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

Ordinary Resistance to Masculine Domination in a Civil Disobedience Movement

Manuel Cervera-Marzal and Bruno Frère

EXTRALEGALISATION AND TERRITORIALISATION OF SOCIAL CONTESTATION IN FRANCE

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

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

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18 modes of contemporary contestation. You can, of course, find the
19 underlying causes of this at the end of the 1950s, in particular in the first
20 political actions of Lanza del Vasto's Communauté de l'Arche in 1956,¹
21 the creation of Action Civique Non-Violente² in 1957, the "manifesto of
22 the 121" against the Algerian war in 1960, the Fight for the Larzac from
23 1971 and the birth of the Movement for a Non-violent Alternative in
24 1974. But at that point the movement was still comparatively insignificant
25 and was eclipsed by other grammars of contestation—socialist ones in par-
26 ticular. After the "golden age"³ of the 1970s, the withdrawal phase of the
27 "nightmarish" 1980s affected the non-violent movements of the time to
28 the same degree as it did other struggles.

29 It was only through the revival of social movements at the end of the
30 1990s that, parallel to the decline of traditional modes of action (a fall in
31 the rate of unionisation and the number of strike days, a rise in abstention,
32 a loss of belief in the efficacy of protests), civil disobedience really began
33 to flourish. The term spread along with the phenomenon itself. This mode
34 of action was increasingly valued, giving rise to the emergence of several
35 collectives (Act Up in 1989, the squats of the Droit au Logement from
36 1993 onwards, the Faucheurs Volontaires d'OGM in 2003, Jeudi Noir in
37 2006, etc.) which orchestrated its first moments of glory (a giant condom
38 on the Concorde obelisk during World AIDS Day in 1993, the disman-
39 tling of the Millau McDonalds in August 1999).

40 During the same period the name "civil disobedience" saw growing suc-
41 cess: it began to be used as a label for practices that had existed for a long
42 time but which, until now, were not recognised as such. The spread of the
43 label "disobedience" was accompanied by the invention of multiple vari-
44 ants: "civil disobedience", "ethical disobedience", "civic disobedience",
45 "pedagogical disobedience", "institutional disobedience", "professional
46 disobedience", "individual disobedience". This shared vocabulary of "dis-
47 obedience" helped bring together practices that had previously been igno-
48 rant of themselves—as forms of disobedience that did not speak their own
49 name—and ignorant of each other—because they were unable to relate to
50 the same symbolic identity. The signifier "disobedience" and the semantic
51 field that accompanied it conferred a shared identity on disparate experi-
52 ences: "we are all disobedients". This *self-reference* prompted previously
53 scattered practices, experiences and organisations to group together in a
54 single entity, for example the three "Disobedience Forums" organised in
55 the town of Grigny beginning in 2011, which brought together dozens of
56 actors that had come to understand themselves using this label.

Examples of civil disobedience show that a growing number of activists no longer hesitate to cross the boundaries set down by the law. Their civil disobedience also largely goes hand in hand with the territorialisation of political causes: organisations as diverse as Greenpeace, the Confédération Paysanne, the Faucheurs d’OGM, the Déboulonneurs and Résistance à l’Agression Publicitaire all defend, in their own way, another way of living on the land—one that is more respectful of the environment, of biodiversity and of environmentally friendly agriculture. In the same way, do the members of the Réseau Education Sans Frontières (Education Without Borders Network) not agitate to put an end to an identity-based and nationalistic conception of the French territory? Do Jeudi Noir and Droit au Logement not seek to remove urban space from property speculation in order to place it at the service of those with poor housing and the homeless?

