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“Lost my Job, Found an Occupation:”

Space, Networks, and Organization in Occupy Wall Street

A Dissertation Presented

by

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to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

Stony Brook University

August 2016

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

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Abstract of the Dissertation

"Lost my Job, Found an Occupation:"

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Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

Stony Brook University

2016

While scholars have separately analyzed the role of both networks and space in social movements, little attention has been drawn to their relationship. This dissertation draws from in-depth qualitative research on the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in New York City in order to provide an insight into this relationship. The findings discussed in the dissertation suggest, in particular, that social movements' internal networks and various uses of space have a mutually constitutive and interactive relationship—that different uses of space create, reflect, and reproduce social movement networks.

The findings of the research are presented in three substantive chapters. The first set of findings introduces the connection between social movement networks and uses of space by highlighting how the Occupy Wall Street movement's sustained occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan carried out four organizational functions: messaging, recruitment, building commitment, and connecting participants to each other. The findings discussed in the following chapter additionally illustrate this connection by showing how the Occupy Wall Street movement's decentralized structure and tactic of occupation served as mutually beneficial elements of a distinctive global repertoire. The final substantive chapter then discusses two factors that contributed to the engagement of OWS participants—a perceived ability to contribute to or shape the direction of a movement, and dense ties among participants—and in particular highlights the role of the occupation in strengthening the movement's internal networks.

Together, these findings illustrate the interactive and mutually constitutive relationship between social movement networks and uses of space. Ultimately, both social movement scholars and practitioners stand to benefit from a more sophisticated understanding of the specific ways in which social movements' internal networks and uses of space affect one another.

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Introduction

In the fall of 2011, the Occupy movement made national headlines first through the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York City's Financial District, and then through the spread of similar occupations in cities and towns throughout the United States and the world. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the Occupy movement helped instigate a change in the dominant political discourse from one obsessed about budgetary deficits, to one more concerned with economic justice. Even before the wave of violent police evictions of occupations throughout the country in November and December, the movement's broad-based critique of society's top one percent and slogan that "We Are The 99 Percent" evoked a powerful image that captured and inspired the imaginations of many.

In New York City, the growth of the movement during its first two months—before the forceful police eviction of Zuccotti Park—exceeded the initial expectations of many, including many of the movement's early organizers. While for instance some observers were initially surprised that the occupiers were not immediately evicted from the park by the police, a series of subsequent incidents brought increasing attention to the movement. Documented instances of repression, such as a video of two young women being pepper sprayed by a police officer during a march on September 24th, were widely circulated. On October 2nd, 700 people were arrested while attempting to cross the Brooklyn Bridge in "one of the largest arrests of nonviolent

protesters in recent history".[1] Three days later, approximately 15,000 people attended a solidarity march involving a number of labor unions. On October 14th, protesters successfully resisted an attempt by New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and the owners of Zuccotti Park to clear the plaza for supposed cleaning. In less than two months, the Zuccotti Park occupation grew from approximately 100 people who spent the night there on September 17th to thousands visiting the plaza each day (see Figure 1). The mainstream media coverage focusing on the movement additionally suggested that Occupy Wall Street, along with the occupations that quickly spread across the country, was becoming a force to be reckoned with.

[Figure 1 about here]

Yet despite this growth, the Occupy movement's influence reached a limit. In the early morning of November 15th, the New York Police Department launched a surprise military-style assault on the occupiers in Zuccotti Park and the supporters who came to defend them. Though participants struggled to defend the occupation, the police ultimately managed to evict the occupiers and remove the vast amount of materials in the park. Even while individuals and groups continued organizing various actions afterward, the eviction dealt a blow to the movement from which it was ultimately unable to recover.

A particularly distinctive feature of the movement was its form of organization. Before the first day of the Zuccotti Park occupation on September 17th, organizers had agreed they would operate using a consensus-based decision making process and "horizontal" (Sitrin 2006) organizational model, in which the movement divided itself into various working groups

[1] "700 Arrested on Brooklyn Bridge as Occupy Wall Street Enters Third Week, Protests Grows [sic] Nationwide." *Democracy Now!,* October 3, 2011.
<http://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/3/700_arrested_on_brooklyn_bridge_as>

focusing on different areas. The movement as a whole thus rejected more hierarchical forms of organizing, and many participants viewed this form of direct democracy, which served as a defining feature of the movement, as a response to the crisis of representative politics they saw in the broader society.

