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Résumé de l'article

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ABSTRACT

Through a collective autoethnography, we describe how our group of academic activists—four women—has continued to support CSR activities in research and teaching practices and in all aspects of our business school's operations to resist mainstream management education. We have done so while contesting the business-case approach to CSR and the pressures that threaten to undermine or lessen the importance of social and environmental issues in management education. Here, we describe the forms of resistance that we undertook, our identity work between resistance and compliance in our business school and our collective dynamics over time.

Keywords: Micro-resistance, collective resistance, academic activists, CSR, collective autoethnography, business school, France

Résumé

À travers une auto-ethnographie collective, nous décrivons comment notre groupe d'activistes académiques—quatre femmes—a soutenu le développement des activités de RSE dans les pratiques de recherche et d'enseignement et dans tous les aspects du management de notre école de management pour résister à l'enseignement traditionnel de la gestion. Nous expliquons notre résistance à une logique de business-case et aux pressions menaçant de remettre en cause ou de réduire l'intégration de questions sociales et environnementales dans les formations en gestion. Nous décrivons ici les formes de résistance que nous avons entreprises, notre travail identitaire entre résistance et conformité dans notre école de management et nos dynamiques collectives dans le temps.

Mots-Clefs : micro-résistance, résistance collective, activistes académiques, RSE, auto-ethnographie collective, école de management, France

Resumen

A través de una autoetnografía colectiva, describimos como nuestro grupo de activistas académicas —cuatro mujeres— a sostenido el desarrollo de actividades de RSE/desarrollo sostenible en sus practicas de investigación, educación y en diferentes campos de management en la escuela de negocios para resistir a la educación tradicional de la gestión. Explicamos nuestra resistencia frente a una lógica business-case and frente a presiones amenazando con cuestionar o reducir la integración de cuestiones sociales y ambientales en la formación en gestión. Describimos formas de resistencia que implementamos, nuestro reflexión sobre nuestra identidad de trabajo entre resistencia y conformidad, y nuestras dinámicas colectivas.

Palabras Clave: micro-resistencia, resistencia colectiva, activistas académicos, RSE, autoetnografía colectiva, escuela de gestión, Francia

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The authors of this paper are a group of academic activists from a French business school (BS) who aim to resist mainstream management education by trying to integrate social and environmental issues in the various activities of their BS environment. We joined the BS at approximately the same time as young academics and spontaneously began to meet regularly as we found that we shared similar professional identities and aimed to engage in impactful scholarship, encourage knowledge-infused change in academic environments, and critically self-question our roles as academics in society.

Coming from different backgrounds and disciplines in management sciences (strategy, human resources, marketing and economics), we all completed our PhDs in topics related to ethics, sustainability or corporate social responsibility (CSR). While engaging in these topics as early-career academics, we realized that they represented an opportunity to transform our BS from the inside and to resist neoliberal influences within our school. We identified the importance of promoting social and environmental issues in management while resisting their instrumentalization from a mere business-case perspective. In doing so, we have gradually taken on the role of CSR activists within our school.

This collective positioning was not obvious given the controversies surrounding the political nature of CSR (Fooks et., 2013) and its contribution to the legitimation of capitalism through the commodification of ethics. Our collective choice was explained, however, by the desire to act on a topic—CSR—that was supported by the mission of the top management of our BS and increasingly institutionalized in the landscape of French BSs. In response to worldwide criticism—especially for training the managers involved in the corporate scandals that shook the business world in the early 21st century (Swanson and Frederick, 2003)—French BSs have simultaneously tried to serve the dual purposes of fostering CSR practices and improving organizational performance (Alajoutsijärvi *et al.*, 2015). While some have gradually integrated courses related to CSR, others, such as our school, have chosen to include CSR at the heart of the school's mission and to integrate it in different activities (e.g., teaching, learning objectives, research).

Our collective positioning forces us to lead our actions both by defending the primacy of our topic of resistance in practice and by conducting critical work on the construction and deconstruction of its meaning over time. Our actions therefore involve important identity work between compliance and resistance (Bristow *et al.*, 2017) to fight against mainstream education while collectively mobilizing its codes and discourses. Because of the importance of the identity issues associated with a form of resistance through CSR, many authors have questioned its performative potential (Fleming and Banerjee, 2016), that is, its capacity to produce change in practice. Consequently, academic activism around this topic has sometimes been described as fragmented and of little use, while other authors have suggested that collective practices of resistance could facilitate identity work and thus increase the performativity of such resistance actions (Ramboarisata and Gendron, 2019).

Consequently, our paper investigates: *how in-group dynamics can support the identity work of CSR academic activists and strengthen their micro-resistance practices within a BS context*? While prior research has largely explored individual forms of resistance (Beaujolin-Bellet and Grima, 2011; Rowlinson and Hassard, 2011), our paper focuses on the collective dynamics of micro-resistance that have been studied more recently (Gagnon and Collinson, 2017). We approach resistance as a process through which we self-identify as academics who are activists for CSR in the French BS where we work. To understand this role over the past eight years, we performed *collective autoethnography* (Chang *et al.*, 2016; Ngunjiri et Hernandez, 2017) to guide the reflexive analysis of our experiences. We collaboratively surveyed our own identity work constructs and our own collective questioning of the ways in which our group is driven and deals with tensions. We investigated the forms of resistance that we undertook at both the individual and the collective levels, the conditions for resistance manifestation, and how we managed to sustain our collective dynamics over time.

The contributions of our paper are twofold. First, we contribute to the literature on collective micro-resistance by emphasizing our collective dynamics and their role throughout our resistance process. In particular, we describe how we created a legitimate identity for our group by combining resistant and compliant behaviors (Bristow *et al.*, 2017; Ybema and Horvers, 2017) and how tensions between members have been regulated to sustain the group's vibrancy and impact. We show how specific spaces and collective projects were useful in taking on the role of "objects of resistance" (Courpasson *et al.*, 2012) to sustain our collective dynamics throughout the years. Second, we contribute to the literature on resistance within business schools by questioning the capacity of academics to reappropriate their professional identity and their profession while highlighting the conflicting logics at stake. We contribute to the understanding of the contested place of CSR within business schools and show how resistance

around this topic implies a transformation of meaning in the midst of various stakeholder groups to produce incremental change.

The paper is organized as follows. First, in our theoretical background, we outline how individual and collective academic micro-resistance practices occur in a BS context, particularly in relation to CSR issues. We then describe our methods and proceed to the analysis of our personal narratives as academic CSR activists before discussing our findings and concluding.

Theoretical Background

In this theoretical background, we explain the dynamics of micro-resistance of academics—between resistance and compliance—that are likely to occur within business schools to counter neoliberal pressures and to fight mainstream education. We explain how CSR can be viewed as an object of resistance within business schools while highlighting its limits and controversies in producing change. We emphasize the importance of the identity work that we had to undertake in this context.

Academic Micro-Resistance Practices in Business Schools

Business schools worldwide have faced the ascendancy of "managerialism" and associated neoliberal pressures that have reinforced control mechanisms and quantitative performance objectives for academics (Anderson *et al.*, 2018). These pressures are embodied in practice by quantitative requirements for excellence (Butler and Spoelstra, 2012; Bristow *et al.*, 2017), for example, in relation to the number of research publications, student evaluations, the amount of funds raised or compliance with national and international quality standards. Several academics have discussed these increasing pressures, which threaten the autonomy that is so central to the identity of the profession (Anderson, 2008) and their capacity to exercise in a qualitative manner. These quantitative requirements have been described as incompatible with impactful scholarship within society and with genuine critical inquiry (Butler *et al.*, 2017).

