does not want to recruit because they are too expensive!

Jacques also recalled that his steadfastness was helped by the solidarity he found in his family, in conversations with his wife (a nurse) and his children, ages 29 and 27. In his personal narrative, Jacques explicitly mentions family dinners as moments for discussing and "checking the legitimacy of some of [my] claims." In the interview, he said:

I suppose if my wife wouldn't have supported the risk I was taking, that probably wouldn't be my wife. . . .

On May 14, 2009, Jacques started his new job. Still, he believed his business with Aero was unfinished. He needed to send final messages to his colleagues. He organized, with the help of the unions and the HR department, a farewell party bigger than any other social event the company had ever known, according to a message sent to Jacques later in May by the HR manager herself.

The party took place in a room rented by the company, with more than 200 people in attendance. Jacques offered a white rose to every woman in the room. To each man, he offered a pen bearing the slogan of his union. He and many of his colleagues posted poems and texts on the walls of the room for everyone to read. He read a poem that he had written, evoking some tears and words of regret from many colleagues. The HR manager gave him a book by Pierre Dac[7] to celebrate the humor she had always found in his leaflets and messages. Jacques describes this occasion in his narrative as "a moment of freedom when we escaped together the glaze of the company."

On May 15, 2009, just before leaving the company for good, Jacques sent an e-mail to all the people present at the party with another poem. He shared his cell phone number and said good-bye. In the next days, he received dozens of messages.

Effects on the Company Future

Organizational entrepreneurship entails the creation of spaces where existing organizational processes are interrupted and broken, thus opening opportunities for the generation of new ideas, new modes of organizing, new practices, new strategic discourses, and new forms of exchanges and relationships (Gartner et al., 1992; Rindova et al., 2009). Sophie, Phil, and Max, three of Jacques's former colleagues, told us when we saw them in May and June of 2013 that Jacques's resistance had generated changes to both the company and individual destinies. Sophie, HR Director at the time of the events, states that "After Jacques left, I could not see the company, the management, in the same light. It was a different place for me." She continues:

I suppose the emotion that we all felt at the party led me to think about what I was doing here (. . .) We realized in large numbers that Jacques was surely right . . . at least he made us think about what it means to be successful in this company. So I told myself, "Let's forget this success thing, the Indian Center and so on, and let's see what drives people in the Lab for years to do such a great job! Why should we stop this? There is concrete proof of the good work the Lab workers have done. Why impose new rules now?"

Sophie points out that Jacques's intervention altered her own views on what Aero management defines as success, what constitutes quality work, and how behavior is/should be rewarded or sanctioned. Such intervention, in other words, allowed her to move away from the dominant view at the company and consider a multiplicity of potential paths.

Max and Phil, two of Jacques' colleagues at the Lab, describe how the company has changed in their view. Max recalls that:

The place was not the same anymore, it was as if we had started something, you know, talking together and sharing views on issues that we were not supposed to

7. A French humorist.

> talk about. . . . Even after Jacques left, although his shadow kind of lingered in the corridors, we held meetings. . . . We took time to discuss matters. That was a new experience for us.

Likewise, Phil adds that he has seen the hierarchy become more receptive to what engineers and technicians would say about the FEDC project, thus suggesting that existing stabilities of human relations and interactions (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) had been impacted by Jacques's resistance. Phil points out that, "Management was more inclined to listen. This was partly because after Jacques's departure, things were not going well. The guy appointed to coordinate all that was not a good fit, so the company needed to reach out to remaining employees to find a solution." He attributes that perceived need as the outcome of Jacques's work. Toward the end of 2010, the R&D director officially created a new structure for R&D units that have been discussed in Monday meetings since 2009. In a December 12 e-mail message to these units, he writes: "R&D units need to become knowledge centres: units oriented toward the creation of new practical and technical knowledge for the factories . . . In that effort, coordination among units is key. The organization of R&D has to evolve toward a single unit composed of two teams: the French Lab and the UK Centre for Manufacturing Processes." Phil left the company 3 months before this announcement. Max, still working at Aero, wants to testify that the workplace is not the same:

> It is not that we have saved most of our jobs. It is that we are the key unit in the knowledge centre now: 10 engineers and technicians were hired last year . . . and the striking thing is that two of them are Indians! Jacques knows that. We keep in touch from time to time, although not frequently because he clearly wanted to turn this page. He is certainly happy about this transformation, something we have talked about in meetings, although of course he refuses to take credit.