In many ways, the distinct combination of a decentralized organizational model and the tactic of occupying a central public space was echoed in a variety of movements that proceeded and followed the Occupy movement. In February of 2011, Egyptians successfully overthrew the brutal regime of Hosni Mubarak through a massive occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo's city center and other disruptive actions in different areas of the country (Schwartz 2011a, Schwartz 2011b). Then, in May, protesters in Spain, using a more explicitly horizontal organizational model, staged similar mass occupations of public squares in cities across the country, such as in Madrid's Puerta del Sol. Throughout that summer, Greek anti-austerity protests garnered global headlines through tactics that included amassing in Athens' central plaza, Syntagma Square. Following the wave of occupations in the context of the Occupy movement, Russians braved the harsh winter conditions and gathered in Bolotnaya Square in Moscow to protest what they perceived as flawed election results. The subsequent occupations of Gezi Park/Taksim Square in Istanbul and Maidan Square in Kiev, were similarly at the center of their respective movements in Turkey and Ukraine. Despite the various differences between these movements, the tactic of occupying a central public space was prominent in all of them.

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This dissertation discusses evidence drawn from the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York City in order to provide insight into the relationship between networks and space in

social movements. Networks, which I conceptualize here broadly as a set of relationships between various interconnected individuals or groups, are central features of social life. In turn, I use a narrower understanding of space here to simply refer to any physical area or location. Both networks and space are inherent features of social movements, as all social movements are comprised of some form of network and inevitably interact with space in some way. Yet I would like to more particularly suggest that *networks and space have a mutually constitutive and interactive relationship* that inevitably affects social movements, as well as other aspects of social life. In other words, *space creates, reflects, and reproduces networks*.

On the one hand, networks manifest themselves in space: social movement organizations, for instance, carry out direct actions and hold meetings in various spaces. In the case of the Occupy Wall Street movement, the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park was the product of planning by various pre-existing networks. At the same time, space itself can facilitate the formation of new networks, in the same way that a social gathering can turn strangers into friends. The occupation of Zuccotti Park, as I later illustrate, enabled new working groups to form, and for various movement participants to be placed into contact with each other. In short, the evidence discussed here sheds insight into the relationship between networks and space.

While it is possible to speak of space in a general sense, it is also important to acknowledge that different spaces can be used in different ways: indeed, as I illustrate in later chapters, the specific actions of Occupy Wall Street participants in Zuccotti Park mattered greatly. Similarly, it is important to acknowledge that different spaces have distinct characteristics, and are imbued with different forms of political, economic, and symbolic power. Nevertheless, the evidence discussed here suggests that the case of Occupy Wall Street—and in particular, the movement's ongoing occupation of Zuccotti Park—

provides a particularly illustrative example of the reciprocal relationship between networks and space.

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The data presented here are primarily drawn from over 100 hours of ethnographic observations carried out between September 2011 and September 2012. Overall, the ethnographic component, which aims at "thick description" (Geertz 1973), provides depth and insight into the social fabric and milieu in which actors move within their world. First-hand experience provides the researcher with a richness of information inaccessible to scholars forced to rely on second-hand historical accounts or post-facto recollections. Ethnography also allows the researcher to capture changes over time, therefore inviting internal comparisons within a single case (more on this below). Settings included direct actions, assemblies, working group meetings, and other movement-related gatherings. Observations included a combination of large gatherings and smaller working groups so as to attain both breadth and depth, and to trace the relation between the whole and its parts. While some contexts allowed for occasional note-taking, full fieldnotes were written up after every occasion in the field, and were subsequently reread and coded to identify recurring patterns. Access to field sites was generally not an issue, as a large majority of meetings were well publicized and open to the public.[2]

The study was conducted to examine primarily internal features of the movement and, in particular, identify factors that produced coordination within the decentralized structure of the movement. Given the centrality of the tactic of occupation along with participants' general rejection of centralized or formal organization, Occupy Wall Street serves as a unique case in

[2] In contrast to previous movements such as the global justice movement (Graeber 2009), the common sentiment took police surveillance in all contexts for granted, and therefore participants were usually open to the presence of researchers, journalists and other outsiders.

terms of the ways in which coordination was produced among participants. In a similar way, Krinsky and Pickerill (2012:279) suggest that the Occupy movement "enables us to critically reexamine and question what we think we know about the processes of collective action." In reference to data collected from a single case, Minkoff and McCarthy note that "case study research is, in some ways, the most compelling approach to studying strategic decision making and organizational change since it takes us inside the 'black box' of organization." They make an equally compelling case for the extension of this method to both comparative and historical or longitudinal work "in order to capture the implications of transformation for organizational survival and success" (2005:303). While this study focuses on a single case, the movement's diversity of smaller working groups and affinity groups allowed for internal comparisons across different contexts. The longitudinal component of the study also captured changes in the movement's structure,[3] allowing comparisons between different temporal moments.