Management researchers and educators thus find themselves coping with paradoxical injunctions (Harris, 2005) that can create uncertainties or frustrations when the possibility to resolve tensions is lacking. One result is that self-protection runs high in the academic landscape (Archer, 2008), which explains why many academics do not actively resist but often escape through cynicism or disengagement when disappointment occurs. Resistance—when it occurs—often takes place in the midst of tensions and contradictions between prescribed and desired behaviors, often with a dialectic between resistance and compliance (Kalfa *et al.*, 2018). This is especially the case for early-career academics, who must conform to expectations as they start their careers and as quantitative standards of performance are spread worldwide (Bristow *et al.*, 2017). For these reasons, most academic resistance work occurs at the micro-level and neglects macro-resistance practices or formal opposition that could threaten academic positions (Grey, 2010; Leathwood and Read, 2013). Academics acknowledge a multitude of less visible and often unplanned oppositional practices in their everyday life. These so-called micro-resistance practices may be hidden, and they exist to offer some freedom in the work that must be done and to make it more bearable (Linhart, 2009). These practices offer the possibility for academics to renew and take control of their professional identity and their profession in the service of emancipation (Knights and Clarke, 2014).

This means that academics reflect on their own identity performance, recognizing contradictions and tensions (Bristow *et al.*, 2017) and, in so doing, perverting and subtly shifting meanings and understandings (Thomas and Davies, 2005). For example, Bristow *et al.* (2017) defined different narratives of identity work between resistance and compliance for early-career critical management studies (CMS) academics: (i) diplomatic narratives, when academics negotiate, network, compromise and engage in secret politics; (ii) combative narratives, when behaviors of heroism, radicalism, sacrifice and combat are described; and (iii) idealistic narratives, when the objective is to stay true to certain beliefs and principles and uphold values. These authors focus on the identity issues associated with a posture between resistance and compliance and in their more recent papers acknowledge the difficulties in supporting this posture individually, without change or collective action at work (Bristow *et al.* 2019). Their work is however particularly useful to qualify the various coping strategies that academics can use to counterbalance academic arrhythmia, managerialism and individualism and associated forms of violence.

Although resistance is likely to occur at the individual level (Beaujolin-Bellet and Grima, 2011; Rowlinson and Hassard, 2011), collective forms of micro-resistance are also likely to emerge in the academic world (Cruz *et al.*, 2018; Iqbal, 2013; Raaper, 2016). Collective forms of micro-resistance are called "collective infrapolitics" and focus on forms of collective yet quiet, disguised, hidden or

anonymous resistance that serve to challenge or unsettle the dominant discourse (Mumby *et al.*, 2017). Collective forms of infrapolitics are hidden mobilizations that do not publicly display political intent (Gagnon and Collinson, 2017). They carve out spaces, such as creative projects, which allow academics to "practise with integrity" (Clegg, 2008).

Collective forms of resistance are important because they can make the work more bearable and provide the group with the necessary strength to perform its tasks and build a better identity at work. Resisting collectively can be a powerful means to achieve recognition for a group when a feeling of dissatisfaction or scorn has been shared by the group members (Pierson, 2011). In the academic world of management education, these forms of resistance might be useful for creating a solid collective identity, solidarity and mutual support (Courpasson, 2017), which can be seen as a form of resistance itself and a citizenship experience with regard to the growing individualism in academia (Anderson, 2008; Butler *et al.*, 2017; Clegg, 2008; Jain *et al.*, 2009). These forms of resistance have been less studied in the resistance literature, and more attention to their conditions of emergence and their forms and effects is needed (Mumby *et al.*, 2015).

CSR as an Object of Resistance Within Business Schools

Prior to the 2000s, the top BSs worldwide were not particularly interested in CSR activities. While these organizations were engaged in the mission of education, they were not encouraged to address other social or environmental issues or prove their contribution to sustainable development (Gioia and Corley, 2002). They were instead expected to focus on criteria such as the level of selectivity for school admission and employability and pay rate upon graduation. The mission and "raison d'être" of BSs naturally led them to concentrate on financial performance and training generations of top managers for entrepreneurial and financial success (Ortiz and Muniesa, 2018).

However, the legitimacy of these schools has been and remains threatened by the scandals arising from the ethical failings of the managers they have trained and their standardization and reproduction of a neoliberal model (Alajoutsijarvi *et al.*, 2015). A call was thus launched to rethink BSs as organizations situated within a community that is aware of their potential to meet societal challenges by training a new generation of responsible managers. These organizations play a key social role in training future managers (Gardiner and Lacy, 2005) and producing and disseminating management knowledge (Pfeffer and Fong, 2004; Gioia and Corley, 2002; Laszlo *et al.*, 2017). They have been criticized by their stakeholders and the academic world and are increasingly cognizant of their social responsibility and the consequences of their activities on society (Gardiner and Lacy, 2005).

Consequently, CSR has been largely institutionalized within the BS environment (e.g., teaching subjects, development of this stream of research, relationships with stakeholders) and integrated into the criteria of evaluation by international bodies. While some schools have only marginally integrated CSR into their practices (e.g., with dedicated courses integrated into the curriculum or with the integration of actions popularized by accreditation bodies), others—such as our school—have chosen to put CSR at the heart of the school's mission and to integrate it in different activities (e.g., teaching, learning objectives, research). However, BSs remain vulnerable to pressure for academic capitalism (Slaughter and Leslie, 2001) or neoliberal normalization, and CSR is often implemented from a business-case perspective (Ramboarisata and Gendron, 2019). A change in paradigm has not yet occurred, and many critical scholars see CSR as a way to reintegrate a social critique of capitalism into capitalism itself, thereby making it even stronger (Fleming and Banerjee, 2016). From this standpoint, researchers have made strong calls to repoliticize social and environmental issues within business schools to fight against mainstream management education (Manteaw, 2008; Toft, 2015) and to overcome the limited performativity of CSR (Fleming and Banerjee, 2016).

CSR might represent a rich area of inquiry for both academics and practitioners (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). This is particularly the case in France, where CSR has been strongly institutionalized and included in French laws and regulations (Antal and Sobczak, 2007). The academic community appears to be a creator, translator and mediator in the debate about CSR (Gardiner and Lacy, 2006). Indeed, academics, especially in management education, have a strong role in shaping and facilitating proper and meaningful learning for today's and tomorrow's managers (Swanson and Frederick, 2003). Academics have a role in society and a duty to question the social and environmental impacts of the management knowledge they produce (Khalili, 2015).

Despite the criticisms presented above, we believe that CSR offers academic actors leverage for change by challenging the hegemonic discourse, attempting to avoid the complexity of this concept and seeking to subordinate it to economic performance (Tregidga *et al.*, 2018). In particular, by conceiving the CSR business-case as a discourse of power, recent studies have shown how CSR activists can align CSR programs more closely with their personal convictions and eventually bring about incremental change (Grisard *et al.*, 2020). In this regard, we acknowledge that academics in BSs may have an opportunity to resist mainstream management education through CSR, particularly by engaging in strong identity work between compliance and resistance at a collective level.