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

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

PRESENTATION OF THE FIELD

97 Is a collective that intends to fight for the emancipation of women really
98 emancipatory for those for whom it struggles? Long victim of a certain
99 disinterest, the question of the relations of domination in activist organisa-
100 tions has been the object of growing interest for at least a decade (Fillieule
101 and Roux 2009; Dunezat and Galerand 2013; Jacquemart 2013b). This
102 questioning has emerged out of the encounter between, on the one hand,
103 the sociology of social movements and, on the other, the sociology of
104 social relations between the sexes (Kergoat 2012; Bargel and Dunezat
105 2009, p. 249) and studies on gender (Fillieule et al. 2007; Bereni and
106 Revillard 2012).⁴

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

128 The chapter is based on an ethnographic study of a collective of activists
129 that supports civil disobedience, Les Refuseurs. Founded in the mid-
130 2000s, this organisation brings together 50 regular activists—of which a
131 “hard core” of 20 members put in more than ten hours a week—and 7
132 half-time employees. Each year this collective organises around 40 civil
133 disobedience actions, which are defined as consisting in collective, public,

extralegal and non-violent activity. Strongly inclined to mediatise their actions, the collective is the object of frequent reports in the mainstream broadcast media and the national press. It is an alter-globalist organisation that places the struggle against sexism at the centre of its concerns. Belonging to this collective in “the space of the women’s cause” (Bereni 2007, p. 23) translates into regular actions against “publisexism”, the editing of a brochure dedicated to the history of feminist struggles, participation in protests to defend the right to abortion, the creation and distribution of feminist stickers and collaboration with other organisations for the defence of women’s rights such as La Barbe, Femen and Osez le Féminisme. Regularly staging theatrical actions with Sauvons les Riches, the Déboulonneurs and the Confédération Paysanne, the Refuseurs collective subscribes to what Irène Pereira (2010) calls the “Nietzschean Grammar” of the radical left.⁶

The members of the hard core are mostly students or young graduates aged 20–32. The students all work (generally half-time) in parallel to their studies. The active young people are in an economically precarious situation (whether unemployed, temping, on short-term contracts, or doing internships) and only have a small amount of money in a bank account by way of economic capital. On the other hand, they almost all have a high level of objectified cultural capital via a university degree (either already obtained or in the course of being obtained) in social sciences—the only exceptions being an engineer and an unemployed person who stopped studying after the baccalauréat. A third of them have signed up to, or tried to sign up to, a higher education course in political studies. Generally part of a heterosexual couple without children, they rent studios in the Paris suburbs. Their parents are engaged in neither politics nor trade unions but vote for the left and work in public education, healthcare or the cultural sector. This “core” (a term used by the informants themselves) of 20 activists is made up of an equal number of men and women. All are perceived and perceive themselves as white so that race relations make themselves feel less within the collective than at its external border (Roediger 2007). For three-quarters of the hard core’s members, engagement in the Refuseurs is their first involvement in an activist organisation. All have already participated in protests and signed petitions. But during interviews, they quickly clarify that these modes of action seem “insufficient” to them, which justifies turning towards civil disobedience, judged more “effective”.

172 Our fieldwork was carried out openly and for explicitly academic rea-
 173 sons. When one of us got in touch (via email) with the collective and in a
 174 first face-to-face meeting (in a café) with its founder leader and two of his
 175 colleagues, he presented himself as a “doctoral candidate in sociology”
 176 keen to observe the concrete practice of civil disobedience. The request
 177 (“to observe the operation of your collective while participating fully in
 178 your activities”) was immediately accepted, and it was agreed that we
 179 would stay for as long as necessary. During the first three months, we
 180 focused on relations between the Refuseurs and their adversaries (political
 181 and economic leaders, law enforcement). Gradually our focus shifted
 182 towards the social relations *internal* to the collective, that is, the relations
 183 *between* activists.

184 The 18-month participant observation (from October 2012 to March
 185 2014) finished with a series of individual semi-structured interviews with
 186 ten members of the hard core.⁷ Lasting an average of two hours, they were
 187 conducted during the final four months of the study, mostly at the inter-
 188 viewees’ homes. These interviews were an opportunity to discuss the mem-
 189 bers’ ideas and practices in a more focused way. We benefited in particular
 190 from comparing the field observations with the perception the activists had
 191 of their organisation.⁸ These interviews also allowed us to build up a com-
 192 plete picture of the activists’ sociodemographic characteristics.