Sophie lives another life, heading a private school for disabled children near Paris. Four engineers left the company within 9 months after Jacques's departure. The FEDC resistance led to a renewal of the organization of R&D; management solutions have been stimulated to develop coordination between the UK center, and the Lab through a network of knowledge largely suggested in Lab's discussions. We thus contend that Jacques's resistance has enabled further entrepreneurial change by opening cracks that make alternative orders and new forms of organizing possible within the dominant ostensive story. As Sophie suggested:

> Not only the party but all these meetings, and the guys discussing in the corridors, and in the restaurant, that was a new feeling . . . Those guys were happy to work together, and a sensible management cannot prevent that from happening.

New relationships have been created between departments and between divisions in the UK and France. FEDC has been abandoned. Individual destinies have been changed, Sophie being just one example.

Considering whether those transformations are a direct or indirect effect of Jacques's resistance is a matter of interpretation. For instance, one could suggest that the R&D area is doing better now that Jacques has left the company, because he could be seen as a "troublemaker," following dominant visions of resistance to change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). To better understand Jacques's actual impact, we have therefore interviewed his former boss, now retired for 6 months. Michel begins with saying that "Jacques has created a shock in the management team" and that Jacques's refusal was therefore seen as disobedience although, in retrospect, he says that he is convinced that "he was not doing

that for defending his own cookie, but for the good of the company." Asked about how he saw the company changing over the course of 3 years, he told us:

> You know I have been working for more than 25 years in this company . . . I know the place . . . the company has changed so rapidly, people were different, they learnt to deal with strategic issues that were of direct significance for them, not a habit here . . . seeing people talking more and more everywhere, we had no control, how could we? . . . So I was pressurized to make the FEDC mowing forward, but I just couldn't . . .

Michel also reflects retrospectively about Jacques's impact on the process:

> Did he change the company . . . ? Well he surely pushed people to take a stance, he encouraged debates, critiques, now I hear that the R&D is different, and that some decisions taken by top management later were partly drawn from solutions suggested in these uncontrollable meetings, also now people are consulted, R&D meetings are not all about technical matters. . . . stuff like that. I don't know for sure but he influenced that, because before the conflict around FEDC, that was just not how we were dealing with issues . . . he has encouraged people to talk more freely about topics that are apparently not their business, and to propose solutions, that's all, but that's much.

Discussion

Our analysis of Jacques's struggle allows us to develop a grounded theory of organizational entrepreneurship as resistance built on a rich empirical case in which entrepreneurial behavior is undertaken with the aim of opening alternatives to a company's dominant strategic story and existing normalizing procedures. Jacques's struggle illustrates how individuals can create new processes through resistance to established ones. Becoming entrepreneurs "on their way to something else" (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999), some actors progressively do more than resist: Although they neither regard themselves as entrepreneurs nor choose that role for themselves (Sarasvathy, 2012), they initiate actions aimed at crafting a new organizational environment that better suits their values and conception of life. Driven into a corner by the growing pressure of the company, Jacques increasingly felt obliged to take a tougher stand. This involved expressing dissent, refusing the leadership position offered to him, and contributing to the postponement or interruption of managerial decisions. This is where we see organizational entrepreneurship as a resisting process, which is likely to transform the workplace and people's lives. We now elaborate on how our findings contribute to and extend existing research on entrepreneurship (Gartner et al., 1992; Hjorth, 2005, 2012; McMullen & Dimov, 2013).