Methods

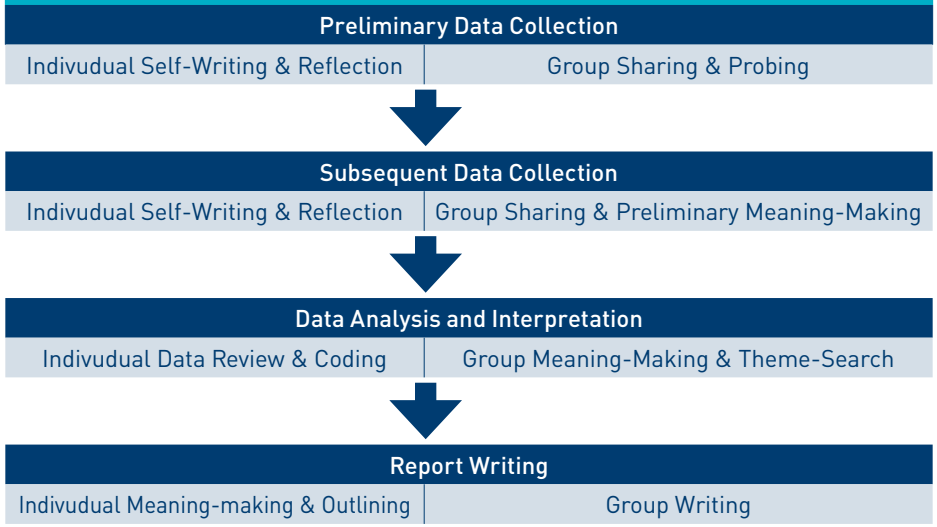
Collective Autoethnography

As mentioned in our introduction, we are a collective of four women, all of whom are academic CSR activists who joined a French BS at the beginning of their academic careers. The group has lasted for eight years and has continued to promote CSR values in the French BS context and the workplace by endorsing and carrying out different forms of micro-resistance at the collective level. Although our BS has been very committed to social values mainly geared toward students, we have collectively worked to develop research, teaching and academic activities to create and sustain a CSR approach beyond a mere business-case perspective. We thus adopted a collective autoethnographic approach to characterize our collective resistance practices.

Autoethnography is a nontraditional qualitative research method that has been well explored in management studies and in the context of academic organizations and their members (e.g., Essén and Värlander, 2013; Learmonth and Humphreys, 2012; Malsch and Tessier, 2015). This approach is rooted in autobiography and is self-focused; the researcher is simultaneously the subject who performs the investigation and the participant who is investigated. It is also context-focused because it is rooted in ethnography, which investigates social and cultural contexts (Jones *et al.*, 2016). Autoethnography is a powerful method to enrich our understanding of how researchers interact with their environment and the social/cultural phenomenon they are studying (Denshire, 2014). This method also enables a focus on emotions and role conflicts or identity work through the experiences that can be explored by the autoethnographers (e.g., Ashlee *et al.*, 2017; Cruz *et al.*, 2018; Fernando *et al.*, 2019; Learmonth and Humphreys, 2012). For these reasons, this method is particularly valuable for the study of resistance through a critical lens, as noted by Denzin (2006, p. 423).

Because our research concerns collective resistance and is in line with the academic articles cited above, we chose the collective approach to autoethnography (Chang *et al.*, 2016; Ngunjiri et Hernandez, 2017), which involves two or more participant-researchers who make decisions about the research process, data collection and analysis. We also adopted a concurrent collaboration model, according to which autobiographers follow successive stages, some based on individual work and others on collective work (Ngunjiri *et al.*, 2017), as indicated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Conducting a collective autoethnography: a step-by-step approach



Source: Ngunjiri *et al.* (2017)

Data Collection And Analysis

To answer our research question, we focused on the meanings that the four of us have given to our individual and collective resistance practices. We began with a step-by-step writing process to clarify our perceptions of what we have lived and experienced over the years. For three months, we worked individually and collectively to assemble our data, which are based on our individual stories. This collaboration was facilitated by our geographical proximity. We organized four meetings to share our individual stories and question each other to draw out further individual data. Our data collection process thus combined collective sharing and meaning-making with individual writing. Our group's story started in 2011, and we possess a vast number of reports, written works, articles, and meeting notes that document and describe our collaboration. We used this material during our data collection and even organized informal interviews and conversations with other collaborators to further specify the autoethnography, as recommended by Denshire (2014).

In our first meeting, our discussions were oriented toward defining the project and the research question that would guide our first step of individual autobiographic data collection. To prepare for our second meeting, each of us shared her story and read the stories of her cowriters. Our discussions during this meeting focused on identifying the historical phases and both the individual and collective resistance activities. We probed each other to better define our resistance positioning and its reasons and objects. At that stage, we found useful to get back to the literature to better circumscribe and define our resistance actions that we sometimes had difficulty to characterize. The framework of Bristow *et al*. (2017) has been useful to us to put words on our forms of resistance but also to extend our representation of our practices of resistance at work. This framework thus appeared as a very useful reflective and structuring tool to give meaning to our reality.

After another round of individual writing, we collectively shared and reviewed our stories in a third meeting, in which we explored specific resistance activities and objects. This helped us to write about how each of us perceived the role of the other members of our group and how we work together. Our discussions in the fourth meeting focused on probing the individual autobiographies to discern tensions and how we coped with them within the group and during our resistance activities. After the fourth iteration of this data collection, we devoted our last step to group meaning-making and data coding as recommended by Ngunjiri *et al*. (2017). Our collaboration lasted throughout the entire process, from data collection and analysis to the writing of this paper. At some points, however, we also worked in pairs.

Our coding process followed two steps. In the first step, we described our identity-work and associated resistance practices using the framework of Bristow *et al*. (2017) that was useful for our collective reflexivity. We gave meaning and sometimes reframed some categories of their grid to make it better bear to our reality and shared experience. Our second step consisted in characterizing our collective dynamics of resistance. Following a multistage inductive coding approach (Kuhn, 2009), we analyzed the discourses about our collective functioning as a group, the factors that were likely to unite us, the tensions that we encountered, and how we strategically dealt with them. By adopting a flexible coding strategy and making multiple round trips, we grouped our raw discursive materials into second-order and first-order categories (see Table 1).

Through discursive positioning, we authored our own experiences to create particular versions of reality. In this regard, we were able to give meaning and embed our findings within our own individual and collective experiences in our BS over time and throughout the phases that we freely determined to set the context. On the basis of these phases and our coding grid, we wrote—together as four authors—a collective and common narrative to give meaning to our singular experiences over the course of multiple exchanges. This process of collective writing consisted in listening to each other voices, challenging and balancing our diverse perspectives; we then defined a collective interpretation of the facts and were able to build a common narrative. We illustrated our collective narrative with some quotes from our personal stories which were coded in order to respect our anonymity. Finally, to give substance to our data, we used graphic representations such as vignettes and timelines to illustrate specific results (Jones *et al*., 2016).

TABLE 1

Coding scheme: Identity work between compliance and resistance and in-group dynamics

