Resisters at Work: Generating Productive Resistance in the Workplace

3 authors:

David Courpasson
EMLYON Business School
45 PUBLICATIONS   **725** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Françoise Dany
EMLYON Business School
13 PUBLICATIONS   **229** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Stewart R Clegg
University of Technology Sydney
342 PUBLICATIONS   **5,696** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Resisters at Work: Generating Productive Resistance in the Workplace

David Courpasson, Françoise Dany

EMLYON Business School, OCE Research Centre, 69130 Ecully, France
{courpasson@em-lyon.com, dany@em-lyon.com}

Stewart Clegg

University of Technology Sydney Business School, New South Wales 2007, Australia, stewart.clegg@uts.edu.au

Research has recognized the transformative dimension of resistance in the workplace. Yet resistance is still seen as an adversarial and antagonistic process that management can accept or reject; thus, understanding how resistance can actually influence workplace change remains a challenge for research. In this paper, we offer an analysis of two situations of resistance wherein resisters, organized in temporary enclaves, are able to influence top management's decisions and produce eventual change. Whether or not resistance becomes productive depends on the skillful work of resisters and the creation of powerful "objects of resistance" that enable resisters to modify temporarily the power configuration of a situation and oblige top management to listen to their claims and accommodate to the new configuration. This paper shows that resistance can be better explained by what resisters do to achieve their ends rather than by seeing resistance as a fixed opposition between irreconcilable adversaries.

Key words: power; resistance; resisting; work; accommodation; enclaves; objects of resistance
History: Published online in *Articles in Advance*.

Introduction

Resistance has had a checkered career. In the popular imagination, after the experiences of various national movements of resistance to Nazi invasion and domination, it was a very positive term. However, in U.S. management circles, as early as 1948, it had become much more negative: resistance to change was something to be overcome (Coch and French 1948). Recently, voices have emerged in organization studies that acknowledge that resistance is inherent to organizational life (Jermier et al. 1994, Thompson and Ackroyd 1995, Mumby 2005) and may not necessarily be harmful to the organization (Ford et al. 2008, Piderit 2000). Notably, research has highlighted the creativity of workers in resisting increasing control of the labor process by management (Prasad and Prasad 2000, Fleming and Sewell 2002, Spicer and Böhm 2007). In this paper, we contend that recent literature does not go far enough, because resistance continues to be thought of using an adversarial perspective. Driven by the priority to provide evidence of the diversity of resisting forms and of resisters' inventiveness, research has neglected studying how resisters can influence top management decisions and produce change as well as investigating examples of resistance being more than the expression of a subaltern or antagonistic class position; these still remain a challenge for research, hardly tackled even by recent research on creative resistance (Thomas and Davies 2005) or by more traditional literature on resistance to change (Dent and Goldberg 1999).

To address these challenges, we introduce and illustrate the notion of productive resistance. Productive resistance refers to those forms of protest that develop outside of institutional channels (such as unions); it is concerned with concrete activities that aim to voice claims and interests that are usually not taken into account by management decisions. Its goal is to foster the development of alternative managerial practices that are likely to benefit the organization as a whole (Courpasson and Dany 2009). Our focus on productive resistance aims at a better understanding of how resisting activities can influence top management to achieve significant organizational change.

The perspective we suggest has significant implications for the way in which resistance in the workplace is conceptualized. First, it adds to recent literature on creative resistance that mainly explores how identities contrary to those propounded by management might emerge (Thomas 2009, Deetz 2008, Zoller and Fairhust 2007). Conceiving of resistance as an authentic expression seeking positive solutions for the organization, rather than as underlings' reactive response to managerial power, leads to a concentration on the processes through which concrete organizational effects of resistance are produced. Second, the study of productive resistance offers an opportunity to overcome the tendency to a "self-defeated vision of resistance" (Thomas 2009, p. 175), a view that characterizes literature that barely challenges the postulate of all-powerful

managerial control (King 2008). Yet top management's "right" to manage does not guarantee the legitimacy of the policies produced; thus, we consider it necessary to push resistance studies so as to explore how organization members can "co-produce a future" (Deetz 2008, p. 389), freeing them from top management policies that are neither designed nor desired by those members on whom they have the most impact. Third, our approach not only complements research on creative resistance. It also calls into question traditional conceptions of resistance to change: it shows that the skillful work of resisters can generate positive change rather than dysfunctional freezing.

Building on the fact that the "coproduction" of change can be the very result of productive resistance, we explore how resisters can challenge extant power relations and prompt top management to accommodate to their claims. We offer details that show how resisters can have a critical influence on top managers' decisions and analyze what happens on both the resisters' and the top management's sides during productive resistance processes. Empirically, we study two situations of productive resistance. These two case studies confirm that contenders, even when drawn from the middle management team, can disagree vehemently with top management yet nevertheless produce forms of agreement that serve both of their respective interests (O'Mahony and Bechky 2008). We then illustrate how the coproduction of change can be explained as a result of the resisters' work. In other words, we offer a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) of how resistance can do more than create space for members to exercise individual discretion and act according to their own values (Fleming and Spicer 2007). We show that resisters can also initiate changes that arise from their skillful resistance to specific decisions; thanks to their capacity to have top management accede to their specific claims and proposals, resisters can have an impact that is likely to benefit the whole organization. We conclude that research could benefit from studying *resisting* (i.e., resisters' activities and objective productions over time) rather than *resistance* (i.e., who resists what and why). In other words, we demonstrate that a focus on resisters' work and their objective productions (what we call "objects of resistance") enables us to develop a view of resistance as a process that better accounts for its status not as an event or identity-shaping phenomenon but as a set of skillful acts that can significantly transform organizations over time.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We first provide an overview of the work on resistance in the workplace and explain why a focus on productive resistance complements previous studies. Second, we introduce our case studies and explain our methods of data collection and analysis. Third, we present our findings and discuss their implications.

Productive Resistance

Alternative Theoretical Perspectives

The productive dimension of resistance in the workplace has been noted in three main streams of research: the sociology of work, the study of creative resistance, and the study of resistance to change. Yet none of those streams has seen acts of resistance as bearing significant challenges to top management's decision-making powers.

First, the sociology of work literature has examined those struggles on the shop floor that enable workers to negotiate compromises over hourly rates or productivity (Roy 1952, Hodson 1995). It shows that the work group uses resistance to negotiate work rules and produce small changes, the indispensable adjustments required for the relatively smooth and everyday functioning of the workshop. Because it postulates that acts of resistance produce both local compromises and "a common interest in opposition to management that simultaneously results in more resistance" (Burawoy 1982, p. 167), this approach conceptualizes resistance as the expression of an irreducible opposition between workers and management. Thus, although the capacity of the workers to be economically astute and highly rational is recognized, their calculations are seen as inevitably contrary to the organization's interests (Roy 1952, Duguid 2006). In a subsequent work, Roy (1953, p. 511) concedes that employees are inevitably an "adversarial group." In other words, resistance is seen to flow from the workers' systematic opposition to their supervisors and inspectors as a result of their enmeshment in exploitative relations. In this perspective, workers are able to exercise some freedom of action because of the existence of "gray zones" in the working process (Anteby 2008), but they do so within a context in which managers still maintain the status quo in power relations. More specifically, managers can accept or reject claims, depending on their degree of tolerance for initiatives that they perceive as contradictory to management's interests. Workers' capacity to exercise an influence over top management decisions is seen as limited, with struggles confined to a narrow range of issues.

Second, a new approach has recently supplemented the sociology of work that highlights the creative dimension of resistance. It emphasizes the critical role of specific discursive practices that utilize strategies of "distancing" (through mechanisms such as irony and subjective resistance) (Fleming and Spicer 2003) to resist control of identity. The attention paid to subjectivity and identity derives from Foucauldian-inspired works (see, for instance, Knights and McCabe 2000). In that view, resistance, by engaging with managerial discourses, operates against those cultural and ideological controls that frame workplaces (Thomas 2009) and crafts new identities that challenge de facto power (Ewick and

Silbey 2003). Although we agree that even trivial acts of resistance (such as refusing to agree to extra hours or to work later) may constitute quiet challenges to power relations (Thomas and Davies 2005, p. 701), we contend that the creative resistance perspective suffers from three problems. First, it does not explain how individuals develop specific capacities of resistance; put differently, their capacity to generate alternative discourses and identities is more postulated than empirically illuminated by the actual practices and activities of resisters. Second, this research has not fully articulated the microsocial processes of resistance as something productive for the organization and not only for identity affirmation. In other words, this discursive and cognitive approach to resistance does not explore workers' possibilities of going beyond the "zones of toleration" of upper management (Weeks 2004). Spicer and Böhm (2007) contend that the possibility of "escalation processes" can inflate the significance of what begins as essentially local shop floor conflicts; however, they have not reported empirical data to support their claim. Moreover, their analysis suggests that intraorganizational mobilization is not enough to influence upper management; they suggest that resisters have to mobilize civil society to be effective change agents. Therefore, even if we sympathize with the idea that creative resistance can be expressed in new identities and discourses, we consider that we still lack an explanation of whether these creations can alter managerial practices. What is needed is an understanding of the actual processes through which resisters can significantly influence top management.

Third, although most research on resistance to change continues to present it as a dysfunctional and detrimental response that should be overcome by competent managers, some studies have begun to consider resistance behaviors as potentially useful (Ford et al. 2008, p. 363). Ford et al. point out that what is seen as resistance from the change agents' point of view can be described as a counteroffer by change recipients. Their arguments conceptualize resistance as a social phenomenon rather than a psychological one. However, their approach remains somewhat "managerialist": although they give resistance a better name and acknowledge its possible validity and added value for organizations, they seem to consider that the potential of resistance depends primarily on change agents. The latter are portrayed as having the power to decide whether to use resistance as "feedback" by "listening to comments, complaints, and criticisms . . . to adjust the pace, scope and sequencing of change" (Ford et al. 2008, p. 369). In other words, this approach still gives top managers the upper hand in the change process because they have the power to label what is to be regarded as resistance versus what is to be seen as a useful suggestion. Decoding what is taken to be happening and the possibility of an accommodation with these

unfolding events remains, therefore, the change agents' job (Ford et al. 2008, p. 373).