An Interactionist Approach to Organizational Entrepreneurship

Organizational entrepreneurship occurs in the interactions among people within organizational contexts who feel driven to change existing organizational patterns and strategic choices. Our data reveal that organizational entrepreneurship consists, in de Certeau's words, of "occupying the gaps or interstices of the strategic grid" (Colebrook, 1997, p. 125). Jacques managed to break free, even if temporarily, from managerial constraints by interacting within a context that constantly pushed him to take new actions. Through these actions, an initial disagreement evolved into an ongoing struggle, which progressively separated and strengthened opposite perspectives on the outsourcing project.

Jacques creatively used the stimuli he received to formulate particular arguments against the company strategy and accompanying value system, and constantly confronted management with his convictions about what he deemed to be morally, occupationally, and economically right or wrong. Jacques's resistance can thus be categorized as active and productive (Courpasson et al., 2012; Hjorth, 2012) because it produces variation in the existing organizational setting (Gartner et al., 1992). The process of developing organizational entrepreneurship required the constant opposing input of his bosses, which enabled him to generate new arguments and new actions. Through this process, he configured himself as an entrepreneur. In other words, paraphrasing Goffman (1961), it is against those oppressive structures that he came to define his self.

Jacques's struggle developed through successive interactions with both colleagues and management, meaning he shared specific grounds of discourse with both. It was these interactions which enabled the entrepreneurial process, which takes place in a complex network of acts (Becker, 1963) and rules involving others. Jacques is not the *avant-garde* entrepreneur or creative outsider conveying a sense of deviance to the internal standards existing within the context of action (Feyerabend, 1987) because of his own lack of integration into this very context. He is rather a managerial insider: he perfectly understands the vocabularies and arguments that exist within the company as well as shared specific codes of conduct. This understanding partly explains Jacques's success in becoming a union representative: engagement in a struggle is coherent with being an official unionist. It also explains why, when management breached the "style" of the struggle with misplaced arguments like the Skoda and the latent racism of Jacques, people enthusiastically rallied to his support. In short, the struggle is characterized by the points of contention between Jacques and his opponents, but also by their dependence upon each other to pursue the conflict, as each side needs the constant interaction in order to eventually realize victory. Put differently, the entrepreneurial process could not have taken shape without the company's "help," expressed in the form of normalized and sanctioned practices and rules, but also threats and other coercive mechanisms. Jacques built his entrepreneurial power by respecting norms, approaching issues by emphasizing facts and figures over feelings. The emotional dimension of his struggle did not seep into his conversations with management: these were two different issues, which Jacques did not want to mix up. Counterintuitively, he developed an entrepreneurial experience in spite of himself. Freedom is in resisting and yet, ironically, he came to break free of managerial constraints by respecting rather than breaching certain norms of conduct in his interactions with superiors. It is by taking management at its word (Straughn, 2005) that the entrepreneur seems to build strength.

In sum, our study attempts to contribute to entrepreneurial research by "inhabiting" the process of entrepreneurship with concrete social interactions between concrete actors. The literature often decouples the concept of entrepreneurship from the social interactions through which it takes shape (Rindova et al., 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). In other words, literature shows a tendency to reify entrepreneurship as an abstraction. However, entrepreneurship is developed and modified as people interact and collaborate to defend a certain vision of how things should be done in a given occupational and organizational context. People like Jacques are carriers and shapers of entrepreneurial processes in the sense of having a clear vision of how their job ought to be done and according to which set of values. Organizational entrepreneurship could thus be defined as the process through which people engage in specific initiatives to "do things together" (Becker, 1986, p. 216) in order to defend those values. This interactionist vision of entrepreneurship allows us to see the concept as a moment of sociability, occurring through concrete interactions. This helps to replace the heroic vision of entrepreneurs as powerful social