193 The division between women and men plays a central role in the organ-
 194 isation’s current incarnation. But the ethnographic data show that the
 195 groups of men and women are not homogeneous. Each exercises (or is
 196 subjected to) male domination in their own way. Studying the different
 197 forms of domination separately leads to a reification of borders that are in
 198 fact porous, and to erase the points of intersection between the patriarchal
 199 system and other phenomena such as racism (Crenshaw 1991; Delphy
 200 2008), capitalist exploitation (Kergoat 1978) and lesbophobia (Wittig
 201 2001). Careful to reconstruct reality in all its complexity (see e.g. Chauvin
 202 2011), this chapter attempts to integrate the logics of sex with those of
 203 class, race, sexuality and age.

[AU2]

204 “ANGELS HAVE A SEX”: THE SEXUAL DIVISION 205 OF ACTIVIST WORK

206 Officially, the division of work among the Refuseurs is egalitarian and dem-
 207 ocratic. When the activists were asked “how are tasks distributed in the
 208 group?”, they responded almost unanimously: “according to each person’s

tastes, desires and competencies”. We insisted on knowing whether “certain tasks are reserved for women or are more often done by them?” Eight of the ten interviewees responded that they were not.⁹ Four of the five women interviewed added that their organisation defended feminist values; something the men did not mention.

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

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

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

248 might not be less utterable in organisations that represent feminist prin-
249 ciples than in other organisations. What is more, this lack of propensity to
250 approach the problem allows the women to preserve the sense of their
251 commitment and the unity of the collective.

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

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

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

280 One case was regularly an exception: Ryan, aged 27, is systematically
281 assigned to tasks involving implementation. Even when surrounded only
282 by women, he never takes a decision or gives an order. On the contrary, he
283 dedicated himself to unappealing tasks, such as tidying up equipment, and
284 we often observed him implementing orders passed down by his female
285 colleagues. Ryan is the only member of the hard core who has grown up
286 in a rural setting and who does not have a university degree. His brother

is unemployed and his parents retired. His subaltern position in the Refuseurs attests to sex-based domination being interwoven with social relations of class. This co-construction clarifies the relationship between Ryan and his female colleagues, to whom he is often subordinated, while at the same time the leader consults him before taking certain important economic decisions.

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

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

The political strategy of the Refuseurs rests in large part on their media visibility. To make up for the weakness of the activist force, they stage theatrical actions capable of catching the camera’s eye and thus that of viewers too. Aware that certain images now spread more quickly over the internet than through television channels, the Refuseurs systematically distribute their actions online, in the hope of “creating buzz”. Thus each action is filmed by at least two cameras: that of a journalist and that of a “video-activist” (Cardon and Granjon 2010, pp. 93–109). The video-activist is a member of the Refuseurs. They always dedicate a few minutes to questioning another activist about the motives for and demands of the action,

326 who thus takes up the role of spokesperson. According to our calculations,
 327 the task of the video activist is fulfilled in 84% of cases by a woman, while
 328 the spokespeople are men in 81% of cases.¹⁰ In an almost systematic way,
 329 activists placed *in front of* the camera are men and those placed *behind* the
 330 camera are women. This unequal distribution of media visibility confirms
 331 Mary B. Parlee's (1989) observation that activist work is structured so
 332 that the role of *attention getting*, socially reserved for men, gives them
 333 voice, while women's role of *attention giving* orients them towards valu-
 334 ing the tasks carried out by men in different ways, in particular through
 335 attentive listening in meetings.

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

362 Beyond this simple role, it is also women who, on a daily basis, maintain
 363 activist cohesion and conviviality. It is not unusual for some of them to
 364 bring a cake (to "home-make") or drinks, or for them to take charge of

the infirmary. Parties are always initiated and organised by them. On the tragic death, at 30, of one of the hard core's members, it was again two women—even though they had only recently arrived in the organisation—who liaised between the deceased's family and the Refuseurs so that the latter could attend the funeral. The maintenance of emotional ties thus principally falls to women (Robnett 1996).