In sum, resistance is now seen as subtle, heterogeneous, and produced by the system of domination that it challenges (Fleming and Spicer 2007); moreover, it is seen as potentially creative of new sites for identities to develop. Its positive dimension is recognized, and resistance is even seen as a "resource" (Ford et al. 2008). Although older images of both an all-powerful management manipulating the minds and behaviors of workers and a harmful resistance are sidestepped in the more recent of these literatures, resistance still seems rather passive, such that its ability to change those power relations within which management is articulated is not fully recognized. Even when the potential of resistance for changing structural arrangements is affirmed, there is a lack of explanation about how the "hidden transcripts" or petty acts (Scott 1985) of creative and subjective resistance can turn into new practices that go beyond local arrangements and defensive subterfuges.

Studying Productive Resistance

In our view, the question, "How can resistance produce change that significantly challenges top management decisions?" is critical. The potential positive effects of productive resistance are not enough to guarantee its accommodation by top management, even by "self-serving" managers (Ford et al. 2008, p. 362) whose organization could benefit from productive resistance.

A first obstacle to accommodation pertains to the risk that top management will fail to grasp the relevance of resisters' claims, especially in contexts where it does not trust lay employees and presumes them to be reluctant to change or to make extra effort; this low trust/high control syndrome is well known (Fox 1974). A second reason for top managers ignoring or rejecting resistance rather than accommodating to it is their fear of delegitimating their past actions, hence the refusal to challenge extant agenda and power arrangements and the fear of "losing face" if the resisters' arguments are recognized as valid. Thus, top management's capacity and willingness to accommodate to resistance should not be overestimated. Shifting from contention to cooperation to achieve settlements (O'Mahony and Bechky 2008) is a difficult task that requires specific capabilities of the resisters themselves and not only of top managers. Because cooperative and positive power practices (Foucault 1977, Haugaard and Clegg 2009) cannot be considered as a managerial given, especially in contexts where command and control have been the norm, resisters who oppose policies they consider unproductive for the organization must carefully cultivate positive power practices. Even though the literature on new organizations claims that "heterarchical" (Stark 1999) or "polyarchic" (Courpasson and Clegg 2011) organizations foster dialogue and distribute authority among different actors, resisters have to be able to give powerful

proof of their superior understanding of a given situation compared to the understanding of top managers and/or of other experts. They also have to craft their concerns and proposals in a skillful way that makes obvious that they can be productive for the organization even while opposing present policies. Put differently, productive resistance requires that resisters create temporary realignments of normal power relations in which the commanded achieve control of an agenda that is presumed to govern them. For a while at least, top managers should agree to let the resisters set the agenda and define priorities to be addressed, even though this undermines some existing prerogatives. Building on this idea, we consider it critical to explore those activities and processes that enable resisters to directly influence management decisions. Therefore, our research question is, through what activities and processes can resisters significantly alter power configurations to influence organizational change? Our argument is that resistance should be studied through what resisters do to be listened to by top managers and eventually coproduce change.

Studying Managerial Resisting Enclaves

Our research focuses on situations where temporary collectives of resistance are shaped and operate to influence top management. Studying collective resistance in highly individualized settings not only fills a gap in the literature (Ganesh et al. 2005) but also recognizes the significance of collective forms of resistance within companies (Zald and Berger 1978). Here, we research intraorganizational collective resistance through analysis of specifically situated resisting "enclaves" (Leeds 1964) that contest prevailing norms and/or managerial decisions. The concept of "enclave" comes from cultural theory (Douglas 1992, Flanagan and Rayner 1988, Thompson et al. 1990). Resisting enclaves oppose decisions arising from prevalent power systems and processes but still act according to the systems' rules. Contrary to the postulates of traditional approaches (Rubin 1995), these groups explicitly communicate and enact alternate visions rather than merely sabotage the viewpoints of others. Enclaves have several forms, including cliques (Tichy 1973), subcultures (Jermier et al. 1991), temporary and shifting coalitions (such as those in new social movements; Armstrong 2002), and collectives formed through resistance (Graham 1995). Our focus is on resisting enclaves composed by managers; thus, we complement the literature that focuses on the resistance of powerless people (Scott 1985) by studying resistance that involves traditionally compliant and well-integrated personnel (who evidently are more "in" power than "under" it). In our view, managerial resistance deserves all the more attention because it is certainly easier to articulate (in material terms) than the resistance of more subordinate employees. Managers have access to

resources that can help them ferret out gaps in institutional logics (Zoller and Fairhurst 2007, Zald and Berger 1978). They also have personal resources (e.g., money and employability), so they can afford to resist illegitimate practices (Boltanski and Chiapello 2006). When exposed to "organizational inequity," they may constitute a population that cultivates productive rather than defiant resistance (Courpasson and Thoenig 2010, Dany and Azimont 2009). Therefore, the interest of studying managerial resisting enclaves is to benefit from the experiences of individuals whose resources can be helpful for creating the temporary realignments of normal power relations required for top management accommodation to resistance.

Methods

We conducted a retrospective analysis of the resisting processes activated by two enclaves in two different sites, referred to hereafter as Bank and Agro. Data come from semistructured interviews and field observations in these sites, during which we developed good relationships with interviewees and learned about the enclaves. The concept of productive resistance emerged from this fieldwork. We developed the concept as a result of seeing that data collected on resisting enclaves contradicted the recent literature on resistance. Our attention was first oriented to this contradiction by the fact of our data depicting overt rather than covert resistance. A second and even more significant feature triggering our interest in the concept is that the enclaves' leaders were eventually promoted rather than stigmatized. Contrary to what the whistle-blowing literature would suggest (Miethe and Rothschild 1994), their resistance eventually came to be supported and rewarded by top management. Third, the fact that we encountered productive resistance and accommodation processes in two settings increased our confidence about the theoretical interest of the processes we unveiled. Similarly to Yin (1991), we sought to generalize our results in a way that was theory-dependent and not a question of sampling. Fourth, we considered that we could take advantage of the rich material at our disposal. Although we had to build on a small number of interviews, for each site we benefited from long interviews with both key enclave members and top managers. We also benefited from an in-depth knowledge of the contexts in which resistance developed because two of the authors had already explored employees' perceptions of ongoing changes in the two companies (one at both Bank and Agro, and one at Agro). Now we present the sites and the methods used to collect and analyze data.

Site 1

The first enclave formed in a bank located in France, which had 520 employees at the time of data collection. Approximately 50% worked in 24 branches of different sizes, ranging from three employees including the

branch manager to 50 employees. Bank had an endogenous system that sponsored upward mobility. The managerial body consisted of the board (10 members) and approximately 50 managers and salespeople. The resisting enclave emerged and took shape from this latter group. The researcher who collected these data had been studying Bank since 1990 and developed an intimate knowledge of the diverse actors involved in the resisting process, an intimacy that helped us gather information about the endogenous struggles existing within the managerial body. Second, the site was facing dramatic changes because of external deregulations that created an atmosphere of uncertainty and suspicion about ongoing managerial decisions, providing a particularly apt context in which to develop insights about power-resistance processes.

The present paper has had a long genesis: in 1990, Bank asked one of the authors of this paper to conduct a qualitative diagnosis of employees' perceptions of changes within the firm and in the banking sector. Because of the rapid deregulation of the financial markets in the early 1990s (Knights and Morgan 1995), firms such as Bank had modified their internal structures as well as their descriptions of jobs and missions, especially in the branch networks. Bank had to move from a culture of "bank street-savviness" to one of market segmentation. The report that the researcher presented to the board highlighted the "relative confusion between two opposed commercial cultures at Bank: one deriving from the new practice of market segmentation, focusing on standardization of customer relationships and interchangeability of salespeople; the other, deriving from the still deeply embedded culture of proximity with the market, focusing on the quality and durability of interpersonal relationships" (excerpt from the confidential research report presented to the board, June 8, 1993).[1]

The qualitative investigation was conducted over three years and included two sets of interviews. In 1990, the researcher interviewed 57 employees and managers of Bank; in 1993, he made a second investigation based on 43 interviews[2] with subjects who had participated in the 1990 interviews. From 1992 on, the researcher was an advisor to the human resources manager and took part in 15 meetings within two years, including 5 board meetings and 5 conventions where he presented and discussed the results of his studies within the company. He spent an average of one day a week at Bank between 1992 and 1993.

The researcher heard about the enclave early in 1993; initially, its significance was not grasped. The trigger for reconsideration occurred in June 1993; while the researcher was on site, a branch manager (called Max in this paper) suggested that they discuss some current events. Max was one of Bank's successful managers, and he wanted to tell the story of the branch managers' enclave. He also suggested that the researcher could

meet some of his "enclave partners." At the time, he did not want the researcher to publicize this story, less for reasons of confidentiality (most Bank managers knew about it) and more because he did not want to be accused of "showing off" as a hero.

Site 2

The second enclave formed at Agro, a French agrochemical company with 4,000 employees located in 15 countries. At the time of the research, 15% of managers worked in research and development (R&D), and there were 150 project managers. High mobility and multinational characteristics created an unstable and competitive environment at the firm. At the board level, 90% of members were engineers, 75% of whom were engineers in agronomy or chemistry. At the business-unit level, data showed that 60% of business-unit managers and heads of departments came from R&D.

In 1997, two of the coauthors conducted research on processes of change at Agro. The research focus was on organizational transformations and their impact on managerial jobs within the company. The researchers interviewed 70 managers over a three-month period (January–March 1997) and taped interviews covering themes of professional background, descriptions of current responsibilities, and perceptions of changes in these responsibilities, professional projects, and career desires. Although the relationships with employees and managers were less intimate than at Bank, the researchers spent many days attending meetings and taking field notes while on site. The researcher leading this project also presented the results of the study on three occasions at managerial meetings and once at a union meeting.