While the bulk of the evidence for the study was obtained through participant observation, supplemental data was also obtained through interviews and informal discourse analysis of a variety of other materials including official and unofficial documents (online and in print), email listserves of different working groups, tweets, text message alerts, images, videos, and websites. These supplemental sources served to triangulate data obtained through participant observation, as well as providing a more enriched account of the movement.

Interviewees were actively involved participants observed in leadership roles such as meeting facilitator or project "bottom-liner," and selected on the basis that these individuals would have relatively privileged access to information about the movement. The selection of other materials, on the other hand, proceeded in an 'ethnographic' way, as I came across and was

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[3] As others have noted, such a prefigurative organization is best understood as a continual work-in-progress (Graeber 2009, Holloway 2002, Holloway 2010, Juris 2008, Sitrin 2006, Sitrin 2012).

made aware of them. In this sense, a more comprehensive ethnography of such a mediated movement necessitated examination of online materials, as many of these materials provided relevant supplementary information not otherwise as easily accessible via participant observation. All data were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti, a software program that facilitates qualitative data management. These methods together were conducted to provide insight into "how ideas, individuals, events, and organizations are linked to each other in broader processes of collective action, with some continuity over time" (della Porta and Diani 2006:5).

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The occupation of Zuccotti Park demonstrates not only the importance of networks in social movements, but also their reciprocal relationship to space. In particular, the occupation enabled the creation of new network connections between participants. As I show in separate chapters, these network connections served to carry out a number of organizational functions, and contributed to participants' overall level of engagement. More generally, these findings help provide a clearer understanding of how and why the elements of decentralized structure and occupation often coincided as elements of a broader global repertoire. In each chapter of the dissertation, I situate its distinct contribution within a more specific theoretical background.

In Chapter 2, I discuss how the movement's sustained occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan carried out four critical organizational functions: messaging, recruitment, building commitment, and connecting participants to each other. These findings help move past a general overemphasis in the scholarship on social movements on organizational structure, and instead point toward the utility of a perspective that accounts for the role of non-organizational factors in the accomplishment of fundamental movement tasks.

In Chapter 3, I present evidence suggesting that the tactic of occupation and decentralized structure served as mutually beneficial elements of a distinctive global repertoire. In doing so, the chapter provides an insight into the relationship between social movements' organizational structure and use of space, drawing particular attention to the way in which space can enable the formation of network ties among participants. The discussion builds upon the findings discussed in Chapter 2 by showing more specifically how the occupation of Zuccotti Park helped create and strengthen network connections between Occupy Wall Street participants.

Chapter 4 investigates why, despite evidence of an inclusive, decentralized structure that contributed to participants' engagement, Occupy Wall Street was unable to sustain a high level of engagement among its participants. In doing so, it identifies two factors that contribute to social movement participants' commitment: 1) a perceived ability to contribute to or shape the direction of a movement, and 2) dense ties among participants. These findings provide insight into the dynamics that sustain engagement, and highlight the particular importance of networks in this process.

Together, the findings discussed in each of these chapters indicate the interactive relationship between social movement networks and space. On the one hand, pre-existing networks can provide a basis for certain collective uses of space. On the other hand, certain uses of space itself—in this case, the ongoing occupation of Zuccotti Park—can themselves contribute to the creation and strengthening of a movement's internal networks. Ultimately, these findings suggest that rather than conceptualizing networks and space as entirely separate and independent elements, social movement scholars and practitioners alike stand to benefit from understanding their interaction.

Chapter 2
Occupying Organization: Space as Organizational Resource

CHAPTER SUMMARY:

Scholars have shown that organizations active in social movements are important because they carry out a number of critical tasks such as recruitment, coordination, and sustained contention. However, these accounts do not explain how a number of recent movements using the tactic of occupation and featuring a seemingly minimal formal organizational structure nevertheless engaged in a number of critical organizational tasks. This chapter discusses findings from the Occupy Wall Street movement that the movement's sustained occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan carried out four critical functions: messaging, recruitment, building commitment, and connecting participants to each other. These findings move past a general overemphasis in the scholarship on social movements on organizational structure, and instead point towards the utility of a perspective that accounts for the role of non-organizational factors in the accomplishment of fundamental movement tasks.

Introduction

Since at least the development of resource mobilization and political process theories, social movement scholars have commonly identified the importance of formal organization for allowing movement participants to coordinate with each other and engage in sustained contention over time (for example, Gamson 1975, McAdam 1982, Staggenborg 1989, Tarrow 1998). While these accounts have provided insight into the utility of collective organization, they fail to explain the relative success of movements with apparently little or no formal

organizational structure. In implying the necessity of organizational structure, they have obscured other factors that support the fundamental tasks of movements. Acknowledging the role of these factors is especially important since they may also operate within the context of formal organization to augment the resources at a movement's disposal.