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

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

It is important to note that while subaltern tasks are almost exclusively assigned to women, not all activists are subjected to them in the same way (Dunezat 2004). The example of Catherine is revealing. Aged 52, she is an illustrator and owner of a five-room apartment in the centre of Paris. When a collective decision displeased her, Catherine did not hold back from making this known. And she regularly boycotts the leader's orders. She is the only female activist to practise such insubordination. Besides, Thierry rarely leaves her to do unappealing tasks, more often reserving

404 these for the novice female activists. And occasionally, Catherine begins
 405 initiatives that bring the rest of the group along with her. This capacity for
 406 bringing others along with her is obviously connected to her profession,
 407 her experience, her age and her family background. Catherine possesses a
 408 vast amount more social, activist and economic capital than her male and
 409 female colleagues, who are on average 26 years old, have recently embarked
 410 on their activist careers and live in rented accommodation. In an informal
 411 discussion during which was made this observation, Catherine responded,
 412 by way of explanation: “aside from my mother, no one has ever given me
 413 orders!” Her biographical characteristics give her leadership abilities and
 414 predispose her to a critical relationship to hierarchy—male hierarchy
 415 included. Thus, the singular position Catherine occupies within the
 416 Refuseurs seemingly invalidates the claim of male domination. In reality,
 417 this “negative” case does not fundamentally throw the patriarchal logic
 418 into doubt. It simply indicates that, to avoid a binary conception of the
 419 social, sociological analysis must connect the factor of sex with those of
 420 social class and age, as theories of intersectionality suggest (Chauvin and
 421 Jaunait 2012). Understood through this lens, Catherine’s case demon-
 422 strates a certain “elasticity of gender norms” (Bargel 2005, p. 42).

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

427 “AH, WOMEN...”: AN ACCOUNT OF ORDINARY SEXISM 428 IN THE ACTIVIST SPACE

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

436 The semi-structured interviews conducted with activists suggest that
 437 persistent chatting up, paternalism and sexual harassment principally come
 438 from the most experienced activists, as if seniority conferred a “property
 439 right” over women. On the other hand, misogynist jokes and comments

seem to come more from the novice activists. At the start of 2014, for example, an activist posted on his Facebook page an image of a worker in blue overalls leaning on an enormous several-thousand-page book. The man is consulting this book, entitled *Manual for understanding the woman*, in an inquisitive way. This sexist caricature reinforces the idea that there exists an “incomprehensible” universally shared female identity. An activist from the Refuseurs sent an acerbic response (as a Facebook comment) to the activist who posted this image: “THE woman ... I’m going to confess something to you, we are many...”. A man—one of the oldest members of the Refuseurs—added the following comment: “Remove this image, it’s ridiculous”. The most politicised activists have generally internalised the taboo on sexist humour.

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

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

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

Beyond interruptions when speaking, women are more often victims of aggressive comments than their male counterparts. Julie, a member of the hard core, told us the following story:

477 During a training course, we debated in groups about whether, in order to
478 protect animal rights, we would be prepared to throw fake blood in the face
479 of a celebrity wearing a fur coat. There were two guys who were kind of
480 clichés of guys, and who said that they wouldn't. The first said that he him-
481 self eats animals. And the second said that the struggle for animal rights is
482 not his priority at all. Except that, obviously, neither of them knew, and I
483 didn't either at that time. So I started to try to explain that culturally chuck-
484 ing fake blood over someone, it's true that for one thing it's a personal
485 attack, which I'd refuse to do, but by contrast you could perhaps try to
486 propose sessions for hair removal from their coat or something else. And
487 suddenly, I hadn't even finished, I hadn't said anything, I hadn't even had
488 the time to say all of that, suddenly you have a guy who jumps in the air
489 shouting [she rises out of her chair to mimic the activist] "yeah no but
490 waaaaiiiiiiiiittttt you have no right not to do it!!!" He really took it person-
491 ally. And since it was a little puny guy, he didn't dare attack the two monsters
492 who had said "I eat animals" and "it's not my priority". So you see it was
493 easier to take it up with a woman. And for a moment I was really taken aback.