actors (Aldrich, 2011; Jones & Spicer, 2009), "modern princes" (Levy & Scully, 2007), or institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, 2006) by a more "peopled" vision (Fine, 2003). Entrepreneurs do not realize their ambition apart from concrete human action and interaction, through which they discover that they have inadvertently contributed to, however slightly, modifying their world by opening up new possibilities and ways of living through the generation of new knowledge, skills, ideas, and of new forms of exchanges and relationships (Aldrich & Martinez, 2010). Our analysis, hence, contributes to recent developments in entrepreneurship research that focus on how ongoing social relations are critical to an understanding of entrepreneurial activity (Ruef, 2010; Sarasvathy, Dew, & Ventresca, 2008) and how opportunities emerge out of individuals' actions and interactions with others (Gartner, 1993; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990).

Organizational Entrepreneurship and the Creation of Alternative Spaces of Discussion

Entrepreneurship is fundamentally an activity involved in generating variation as an organizational phenomenon (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Katz & Gartner, 1988). This paper builds on existing scholarship on entrepreneurship, resistance, and social movements that reveals how the production of "free spaces" (Kellogg, 2009; Polletta, 1999), and "spaces for creativity" and "play" (Hjorth, 2005) within established orders is fundamental to the envisioning and actualization of variation and alternatives within a constraining organizational context. Some purposively designed spaces may be privileged settings in which individuals from disparate groups can produce heterotopic settings, (re)negotiate existing social orders, and seek micro-organizational change (Kellogg; Mair, Martí, & Ventresca, 2012). Jacques's struggle has generated new spaces, beyond the control of corporate management, where people could meet and discuss issues related to the future of their teams, jobs, and the company. Our data contribute to and extend previous work that focuses on how organizing processes are accomplished through interactions among people, continually renegotiated and renewed over time (Aldrich & Ruef; Gartner et al., 1992; Steyaert, 2011). More specifically, our study offers a perspective of organizational entrepreneurship (Hjorth) as the process of creation of spaces of discussion and critique within the company that interrupts managerial powers and suggest, in de Certeau's parlance, the potential for "corrupt(ing) or pervert(ing) the strategy's system" (Colebrook, 1997, p. 125). Thus, our study responds to recent calls for a "broader focus on entrepreneurship research" (Rindova et al., 2009, p. 478) that permits us to better understand the genesis of new ideas and relationships (Gartner, 2012; Rindova et al.) and to develop an analysis of entrepreneurship as a social change activity (Calás et al., 2009).

Physical spaces have been rapidly appropriated and used by people to discuss and critique managerial decisions. The Monday meetings and the Council's office are two such examples. Discovering strategic topics like outsourcing helped Jacques's team to generate shared knowledge, explaining the development of dissenting practices even after Jacques's departure. People engaged in topics that were usually the "property" of corporate top management. Our approach therefore reflects the role of such spaces in allowing actors to create and transform relations, boundaries, or rules within the organization. While these spaces may seem neutral, the learning that takes place therein generates a new collective life that can survive the departure of key players. Thus, our study shows how the creation of those spaces can dislodge or rearrange existing organizational structures and practices. In the Foucaldian (2002) parlance, those spaces are heterotopic instantiations where the "single and real" organizational place is juxtaposed by other spaces and sites that offer potential alternatives to the dominant strategy story. While one cannot expect a

mechanistic effect on behavior through the mere participation in those spaces, because of the mediating influence of organizational inertia and legacies on individual behavior, they can be seen as privileged settings for people to learn about ostensive managerial definitions of quality work, good behavior, accurate decision-making processes, and creatively resist and contest them, thus offering alternatives. This suggests that a second type of spatial production produced by Jacques's activities was political.