The following chapter presents evidence drawn from the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in order to call attention to some of these factors. In the case of Occupy Wall Street, the movement's two-month long occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan not only provided a means for participants to directly connect with each other, but also, more generally, a set of spatially-centralized resources that were otherwise not available. The encampment assumed particular importance as a result of the way the movement was organized, as it helped sustain a high density of ties between participants in what was otherwise a largely decentralized and informally organized movement. In this way, the mid-November 2011 police eviction of the occupation did much more than simply repress the movement; it served as a blow to the movement's very organizational capacity.

The chapter begins with a brief summary of scholarship that has emphasized the centrality of organizations in social movements, drawing particular attention to its emphasis on some of the fundamental tasks of social movements. It then provides a background description of the beginnings of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The remainder of the chapter provides evidence of how the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park served as a form of organization, focusing in particular on its accomplishment of four critical tasks: providing a centralized source of messaging, recruiting outsiders into the movement, increasing participants' commitment, and connecting different sectors of the movement to each other. The final section also illustrates the extent to which the encampment served as a form of organization with a comparison to what

happened after protesters were evicted from Zuccotti Park, where the movement lost its primary organizing mechanism and fell back upon personal ties in the form of affinity groups and disconnected project groups. The chapter concludes with a discussion highlighting the utility of increased attention to factors outside of organizational structure that can bolster a movement's organizational capacities.

Social Movement Organizations and Beyond

Scholarly attention to the role of organizations in social movements has a long history. Michels' (1915) classic study on oligarchy placed an early analytical emphasis on organization and argued it was necessary for effective collective action. Michels' argument was later somewhat modified and challenged (Gerlach and Hine 1970, Piven and Cloward 1977, Schwartz, Rosenthal and Schwartz 1981, Tarrow 1998, Zald and Ash 1966), but the development of resource mobilization theory placed renewed attention on the role of organization in social movement mobilization (for example, McCarthy and Zald 1977). Emerging in part as a reaction to the so called "classical" and collective behavior approaches, the resource mobilization perspective sought to present social movement actors as rational (Schwartz 1976) and emphasized that "social movements rely upon and are composed of formal organizations" (Caniglia and Carmin 2005:202). While this body of research highlighted the contributions of organizational structure in collective action, it led to an "overly-organized" view of movements which overlooked the role of other factors leading to collective action among movement participants (Snow and Moss 2014).

Research on social movement organizations (SMOs) has nevertheless provided useful insights into some of "the fundamental organizing tasks of a movement" (Piven 2013:192). In describing the different ways the Zuccotti Park occupation served as a form of organization, the framework presented here echoes McCarthy and Zald (1977:1217) when they state that

> social movement organizations have a number of strategic tasks. These include mobilizing supporters, neutralizing and/or transforming mass and elite publics into sympathizers, achieving change in targets.

Similarly, della Porta and Diani (2006:137) note that organizations active in social movements "fulfill – if to varying degrees and in varying combinations – a number of functions" such as inducing participants to offer their services, recruiting members, and neutralizing opponents. Scholarly work on SMOs has identified and shed light on a number of these tasks. For instance, research assessing the advantages and disadvantages of different SMO structures has found that bureaucratic organizations are generally more successful at gaining access to established political channels (Ferree and Hess 1985), and are better suited to providing "unity of command" and "combat readiness" (Gamson 1975:91, 108). In turn, scholars have found that more informally organized SMOs are generally better at adapting to emerging situations (Gerlach and Hine 1970, Piven and Cloward 1977), and have apparently fewer barriers preventing them from engaging in disruptive action (Tarrow 1998). Together, these studies have shed light on some of the critical tasks for effective collective action, though they have largely credited organizational structure for the accomplishment of these tasks. In contrast, the following account illustrates how a collective action such as the occupation of space—rather than a movement's organizational structure *per se*—can itself carry out some of these tasks.

Despite an earlier overemphasis on formal organization, research on social movements has gradually developed a broader understanding of organization, beyond the mere presence of a

structure with formal collective guidelines and rules. The concept of “indigenous organization” or “mobilizing structures” (McAdam 1982, Morris 1984), for instance, shifts the focus away from organization as organizational structure and instead highlights the role of social ties. This concept not only captures social groupings such as political or social organizations, but also “churches, friendship networks, schools, sports clubs, workplaces, neighborhoods, and so on… Self-organization or self-recruitment to movements, in other words, is sometimes as important as pre-existing organization” (Goodwin and Jasper 2009:190). Tarrow (1998:123-4) also suggests a broader understanding of organization in his analysis of “three different aspects of movement organization:” “*formal hierarchical organization*,” “*the organization of collective action at the point of contact with opponents*,” and “the *connective structures* that link leaders and followers, center and periphery, and different parts of a movement sector [italics original].” Indeed, many organizational analyses now include “networked” structures (e.g. della Porta 2009, Juris 2008). The present chapter incorporates the broader understanding of organization presented in these accounts and conceptualizes organization, much like Taylor and Van Every (2000), as a set of self-reproducing networks of interaction that enable a basic level of coordination among their members.