The site was facing a lot of dramatic changes that were changing the power balance between diverse subgroups. In particular, the strong R&D culture was contested by the emergence of new marketing practices. Also, many interviewees felt that hierarchical roles were changing. Managers were becoming "business-unit leaders," with numerous consequences. In particular, there was a perception that the quality of hierarchical relationships was decreasing and that managers were increasingly mobile. In their report to the board of Agro, the researchers wrote, "The key factor is that managers are all experiencing a growing individualization of their function; many regret that a direct consequence of that change is the deteriorating quality of the relationships within the company, especially but not exclusively with direct colleagues and subordinates" (excerpt from the confidential research report to Agro, October 1997). The fact that a group of project managers decided to resist a decision concerning an R&D project was a sign of growing tensions arising within the company.

Data Collection Strategy

In this paper, we build on stories of resistance. We choose to build on actors' narratives for two major reasons: (1) Stories of resistance show how resisters politicize contested categories. They help supersede purely formal accounts that can mask contested definitions. (2) Stories of resistance clarify how opportunities for resistance derive from regular power relationships. More specifically, we consider that it is "through everyday practical engagements [that] individuals identify the cracks and vulnerabilities of institutionalized power," and stories of resistance shed light on how individuals actually "make a diagnosis of social contexts" (Ewick and Silbey 2003, p. 1331). Because stories of resistance reveal "conscious attempts to shift the dynamics or openly challenge the givenness of situational power relations" (Ewick and Silbey 2003, p. 1331), they perfectly suit our project of analyzing productive resistance that directly changes power configurations. They call attention to diverse contextual factors—who, where, when, and how individuals decide to resist—that interact with actual managerial rules and imperatives. Of course, that method raises the problem of accuracy of recall. In this study, the stories were told more than two years after they had occurred, but their accuracy was not too great a concern for three reasons: (1) interviewees had no trouble remembering the process they had experienced; (2) we were able to interview both enclave members and top managers, therefore collecting both sides' views; and (3) we benefited from numerous organizational documents (e-mails at Agro, written notes at Bank, as well as two enclaves' reports to the top management) thanks to the relationships developed during earlier research at each site. We also collected background information on the changes affecting the banking sector and how it was affecting Bank.

This paper concentrates on seven interviews across the two sites. One interview was conducted with both enclave leaders in Bank (Max, June 1993) and in Agro (Karl, January 1999). Each lasted for approximately three hours. We also include narratives from two top managers involved in the accommodation process: Doug (chief executive officer (CEO) at Bank) was interviewed in 1996 for three hours, and Elton (R&D vice president (VP) at Agro) was interviewed in 2002 for two and a half hours, after he had retired. This paper also draws from other interviews conducted at Bank—one with Dan, the marketing manager (September 1994), and one with Frank, an enclave member (June 1993). At Agro, we also interviewed Antoine, an R&D enclave member (January 1999). We were unable to interview all enclave members because some were not available (three Agro enclave members had left the company or moved to other units between 1997 and 1999) or because we did not have close relationships with them. Doug, Dan, and Elton provided information about how the organization decided to "listen to" challenges from below and coproduced a process to accommodate resistance. These three interviews helped also to avoid the risk of "success amplification," because the two stories are stories of success, and there may be more positive reconstruction of events with successful outcomes. Accounts from "external insiders," such as top managers and marketing opponents, offered alternative judgments to those advanced by the focal actors. However, the limitation remains and suggests the need for comparative studies based on failures.

Data Analysis

Interviews focused on three major areas: descriptions of resistance situations, the process of mobilizing actors and the actions undertaken by resisters, and the outcome of the resistance—in particular, top management responses. Two authors analyzed the data by reading all of the interview transcripts and field notes. They then constructed metacategories, reread the interviews, and focused on specific themes and subthemes, which were subsequently confirmed or rejected by the third author. Data analysis started with the identification of the key triggers and steps of the resisting processes. Second, we analyzed in greater depth the activities and issues related to each step identified previously. We focused on the elements that seemed to be central to the ongoing accomplishment of effective resistance activities. That is why we paid particular attention to how interviewees described and made sense of the activities they engaged in to accomplish their resisting work.

Data analysis revealed three core steps that make resistance processes productive. The first, *enclave insurgency*, characterizes the work of resisters following their initial rejection of a managerial decision. The second, *temporary realignment of power relations*, characterizes the activities that make resistance "public" as well as resistors' demands that top management back them and follow a new agenda. The third, *accommodation*, describes how top management is forced to cooperate and coproduce eventual settlements with resisters.

The data also illuminated the critical role of the power of the enclaves and of reports. Thus, we decided to concentrate the analysis on these two elements and to make the theoretical thesis of this paper that productive resistance is a working process. Then, we examined the data in terms of the political activities involved at each step, paying specific attention to how the work of the resisters, in changing power relations, could influence top management's inclination to cooperate.

Against New Assessment's Rules at Bank

Enclave Insurgency

The Trigger. The trigger for the insurgency at Bank was a board decision in 1990 to punish the branch

managers at two relatively small branches (nine and seven persons), located in poor rural areas. Both targeted branch managers were over 50 years old, had been in the same area for more than 15 years, and represented a culture of customer proximity that was under attack from new policies at Bank. As Max (the resistance leader) recounted, "They are the kind of guys reluctant to use their phone! They'd rather go to the customers' houses and discuss business while having a drink." A note had been sent by the marketing department to its 24 branch managers ranking Bank branches from best to worst, according to criteria such as the number of products sold in the previous three months. Besides stressing the shortcomings of the two small branches, the note also asked for explanations. Max was shocked that Bank's tradition was neglected: "They spent time in meetings talking about trust and commitment and cooperation and friendship, and the power of the 'Household' (the company). And all of a sudden, wham, a cold note identifying two branches . . . ." Max was convinced that an outsider had written the note. He described the situation as a cultural surprise. The managerial "attack" was not characteristic of how managers at Bank behaved. First, mistakes typically were treated as local problems. Second, in Bank's culture, branches accounted for their results collectively rather than as individual entities. This protected individuals from being singled out and punished. Max depicted a culture in which "people take care of business through informal ways," a view subsequently confirmed by Frank, an enclave member, who said, "If there is a problem somewhere, we talk about it . . . yeah, that's a culture of sharing things, we do not really compete with each other; we strive to find germane places for everybody." In that "communitarian" context, the note broke the social pact of the group's symbolic boundaries.

Enclave Formation. Max was an unlikely rebel. Before he became the enclave leader, he was considered to be one of the best branch managers in Bank. He was tall, ambitious, well educated, and 38 years old—relatively young to be leader of a 34-person branch. Bank was not Max's central interest in life, although he admitted that he owed much to the firm that had recruited him 10 years before as a salesman. He was aware that some new professionals had been hired over the last two years to implement new working rules in the branches' network. Given this context, Max very quickly understood that the note revealed emerging tensions between two commercial cultures: those of the "street savvy banker" and the "skilled head of market segment." He decided to act because he thought that it was "ethically unfair and overly political" to identify two specific branches as underperforming.

Max contacted six close colleagues to obtain their opinions. Max's choice of colleagues was strategic: personal affinities but also, as he said, "some of the best

performing branches. I did not want to give the impression that weak fellows were protecting themselves from the necessities of doing a job. On the contrary, the best among the best were saying 'no' to what we considered a personal attack." Max's colleagues quickly agreed to join him. Frank (a 40-year-old branch manager in the suburb of a dynamic territory) explained that Max's authority and charisma were important, together with the emerging sense of solidarity and collective action that were triggered by the note.

After a few days and some discussions on the phone, the group of seven branch managers met twice for about three hours and arrived at a consensus about their grievance. They also agreed that they had to act swiftly to oppose new practices and rules. Resistance included a time frame—sending a dissenting note quickly to the CEO and displaying collective power through quickly mobilizing other actors in the network, so all branches would be aware of the enclave's action. Their basic idea was that performance criteria did not account for huge discrepancies in conditions between branches, an idea that all branches' employees could immediately understand and share. It was simple but reflected the perspective of the branch managers: "Look, you can't overlook that working as a branch manager in a rich area is not like working in a poor or rural area. You cannot apply exactly the same performance criteria" (Max). Enclave mobilization also resulted from the refusal to let the new "marketing people" impose their views on the CEO. According to Max and his fellow resisters, "The discourse was pretty clear for months and now it turned into decisions hitting colleagues. That was not acceptable because there was no discussion about how to implement new practices, simply top-down injunctions, and then, they hit those in difficult situations because of their location." Resisters agreed that there was a risk that these new practices would rapidly shift power from the branches to the marketing department, which would then control performance at the expense of the branches.

Max took notes of enclave members' discussions and suggested that he write a synthesis that would be sent to the others for approval before it was sent to the CEO. He took the leadership because he was particularly aware of the cultural conflict, as he was at the center of the branches' network, and most colleagues saw him as the "next boss." But what if the culture was changing?

Temporary Realignment of Power Relations

Publicizing Concerns. After exchanges about Max's synthesis, the group sent a 15-page response to top management. This report first expressed disagreement about management's method of communication (sending an impersonal note), provided an interpretation of the underlying stakes, and then offered proposals to improve the management of branches. The report was written

10 days after the first contacts between Max and his six colleagues. The seven enclave members, in alphabetical order, signed the report.

Writing up a report after having shared their opinions and sending the report directly to the CEO without informing the head of sector[3] not only made the resistance official; according to Frank, it also provided "the feeling of being, say, powerful, of having the right to say no and to explain why and to suggest ways to move forward." In short, as Max put it, "We were stronger and they knew it." In a sense, they were so confident in their power that they showed that they did not need to use the hierarchical channels to make their claims credible.

Offering to Cooperate Under Certain Conditions. Through their dissenting report, enclave members sought to be constructive. They were convinced that their target was neither the organization nor the CEO himself. Rather, they sought mutual gain. In their report, they mainly elaborated on the fact that Marketing's note did not offer collaborative opportunities. In the introduction, they wrote, "The initial note sounds authoritarian and strives to impose new criteria without having even discussed the issue with us. This is not acceptable." Furthermore, the report mentions, "We suggest that we discuss with the Board the very important topic of branches' performance criteria." They wanted to collaborate with the initiators of the system they opposed. However, they did not call for a truce; the report also reads, "If no discussion is possible, we have decided that we would not proceed with annual evaluations of our local collaborators."