First-Order Categories	Second-Order Categories	Sub-Themes	Raw Discourses
Identity work between compliance and resistance	**Diplomatic**	**Acting as a CSR marketer:** Looking compliant while doing unconventional things	*"We (A4 & I) are working right now on creating a case study and are trying to put into place a more efficient process to assess the AOL [Assurance Of Learning]... We'll then invest completely in the AOL process and sometimes act as its ambassadors. However, it's not just a matter of compliance, but really of advocating to simplify the processes and ensure that the societal values defended by the school are reflected in the learning framework..."* (A2) *"We were lucky to have the opportunity to revise the Master's program: this let us develop new courses. We needed to create 'values-based' courses: finally, I was going to be able to propose courses in my area of expertise and with no history or competition: teaching innovation was also going to be possible. In this phase of stability, I was able to propose social and solidarity-based courses and also courses about alternative circuits, which resulted from the standard international trade courses and which were clearly more related to my research. I felt like a burst of collective oxygen and a validation of the proposals by the faculty."* (A3)
		Being a careerist: Earning the right to be critical	*"As we created the CSR Research group (2014–2015) to make ourselves legitimate in the eyes of our colleagues and our Research Director, our group came to be called the 'dream team' by our internal contacts, which in a way became a name of resistance. I think this originated with our HR Director, who referred to as as teacher-researcher activists; this is how she presented us during the 'diversity label' audit in 2015..."* (A2) *"In the meantime, as far as research is concerned, I personally continue to capitalize on the work I did before my thesis or on ongoing collaborations. I'm starting to capitalize on some publications in the field and still teach sustainable development at the Bachelor's level."* (A1)
		Becoming a networker: Seeking peer and mentor support internally and/or externally	*"The requests are more numerous and above all they come from different internal stakeholders: HR Director, Executive Education, which is very stimulating and reinforces my commitment to the school."* (A4) *"This was like a validation of the way to teach this topic: the way the students welcomed the classes was totally different, and this proved to me that I was not completely off track."* (A3)
	Combative	**Being an academic freedom fighter:** Resisting the limiting pressures and maintaining freedom	*"Fortunately, some of us, A2 in particular, have taken up the subject and are lobbying our management to have the journals in which we are likely to publish recognized."* (A4)
		Being a CSR hero : Being heroically resistant to CSR threats	*"I feel legitimate enough to take part in the R2D2 conference, which brings together the diversity and CSR representatives of all the Grandes Ecoles (GE) in France in the framework of CSR workshops supported by the GE conference. At this occasion, the school asked me to take part in a round table to represent the faculty. I was asked about the behaviors that GEs need to carry out in order to be involved in a CSR policy. While my role had to be politically correct and show that my school is very committed, I took this opportunity to explain the difficulties of academic publication as soon as we worked on these topics. I took a risk because the Dean was present in the amphitheater and I challenged school policy on this point and launched a debate with a renowned professor who works at the FNEGE on a somewhat controversial subject: the classification of journals and the usefulness of this classification. I expressed my resistance with as much diplomacy as possible and by adapting my language to my interlocutors and the public in the room. I'm going into internal lobbying with management on this."* (A2)

TABLE 1

Coding scheme: Identity work between compliance and resistance and in-group dynamics

First-Order Categories	Second-Order Categories	Sub-Themes	Raw Discourses
Identity work between compliance and resistance	**Idealistic**	**Being a stickler:** Not compromising on the essentials	*"I'm also more vigilant about my remarks and my choices in Executive Education training sessions: I've been in situations of stress from using a discourse that is sometimes too utilitarian to be convincing. Now I'm able to find the right dosage."* (A1)
		Being a free spirit: Carving out your own space and working out how to do what you want to do. Walking away in search of authenticity	*"As far as my teaching is concerned, I'm still teaching CSR but with an increasingly critical posture since the balance sheets on the experiments carried out in companies have been variable. My students and I deconstruct the reality of practice. I take a position where I propose a universe of possibilities to the students, without moralizing but rather helping them to develop critical thinking about the initiatives carried out in business. While this is very exciting, I do feel some frustration about sometimes training cynical students on these issues."* (A1) *For me, it's about giving students the keys to position themselves on societal issues as future organizational managers, stimulating critical thinking and increasing their skills. In fact, I feel I'm learning with them almost as much as I'm teaching them... And I like it very much."* (A2)
In-Group Dynamic	**Unity Drivers**	**Search for meaning:** Needing meaning in all academic activities and identity at work	*"I definitely wanted to find meaning in my activities as a teacher- researcher and develop my research and teaching projects around responsible HR management."* (A4). *"We needed to create 'values-based' courses: finally, I was going to be able to propose courses in my area of competence and with no history or competition: teaching innovation was also going to be possible."* (A3) *"The motivations that led me to this profession: sharing knowledge with my students and producing it to share it with them."* (A2).
		Ideological/intellectual proximity: Sharing common CSR ideologies and perspectives about performing intellectual activities	*"Over the course of this common project, our team has been united around a common vision for it: the importance of»defending our values, a qualitative approach, the importance of defending a critical vision of the school's commitment. I'm delighted with his choices and to be able to share them collectively."* (A1) *"I'm involved in the diversity mission project because it involves working collectively with colleagues whose real commitment to CSR values I've been able to appreciate and whose assumptions and approaches I'm in tune with: no instrumentalization, critical posture nuanced by my colleagues, respect for collective work and research ethics."* (A2).
		Personal friendship: Feeling and maintaining personal intimacy and cohesion	*"I tried from the outset to establish contacts with them and I was very quickly relieved because we have gotten along very well from the start, despite our differences in age and life courses. It was above all affect and friendship that brought us together."* (A2) *"From there, a true collective life began, quite preserved from the tumult of the business school as it underwent a full cultural change. We spend a lot of time discovering ourselves personally and professionally. We share many moments of conviviality, including lunches and tea/coffee breaks, which provide a sense of intimacy and cohesion."* (A4)
		"Looking for self- protection: Looking for individual protection from outside pressures (research and teaching objectives, managerial pressure, etc.)"	*"I think that those initial difficulties associated with the fact that we were certain to have arrived at the same time quickly led me to see that these were people I could trust and others less so."* (A3) *"In my opinion, at that time, The Aquarium was a 'haven of peace' where we were all gathered because our offices were clustered there, a sphere of protection with a desire to protect our somewhat 'heterodox' approach."* (A4)
		"Similar academic status: Having the same characteristics/position in terms of academic career"	*"Integration went well and we were a wave of young or almost young PhDs that had arrived at the same time."* (A3) *"Personal subjects that brought us closer together and our role as 'new recruits' created a certain solidarity. We were all recruited as young PhDs, post-doctoral fellows or those in the process of supporting her doctoral thesis, except A4."* (A2)

TABLE 1

Coding scheme: Identity work between compliance and resistance and in-group dynamics

First-Order Categories	Second-Order Categories	Sub-Themes	Raw Discourses
In-Group Dynamic	**Tensions**	**Inter-personal tensions and work-life balance:** Personal conflicts and changes in personal lives	*"When I returned from a visiting scholar stay in Australia, things were more complicated with one of the group members (SG) because it became apparent that, for personal reasons, I had increasingly fewer affinities with her, until finally I could no longer work with her. Another one of us shared my opinion and my feelings in this regard..."* (A2) *"The activities multiplied during this period. I found it difficult to find my proper place and balance in the middle of all this, particularly with other members of the group. I am valued like two other colleagues by statute, but I felt that I was in a situation of over-commitment."* (A1)
		Tensions over CSR meaning: Debates about CSR ideologies and perspectives	*"I was wondering more and more about the merits of dealing with this issue [diversity]. Is it necessary to ask the questions in these terms or are we heading toward more stigmatization? The answer was obviously nuanced, but the relationships with big companies in this context took me away from my usual environment. I no longer saw myself fitting in with the expectations of management regarding CSR investment as I saw only diversity being put forward."* (A3) *"I found myself increasingly attached to critical thinking and the desire to pursue alternatives. I felt the tension between a very business-case view of my Executive training courses and my willingness to defend a strong commitment to corporate responsibility. These debates with colleagues have been enriching and they stimulate me because we don't always agree on positions."* (A1)
		Tensions around recognition in the school: Differences in individual achievements and in recognition by school managers	*"I feel that our colleagues don't always understand why we do anything other than teaching and research and the name 'dream team' is sometimes associated with a little mockery that we are young women."* (A2) *"We don't want to engage in a [professional] project for which we don't have the competence ... and/or which emphasizes the notion of CSR or diversity when we do not share the ideological premise. We defend our arguments toward the academic direction, but we don't feel really understood and supported because, for example, we were summoned in October 2018 to respond to a proposal under the pretext that it came from one of the school's 'Major Partners' but we simply couldn't get on board with it."* (A4)
		Tensions around efficiency: Difficulties in achieving collective projects	*"I'm somewhat annoyed that our attempts to publish in English are not succeeding, particularly because this undermines the credibility of our research group in terms of its ability to produce publications collectively on the topic. Some members of the academic direction question our legitimacy in this regard and urge us (me in particular during my annual meeting) not to lock ourselves into this collective and 'to open up better prospects through collaborations.' It makes me angry because this collective work is important and pleasurable for me. I feel the contradictions between doing serious work in accordance with my values and the institutional requirements of publications and reputation."* (A1) *"... At the beginning of a project, which emerges very easily (we have lots of them!), we're always very enthusiastic; we have great ambitions (not always realistic) because the project in itself pleases us, we find sense in it but also, for me anyway, because it allows us to come together, especially with one of us who left the school. This way we can continue to work together. We are not alone. But then the difficulties start because I think we want to explore, to deepen, but we are unproductive and inefficient."* (A4)
		Tensions between collective engagement and external activities: Conflicts between in-group and out-group engagements	*"Sometimes I feel like I'm doing too much. I sometimes feel overwhelmed and overworked with a heavy mental load. I feel a tension between my personal life and all the different projects of the school."* (A1) *"... I now ask myself to what extent we can continue to share projects when A3 has her own demands M4 is making new life choices, A2 and A1 are moving toward new activities..."* (A4)