This shift towards a broader understanding of organization has coincided with an increasingly vast body of scholarly work analyzing the central role of networks in social movements (e.g. Castells 2012, della Porta and Diani 2006, Diani and Bison 2004, Gerlach and Hine 1970, Krinsky and Crossley 2013, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). For instance, McAdam’s (1990) study of Freedom Summer participants during the Civil Rights Movement found that individuals’ close connections to other involved participants, more than their ideological zeal, explained their decision to participate. In turn, the concept of indigenous

organization mentioned above has helped explain social movement emergence and activity (McAdam 1982, Morris 1984). Social movements themselves have even been conceptualized as "systems of relations" (Diani 2011:1), and Jeffrey Juris (Juris 2008, 2012) has described decentralized movements as operating according to a "logic of networks." Even while scholars have discussed the importance of networks in social movements, however, they have largely overlooked the possibility that network connections can contribute to the task of organizing itself.

The present analysis acknowledges this possibility. In the case of Occupy Wall Street, the ongoing occupation of Zuccotti Park facilitated the formation of a series of network connections which helped carry out the organizational tasks of messaging, recruitment, increasing commitment, and connecting participants to each other. In the case of messaging, participants relaying messages sought to connect with the targets of their messages. For recruitment, movement insiders connected with prospective participants within the park. In turn, participants' connections with one another strengthened their willingness to contribute. Moreover, these types of connections formed in the absence of what might have otherwise been a more formal organizational effort to connect participants. Ultimately, the formation of these various network connections was made possible by the ongoing concentration of participants in Zuccotti Park. These findings suggest, first, that the ongoing concentration of movement participants can provide a means for the formation and strengthening of a movement's internal networks; and second, that network connections can themselves function to carry out organizational tasks.

While the analysis presented here raises interesting questions regarding the role of space in social movements, it is worth clarifying that its more specific focus is on the ongoing concentration of movement participants. As a result, I simply refer to space here as any physical

area or location in which movement activity can take place. Nevertheless, future scholarship would undoubtedly benefit from more extensive research on other uses of space and conditions which facilitate the formation of network connections between movement participants.

Beginnings

In July of 2011, Adbusters Magazine, a Canadian anti-consumerist magazine, issued a call to “Occupy Wall Street,” drawing parallels to the Egyptian revolution earlier that year and asking readers, “Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?” Beyond this preliminary action, the magazine played no other organizing role. The following month, on August 2nd, a number of groups in New York came together to hold what was advertised as a “General Assembly” to begin a series of planning meetings for the event. As OWS activists later described it, the event had been pre-planned and “taken over” largely by a veteran protest group called the Worker’s World Party, which had proceeded to set up their banners, megaphones, and make speeches. After some heated exchanges, a group of antiauthoritarian activists broke off from the event and formed a consensus-based assembly about fifty feet away, which eventually came to attract a majority of those present. Participants then organized themselves into working groups (such as outreach, food, and logistics) which separated into smaller meetings and later reported back on their decisions (Gould-Wartofsky 2015). This early turning point set into motion the movement’s organizational form and nonhierarchical aspirations, as participants drew inspiration from a long and evolving tradition and organizational repertoire (Clemens 1993, Tilly 1986, Tilly 1995) which includes the Zapatista movement, the antinuclear movement, the women’s movement, and participatory democratic organizations such as SNCC and SDS (Epstein 1991, Graeber 2011a, Graeber 2011b, Polletta 2002, Sitrin 2006).

On September 17th, about a thousand people gathered in Lower Manhattan and held a march in New York's Financial District. Protesters then congregated and settled in a privately owned public space two blocks away from Wall Street, a mostly concrete plaza named Zuccotti Park. That night, approximately one hundred people slept in the plaza, agreeing to remain indefinitely. Over the course of the next two months, the occupation of Zuccotti Park developed widespread support and media attention, leading to hundreds of similar occupations of public spaces and direct actions throughout the world. Adopting the slogan "We Are the 99 Percent," adherents shared a number of critiques related to "Wall Street"—the primary center and symbol of the US finance industry—in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis, including widening income inequality, the dominance of corporate and financial interests in politics, and the bailout of large banks by the government without a proportionate bailout for those most affected by the crisis. Even so, participants refused to issue formal collective demands, and there was little agreement regarding the ultimate goals of the movement while some saw the occupation as an opportunity to prefigure a new society, others viewed it mainly as a means to initiate a broader protest movement. Ultimately, then, the most widely shared goal among participants was simply sustaining the occupation of Zuccotti Park itself.