Accommodation

From Indignation to "Forced Acceptance." The following statement suggests that the accommodation by top management was far from predictable at the beginning: "To me those acts were initially outrageous! Who were they to think they could discuss such an important matter? I mean, the marketing staff knew its job too, they had statistics and stuff!" (Doug, the CEO). However, Doug was not naïve. He knew his company and "his men." He knew he could not ignore the fact that something important was happening. He also realized that the resistance was not capricious: "I knew they were regularly discussing, meeting together, and that they mobilized around their buddies. I also knew they made it a fundamental issue between them and the marketing director and staff. I did not want to encourage that but I understood that it was serious . . . . We couldn't carry on as if nothing had happened."

New Roles and Strategy. The day after he received the report, the CEO phoned Max. It was "as if they knew I started the process. One way or another, they knew that I started the process" (Max). They set up an appointment for the following Monday. Other people, including the new marketing director (Dan), participated in the meeting, and Max quickly understood that Dan had written the note to the branches and, therefore, was "the enemy."

The meeting lasted two hours, with most of the time spent discussing the report that had been circulated by the CEO to other board members. The CEO decided to create a task force, made up of 10 people—7 from the branches and 3 from the marketing department. He was trying to establish a dialogue between two opposing groups of actors, and he appointed Max as leader of the task force. He also appointed another enclave member. The marketing director refused to attend the first task force meeting and sent a colleague instead. The task force met seven times and came up with new criteria that considered context and a "principle of equity for judging the contributions of branches" (excerpt from the task force report). A 30-page report was written by Max, circulated to all board members, and discussed several times at the board level and, later, at the level of geographical sectors.

The behavior of the different actors eventually led to new relationships and to unexpected mutual gains. Instrumental to achieving these new relations and mutual gains was the CEO's realization that the resistance claims, particularly as formalized in the report, corroborated his own concerns about the branches' performance while allowing new ideas about how to do business to surface. For instance, based on some recommendations made in the enclave's report, the task force developed specific criteria to overcome the commercial difficulties experienced by the local branches, contrary to the project of marketing experts that aimed to standardize branches' practices. Doug actually sensed tension between the marketing and branch managers, and he knew that this tension was articulated around two very different visions of Bank's culture: "I know that it might have been a shock for some long-tenured people to see all those graduated people turning up at Bank. So, I rapidly realized that underperforming was not the problem. In my view there was no real problem of branch management! You know, we used to talk, phone, or have lunch to tell to people that something is wrong, and now there was 'just a note' . . . ." (Doug).

Also, the CEO interpreted Max's leadership and the formation of a resisting group as a result of Bank's specific culture—having people take initiatives, make autonomous decisions, and above all, take care of the company. All in all, the CEO began to see the resistance as credible and to accommodate with it; from this perspective, he could easily read Max's leadership as proof of his involvement in Bank's community: "Well, I wasn't surprised. I know him so well . . . . He is simply the best. That is why he took my position when I left. His branch is the place where all outstanding managers go and learn

leadership! So, in a way, I found that was very 'Bank' that he took the lead."

For Doug, the task force helped to calm things down. It showed the whole company who was making the actual decisions even though the enclave was too strong to be bypassed. There was no longer any doubt about who was and who was not legitimate in the company. From the first meeting with the CEO, it was clear that the respective interests of marketing and branches were not entirely balanced. Seeking collaboration on a very important topic for the whole organization, the CEO rapidly stood up for the branch managers. The resisters' claims were convincing. Moreover, a couple of bigger banking groups were closely scrutinizing Bank for a potential merger project, which meant that the CEO sought to avoid any risk of social disorder: "At first glance, I was really embarrassed by this report emanating from the branches, really. It couldn't have showed up at a more awkward moment, so I had to react, quickly.... I decided to talk with them, with Max, because they were expressing interesting views, and, in their own world, they were right, absolutely right."

Doug's objective was to find a means to reduce internal tensions and to save face. Dan's refusal to step back and to talk was crucial. It made clear that marketing decisions and the marketing director were becoming the problem. Unlike Max, Dan was not cooperating: "I was looking for a compromise. The marketing manager helped me, in a way; he was too radical, he refused to step back and talk. That eased things for me...." (Doug). Although Max was the initial "insurgent," a new distribution of roles was emerging, with him taking the upper hand. "I wanted them to talk, but Dan would not. I guess he was afraid of talking business with Max, and he thought I was on Max's side. Maybe he was right. But he misinterpreted my decision that led to the eventual task force" (Doug).

The respective power relations of branch managers and marketing consultants and experts at Bank also changed with the progressive restoration of the influence of branch managers; Max was officially appointed head of sector in 1995 and later became the CEO of Bank.

Eight months after the first accommodation meeting, Dan, the marketing manager, resigned and became regional head at another bank. He explains it as follows:

> That's not a thing we are used to, people contesting something not contestable. The fact was that a couple of branches were strikingly underperforming, and we wanted explanations from the managers. And they said no, and the boss was afraid of, I don't know, a strike or something. Moreover, the contest was led by a pretty influential guy, and the boss was not ready to have a fight with him. He was the kind of super-performing guy, the example in meetings, the highest bonuses on the charts, blah, blah, blah. I started to disagree with how the CEO and some board members handled the case. It was unbelievable that their demands got such a welcoming answer.... And there was this terrible task force to

design and implement supposed new rules for assessing branches' performance and so forth. Task force convened, I don't know, something like 10 times in three months, to back up those dissenters and make a set of propositions because they were sort of experts. Obviously. And the new rules, as the boss said, were supposed to help the firm to better supervise local business, provide better control over the business, and blah, blah, blah. But it was all about reinforcing the power of these branch guys. I decided to leave some weeks later as the result of the task force denigrating what I strove to implement within my two years as Bank's marketing manager. I had already some close acquaintances in another banking firm, I moved, and I am now in charge of a big region.

In terms of Bank politics, the marketing discourse had lost out and, with it, its chief representative.

Against Go/No-Go Decision Rules at Agro

Enclave Insurgency

The Trigger. The trigger of the insurgency at Agro was a decision by the central R&D committee to stop a five-year-old project (called AMX)[4] led by project manager Henri. The enclave leader, Karl, explained the context of this cancellation:

> I don't know whether you met Henri—a bright guy who was in charge of the AMX project. You know, this new molecule is supposed to increase the resistance of certain cereals to insecticides. He was appointed in 1988. I guess he was around 30, and the project grew very fast during the two or three first years. Some steps of the investigation were very conclusive and the project team grew. In 1993, they were something like 15 when the decision to stop it was made.

Enclave Formation. Karl perceived the decision to stop AMX as the expression of a willingness to affirm the domination of a "financial logic over other concerns." In Henri's last report to the committee, AMX was described as being in its final stage of development. Karl heard about the cancellation of AMX from a friend working in Henri's lab. News spread quickly, as it was the first time that a "no-go" decision had affected such a big and advanced project. Like others, Karl was shocked by this decision, believing that it made clear that researchers could no longer trust the commitment of senior managers regarding strategic decisions affecting projects. Karl's initial reaction was to discuss the news with his wife: "I first told the story to my wife. She is an engineer and shared the same indignation.... A couple of days later, I sent a message to approximately 40 R&D managers and project leaders to express my indignation."

Karl took time to think and talk before acting. Tension between engineers and nonengineers (whom Karl and his colleagues called "the market guys") had been widespread at Agro for some years. The target of the decision was not AMX, according to Karl. Agro,

like most companies in the sector, faced increasing competition, and they needed to improve their economic performance "based on the swiftness of the innovation programs" (Marketing Department note, Agro, November 1993). Pushing top management's marketing preoccupations was the objective behind the decision, according to Karl.

Karl showed the researcher the 14-line message that he sent on December 15, 1993, to 38 project managers in Europe. The message was noteworthy in that it was not about the procedure or the decision itself. Karl did not contest the decision per se, which he took as a given. His resistance was more fundamental. He believed that scientists should discuss criteria leading to "go/no-go" decisions on "their" projects; that is, scientists should address the substance and legitimacy of these criteria. Karl's message introduced competing values—the durability of science and how quickly a scientific endeavor becomes a marketable product. He suggested, without being overtly oppositional, that a debate with the committee was necessary, insisting that the group of project managers share rationales about important decisions concerning "their" projects.

The message he sent had two themes: disagreement with underlying operational values and cooperation with the R&D committee based on the importance of the topic. For instance, Karl wrote, "If certain people think that a long scientific process has not demonstrated results 'early enough' for its capacity to become a 'profitable product,' then we better grasp what 'early enough' and 'profitable' are, so as to avoid future misunderstandings."

Karl recalled that the people who acknowledged his message had an interest in the initiative. Over two months, he received several messages a day on this subject, and two opposite positions emerged. The first suggested overtly contesting the decision, as in this message sent by a future enclave member three days after Karl's initial message: "That is unacceptable, we are the scientists and the experts, I think we should bypass these market guys who have their eyes riveted on the sales numbers without seeing the work . . . ." Resisting meant contesting the legitimacy of other professionals, the marketing experts. The second position basically ratified the committee's decision, as in this message, sent in early January 1994: "Karl, I think you're right. Now, we don't know why the committee took that position, I think it's just a way to improve our knowledge about the functioning of the committee . . . ."

Antoine, a 39-year-old project manager working in Belgium, revealed why he joined the resistance:

> We felt that our bosses were not interested in the content of the projects. The only thing that matters to them was that projects generated cash. I remember a meeting where a guy from sales and marketing was criticizing R&D people for not caring about the general interests of the company and for "having fun with their projects."

This was as opposed to their difficult task of selling our fun, or something like that was deliberately attacking us. I felt that Henri's dismissal was a sort of final step in that tension.