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

497 Julie: Last weekend I really felt attacked by the anti-speciesist guy.¹¹

498 Mathieu: Er ... when was that?

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

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

509 This exchange reveals a gap in perception between Julie and Mathieu,
510 linked to their respective sex. Mathieu seems to have forgotten the scene
511 ("Er ... when was that?"). By contrast Julie, who felt the need to share her
512 feelings (it was she who raised the subject), repeated twice that she had
513 been "attacked". She underlined the sexist character of the verbal aggres-
514 sion: two other activists were more firmly opposed than her to the throwing

of fake blood, *but* the “anti-speciesist guy hadn’t yelled at the other two guys”, because they were “guys”, and it was “easier” to take it up with a woman. Rather than agreeing with Julie’s judgement and condemning this sexist behaviour, Mathieu sought to minimise the gravity of the act (“it’s tactlessness” and not an “attack”) and to excuse its perpetrator (“he didn’t want to attack you but just to make you understand the importance of anti-speciesism”). This difference in experience is linked to the position that each occupies in contemporary patriarchal society: women are subjected to, feel and, sometimes, denounce domination exercised by men. By downplaying their participation in this domination, male activists avoid an individual challenge that could potentially destabilise their political engagement (Jacquemart 2013a).

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

The group of men is no more homogeneous than that of women. It is crossed by relations of domination, which are principally founded on differences in media-related capital, activist capital and age. Thus, most prerogatives and privileges are concentrated in the figure of the leader. He is surrounded by a narrow circle of five collaborators, who are themselves superior in relation to the rest of the male militants. From the heterogeneity of the male group (and of masculinities) stems the existence of several ways of dominating. For example, while the leader does not hesitate to give orders to the women, the novice activists have a less directive attitude: they are content to leave the women to take on unappealing jobs in their place.

554 The male group is also crossed by a divide centred on sexuality. The
 555 Refuseurs have developed a discourse firmly committed to the rights of
 556 homosexuals. They collaborate with Act Up Paris and they make and dis-
 557 tribute stickers on which the slogans “Yes to marriage for all” and “A gay
 558 marriage is better than a sad marriage” are written. But in an interview,
 559 one female activist (Camille) told that:

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

AU5

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

581 *What male domination does to activism* has now been analysed and can
 582 be summarised here: it leads to a sexed division of activist labour and feeds
 583 a sexist organisational culture. Given that activism constitutes both a prod-
 584 uct of and a way of (re)producing gender relations (Bargel and Dunezat
 585 2009, p. 252), the question must also be understood the other way
 586 around, in order to analyse *what activism does to male domination*. This is
 587 a question of how the activist space *reconfigures* the relations of male dom-
 588 ination characteristic of contemporary society, because collective action
 589 constitutes a “space-time” in which social relations of sex are constantly
 590 “replayed” (Dunezat 2006). Activist organisations do not just welcome

AU6

people in as they are; they are themselves places of socialisation (Bargel 2008) that fashion their members' *habitus* through the political training they offer them (Ethuïn 2003) or, in a more informal way, through activist sociability (Yon 2005).

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

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

Despite their significant cultural capital (which is usually thought to increase reflexivity), the men in the collective do not seem to perceive the domination exercised over the women. In interviews, despite persistent questions on this subject, none of them recognised the gendered character of the distribution of tasks or the male chauvinist atmosphere that pervaded

629 the organisation. This kind of collective repression allows tensions induced
630 by the discrepancy between a feminist discourse and sexist practices to be
631 shrugged off.

632 Contrary to their male colleagues, the women questioned in interviews
633 or during informal conversations exhibited greater lucidity. The majority
634 of them did not seem to see the gendered character of the distribution of
635 tasks,¹² but taken together they have a clear awareness of the sexist climate
636 that prevails in the Refuseurs. Several also emphasise that *sexism is stronger*
637 *within the organisation than outside it*.