As the movement grew, participants sought to maintain its nonhierarchical aspirations, continuing to operate with a decentralized structure consisting mainly of smaller working groups and practicing consensus-based decision making. At the broadest formal organizational level, participants held mass assemblies, intended to function as a tool for collective decision making. In theory, the assemblies served as the spaces where participants could discuss, as some put it, "decisions that concern the entire movement."

In practice, however, the assemblies over time became characterized by frequent bitter disputes and disruptive behavior, decisions made "autonomously" outside of them outnumbered and overshadowed decisions made within them, and many centrally involved participants eventually stopped going to them (Smucker 2013). As a result, the assemblies' function as collective organizing mechanisms was largely limited. Overall, then, the movement as a whole had very little formal organizational structure beyond its division into a potentially infinite number of working groups. In spite of this, however, Occupy Wall Street was able to grow into a large-scale movement able to engage in the organizational tasks of messaging, recruitment, increasing participants' commitment, and connecting participants to each other. In the following sections, I describe how the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park respectively enabled each of these functions.

A Statement in Itself

All movements face the challenge of crafting and sustaining a positive image, which includes sending messages that resonate with and persuade their various audiences. This work of messaging has typically been attributed to formal organization, which enables the potential for a certain amount of centralization and control over its messages, along with abilities such as releasing official statements on behalf of constituents. In contrast, the fact that OWS participants emphasized that they had no official spokespeople meant that most of the messaging in the movement was decentralized, and that the statements made within the context of the movement were not products of any particular organizational body. Indeed, many participants explicitly rejected the idea of issuing any collective demands. Nevertheless, the movement's decentralized messaging was not a problem during the duration of the encampment, as the occupation, *as a*

statement in itself, served as a central source of messaging, and carried out the task that might have otherwise been fulfilled via more formal organization.

Like the movement's decentralized structure more generally, its decentralized messaging was notable in a variety of contexts. Instead of channeling resources to print and distribute signs with a particular message, participants encouraged others to make their own signs. During the first few weeks of the occupation, for example, an area of the park featured handwritten signs spread out onto the pavement for display, along with blank pieces of cardboard and writing materials for anyone to create their own sign, either for display or for personal use (Figure 2). Indeed, it was very rare to witness at any point participants holding signs with the exact same message. Such instances reflected the idea that messaging in the movement, like the overall structure of the movement itself, was decentralized.

[Figure 2 about here]

To be sure, this form of messaging was not without its weaknesses. For instance, many journalists in the mainstream media perceived the movement's rejection of demands as a lack of a clear agenda. While more structured movement organizations might have been able to issue an official response to such critiques, the time-consuming aspects of consensus-based decision making in large groups (Barkan 1979, Cornell 2009, Polletta 2002, Smith and Glidden 2012), and the process of having to reach consensus on all of the details, including wording, made official statements much less frequent in the context of OWS.

During the occupation of Zuccotti Park, however, these weaknesses were minimized, as the collective activity in the park stood as a statement in itself. In short, all that was needed for

anyone to obtain a general sense of the movement's message was to simply *go to the park* and talk to any number of participants themselves. In this way, the park itself served as an implicit contrast to negative depictions of the movement within the media. In one informal conversation I had with a participant, for example, he criticized the media for its negative representation of OWS. "You don't want to know what was going through my head that first week," he said, referring to the period when he had only been exposed to the movement through the media, and suggesting that he had held a very negative impression of it. "Then when I went down there [to the park]," he said, "what I found was completely different" than what he had been led to believe: he found that people had legitimate grievances, and he agreed with them. Such instances suggested that the Zuccotti Park encampment itself served as a form of counter-messaging.

While all movements benefit from the capacity to foster a positive image and deflect criticism, the way in which the occupation of Zuccotti Park carried out this task was fundamentally unique. In the absence of any governing organizational body, only the encampment itself could serve as a central source of messaging—a critical organizational task that is normally discharged within the context of formal organization. Through interaction with participants or by taking part in events at the park, the occupation as a whole furnished a lens through which outsiders could understand the movement. This has significant implications for how we understand critical movement tasks such as framing (Benford and Snow 2000, Snow, Rochford, Worden et al. 1986, Snow and Benford 1988), which has often been portrayed as the product of the conscious efforts of a particular segment of a movement. Insofar as participants issued few official collective statements, OWS did not need to engage in the labor of framing as such. Instead, a variety of individuals articulated their messages and engaged in their own framing strategies, with no one claiming to speak for the movement as a whole. But more

relevant for our purposes here is the fact that the encampment effectively helped carry out the critical function of messaging, for which organization has typically been considered vital.