Antoine believed the resistance was political; Karl, on the other hand, avoided talking overtly about problems with marketing, although he shared Antoine's interpretation. Antoine said he was convinced that

> they wanted to make an example of AMX: I mean, how can a project which has gone so far be stopped? It is to send a message to the engineers, "Stop your fun, we need products, not concepts." You should now begin to care about market entry and create sellable products. I think that was intentional: yes, we can stop a very important and pretty advanced project; we marketing experts have this power.

After roughly two months of exchanging views via e-mails, Karl knew who was on board. Approximately 150 e-mails had been exchanged after his initial message before he decided to intensify the discussion with a group of 12 regular intranet talkers, who were apparently committed to acting. Thus, at Agro the resisting enclave eventually comprised 13 project managers (including Karl) from three countries: France, Belgium, and Germany. The discussions were in English. They rapidly agreed on their reasons for resistance, and in March 1994, Karl synthesized these discussions in a 17-page report to publicize their claims.

Temporary Realignment of Power Relations

Publicizing Concerns. After being approved by the group through written e-mails, the report was sent to the R&D vice president (who was also chair of the R&D committee). It pointed to the difference in visions and calendar between researchers and marketers.[5] The report also highlighted the necessity of cooperation between these two departments to reconcile the R&D process (i.e., the researchers' need for autonomy and power over decisions in key projects) with the requirements of the marketers (i.e., to expedite products to market and to recognize the constraints of competition). Acknowledgement of the researchers' expertise and their legitimate participation in decisions was posited in the report as a condition of success that was as critical for the company as marketing expertise. The report explicitly questioned the composition of the R&D committee, highlighting the asymmetry between the five marketing representatives and three R&D representatives. In all, the report insisted on the need for discussion and offered direct insights to clarify where and how the process of R&D management could be improved. Therefore, the report not only signaled that a specific agenda had to be established rapidly but also strongly suggested the agenda that should be followed: rebalancing the composition of the R&D committee and devising criteria for quality of projects.

Bypassing Official Decisions. Simultaneously with the group of 13's mobilization, in January 1994, Henri's manager decided to use part of his "hidden budget" to allow Henri to finish the project. Thus, Henri went to Spain several times to continue scientific work related to one of the four research directions that had been described as highly promising in his last report to the committee. Therefore, he continued working on the project even as another researcher had been officially appointed to terminate the project and find new missions for former AMX members. Karl stated, "There were people moving here and there, not knowing what was happening, technicians, experts, PhDs, etc. What a mess! The boss gave 200,000 euros out of his pocket to save the project. Henri took the challenge."

Henri's boss's support was known to some of the project managers in contact with Karl. It clearly showed that the R&D hierarchy was starting to take a stand. Because of very close relationships between lab managers and some project managers, lab managers knew early on what was happening with the enclave of 13 project managers; some of them totally agreed with them, although they did not take part in the discussion itself. Antoine said, "It was as if, beyond our group of 13, all the R&D guys were somewhere behind; we were feeling like being representatives of the group." Karl concurred: "I discovered later that the higher bosses were interested in the process; so anyway, Henri was on his way, while the project was officially closed! Strange things happen in companies, right?"

When describing this period, Antoine emphasized the subjective side of the context. He described, in veiled terms, how it felt to challenge the central authorities:

> You know the best part was the last messages, the last exchanges, when we knew something happened, that it was possible to resist, to demonstrate we could do better for the good of us all. I know it looks pretentious, or preaching religious stuff, but that's true. We not only saved a deserving colleague, or corrected a flabbergasting unfairness, we put something in motion. We can say "no" in this company, and that encouraged me enormously to do my job even better. And we kept on having irregular exchanges; we were friends, eventually, even if I have never met the English guy. Can you imagine that?

To sum up, as in the case of Bank, at Agro a clear governance instruction—terminate this project—was contested by those who felt committed to underlying principles of natural justice that the decision seemed to flout. What is noteworthy is that once more, resisters did more than contesting: they put something into motion—making a difference, exercising power, intruding "forbidden" spaces of power.

Accommodation

Indignation. As at Bank, enclave insurgency was not viewed favorably at first. Elton, the R&D VP, was

extremely disturbed by the report. His first reaction was that he did not like its tone: "At first glance the report was pretty arrogant, sort of 'we are going to help you bastards understand what a project is!' How could they contest the marketing grievances? We, in the committee, were unanimous on that point."

Yet Elton knew the culture; he had an R&D background, had been a lab manager, and knew that R&D people were capable of "making a mess in the company if they want." He could also feel some hints of a potential threat in the resistance, although the resisters did not overtly express any such threat. Therefore, he could not ignore the report, all the more because reading it carefully led him to see things differently.

"Forced Acceptance" and New Roles. Finally, Elton admitted that it was a very good report:

> The report was extremely professional. I mean, there were plenty of reasons to believe that they were in a very constructive mood, but I felt that was strange, knowing those guys.... We started a weird process to wonder whether they were right.... You know that's pretty destabilizing, when you see competent guys, sending messages, writing notes, being seriously involved in their stuff. You cannot be impervious to that, let alone contemptuous of their cause.

During his interview in 2002, after he retired, Elton admitted, "I felt the marketing department had won a battle, because bumping off AMX was a considerable event, and I was unable to prevent it as they had some compelling arguments. But then there was this report from the project people and I felt that something even more important was happening." Elton was well aware of the tensions between R&D engineers and marketing representatives and had witnessed their battles for years in the central committee. He realized very quickly that reasserting hierarchical prerogatives was inadequate in this case. Indeed, enclave members were discreet in their access to both the grassroots (they knew all the protagonists of the situation) and the hierarchy. Occupying an in-between position gave them a unique political resource. In actuality, enclave members, as decision recipients, felt "powerless" and believed that they needed powerful personnel to intervene for them. At the same time, their unconventional request (i.e., sending a very professional report to the R&D VP, offering suggestions, etc.) transformed their powerlessness into an influential and decisive action. Corporate managers, like Elton, could not avoid answering: he had to take a stand and make a decision, if only to "save face." Rather than starting a struggle whose outcome was uncertain, it seemed wiser to cooperate and, in so doing, for Elton to reassert his leadership by showing that he was the ultimate authority who decided who did what.

On second thoughts, Elton understood that the resistance could also be used to implement significant

changes; improving project management was one of his key objectives as R&D VP. Building on the suggestions of the R&D people appeared to be a good move:

> If project managers wanted to piss us off, they had plenty of arguments to use against the committee. They were strong as a group, and they were smart in not attacking, or even talking about, the marketing colleagues. I had no real choice but to use this controversy to make people work together and therefore to help project management improve . . . . We needed to move things in a different direction in that sector, because we were good at discovering molecules but the connection between findings and markets was bad. So I had to cool the battle, and I got useful recommendations in the process.   (Elton)

Eventually, as Karl said,

> June 1994 was a very busy month for everybody. I had these meetings with the R&D VP and his staff. Henri reported some good results, a sort of fairy tale you would say . . . . And I think we got two major things . . . . In the committee meeting of September 1994, Henri was officially reinstalled as AMX project leader . . . . We defined a clear list of criteria, especially for late stages of projects, and we also proposed a first list to be discussed.

R&D voices were eventually heard. In particular, Henri's comeback was a clear sign that the power balance between project managers and marketing experts was changing at Agro.

Political Activities of Resisters at Bank and Agro

At Bank and Agro, the stories reveal differences in the way productive resistance develops over time. For instance, neither enclave insurgency follows exactly the same pattern. At Bank, the leader was seen as a person of very high potential. He took the lead from the outset and selected the other enclave members. At Agro, enclave members were self-selected through their exchanges and e-mails, although a leader started the process. Likewise, in that latter case, several alternatives were discussed before enclave members agreed on a collective position, whereas at Bank the consensus on the grievance was almost immediate. Despite differences, however, both of these stories show intensive political activities at each step of the process leading from the initial insurgency to the eventual accommodation. Here, we describe these political activities.

Enclave Insurgency

Enclave insurgency requires more than an initial trigger. What turns an initial "shock" into an insurgency is a carefully crafted interpretation of the initial trigger that highlights what was at stake politically, beyond unfair decisions. Enclave insurgency *dramatized* each situation; thus, both enclave leaders offered credible interpretations of events, prompting individuals to mobilize and

helping the enclaves to form swiftly. At Bank, resisters said that the contested managerial decision threatened usual performance criteria and forecast a rapid loss of control by branches. At Agro, enclave members interpreted the contested decision as a sign of an emerging, competitive marketing group, one that threatened the usual performance criteria of projects as well as the working relationship between R&D and top management. Therefore, those insurgencies were driven by classical struggles between central marketing and local managers and the role of each in overall strategic decisions as well as how to do the job. The role of the enclaves was to persuade enough people that the proper ways of doing the job were in jeopardy and that the whole organization was subsequently threatened as well. Through their mobilization and their arguments, enclave members contribute to a new analysis of the situation and prepare the ground for diverse political actions, for instance, the potential mobilization of the whole branches' network at Bank and the support of lab managers at Agro.

Besides dramatization, *organization* (informal meetings, e-mail exchanges, enclave formation) helped the resistance to develop rapidly and to gain credibility. At Bank, two meetings involving seven branch managers helped to clarify what specific form of resistance they should adopt. Because Max wanted to establish symbolic boundaries and leadership, the two meetings took place in a restaurant where Max was well known. The seven branch managers called on by Max were good performers who could not easily be ignored by upper management. At Agro, the ad hoc enclave formed remotely. E-mail exchanges clarified who was in and who was not in the movement and then helped form agreement on the claims to push. Through his messages, Karl was cautious to avoid endless debates about the fairness of managerial decisions. Enclave formation rapidly modified the normal power balance and demonstrated that the insurgency was credible and had strong interlocutors.