Straddling diverse units and places within the company, a political space was indeed generated by the capacity of Jacques and—progressively—of other company employees to utilize the legitimate knowledge imposed by management on the issue of outsourcing. The critique that resulted demonstrated that certain decisions would not be accepted, illustrating the limits of managerial knowledge. Following Foucault, we propose that the politicization of the company spaces is based on the "breach of the self-evident. . . . at places where . . . and obviousness [that] imposes itself uniformly on all" (Foucault, 2002, p. 226). It became possible to reverse imposed discourses and knowledge to offer an alternative vision as well as relevant alternative working practices like those exemplified in Monday meetings. Jacques became an organizational entrepreneur by contesting this knowledge and proposing in its place alternative ideas for developing the company's R&D. This was possible because Jacques could create spaces that were used to discuss alternative knowledge from which to develop solutions for the Lab. The prescribed order was therefore challenged and then altered by this activity. Those spaces are entrepreneurial—that is to say, zones of discussion, creativity, and joy (Hjorth, 2005; Steyaert, 2011); an oppositional consciousness could be progressively built among colleagues confronted to a common issue and leading them to elaborate alternative visions and solutions. These entrepreneurial spaces are materialized by a place, which helps develop trust and a sense of togetherness among people. They are privileged settings from which to observe how new organizing processes are envisioned and accomplished through interactions among people that contribute to the dislodging and/or rearranging of existing organizational structures and practices (Gartner, 2012; Katz & Gartner, 1988). Additionally, these entrepreneurial spaces are important because they might trigger new human capabilities and potentialities that, for the case of Aero, will be effectively actualized by people to push alternative solutions for the company (like the knowledge center), but also to construct alternative life projects (like Sophie), thus reaffirming the idea that "entrepreneurship is often an act toward emancipation" (Rindova et al., 2009, p. 490).

Our findings illustrate how these spaces draw their power from a combination of friendship and camaraderie (as seen in the farewell party), hospitality (Council office), networking (with other departments in the company), and knowledge creation about strategy (Monday meetings). The power that Jacques exercised over the course of two and a half years is possible in settings such as these where freedom is in resisting. Jacques's ability to create "spaces for actualizing new ideas" (Hjorth, 2005, p. 417) gave birth to a collective energy that fostered the potential for new business practices; these were actualized later. In other words, we contend that a movement toward future creations had been set in motion and continued to operate after Jacques's departure. In the words of Colebrook (1997, as quoted in Hjorth, p. 429), Jacques managed to "alter and reconfigure the force operating" in the company. Ironically, it was Jacques's very departure, through the spaces that he created, which empowered his colleagues to make similar decisions regarding their future; they would create their own difference from management decisions, thanks to the spaces produced through Jacques's struggle. Some purposively designed spaces may be privileged settings in which individuals from disparate groups can learn, becoming users of concepts and their related language and practice, and thus self-creating themselves and potentially engaging in the (re)negotiation of existing social orders. Recent work by social

movement scholars (Polletta, 1999) and organizational theorists (Hjorth; Kellogg, 2009) suggests the importance of different social spaces for these ends. Our findings speak to and provide an empirical path to continue these conversations.

Organizational Entrepreneurship as Resistance

Numerous studies on entrepreneurship within organizational contexts have focused on how managerial efforts may stimulate entrepreneurship within corporate hierarchies (Busenitz et al., 2003; Kuratko et al., 2005). This literature emphasizes the importance of different antecedents (e.g., management support, work autonomy, time availability) that place organizational architecture and control mechanisms at the core of intra-organizational entrepreneurial phenomena. Our contribution is in identifying how organizational entrepreneurship occurs precisely in and around the structures, rules, and spaces created by those antecedents, as the active resistance that aims at interrupting managerial powers and creating alternatives.