Occupation as Recruitment

The opportunity for anyone in the metropolitan area to visit the encampment at any moment aided in carrying out another critical function of social movement organizations: recruitment. In asking participants how they became involved, a large majority of them responded that after having heard about it, they simply went down to the park. Take, for example, the following participant's description of how he became involved, after having heard about the occupation and following it via livestream:

> [I]t was near my bike route home...[and I just] decided to go out a little farther this day... And I just stopped off and it happened to be after a General Assembly, and so people were kinda standing in circles, talking, and at one point I see Jesse LaGreca [a highly involved participant] just kind of get up and soapbox a little bit about you know how to deal with the media, and I saw people talking about Consumer Finance Protection Bureau and the Glass-Steagall Act, and I saw people just helping each other like get a sandwich or figure out where to sleep or something.
>
> And I stopped and I said, 'you know what? My whole life my friends and I have been saying that people are being exploited and are being held down, and they just don't care. And all of a sudden, people care. And not only do they care, but they care enough to put their bodies on the line, they care enough to more importantly learn about the issues—like, this stuff is important to them.[4]

[4] Interview with Aaron Bornstein. Brooklyn, NY, November 21, 2012.

The simple fact that a large portion of participants became involved simply by visiting the occupation itself is highly indicative of its role as a tool for recruitment. In this particular case the above participant was moved to action by what he viewed as the simple display of people "caring." This description resonates with the stated experiences of many other participants. Some even described the distinct atmosphere they found in the space as magical, and evocative of a "near-religious experience" (Milkman, Lewis and Luce 2013:25). For many participants, in short, the actions taking place within the encampment on the whole stood as sufficient reasons to get involved.

Related to the fact that the park was also very conducive to "recruiting" participants was the extremely low cost of participation: visiting the park was all that was necessary, and individuals were invited to contribute in any way they saw fit, whether that meant contributing to the services that were already being offered, or identifying and spearheading other endeavors. The ongoing presence of the occupation meant that individuals, whether they were actively involved or simply curious, could visit the occupation at any time of the day. The park was also centrally located, which meant that access to the park for many inhabitants of the city was simply a subway ride away. Also related to the ease of participation was the very flexibility and inclusiveness of the idea of "membership" in the movement, as no one had a monopoly on the "Occupy" label, and anyone could claim to be a member of the movement[5]—or alternatively, as one participant put it, membership was "an idea that didn't fit in the movement… Anyone who said they were Occupy *were* Occupy." In short, to be "involved," to be a "member," all that was needed was to come to the park—and that is in fact precisely what many people did.

[5] This is, arguably, one of the reasons why "Occupy" spread across different cities with such rapidity (along with other factors such as the presence of pre-existing social movement networks).

Movement organizers themselves consciously acknowledged the occupation as a means to participation as well: when two key participants were asked during a radio interview how one might get involved, one responded, "if you're anywhere near [Zuccotti Park], come out and join us." When a caller asked specifically about how one might find out more information about the Sustainability working group, one of the organizers' immediate recommendation was "If you're local, come down to the Information booth" at the park, or look up information about the working group online.[6] These responses speak to the centrality of the occupation as a call to action, as well as the spatial concentration of resources in the park. When compared to the labor of, for instance, going door-to-door to recruit participants, the ongoing daily presence of the occupation was especially efficient.

Naturally, the potential for involvement extended far beyond simply being present in the park, and visiting the encampment offered the outsider a host of opportunities to become involved on a more profound level. Beyond the various formal and informal groups that held meetings or otherwise exhibited their presence in the space (see Figure 3), the park featured an Information desk where outsiders could obtain more information about various working groups and their meeting times, along with a large chalkboard listing upcoming events (see Figure 4). As one participant put it, the occupation was "a very potent recruitment tool, because you didn't have to know anything about Occupy Wall Street, you didn't have to know who to talk to; if you just walked to this park, you'd find people." Here, he describes his experience at the Information desk:

> People would walk in off the street, walk up to the Info desk and start talking to that person about politics.

[6] WE Tele-Forum : "A Live Interactive Conversation With Justin Wedes and Sandra Nurse." October 19, 2011. http://we.net/weevents/238-occupy-wall-street-tele-forum.

> …So I tried to streamline information so that it could be accessible to people. And I found that if you make it to accessible to people, people would join! Like, people would walk in and talk to the person at the Information desk, and when I was able to sound like a cogent human being and make sane rational arguments and explain what's going on, they decided to stick around. Next thing you know, a year later, they're still here! I know a couple of people in the movement who I met them first because they asked me a question at the Info desk, and they're still here because I answered the question right. [7]

This excerpt captures the use of the park as a tool not only for recruiting outsiders into the movement, but also for sustaining their commitment. This concentration of and ease of access to the right kinds of "information" within the park indeed proved vital.