Temporary Realignment of Power Relations

Even if the processes followed in the two companies are not identical, we observe in both cases a temporary realignment of power relations. First, sending a well-argued report not only allowed resisters to publicize their concerns; it also showed their willingness to *take over the agenda*. Although resisters acted with political subtlety and were able to justify their claims and offer concrete solutions, they nevertheless addressed topics that were normally encoded as being in the top managers' power domain. What is more, Max positing, "For me, either they listened to us and we could discuss, or they closed the door and we should be obliged to take steps" confirms that at Bank resisters did not envisage much choice for top management. They temporarily seized power and forced top management's cooperation

through different threats (like stopping the assessment of their collaborators and disregarding recalcitrant clerks and salespeople who were refusing to sell certain products in local branches). At Agro, top management's decision was even bypassed. It was clear that even though in this latter company enclave members did not express any threats, project managers could benefit from numerous allies in both lower and upper echelons that could jeopardize research projects.

Second, realignment of power relations is also permitted by resisters' capacity to *take on new roles* that challenged the usual relationships between contenders. Production of reports for upper management permitted the resisters to formalize areas of agreement and to prioritize issues and actions. It also demonstrated enclave members' professionalism and commitment, both to the firm and to the insurgents themselves. Insurgency was established on the basis of the expertise of enclave members who strongly disagreed with specific decisions. It was not a contest based on systematic adversarial positioning from threatened occupational communities. More specifically, although resisters wanted to have an impact on organizational policies, by sending their reports to top management and by making proposals and carefully justified claims, they presented themselves as potential contributors rather than competitors. They opened the door for cooperation should the top managers accept the temporary realignment of power relations. Indeed, resisters made clear that if top managers conceded some authority and let them express their concerns and lead the discussion, they would be inclined to accept later compromises. As such, they were able both to stand for their positions and to work out solutions (i.e., new processes for evaluating research projects and branches) that could benefit the organization. The work done to produce their reports and to mobilize relevant actors clearly demonstrated their political capabilities.

In sum, temporary power realignment is permitted by the compelling strength of the enclaves formed by the resisters in each situation and their capability in convincing top managers that they were not against them. While they forced top management to listen to them, they demonstrated that they were ready and able to cooperate and take new roles to achieve mutual gains.

Accommodation

Accommodation appears at Bank and Agro at two critical moments. It first appeared when top managers *retook the lead* and demonstrated that they had something to offer in negotiation of power relations concerning the issue at hand. In both cases, they reacted rapidly and organized meetings. They had to keep up with the resisters' pace and to show that everything was under their control even though they had no choice but to take the resistance seriously, which meant cooperating with the resisters. Thus, accommodation results from the fact

that, through publicizing their concerns, resisters placed the top management in a position where they had to take a stand with respect to the combatants: branch managers and R&D managers on the one side and the marketing representatives, who resisters accused of pulling the strings, on the other side. The formation of the enclave and production of a report articulating the grievance actually did more than make the issues and the protagonists' positions apparent. It also enabled the realignment of power relations by demonstrating resisters determination and capabilities. At Bank, for instance, Max was able to mobilize the best branch managers; he also appeared stronger and more constructive than Dan, who refused to discuss the problem. At Agro, the collective force of R&D resisters was crucial: for Elton, it was clear that marketing people were far from having won the battle with R&D people; Agro could not expect to succeed without R&D commitment.

Second, our stories also show that accommodation goes beyond calming things down and demonstrating top management leadership. Whereas top management saved face through operational decisions (such as allocating official roles among contenders and creating task forces with clear road maps, leadership, and deadlines—the usual top managerial "stuff"), they also eventually accepted to *coproduce new policies* in line with the new configuration of roles resulting from the productive resistance processes. Thus, at Bank, Max played a more influential role in the production of new assessment criteria than did the marketing experts. He had to defend the enclave members' view and to demonstrate that he was acting not only in his own interests but also for the collective good. The task force helped Doug to restore his position as "the boss." It also smoothed some tensions that arose from growing opposition between the branches and central marketing. Agro, in its case, benefited from researchers' expertise on project evaluations. The task force expedited researchers' involvement in the transformation of research management policies, preventing them from feeling victimized by the new rules of the game imposed from above. In short, the accommodation was accomplished when top managers realized and then accepted that their power prerogatives had been challenged, that a new political configuration was working, and that, consequently, concrete outcomes could be coproduced.

Discussion

The two case studies illustrate resisters' ability to influence top managers and facilitate accommodation through active efforts, which triggered change at both Bank and Agro. They contradict the dominant idea according to which it is mainly up to "official power holders" (such as top managers) to choose whether they are going to accept or reject resister's claims (Ford et al. 2008). We

provide illustrations in which leaders had little choice in situations in which previous resisting work, through the gradual steps taken by the resisters, had constituted a challenge and developed a new power configuration, framing new roles through which top management had to learn new ways to cooperate—against their previous decisions. Thus, this paper contradicts the managerialist perspective of the resistance to change literature; it does so by demonstrating that resistance is likely to be productive when it is couched as a challenge to normal relations of power and founded in established, specific, and legitimate power/knowledge relations. In our stories, resistance was not tolerated and embraced because of the goodwill or competence of top management, but because of the capacity of resisters to realign power relations and to work out claims and solutions that were substantially convincing and useful for the organization.

Our case studies also add to recent examinations of creative resistance that highlight how organizations are largely structured by struggles between different contending discourses and identities (Spicer and Böhm 2007, Thomas 2009). The cast of characters is different from these accounts, because it does not see organizations as primarily characterized by the contradictions of fundamental relations of production. The stakes here were more specific, the actors more locally interested and connected, and the strategies more innovative and emergent than the set piece confrontations of class struggle (Braverman 1974). We offer an analysis of resistance less adversarial and pessimistic than the one inherited from a tradition that systematically separates employees' and managers' interests and thinks of resistance primarily as defiance (Vallas 2006). Our analysis confirms recent research suggesting that contenders can disagree and still find common interests (O'Mahony and Bechky 2008). Yet we show that the commonality of interest might not be obvious: at both Agro and Bank, top management's first reaction was to condemn the resisters' initiative. In these two case studies, it is the resisters who, through their work, create new situations that shape a context of converging interests, one that eventually allows for the construction of settlements. Therefore, we show that resisters' work in achieving accommodation is crucial. More precisely, despite differences in the ways resistance developed, we conclude from our case studies that resisters make accommodation and change possible by building tangible challenges to extant power relations. We will show in the following discussion how focusing on "objects of resistance" and on the concept of resistance as "work" leads to new ways of thinking about productive resistance in the workplace.

Objects of Resistance and Accommodation

Objects of resistance arise as instantiations of the willingness of a group of skilled individuals to challenge top management, despite the apparent power of the latter to impose decisions on lower echelons; they concretize resisters' work. We identify two particular objects of resistance in our stories: the enclaves and the reports. The enclaves provide a situated forum in which the resisters can explore and discuss their concerns; they also facilitate the identification and mobilization of key resources strengthening the resisters' position. The reports offer them the opportunity to articulate and formalize claims about issues that were hitherto not recognized, as well as to suggest possible ways to solve the tensions. Furthermore, resisting enclaves concretize the formation of spatial and occupational boundaries, thus making official the membership and commitment of specific actors. Similarly, written reports are a good example of objects that designate the enclave as a place of deliberation where certain claims can be pushed. These texts are concrete manifestations of the disagreement between enclave members and top management while also clarifying the capacity of resisters to solve the problem that had been formulated as well as their capacity to engage in the more cooperative steps of the accommodation process. The objects helped contenders share what the problem might be, both by situating their discussions (enclaves) and in agreeing on a content (reports). For instance, at Bank, the report by Max and his colleagues (as well as the very quality of the membership having produced the report) quickly convinced top management that change would be difficult if the issue of the prevalent commercial culture was not addressed before new working practices were implemented.

The objects that are produced by the resisting work have dual aspects, both *tangible* and *social*. For instance, an enclave is not only a working space but also a means to easily identify individual's membership in a given occupational community (branch managers at Bank and project managers at Agro) in which values and a certain vision of how to do the job are shared. Similarly, reports are not only texts that can be read but also the manifestation of an agreement about a political diagnosis. This duality—the tangible and the social—of those objects is highly significant because it means both a proven capacity to offer new insights and recommendations to top management and the existence of determined and significant actors. In other words, objects of resistance ensure that insurgency can turn in one of two directions—with either more conflict or greater cooperation—because they actualize the resisters' claims and productions, and they provide social credibility to their very grouping. They demonstrate the resisters' strength as well as their willingness to respect top management and to cooperate under certain conditions. Thus, we suggest that objects of resistance serve as weapons for resisters to enter into a "forbidden zone," the area of power of top managers. The intrusion into top management's zone of prerogatives and action is facilitated by creating new situations

(a new balance of power, new interpretations and priorities, etc.) and by demonstrating that the challenge to power (i.e., the resister's willingness to set a new agenda) is temporary. We suggest that producing objects of resistance is a necessary tool of the weak against powers that, should they choose, could be indifferent toward acts of resistance. Clearly, the top management in each case might have reasserted the prerogatives of rule; what made resistance successful was that they did not. Instead, they accommodated and incorporated the new issues in their management agenda and strategies because of the changing power relations inscribed in the objects of resistance.

We suggest that the concept of objects of resistance adds to research about "boundary objects" (Carlile 2002). As boundary objects, textual artifacts (such as resisters' reports) create the material and social conditions for building common ground and shared understanding of a contentious situation, and they legitimize specific forms of work, as well as maintain and solidify occupational status (Bechky 2003). The production of these objects of resistance also shows that resisting activities can be understood as potentially cooperative moments wherein concrete initiatives can be taken. Such moments permit the formation of "settlements" between contending actors that allow the status of issues to be negotiated despite contention (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Although research on boundary objects already provides insights about when and why boundary objects are useful in new product development (Carlile 2002) or in the process of knowledge sharing between occupational communities (Bechky 2003), it has primarily been focused on shaping specific outcomes (Henderson 1995) and on stabilizing and mediating diverse interests (Briers and Chua 2001). The political influence of boundary objects, however, has not been well understood. We provide a possible answer to Winner's (1986, p. 19) question: "Do artifacts [in an organizational context] have politics?" Our research suggests that objects of resistance operate as constraining forces; thus they not only facilitate relationships but also force contenders to move in less conflicting directions. The analysis of the constraining impact of objects of resistance allows us to address more specifically how these objects play out in politically contentious processes: objects of resistance are political because they clarify common analyses of a political situation and because they can serve as a powerful constraint over top management. Creating such a constraint is permitted by the dual quality of objects of resistance: tangible objects such as reports need the more social and spatial dimension of other objects such as enclaves to be politically meaningful to all the parties. Objects of resistance include social and "harder" tangible dimensions that give them more significance than "pure" artifacts that are inherently limited because of their marginal

nature (Sapsed and Salter 2004). In other words, our stories demonstrate that the political influence of objects of resistance is produced by the combination between the "materiality" of reports and the "sociality" and "spatiality" of enclaves.