TABLE 1
Coding scheme: Identity work between compliance and resistance and in-group dynamics

First-Order Categories	Second-Order Categories	Sub-Themes	Raw Discourses
In-Group Dynamic	**Strategies to deal with tensions**	**Open communication and collective reflexivity:** On-going dialogue between members about who they are and what they do	*"We talk a lot among ourselves, sometimes for hours, but that is also the richness: our sharing and our debates."* (A1) *"I feel tension both with myself and with them, even if they don't blame me at all... I talk to them regularly, they reassure me, I redouble my efforts. This balance is generally achieved but regularly compromised by the fact that I'm involved in too many projects and activities within the school."* (A2)
		Anti-hierarchical practices: Fighting for collective governance in all group projects	*"At that time, courses were offered to us at the EMBA level on these [CSR] issues, particularly within the framework of the certificate piloted by MME, but we also work with the new development department of Executive Education on these issues. It was developed during my maternity leave so I wasn't part of it, but A4 offered me a place on the team as soon as I returned. I was very touched by this and I feel that it confirms our great unity and especially our desire to continue and develop projects together."* (A1)
		Positive construction of differences and self-esteem: Knowing and acknowledging everyone's strengths and building on them for collective success	*"I believe that the strength of our collective is that each of us manages to take the leadership role one after the other on a project. We always agree on the nature of the projects to be carried out and the direction we want to give them, but our form and level of commitment varies according to our priorities, the periodic intensity of our teaching activity we receive (especially for CJ, who has taken on several responsibilities)."* (A4) *"I am very proud to be part of the 'dream team' that has carried out projects based on our own values and those of the school, and has succeeded in making this rare fit. We share, I believe once again, the same desire to make the school a real actor who contributes to society, a 'citizen' organization."* (A1) *"During this period, we'll be very much in demand to work and represent internally and externally the school's CSR commitment and diversity (award ceremony, diplomas, etc.). In order to be able to respond to these requests, which are not part of our scheduled workloads or our objectives as scholars, we divide the tasks within the group, according to our desires, skills and work schedules... But with the motivation to carry out our commitment."* (A2)
		Acceptance of individual free spaces: Letting everyone be independent to carve out her own spaces	*"Several very marked personal developments have occurred recently. In particular, A2's management responsibilities, A4's choice to go further on Exed and on diversity/inclusion, A6's personal projects. A3 has other projects outside the school and I completed my 'habilitation to supervise research'. These will be difficult to manage for our collective but at the same time I feel a certain freedom for everyone to do and evolve according to what is important to them. This remains important to me and is certainly one of the keys to our collective success."* (A1)

Source: Authors

Findings

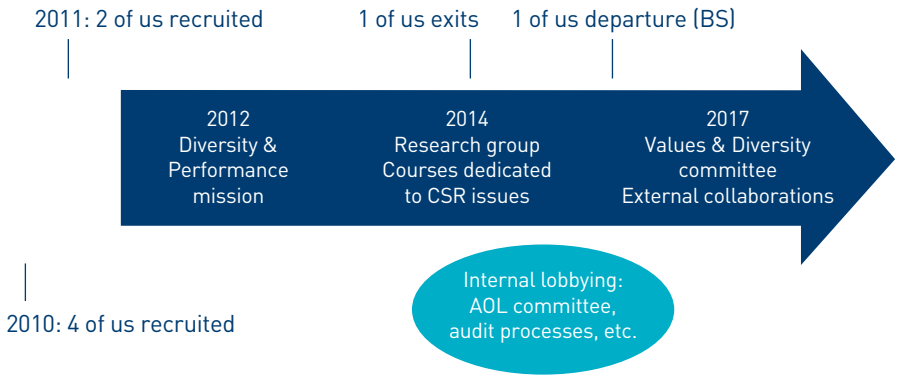
In our stories, we identified three main phases in our group dynamics as academic CSR activists in the French BS that employs us (see Figure 2): *induction* (Phase 1), *strengthening* (Phase 2) and *development* (Phase 3). Throughout these three phases, we found that our identity work construct was balanced between resistance and compliance at both the individual and the collective level. The three contingent narratives of resistance and identity—*diplomatic, combative* and *idealistic*—identified by Bristow *et al.* (2017) permitted us to describe our specific mode of engaging in micro-resistance practices based on objects of resistance we had built together and oriented toward targeted BS stakeholders. Our narratives revealed that our identity work was embedded in a challenging and demanding BS context that compelled us to mobilize specific group-unity drivers to support our resistance. The narratives also highlighted the tensions we encountered and the strategies we used to address them.

Phase 1. Induction Phase (2010–2013)

In this period, the BS redefined its mission statement by strengthening CSR dimensions that matched its values and trying to obtain a competitive advantage. This repositioning relied on all the activities of the BS, including recruitment of CSR-oriented lecturers, development of the equal opportunities policy (apprenticeship and various scholarships), and the creation of a dedicated HR and CSR department. Our arrival was part of this dynamic.

The induction phase characterized the birth of our group of academic CSR activists and the first stage of our collective resistance, as we made efforts to learn the dominant discourse while also trying to find our place within the BS and build a certain legitimacy for our CSR views. Originally, we were six women with the same academic status who had joined the BS between 2010 and 2011. Some of us were initially quite reluctant to work for a business school, an institution whose goal is to train students in the dominant economic model and a traditional approach to CSR: *"At that time, I had several reservations and prejudices toward business schools (e.g., commodification of knowledge, privileged student public…)"* (A1). However, the discovery of our common research interests before and after our integration reassured us and helped us to overcome our personal doubts. We had academic profiles in economics, human resource management (HRM) and organizational behavior, strategic management and marketing, and we had addressed a wide range of CSR topics in our PhD work and emerging research activities, such as environmental policy, fair trade, social and solidarity-based economies, and top managers' responsibilities. Our PhDs were focused on an alternative approach to corporate sustainability, overcoming the business-case perspective and developing a particular interest in tensions, contradictions or complex stakeholder strategies coming from a systemic approach of organizations. The topics of our research or teaching were the first things that gathered us: *"I find my colleagues' thesis topics exciting and promising. I am surprised at the intellectual closeness that exists between us"* (A2). From our first meetings and discussions, we quickly realized that we shared the same professional and personal objectives. The search for meaning in our academic activities has held us together from the beginning to the present: *"I definitely wanted to find meaning in my activities as a teacher-researcher and develop my research and teaching projects around a responsible HR management"* (A2).