638 During a discussion over email, a member of the hard core said: “I
639 found that it was quite a sexist environment and there were quite a few
640 remarks that were a bit out of order. It never crossed a red line and it
641 wasn’t really malicious but it could sometimes bother you. And these
642 remarks didn’t come from just one person but it was *more widespread*. [...]
643 By ‘quite a sexist environment’ I mean all those dirty jokes, the chatting
644 up that’s a bit too strong or persistent, and of course the little expressions
645 with sexual connotations, with a subtext. This form of sexism is very wide-
646 spread, it’s even *the time where I’ve felt it most in my life*. I find it incredibly
647 paradoxical for an environment that advocates the convergence of strug-
648 gles. [...] When I went to the squat [the group’s premises], I wasn’t too
649 keen to find myself there alone and I arranged not to go there too much...”. AU8

650 Another female activist, in an interview: “Real awareness of sexism was
651 lacking among some of the guys who manage the Refuseurs, of chauvin-
652 ism, of ... I don’t know how to say it. [...] I had the opportunity to talk
653 about it with the other girls and I’m sure that all of us would put it differ-
654 ently, but I’m sure that there’s a real gender problem, which comes from
655 some male activists in particular. Of that I’m convinced. And everyone
656 handles it differently. Some call it ‘harassment’. Others call it ‘flirting’, and
657 they play along, it gives them pleasure, it’s funny, it’s flattering. But all of
658 that depends on ‘to what extent you are still under masculine domination
659 or not’. And all the girls in the Refuseurs that I’ve come across have had
660 problems. [...] So that [harassment] has started to happen quite a lot, it
661 happens more than once a year...”. AU9

662 The first of these two women belonged to four different organisations
663 before rejoining the Refuseurs. But she maintains that she has never
664 known such a high level of sexism. The second woman confirms this
665 report, emphasising that “all” the women in the collective have been sub-
666 jected to “chauvinist” behaviour, even “harassment” by certain “manag-
667 ers”. In the case of the Refuseurs, *what activism does to male domination*

thus resembles an amplifying effect. The serious testimony of these female activists can be placed alongside the sexual division of activist labour described earlier. These two factors suggest that the activist space consolidates male domination. There is no collective discussion space in which these problems can be brought up and, as a consequence, no practices have been considered to try to address them.

Which raises the following question: how do these female activists manage to hold together both their feminist values and their conscience of the sexism that prevails within the organisation? According to our observations, the women do not use the group's feminist discourse to denounce the way in which it really functions on a daily basis. Nonetheless, male domination encounters diverse forms of resistance, which weaken it without attacking it head-on. We will now present the effects produced by the paradox of a group that openly declares itself feminist while consolidating the domination of men over women.

“CIAO GUYS”: THE CRITIQUE THROUGH *EXIT* AND STRATEGIES OF MICRORESISTANCE

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

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

But with me it's a bit unusual, it's important to say that I have a really good mate in the group, Daniel. So whatever happens, even if I'm surrounded by people who I'm not necessarily going to like, well, there you go, I've got a mate who I can cling onto. And often we're thinking the same thing, and if we're not thinking the same thing we end up talking about it. Maybe it's also that that allows me to stay, because as a result I have this thing that gives me my breath back. I'm a bit less targeted than other women. But yes there's regular sexism in the sense that there's a form of constant chatting up.

705 Céline considers herself less a victim of sexism than other activists. She
706 links this relative tranquillity to the fact that she is close to one of the men
707 in the hard core. Daniel belongs to the male group that dominates Céline's
708 female group. But as a friend, Daniel is an *ally* for her—and this despite,
709 or “thanks to”, his belonging to the dominant group. She can, she says,
710 “cling onto” him. Their friendship allows her to “breathe”. This, in any
711 case, is how Céline interprets the fact that she is less a victim of sexist jokes
712 than the other female activists.

713 In this case, the alliance of a woman with a man reduces her vulnerabil-
714 ity. *Individually*, such an alliance can constitute a defensive strategy. But
715 *socially*, this type of alliance remains a prisoner of relations of male domi-
716 nation since it perpetuates the tutelage of women: the woman is only (bet-
717 ter) protected because of her privileged link with one of the members of
718 the dominant group. In the men's eyes, it is forbidden (consciously or
719 not) to do anything to a female activist who already *belongs* symbolically to
720 one of them (because she is his friend or his partner).