Another contribution of this paper is the suggestion that objects of resistance not only legitimize resisters' claims but also target top management and its accommodation by making these claims *public*. The very fact that the spatial or textual objects that articulated the resistance aimed to "show resistance" deserves attention because it challenges a literature focusing mainly on covert resistance. Whereas recent studies of resistance seem to imply that there is no possibility other than to act covertly in resisting managerial control (Fleming and Sewell 2002), the resistance depicted in this paper does not operate through acts of disengagement (Thompson and Ackroyd 1995) or through covert challenges (Morrill et al. 2003) but operates through dramatizing and publicizing the challenges. Our research thus complements studies of resistance that see in it processes of disidentification through cynicism, irony, humor, and "distancing," and these studies demonstrate that some actors are able to marshal resistance that is "other" and more than a tendency toward self-defeating appreciation of agency (Thomas 2009, p. 175). We offer an explanation of how individuals can influence top management policies through the production of objects that provide them with a political voice they do not ordinarily have. Our analysis also adds elements to the study of tactics of subversive small-scale resistance. Whereas other authors have explained the victories of the weak over the strong (de Certeau 1984, Scott 1985) by the fact that everyday activities (such as reading, talking, walking, dwelling, and cooking) are creative acts of resistance, our insights describe resistance processes as direct and overt temporary challenges to upper management power, which create a new balance of power that obliges top managers to learn how to cope with resisting enclaves. In other words, our case studies allow us to address situations of resistance wherein resisters successfully reduce the scope of decisions and control of "all-powerful" management. That said, resisters at Bank and Agro were not acting within spaces characterized by an absence of power (de Certeau 1984, p. 38) or marked by top management tolerance or sympathy toward their claims. The claims were provocative: they made issues out of what had already been presented as faits accomplis. Yet the resisters do more than merely develop infrapolitics among subordinate groups (Scott 1990) limited to diverse subterfuges with which to maintain spheres of mental and discursive autonomy. Rather, the cases of Bank and Agro offer instances of intraorganizational, nondissimulative political action, in which the work of resisters implies a de facto engagement with a well-known adversary. Drawing from those stories,

we suggest that more attention should be paid to overt resistance that does not use institutional channels but that is produced by the very actors involved.

From Resistance to Resisting

A key characteristic of our analysis is to think of adversarial actors as, to some extent, "products of each other" (Steinberg 1999, p. 208) rather than as discrete entities working in opposition and shaping their claims as oppositional by principle. This perspective breaks with the dominant tendency that sees resistance as an oppositional structure of action that encourages actors to isolate and to think of themselves as organized exclusively around their specific interests and values, thus shaping resistance as "misbehavior" (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999). In this structural vision of *resistance*, roles are allocated, whereas power relations are given and beyond reach. There are deciders and recipients whose positions are fixed. Our paper, on the contrary, suggests that resistance is rather more an ongoing social and material accomplishment, something to achieve, constituted and sustained by the work of actors who overtly engage in a given struggle. It shows that, to be productive, resistance requires more than a legitimate claim, a strong leadership, extensive resources, and wide collective mobilization, as most theories of resistance would suggest (Spicer and Böhm 2007), including those studying powerless resisters (Scott 1990). Resistance also requires a true competence in "resisting work," encompassing an ability to generate compelling social and material productions that we define as successful when they temporarily displace normal power relations. As we suggest above, producing specific objects of resistance is not part of the formal brief of complying employees; their doing so obliges top management to recognize issues that had not been acknowledged and, eventually, to cooperate with resisters to accommodate resistance and shape its outcomes. It is a way of articulating nonissues so that they are on rather than off the agenda.

The resisters' work produces evidence, i.e., powerful objects that can translate dissent into a subsequent capacity to work out expert solutions. It also creates specific knowledge that helps craft these expert solutions so as to address both the resisters' and top management's interests, with the latter even being reframed by resisters according to the new situation they are able to create. Drawing from Barley and Kunda's (2001) analysis of work, we suggest that productive resistance emerges from the ongoing and situated work of resisters. Put differently, this paper shows that resistance can be better explained by what resisters do to get their "resisting work" done than by seeing resistance as a fixed opposition between irreconcilable adversaries. It temporarily minimizes the distance between adversaries. Resisters demonstrate that, in certain circumstances, "workers may know more than managers about what is good for

the company" (Duguid 2006, p. 1797). This vision of *resisting* conceives roles as changing, power relations as likely to be fluid, and positions as likely to be modified. In other words, resisting work is what people do once they decide a given managerial context is inappropriate; change is made possible by what resisters bring to the social situation, not by what top managers decide to accept or reject according to fixed hierarchies of prerogatives.

Distinguishing between "resistance" and "resisting" may seem like an inconsequential lexical ploy, but the findings suggest that there are substantial implications. In particular, they present resistance as a phenomenon that is embedded in concrete acts and recurrent practices, rather than one that resides in some a priori oppositional and conflicting structure of relationships that cause depreciation of workers' acts as organizationally counterproductive (Roy 1961). It suggests that the major aspect of resistance is neither the initial controversy nor refusal, nor is it the ability to gather resources, but rather it is how resisters manage to produce powerful objects that challenge power relations and force top managers to acknowledge resisters as credible interlocutors—that is to say, as simultaneously legitimate *and* resisting employees. Not studying resisting as work can lead to a homogeneous vision of resistance as structural conflict, the creation of hidden transcripts (Scott 1985), or the production of alternative subjectivities (Knights and McCabe 2000); the notion of resisting work shows that the way an organization will change or not change depends on how resisting is designed, the way it is deployed, and how it leads resisters to create new objects and new knowledge. It opens the way to research that can further illuminate why "in not giving [workers] genuine voice in the factory order, managers simply did not comprehend their own best interest" (Burawoy 2001, p. 455).

The resisting work comprises the whole set of mechanisms and activities that resisters create and develop to publicize their insurgency and to produce objects that force the power holders to go beyond toleration and to accept the notion that resisters can temporarily set the agenda. According to this perspective, eventual change is the outcome of a process of power challenge that is facilitated by actors who provide clear diagnoses and recommendations and learn new skills faster than top management can produce defenses of its actions. Accommodation is produced by the fact that, in certain circumstances, what is seen as "deviant organizationally" may be "occupationally correct" (Van Maanen and Barley 1984, p. 291) and eventually as good for the organization, although top managers might not expect this to be the case.

An interesting feature of resisting work that deserves further attention in future research is its similarity to

managerial work. The process of resisting means choosing collaborators, reflecting on a given dysfunctional situation, shaping a cohesive team, articulating a diagnosis, drawing conclusions, and formalizing recommendations. Power is implied in the ability to design a project and to generate knowledge and a common vocabulary for action, as well as in the creation of appropriate objects to express these. Research on productive resistance could, therefore, be pursued by studying resisting processes as "skillful performances" (Orlikowski 2002), wherein collective competence and tacit knowledge are likely to be created and shared among employees, thus potentially facilitating more massive intraorganizational mobilization.

Conclusion

This paper illuminates the dynamics of resistance within two organizations. It shows how the work of resisters generates a process of accommodation and makes resistance productive. This paper illustrates that contenders, despite different initial agendas, can still find modalities that serve their diverging interests. The study of the two resisting enclaves provides insights into the power of objects of resistance produced by enclaves, which influenced top management's decision as did the intrinsic quality of the claims advanced and the quality of the enclave members. The objects of resistance permit the temporary realignments and reversals of power relations that, to some degree, invert roles and responsibilities and make resistance truly effective. This paper also shows that resisting work includes a mix of compliance (acting within a given system of power, offering solutions, assuming de facto managerial roles) and outright confrontation. Accommodation of resistance is produced by this skillful work and by this mix, and it is all the more accepted by top managers because it allows them to move forward in the face of intraorganizational cultural tensions that could otherwise be very disturbing confrontations.

Acknowledgments

Endnotes

[1] A 10-page outline of the report, written by the researcher, was also communicated to Bank's employees in October 1993.
[2] During interviews, which lasted two hours on average, the qualitative investigation focused on three major topics: evolution of hierarchical relationships and of the role of the headquarters in relation to local branches, evolution of the role and attributions of the branch manager, and perceptions of the future from a personal and organizational point of view. Interestingly, resistance was not an issue initially addressed; the idea was rather to describe how local branches were adapting to new forms of relationships with local markets.
[3] This was the hierarchical level immediately above branch managers. There are four geographical sectors at Bank, each of them comprising six branches.
[4] At the time of insurgency, there were 10 research labs at Agro in six countries (France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, the United States, and Scotland) including approximately 250 ongoing projects of diverse sizes. AMX was one of the biggest projects in terms of members (15) and budget (eight millions euros).
[5] The title of the first part of the report is "Time discrepancies between research and market."

References

Ackroyd, S., P. Thompson. 1999. *Organizational Misbehavior*. Sage, London.

Anteby, M. 2008 *Moral Gray Zones: Side Productions, Identity, and Regulation in an Aeronautic Plant*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Armstrong, E. A. 2002. Crisis, collective creativity, and the generation of new organizational forms: The transformation of lesbian/gay organizations in San Francisco. M. Lounsbury, M. Ventresca, eds. *Social Structure and Organizations Revisited*. Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Vol. 19. JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 361–397.

Barley, S., G. Kunda. 2001. Bringing work back in. *Organ. Sci.* **12**(1) 76–95.