FIGURE 2
Chronology of our identity work between resistance and compliance to disseminate CSR within our business school



As we discovered our intellectual proximity in research based on a shared interest in alterity and believed in the value and advantages of the collective, we began to consider common projects. We were also driven by the same teaching objectives oriented toward our students' self-development and innovation: *"For me, it is about giving students the keys to position themselves on societal issues as future organizational managers, stimulating critical thinking and increasing their skills. In fact, I feel I am learning with them almost as much as I am teaching them… In addition, I truly like it"* (A4). Our common point was considering CSR not only as a specific field but also as a way to transform management as a whole. Thus, we integrated CSR issues into the content of existing courses for which we were responsible: HRM, international trade, strategy and marketing. However, our purpose was not merely to teach ethical codes and norms and spread the good word but rather to truly encourage our students toward authentic responsible leadership and management practices that would contribute to the complex endeavor of social transformation. We were and remain convinced that CSR should be an integral part of the manager's mindset. However, at this time, it was not easy to defend this approach because the BS students seemed uninterested and unwilling to learn about it. They were still very "business-oriented" and saw little value in following CSR teachings in a BS context. Students often objected during our first classes that CSR was not a core topic for enterprises whose objective is, above all, to make profits. Some of them believed that even if some managers may feel personally concerned about sustainable

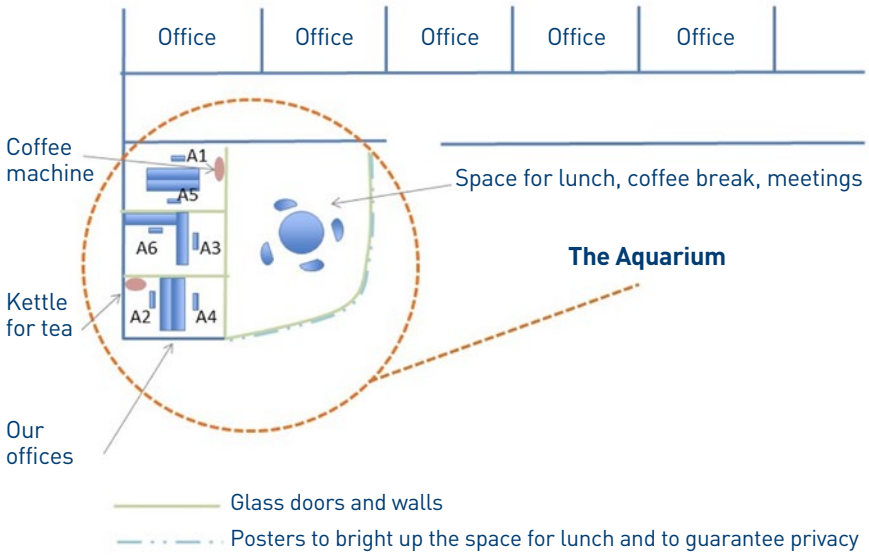
development, they will not necessarily change their way of doing business by considering social or environmental issues. To overcome this approach, we adapted our vocabulary and integrated case studies of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations, which permitted open discussions. We wanted our students to take a more critical stance toward the conventional approach to business and to become aware that other ways of "doing business" were both possible and effective. Nevertheless, tensions coming from the neoliberal BS context have continued to exist, and exchanges between us helped to improve our teaching practices: *"I find myself increasingly attached to critical thinking and the desire to pursue alternatives. I feel tensions between a very business-case view of my executive trainings and my willingness to defend a strong responsible commitment. These debates are rich with my colleagues, and they feed me because we do not always agree on positions"* (A1).

In meetings and talks with our peers in the BS, we also observed that some of them were quite skeptical about CSR and its usefulness for teaching and research. According to this view, CSR should remain peripheral to the firm's bottom line. Other colleagues were more open to CSR concerns and introduced them in their teaching, but they still focused on the business-case perspective, which is the dominant CSR view in BSs.

One episode of our story is particularly revealing of the way we managed tensions that arose regarding what CSR meant in the BS and even within our own group as we tried to find our academical legitimacy. In 2012, we were asked by the General Director (GD) to conduct a study on the link between diversity and performance in our BS, which has long been engaged in a diversity policy. Throughout the consulting mission, the GD's ambition was to demonstrate that a diversity policy is a source of organizational performance principally to convince the BS stakeholders to remain engaged in the policy. We were enthusiastic about a collective project based on a CSR value that would enable us to work together and structure our action. However, we wanted to work in our way, and we openly refused to conduct a quantitative study on this topic, as initially expected by the GD, to primarily prove the economic benefits of a diversity policy. We instead suggested a qualitative approach that we believed would better reflect the complexity and richness of the topic. Although we mostly shared the same approach to CSR, one of us defended a more business case-oriented vision that made it difficult for us to work together. Our mutual trust and friendship permitted us to develop open communication based on an authentic and free sharing of our personal arguments in a spirit of debate that finally and quite rapidly permitted us to reach agreement. This did not work with two other colleagues who were also involved in the mission but with whom we had less intellectual and personal proximity. We clearly understood that they did not wish to defend this kind of subject in the school and preferred to adapt to the GD's requirements. This mission was indisputably our first object of resistance that helped to legitimate our group identity work to our colleagues and to the GD in particular. Through this mission, we positioned to resist in a more combative way by not compromising on what we believed was an essential point: maintaining a scientific positioning and not considering a single business-case-oriented vision. Here, the difficulty was in implementing resistance to a demand coming from our hierarchy. It was risky and difficult to implement, but the in-group dynamics clearly permitted us to affirm this positioning, which was finally accepted: *"The contract* [results of the diversity and performance mission] *seems to us to have been respected, even though we did not meet their initial expectations. From this moment, we also became more legitimate in their eyes in terms of the school representations on diversity and CSR issues because they asked us to do more such work"* (A4).

All the events that took place during our induction phase were deeply linked to the natural alignment of our personal values with our professional positions, which helped to create strong mutual understanding, listening and protection in the group. Personal friendships have developed and further cemented our group and have permitted collective positioning, as mentioned above. They were embedded in a dedicated gathering space, a small room near our offices called *"the Aquarium"* (see Figure 3). This room that we chose as "ours" became a space for daily chats on our professional and personal lives, which reinforced our collective identity and solidarity: *"We share a common space for work but also for relaxation and meals (organic herbal teas, interest in quality of life and food) that allows us to exchange personally. We share crazy laughs, good times, outings outside school; we share our lives"* (A1); *"In my opinion, at that time, the Aquarium was a 'haven of peace' where we are now all gathered thanks to the sharing of offices, a sphere of protection with a desire to protect our somewhat 'heterodox' approach"* (A2).

FIGURE 3
The Aquarium



Sharing a physical space also meant that we came to be identified by our colleagues as an intimate and exclusive group of "the girls" defending social values; few of them dared enter this space, especially during our animated discussions. We felt that some colleagues considered our collective of young female academics with a certain kindness but also sometimes with a lack of professional consideration: *"I feel that our colleagues do not always understand why we do things other than teaching and research, and the name 'dream team' is sometimes also associated with a little mockery that we are young women"* (A4).

As early-career academics, we thus adopted in that phase both a diplomatic strategy by maneuvering tensions to be recognized as CSR academics and a combative approach by refusing to compromise on the essentials.