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

735 Weary of this, Clémence ended up making the joke herself. When the
736 theme of fundraising comes up in discussion, Clémence does not leave the
737 men the time to make this joke. Taking the lead, she herself confirms,
738 swaying her shoulders and chest to mimic an ostensibly alluring attitude:
739 “ok I'll take care of it”. Through preventative self-derision, she thus avoids
740 being the object of male mockery. When the joke comes from a man, it is
741 a way of inferiorising, even of humiliating. The same joke made by the
742 victim can at first glance be interpreted as a supreme form of alienation,
743 attesting to a profound degree of interiorisation of their inferiority. But

this interpretation seems to miss the strategic charge that self-derision carries. In Clémence's case, this strategic self-derision can, on the contrary, be understood as an attempt to reappropriate the stigma ("woman = prostitute"). She repeats a chauvinist joke but, in doing so, she *denies* the men the opportunity to say this joke out loud and, in this way, she begins a process of reappropriating her femininity.

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

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

These microresistances principally exist in a concealed form. The American anthropologist James C. Scott (2009) and the German historian Alf Lüdtke (2016) have shown, in other contexts, that the felicity conditions for this "infrapolitics of the subalterns" and this "reserve" reside in their capacity to remain hidden. The refusal to adopt an explicit critique of male domination constitutes both their strength and their weakness—their strength, because these strategies are difficult to counter since they are developed behind the backs of those who are dominant; their weakness, because by refusing to declare themselves as such, these resistances do not openly challenge what they combat. They proceed via an oblique path that weakens domination yet fails to attack its roots. From a sociological point of view, it is never a question of deploring the absence of

783 public or collective resistance or, to put it like Albert Hirschman, the
 784 absence of *voice*. The actors' strategies are constrained by the repertoire of
 785 action available to them (Tilly 1978). If the female activists do not express
 786 their critique through *voice*, this is simply because they do not have the
 787 opportunity to do so. No time, space or procedure is provided to allow it.
 788 The female critique of male domination thus oscillates between two atti-
 789 tudes: an *apparent* loyalty—since the women resist *behind the back* of the
 790 men—and defection (Hirschmann 1970). [AUI0]

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

799 Among the Refuseurs, the disengagement (Fillieule 2003; Bennai-
 800 Charaibi 2009) of women is always individual, intentional and, almost
 801 always, silent. The female activists from the hard core leave without warn-
 802 ing, without explanation and without a trace. Coming across five of them
 803 again in other activist spaces and conducting a semi-structured interview
 804 with two others some weeks before their respective departures, we were
 805 able to collect some corroborating information. These departures were
 806 both the consequence of male domination—women have no place in the
 807 group and are informally pushed towards the exit—*and* a way of resisting
 808 it—by leaving the organisation, the women demonstrate, albeit silently,
 809 their discontent. [AUI1]
[AUI2]

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

819 In this context, female defection is the outcome of an informal exclu-
 820 sion that, by stifling the voice of women, gradually drives them towards
 821 the exit. This exit is largely forced but it is also, in one sense, a form of

critique. First because departure is experienced as a way of freeing oneself from an iron grip and demonstrating a disagreement with the group's sexist functioning. Then because, objectively, these departures deprive the organisation of precious "human resources" heavily invested in domestic and subaltern tasks that are indispensable to its proper everyday functioning. The group's leader is aware of the difficulties presented by the increase of defections; in an interview, he declared that:

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

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

But contrary to Thierry's expectations, the introduction of salaries did not succeed in reducing the frequency of the departures. The reason is simple: the large majority of defections are of women, which Thierry does not seem to have recognised. By paying mostly men (70% of the employees), Thierry is trying to secure the loyalty of those members of the organisation who were *already* the most loyal and the least disposed to leave. The plan to pay wages missed its target. By reinforcing the assignment of women to the least remunerated tasks, paying wages in no way impeded the rate of female defections.