Bechky, B. A. 2003. Shared meaning across occupational communities: The transformation of understanding on a production floor. *Organ. Sci.* **14**(3) 312–330.

Boltanski L., E. Chiapello. 2006. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. Verso, London.

Boltanski, L., L. Thévenot. 2006. *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Translated by C. Porter. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Braverman, H. 1974. *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. Monthly Review Press, New York.

Briers, M., W. F. Chua. 2001. The role of actor-networks and boundary objects in management accounting change: A field study of an implementation of activity-based costing. *Accounting, Organ. Soc.* **26**(3) 237–269.

Burawoy, M. 1982. *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Burawoy, M. 2001. Donald Roy: Sociologist and working stiff. *Contemporary Sociol.* **30**(5) 453–458.

Carlile, P. R. 2002. A pragmatic view of knowledge and boundaries: Boundary objects in new product development. *Organ. Sci.* **13**(4) 442–455.

Coch, L., J. R. P. French Jr. 1948. Overcoming resistance to change. *Human Relations* **1**(4) 512–532.

Courpasson, D., S. R. Clegg. 2011. Polyarchic organizations. D. Courpasson, D. Golsorkhi, J. Sallaz, eds. *Empowering Organizational Sociology*. Research in the Sociology of Organizations. Forthcoming.

Courpasson, D., F. Dany. 2009. Cultures of resistance. S. R. Clegg, M. Haugaard, eds. *The Sage Handbook on Power*. Sage, London, 332–348.

Courpasson, D., J.-C. Thoenig. 2010. *When Managers Rebel*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Dany, F., F. Azimont. 2009. Des "crazy people" en organization? Etude d'un cas de résistance productive. *Revue Française de Gestion* **35**(193) 73–87.

de Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Deetz, S. 2008. Resistance: Would struggle by any other name be as sweet? *Management Comm. Quart.* **21**(3) 387–392.

Dent, E. B., S. G. Goldberg. 1999. Challenging "resistance to change." *J. Appl. Behav. Sci.* **35**(1) 25–41.

Douglas, M. 1992. *In the Active Voice*. Routledge, London.

Duguid, P. 2006. What talking about machines tells us. *Organ. Stud.* **27**(12) 1794–1805.

Ewick, P., S. Silbey. 2003. Narrating social structure: Stories of resistance to legal authority. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **108**(6) 1328–1372.

Flanagan, J. F., S. Rayner, eds. 1988. *Rules, Decisions, and Inequality in Egalitarian Societies*. Gower, Brookfield, VT.

Fleming, P., G. Sewell. 2002. Looking for the good soldier, Švejk: Alternative modalities of resistance in the contemporary workplace. *Sociology* **36**(4) 857–873.

Fleming, P., A. Spicer. 2003. Working at a cynical distance: Implications for power, subjectivity and resistance. *Organization* **10**(1) 157–179.

Fleming, P., A. Spicer. 2007. *Contesting the Corporation: Struggle, Power and Resistance in Organizations*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Ford, J. D., L. W. Ford, A. D'Amelio. 2008. Resistance to change: The rest of the story. *Acad. Management Rev.* **33**(2) 362–378.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Penguin, London.

Fox, A. 1974. *Beyond Contract: Work, Power and Trust Relations*. Faber & Faber, London.

Ganesh, S., H. M. Zoller, C. Cheney. 2005. Transforming resistance, broadening our boundaries: Critical organizational communication meets globalization from below. *Comm. Monogr.* **72**(2) 169–191.

Glaser, B. G., A. L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine de Gruyter, New York.

Graham, L. 1995. *On the Line at Subaru-Isuzu: The Japanese and the American Worker*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Haugaard, M., S. R. Clegg. 2009. Why power is the central concept of the social sciences. S. R. Clegg, M. Haugaard, eds. *The Sage Handbook of Power*. Sage, London, 1–25.

Henderson, K. 1995. The political career of a prototype: Visual representation in design engineering. *Soc. Problems* **42**(2) 274–299.

Hodson, R. 1995. Worker resistance: An underdeveloped concept in the sociology of work. *Econom. Indust. Democracy* **16**(1) 79–110.

Jermier, J. M., D. Knights, W. R. Nord, eds. 1994. *Resistance and Power in Organizations*. Routledge, New York.

Jermier, J. M., J. W. Slocum, L. W. Fry, J. Gaines. 1991. Organizational subcultures in a soft bureaucracy: Resistance behind the myth and façade of an official culture. *Organ. Sci.* **2**(2) 170–194.

King, B. 2008. A political mediation model of corporate response to social movement activism. *Admin. Sci. Quart.* **53**(3) 395–421.

Knights, D., D. McCabe. 2000. "Ain't misbehavin?" Opportunities for resistance under new forms of "quality" management. *Sociology* **34**(3) 421–436.

Knights, D., G. Morgan. 1995. Strategic management, financial services and information technology. *J. Management Stud.* **32**(2) 191–214.

Leeds, R. 1964. The absorption of protest: A working paper. W. W. Cooper, H. J. Leavitt, M. W. Shelly II, eds. *New Perspectives in Organizational Research*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 115–135.

Miethe, T. D., J. Rothschild. 1994. Whistleblowing and the control of organisational misconduct. *Sociol. Inquiry* **64**(3) 322–347.

Morrill, C., M. N. Zald, H. Rao. 2003. Covert political conflict in organizations: Challenges from below. *Annual Rev. Sociol.* **29** 391–415.

Mumby, D. K. 2005. Theorizing resistance in organization studies: A dialectical approach. *Management Comm. Quart.* **19**(1) 19–44.

O'Mahony, S., B. A. Bechky. 2008. Boundary organizations: Enabling collaboration among unexpected allies. *Admin. Sci. Quart.* **53**(3) 422–459.

Orlikowski, W. J. 2002. Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organ. Sci.* **13**(3) 249–273.

Piderit, S. K. 2000. Rethinking resistance and recognizing ambivalence: A multidimensional view of attitudes toward an organizational change. *Acad. Management Rev.* **25**(4) 783–794.

Prasad, P., A. Prasad. 2000. Stretching the iron cage: The constitution and implications of routine workplace resistance. *Organ. Sci.* **11**(4) 387–403.

Roy, D. 1952. Quota restriction and goldbricking in a machine shop. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **57**(5) 427–442.

Roy, D. F. 1953. Work satisfaction and social reward in quota achievement: An analysis of piecework incentive. *Amer. Sociol. Rev.* **18**(5) 507–514.

Roy, D. F. 1961. "Banana time": Job satisfaction and informal interaction. *Human Organ.* **18**(4) 158–168.

Rubin, J. W. 1995. Defining resistance: Contested interpretations of everyday acts. A. Sarat, S. S. Silbey, eds. *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, Vol. 15. JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 237–260.

Sapsed, J., A. Salter. 2004. Postcards from the edge: Local communities, global programs and boundary objects. *Organ. Stud.* **25**(9) 1515–1534.

Scott, J. C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Scott, J. C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Spicer, A., S. Böhm. 2007. Moving management: Theorizing struggles against the hegemony of management. *Organ. Stud.* **28**(11) 1667–1698.

Stark, D. 1999. Heterarchy: Distributed authority and organizing diversity. J. H. Clippinger, ed. *The Biology of Business: Decoding the Natural Laws of Enterprise*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 153–179.

Steinberg, M. W. 1999. The talk and back talk of collective action: A dialogic analysis of repertoires of discourse among nineteenth-century English cotton spinners. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **105**(3) 736–780.

Thomas, R. 2009. Critical management studies on identity: Mapping the terrain. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman, H. Willmott, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 166–186.

Thomas, R., A. Davies. 2005. Theorizing the micro-politics of resistance: New public management and managerial identities in the UK public services. *Organ. Stud.* **26**(5) 683–706.

Thompson, P., S. Ackroyd. 1995. All quiet on the workplace front? A critique of recent trends in British industrial sociology. *Sociology* **29**(4) 615–633.

Thompson, M., R. Ellis, A. Wildavsky. 1990. *Cultural Theory*. Westview, Oxford, UK.

Tichy, N. M. 1973. An analysis of clique formation and structure in organizations. *Admin. Sci. Quart.* **18**(2) 194–208.

Vallas, S. P. 2006. Empowerment redux: Empowerment, agency, and the remaking of managerial authority. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **111**(6) 1677–1717.

Van Maanen, J., S. R. Barley. 1984. Occupational communities: Culture and control in organizations. J. van Maanen, S. R. Barley, eds. *Research in Organizational Behavior*. JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 287–365.

Weeks, J. 2004. *Unpopular Culture: The Ritual of Complaint in a British Bank*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Winner, L. 1986. *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Yin, R. K. 1991. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 1st ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Zald, M. N., M. A. Berger. 1978. Social movements in organizations: Coup d'Etat, insurgency and mass movements. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **83**(4) 823–861.

Zoller, H. M., G. T. Fairhurst. 2007. Resistance leadership: The overlooked potential in critical organization and leadership studies. *Human Relations* **60**(9) 1331–1360.

David Courpasson is a professor of sociology at EMLYON Business School and a researcher at the EMLYON Business School OCE Research Centre. He is editor-in-chief of *Organization Studies*. His primary research interests focus on the dynamics of domination within bureaucracies and postbureaucracies. He is currently investigating processes of resistance in organizations and the influence of occupational, organizational, and community contexts on the accomplishment of entrepreneurial work and emancipation.

Françoise Dany is a professor of human resource management at EMLYON Business School, where she is director of the OCE Research Centre (Organizations, Careers and New Elites). Her research interests include human resource management, contemporary careers, and, more broadly, the evolutions of the employment relationships, with a particular emphasis on "productive resistance."

Stewart Clegg is research director of the Center for Organization Studies and a professor of management at the University of Technology, Sydney. He is also a visiting professor at EMLYON Business School (France), Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal), and Copenhagen Business School (Denmark). His Ph.D. is from the University of Bradford (United Kingdom). His research interests include power, strategy, ethics, project management, and social theory.