Phase 2. Strengthening Phase (2014–2016)

The second period was characterized by an increasingly challenging environment of the BS, which prompted us to engage in more targeted actions. Both our private and professional contexts become more demanding. We shared happy family events such as the arrival of our first children and painful personal moments, while the BS climate hardened with the definition of increasingly demanding research objectives and the dissemination of disturbing managerial discourses about academic excellence strategies. In this turbulent context that worried us all, we took on new compliant roles while creating objects of resistance.

First, we continued our diplomatic resistance by acting as "CSR marketers" and networking with our managers and colleagues during crucial moments of involvement in the BS's internal institutions. We formalized our group identity in 2014 by creating the first internal research group on CSR issues. This was an essential object of resistance that enabled us to build our network inside the school and made our CSR engagement more visible and tangible to both our internal and external peers. This collective initiative was positively perceived by our managers because it was aligned with the strategy of the BS and permitted us to demonstrate its CSR commitment: *"The creation of the research group represents, in my opinion, an opportunity to strengthen the collective dynamic around our research axes, to make ourselves more visible internally, to encourage new collaborations both internally and externally"* (A2). In addition, two of us (A4 & A2) became permanent members of the *Assurance of Learning* (AOL) committee, an internal body that drives the assessment of students' learning outcomes, and volunteered to be specifically in charge of promoting CSR topics in the school curriculum: *"We (A2 & I) will then invest ourselves thoroughly in the AOL process and sometimes become its ambassadors. However, it is not just a matter of compliance, but really of advocating to simplify the processes and ensure that the societal values defended by the school are truly reflected in the learning framework..."* (A4). Moreover, three of us were systematically asked to participate in the academic or AOL sessions organized during accreditation audits, where we had another opportunity to defend our CSR teaching and research approach in a diplomatic manner.

After a curriculum review by accreditors, the faculty was encouraged to create new values-based teachings coherent with our school's mission. We took this opportunity to develop new teachings that act as powerful idealistic objects

of resistance. This marked a key episode of our group story because it offered us a real space to treat CSR in dedicated teachings; we no longer had to integrate a CSR dimension into business fundamentals courses such as HRM, international trade or strategy. This led to a decrease in our personal tensions while satisfying the BS requirements. We were enthusiastic and interpreted this as a sign of confidence from our managers because we were free to develop the topics we wanted to address with our own pedagogical approach: *"I felt like a burst of collective oxygen"* (A3). This opportunity allowed us to take some distance from the dominant neoliberal discourse within the BS and to draw closer to our students, who were becoming more sensitive to CSR issues, probably because of societal and generational changes.

At this time, we nevertheless adopted a more combative form of resistance when we perceived that CSR might be jeopardized both in our research activity and in the BS's operations and governance. We faced some critical situations where we had to confront decision-makers such as the Academic Dean (AD) or the GD. For example, one of us fought for the school's recognition of some of the academic journals in which we are able to publish our type of CSR research. We also had to struggle against a new internal policy that endangered our collective dynamic of publication because the research premium was now limited to two internal co-authors to encourage external collaboration. After the announcement of this new rule, we had a few bilateral exchanges that confirmed that the rule made no sense to us and that it was not fair to individually publish with only some members of our group. We finally all converged on the idea that we would continue to work together on different projects and decided to change the order of authors on our publications in turn to allow equity in the distribution of bonuses and recognition. We maintained this position up to now...

Moreover, one of us, in the name of the collective, suggested contacting the AD to avoid this rule, highlighting the nesting of our contributions that would not permit us to follow the rule. Our demand was accepted, but only for works in progress. In our view, this episode clearly put us in uncomfortable positions regarding our academic identity construct with the BS, but we overcame these tensions thanks to our solidarity, and we reinforced our group dynamics by finding a collective position.

However, at the end of this period, we did feel not equally recognized by our managers, particularly due to different individual achievements of academic objectives in research or pedagogy, which tended to generate intrapersonal tensions. Our identity work construct, which was balanced between resistance and compliance, also led us to professional fatigue, sometimes associated with overinvestment in BS activities: *"I am involved in too many projects and activities within the school: (...), AOL committee, accreditations, meetings and juries of all kinds..."* (A4). Furthermore, the move of the faculty department to new premises marked the end of our common preserved space, and we feared that the unity of the group could be jeopardized: *"The Aquarium is dissolved (...) We no longer have a space to find each other and we no longer have this bubble that kept us together (...) The group is a little bit loose, and I feel less supported"* (A3).

Despite these difficulties, we managed to reinforce our group identity in that phase by disseminating our own CSR discourse toward internal BS stakeholders, students, academic peers and managers, in a more idealistic and combative manner.

Phase 3: Development Phase (2017-)

In the beginning of 2017, our group faced renewed pressures from the BS and its top managers with the implementation of a new faculty handbook. Pressure for academic excellence with regard to the number of publications intensified, as did other expectations about teaching and overall investment in the school. Most of our group members felt pulled in different directions by the numerous and often conflicting demands. We experienced strong tensions between recognition and efficiency: *"Some members of the academic direction question our legitimacy ... and urge me (in particular during the performance appraisal review) not to lock myself in this collective and 'to open up better prospects through collaborations' (...) I feel the contradictions between doing serious work, in accordance with my values, and the institutional requirements of publications and reputation"* (A1). This context invited a deep self-questioning about what kind of projects we wanted to develop in the future, with whom and how. We thus got involved in different spheres to diversify our free-spirit spaces. Some of us endorsed more responsibilities together to display the positioning of the group and to undertake more targeted actions. We also mobilized external spaces such as research groups or associative working groups to develop new collaborations. In that

dynamic, we developed more individual projects; for example, one of us engaged in the achievement of a postdoctoral degree, allowing us to supervise PhD students, while another decided to leave the BS to join another school. It seems that at this time, each of us made the bet that our individual initiatives would not endanger our collective; we remain close and still develop common research and teaching projects.

In parallel, we created an important object of resistance that enabled us to both comply with the BS requirements and gain a new free-spirit space: the Values & Diversity Committee. In response to a top management demand for every faculty member to be more involved in the BS activities, we collectively decided to propose the creation of a new committee to coordinate and structure our various individual and collective initiatives around diversity and, more broadly, CSR issues. Thanks to this, we began to work more closely with the CSR department, particularly the HR&CSR Director, combining our mutual interests and developing new projects with different partners (e.g., AFMD/French Association of Diversity Managers Face Hérault[1], the University), such as surveys, teachings, conferences, and events. Our group became stronger, but we all remained aware that our institutional positioning on values was risky and required us to be cautious regarding the different demands from our managers and not to be instrumentalized to represent the BS "moral guarantor": *"I deplore the confusion that many colleagues make between our values committee and an ethics committee, which would aim to ensure that ethics are respected in all BS activities. We are aware that our positioning on values is risky and remains cautious. We don't want to be associated with certain directions taken by the school that would not be in line with our own values"* (A2).

The end of this period was marked by the departure of two important figures who had deeply defended CSR values within our BS: the GD and the HR&CSR Director. This event, combined with the development of more individual projects that could weaken the collective, began an uncertain period. We wonder whether the school would maintain its strong engagement in CSR or be more focused on neoliberal approaches. Our actions will thus consist of strengthening our internal lobbying to convince our managers of the importance of pursuing CSR actions and our external lobbying to increase awareness among other BS stakeholders.

Finally, we can observe that from this period to the present, we were able to maintain our CSR initiatives within the BS, and we are still working together. We managed to clearly identify the importance of what each of us can bring to the group; in that way, individual projects can ultimately reinforce our actions and enrich our collective projects: *"I believe that the strength of our collective is that each of us manages to take the leadership one after the other on a project. We always agree on the nature of the projects to be carried out and the direction we want to give them, but our form and level of commitment vary according to our priorities"* (A2).