859 Women leave the organisation all the more easily because the cost of
860 their exit is relatively low (Bennani-Chraïbi and Fillieule 2003). Female AUI3
861 activists are of course attached to the anti-globalist cause defended by their
862 collective. But other than the case of Céline (cf., above, her proximity to
863 Daniel), few emotional constraints weigh on them. Only weakly embed-
864 ded in a network of camaraderie, their departure thus does not risk break-
865 ing apart friendships. In the same way, as most of the female activists are
866 not employees of the organisation, they can leave the very next day, as
867 frequently happens. The men's dependence on the group is stronger. They
868 are materially (the salary that allows them to live), legally (they are engaged
869 by a written or oral contract) and emotionally (through strong personal
870 links with the leader) bound to their organisation.

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

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

892

CONCLUSION

893 Highlighting the gendered character of the activist division of labour makes
894 visible the influence of male domination on the structuring of the internal
895 functioning of the Refuseurs collective. The assignment of women to domes-
896 tic tasks and subaltern positions is coupled with daily symbolic violence.

While the unequal distribution of tasks is largely unperceived by men *and* 897
 women, the latter have a broad awareness of the sexist comments and behav- 898
 iour of which they are victims. The feeling of relegation and the difficulty of 899
 integrating in the group give rise to strategies of microresistance and the 900
 frequent defection of female activists. This critique through *exit* constitutes 901
 a form of individual salvation but impedes the constitution of a true female 902
 collective capable of challenging male power and privileges head-on. 903

These observations invite us to take better account of the way in which 904
 the (re)production of male domination in the activist environment advan- 905
 tages men's careers (Becker 1973). Our investigation suggests that gen- 906
 dered organisational socialisation produces a decisive effect on the 907
 trajectories of the activists. While most of the women leave the Refuseurs 908
 collective only a few months after joining, the men engage long term. In 909
 addition, the men who are most committed obtain a set of rewards (medi- 910
 atisation, financial compensation) and resources (political training by the 911
 leader, participation in decision-making) that their female colleagues can- 912
 not obtain. On this point, a future study that revisits the activist careers of 913
 members of the collective in comparative perspective would allow us to 914
 understand the influence of men's domination on their activist "ascent". 915

NOTES 916

1. Following his encounter with Gandhi in 1937, the philosophy teacher and 917
 non-violent activist Lanza del Vasto founded the first rural Community of 918
 the Ark in Charente in 1948 on the model of the Gandhian *Ashtams*. 919
2. Led by the militant philosopher Joseph Pyronnet, this group of recusants 920
 opposed to the war in Algeria (*réfractaires*) protested several times in front 921
 of the prisons where conscientious objectors were being held, despite 922
 being banned from doing so. Along with pacifist activist Louis Lecoin's 923
 hunger strike, their actions led to the legal recognition of the status of 924
 conscientious objector by the French state in December 1963. See Erica 925
 Fraters, *Réfractaires à la guerre d'Algérie avec l'Action civique non-violente* 926
1959–1963, Paris, Syllepse, 2005. 927
3. Lilian Mathieu, *Les années 70, un âge d'or des luttes?*, Paris, Textuel, 2009. 928
4. Thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments. 929
5. Conversely, conservative organisations sometimes encourage emancipatory 930
 practices and women's reappropriation of political activity (Della Sudda 931
[2010](#); Rétif [2013](#); Jacquemart [2013b](#)). 932
6. In order to protect our informants, we have anonymised the name of the 933
 group and its members, and we have broken the correspondence between 934
 people and their comments, taking care not to let this affect their socio- 935
 logical significance. 936

- 937 7. Five other interviews were carried out with journalists and representatives
 938 of partner organisations.
- 939 8. The interview agenda included the following series of questions: “Can you
 940 describe the internal mode of functioning? How are decisions taken? How
 941 are disagreements managed? Who does what in the group? How are tasks
 942 shared out? Does sex seem to you to play a role in all this?”.
- 943 9. The only two activists who mentioned the sexual division of labour are also
 944 the only two who had previously participated in a feminist collective; this
 945 supports the hypothesis that activist experience is a decisive factor in the
 946 critique of male domination.
- 947 10. We did this calculation based on the last 33 of the 40 actions in which we
 948 participated.
- 949 11. Anti-speciesism is a political movement, started in the 1970s, which is
 950 opposed to humanism and rejects the superiority of the human species over
 951 other animal species.
- 952 12. See Endnote 6.

953

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