Resistance influences the outcome of power relations by limiting managerial control (Barbalet, 1985). All definitions of resistance agree that such activity restrains power at the upper level and therefore contributes to the outcome of power relations/struggles (Barbalet, p. 531). Jacques's story indeed exemplifies how corporate power may be limited and even temporarily reversed. Therefore, we urge future studies to heavily weigh the role of resistance in the analysis of entrepreneurial processes. This vision of resistance as a necessary component of entrepreneurship can be found in previous organizational studies, such as Gouldner (1954, p. 154), who argues that the bureaucratization process in a factory is "a function of subordinates' motivation and ability to resist managerial efforts." This suggests the importance of resistance in conceptualizing the role of specific subordinate actors in influencing an organization's distribution of power. The "relative strength of opposing groups" (Gouldner) in shaping the outcome can explain whether spaces of discussion, critique, and creativity are likely to be created in a given setting. Our findings further support the view that actors may initiate changes that management attempts to block by imposing its own vision of change to maintain itself as the ruling group. Managerial forces want to maintain control by limiting entrepreneurial action or "inducing" (Burgelman, 1983) and channeling it into certain "acceptable" conduits, which, by constraining thinking regarding what is possible or impossible, acceptable or unacceptable, can be powerful enough to intimidate to-be entrepreneurs (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999; Baker & Pollock, 2007). Jacques's efforts are directed precisely against those managerial forces but situated within the "terrain imposed" (Hjorth, 2012, p. 390) and constructed by them. Thus, as we have argued, if we are to achieve a full understanding of organizational entrepreneurial phenomena, we must balance these two foci of inquiry.

We will recall that resistance places some limitation on the initiative of others (Barbalet, 1985, p. 538), while at the same time suggesting the capacity to initiate alternative projects and solutions (Courpasson et al., 2012). That is why the connection between resistance and entrepreneurship is fundamental: together, these concepts define organizational entrepreneurship as a generative force through which organizational practice can be transformed by limiting managerial power(s). Through such limitation, resistance will produce outcomes other than those anticipated by management. These effects can be surprising, as new relationships emerge between managers and subordinate actors. Organizational entrepreneurship is observable through resisting acts that transform "the conditions of reproduction of those social systems in which those resisting power have subordinate positions" (Barbalet, p. 542). Resistance is essentially interactional and refers

to the "transformative capacities of human action" (Giddens, 1976, p. 110) within social fields. We therefore suggest that organizational entrepreneurship can be seen in terms of the instantiation of resistance in action.

Limitations and Conclusion

This study reports on the entrepreneurial work done by an individual when confronted with a contradiction between his personal values on the one hand, and organizational demands on the other. We show how a process of resistance can foster unintended outcomes for both individuals and the company, without requiring compromises with the environment. The actor's achievement is in resisting what he sees as unacceptable demands, therefore strengthening his initial refusal and leading him to generate alternate solutions and visions.

Although we believe our data were particularly suitable for exploring organizational entrepreneurship as resistance in depth, given their particular salience in the narrative, the generalizability of our findings to other organizational settings will need to be established in future research. Our data collection and analysis were limited to a single narrative within a mature, large, organization in organizational contexts characterized by hierarchical non-distributed structures where internal patterns of domination and participation are well established. Such a focus has, however, allowed us to unpack complex processes and to subject them to a finely grained analysis that highlights the value of connecting a vision of entrepreneurship with a vision of resistance as a work(ing) process. However, it would be particularly useful to examine whether and how organizational entrepreneurship as described in our paper, occurs within less hierarchical and more participative organizations.

Moreover, our main source of data has been a personal narrative and interviews rather than direct observation of practices: thus, the results are presented with some caveats that are often associated with the analysis of this kind of materials (Atkinson, 1998; Gartner, 2010). It is possible that materials collected could indicate a degree of convergence not experienced by the actors. Ethnographic studies of organizational entrepreneurship as resistance would yield further and complementary insights in relation to these issues.

These limitations notwithstanding, our work generates conceptual and empirical insights that link entrepreneurial and resisting behavior within organizations and show how resisting efforts are important in theorizing the emergence and sustenance of such processes.

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David Courpasson is a professor at EMLYON Business School, OCE Research Center, 23 Avenue Guy de Collongue, 69134 Ecully, France.

Françoise Dany is a professor at EMLYON Business School, OCE Research Center, 23 Avenue Guy de Collongue, 69134 Ecully, France.

Ignasi Martí is an associate professor at EMLYON Business School, OCE Research Center, 23 Avenue Guy de Collongue, 69134 Ecully, France.