To conclude, in these three main phases, our group was built and has developed over time by combining actions between compliance and resistance. Our findings demonstrate the existence of a strong collective dynamic that acts as a virtuous circle that both permits resistance to BS stakeholders and supports our CSR academic identity construct.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper sheds light on our collective experience of micro-resistance as academic activists through CSR in a BS and describes the forms of resistance that we undertook, the conditions in which it manifested, and how we managed to sustain our collective in-group dynamics over time. We discuss here with transparency and humility our lessons and impacts throughout our process of resistance. As our results show, we believe that our action has been a vector of incremental change within our business school, even though we recognize the ambivalences and the limits of our actions. Our contributions bear witness to this reality.

First, our study contributes to the literature on collective micro-resistance practices by describing our collective dynamics over time. Our paper provides insights into the reality of a collective resistance movement and the conditions of its existence and sustainability over time (Bristow *et al.*, 2017; Ybema and Horvers, 2017). We confirm that a resistance group can have a life of its own within an organization. Our group, for example, developed specific strategies and constituted "places of organization" for resistance (Soparnot, 2013) to defend

1. Face Hérault is a business association of local organizations implementing actions to make tangible their CSR and diversity approach.

certain interests without displaying political intent. For example, the Aquarium that we described shows that our collective resistance could even be structured within a shared physical space (Donis and Taskin, 2017) to enhance and protect our collective identity. Moreover, we emphasize the importance of mobilizing objects of resistance to make our resistance actions tangible and our collective engagement visible (Batac and Maymo, 2019). These objects were useful to institutionalize our resistance within our school and to give to the outside world a collective meaning for and evidence of the existence of our actions. These inclusive objects were related to common spaces (e.g., the Aquarium), to common development through the emergence of collective projects (e.g., research, teaching) and to power when we created groups to gain power and resources for our actions (e.g., research groups, creation of committees). This helped us to sustain sisterhood and learning (Deschner *et al.*, 2020).

Our experience also supports some of the results of Courpasson (2017) on how to structure a group of resisters and the results of Gagnon and Collinson (2017) on the factors that help to create the dynamics of collective resistance, such as nonhierarchical practices or recognition of the uniqueness of each member. We confirm the importance of these factors and note that they can be enriched by other strategies to deal with collective tensions. For example, we show the importance of letting each group member keep her own free space for resistance or action. Within this noncollective space, the members are free to express different values, projects or personal expectations that are not shared by the whole group. Our findings shed light on the crucial importance of collective reflexivity (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015) to deal with tensions. These tensions are often caused by paradoxical injunctions within our school and liberal pressures (e.g., objectives of performance, individualization of work) (Soparnot, 2013) were often translated at the intrapersonal level instead of being expressed at the interpersonal level. While this issue is complicated to address at an individual level causing stress, anger and terrorization (Ratle *et al.*, 2020), it often allowed us to stay united while adjusting our individual roles and expectations (Jain *et al.*, 2009). In our experience, accepting and living with tensions seems synonymous with our capacity for resilience as a group—that is, our capacity to absorb external changes by relying on what unites us. We show that effective collaboration emerges in a two-step process where we first produce discursive resources through conversation that creates a collective identity and that then allows us to effectively collaborate (Beech *et al.*, 2012; Hardy *et al.*, 2005).

Our collective strategies of resistance enabled us to protect ourselves from managerial and liberal pressures from our school and to guarantee an experience based on pleasure, scientific sharing and conviviality. In a way, the group allowed us to give meaning to our work and to make it more bearable within our school. It allowed us to dis-identify with cultural prescriptions while often performing them (Fleming and Spicer, 2003).

Consequently, our findings also contribute to the literature on resistance within business schools while discussing the role of CSR in the French context as an object of resistance that can enable academic activists to combine conformity and resistance behaviors while reshaping meaning and the power relations at stake. We show how early-career academics try to produce change within their BS by conducting identity work between resistance and compliance (Bristow *et al.*, 2017). Our experience bears witness to a learning process and a progressive awareness of our resistance (Pierson, 2011). Indeed, we show how the expression of our personal agencies has, over time, encountered organizational constraints that have been reinforced and how this meeting between constraints and our values has gradually shaped our behavior at a microlevel as well as our consciousness of our opposition (Cohen and Taylor, 2003; Summers-Effler, 2002). We note that the tensions were related to our opposition to quantitative performance requirements (Malsch and Tessier, 2015) that led us to a position where we were more vulnerable to our top management and forced us increase our efficiency inside and outside the school (Butler *et al.*, 2017). This has led us to a frantic pace of work to put us in capacity to deal with the paradoxical injunctions that we faced with the associated risks of exhaustion, loss of motivation and self-perception of hypocrisy (Bristow *et al.*, 2019).

We also show how conflicts were likely to occur due to our defense of the primacy of social and environmental issues within education from colleagues or partners who did not share the same vision. In our case, we show that the struggle against mainstream education is not only aimed at changing the policy of our school but also consists of changing the representations of all stakeholders. For example, at the start of our careers, we had to convince students of the interest of our subjects more than our management. Even today, our colleagues

and external partners (companies, associations) remain those whose representations remain the most anchored in a neo-liberal perspective. We thus describe how a protean resistance strategy unfolded in the midst of various power interests and expectations and how it aimed to change the representations of all members of a mainstream neoliberal education management system (Laszlo *et al.*, 2017). BSs are systems or communities embedded in the BS market and society, and resistance efforts should thus target the key stakeholders that build them (Gardiner and Lacy, 2005) amidst political and managerial logics (Gaidos *et al.*, 2017).

In this regard, CSR appeared as a boundary object at the very heart of various stakeholder interests and was useful to drive change (Benn and Martin, 2010). Although contested in its neo-liberal definition, this object can also represent—in our experience—an opportunity to re-politicize social and environmental issues in a BS context, particularly by deconstructing its utilitarian approach. If this has allowed us to open up discretion for our resistance actions and to produce incremental change, we modestly recognize the performative limits of this object in leading more significant change and the need to go beyond it to alternative discourses (Contu, 2020).

In conclusion, our study provides a rich description of what can be done by a group of academics searching for emancipation from neoliberal pressures in a French BS context. We highlight the importance of the identity work that we undertook between compliance and resistance, particularly at the beginning of our careers (Bristow *et al.*, 2017). We show the difficulty of intervening in changing the management education sector without targeting the wide range of stakeholders that shape the reality of BSs. We emphasize the importance of mobilizing common objects of resistance to make our resistance actions tangible and our collective engagement visible.

To date, our actions, as those of our colleagues, have made possible to include in our school's mission an organizational commitment to societal and environmental transition and to inclusion. Although this represents progress, we nonetheless consider this stage to be fragile and this will have to be very largely consolidated by collective actions of resistance on a larger scale, in particular to guarantee the continuity of this mission but also to avoid its recuperation and denaturation by the neoliberal agenda (Bristow *et al.*, 2019; Ratle *et al.*, 2020). By clarifying our vision of CSR, its role in management education and our resistance practices, we acknowledge the importance to defend a broader political project anchored in a collective ethics of care and empathy for the living while encouraging slow scholarship and collective action to counterbalance individualism, managerialism and arrogance in academia and within the neoliberal BS environment (Deschner *et al.*, 2020; Mountz *et al.*, 2015). Our experience—whatever the encountered difficulties—has fortified our resolve to continue this work building new coalitions, creating more equitable and less exploitative organizational and management alternatives with others (Contu, 2018).

We hope that future studies will address the same topic and shed light on their unique experiences in different contexts. It might also be fruitful to adopt a longitudinal approach.

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