[Figures 3 and 4 about here]

Building Commitment

The sustained presence of the occupation not only provided a central channel for outsiders to get involved; it also aided in building and sustaining commitment among participants over time. Many individuals, for instance, became "radicalized" over the course of their time spent in the park: as one participant put it, "I saw lots and lots of more moderate people become more radical; I never saw it go in the other direction."[8] Not unlike Munson's (2009) finding that commitment is a consequence rather than a cause of participation, many

[7] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, October 17, 2013.

[8] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, October 17, 2013.

individuals became more centrally involved after visiting the park out of curiosity, or even out of chance.

A prominent feature of the occupation was a ubiquity of discussion and dialogue. The movement's ongoing presence in a space granted the opportunity for conversations among participants and outsiders. Hundreds of individuals demonstrated they were willing to engage in political conversations, either with passersby, returning visitors, or other participants, with some even holding signs inviting others to ask them about a given topic. In this way, the occupation functioned as a kind of "public sphere" (Habermas 1962) in which political topics of concern could be openly discussed among any willing participant, in public space. Such genuine and civil conversations also offered a stark symbolic contrast with mainstream institutional politics, which participants tended to view as polarized and dysfunctional (Gould-Wartofsky 2015). In any case, the simple display and concentration of such conversations had an impact on many participants, as the following account illustrates:

> When I first came down to the park on October 5th, during the huge union march there, we made it to Zuccotti and I saw there were people talking to one another—*and I had never really experienced anything like that before in my life*: people actually talking about the movement's substance, and from radically different places, and being able to do that without like, yelling at each other, was really impressive to me [emphasis added].[9]

Through such conversations, participants could not only connect with each other and build relationships; they could also potentially win the sympathies of people who were even only marginally supportive of the ideas being circulated. Nathan Schneider, an embedded journalist in the movement, similarly reported that "One of the things Occupy encampments like Liberty Plaza [the name given to Zuccotti Park by OWS participants] did best was serving as a school:"

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[9] Interview with Aaron Bornstein. Brooklyn, NY, November 21, 2012.

> Over the course of a week or two, I would see people's political views transform in remarkable ways…People seemed to be experiencing the equivalent of a semester of school in just a day at Liberty not because of the much-touted consensus, but because of the debate and diversity (Schneider 2014).

One participant echoed this sentiment when he stated, "I learned and absorbed more in that park than in any classroom in my entire life."[10] In this way, the occupation exerted a spiral-like effect on participants: as this transformation of views led to increased commitment and more intensive participation, more time spent in the park allowed for more conversation that further increased participants' desire to contribute to the movement.

Alongside discussions between participants and outsiders were conversations held among participants themselves. On any given day, for instance, one could encounter discussions about alternatives to capitalism, particular policies, and the movement's relationship with other social movements. Rather than depending on the mass media for the movement's message to be conveyed in a particular way, insiders and outsiders spoke face-to-face, established friendships, and organized actions together.

Occupation as Connective Structure

Social movement scholars have shown that effective mass movements consist of networks of decentralized but connected groups (for example, Han 2014, Tarrow 1998). Just as the occupation enabled conversations between different sectors of participants within the movement—outsiders, those who were somewhat involved, and those who were more centrally involved—it also established important connections between them. Co-presence in a shared

[10] George Machado, Left Forum Panel: "Is This Really What Democracy Looks Like? Self-Governance, Leadership, and Autonomy." March 18, 2012.

space allowed a variety of individuals and groups to be put in touch with one another, and for information to easily spread. Take, for instance, the following participants' description of Think Tank, a working group that hosted a variety of open-ended discussions in the park that were of interest to participants:

> When people were sharing a space, people would just walk around or join the meta- groups like Think Tank. You could show up to the Think Tank and have a conversation about what you were talking about, what you were interested in, and three or four people might be interested and they'd go off and form a working group.[11]

Within this informal process by which many working groups formed, the physical concentration of people proved to be particularly advantageous.

Face-to-face interaction and conversation not only formed the basis of new discussions and activities, but also allowed individuals and groups to find each other. Here is one account of how this process transpired in the space:

> Right before the eviction…we were using generators, but that was a fire department problem and we were pretty sure that if we didn't stop using generators, we would have a fire code issue... And so we looked around and since we had a thousand people, we found someone who was a former member of the FDNY and knew certifications and ranks inside and out; we had someone who was fire department certified—that was me, actually… I took ownership of their gasoline and generators and tried to make a system that was not dangerous... And we also had someone who had experience through theater and Hollywood-type production with laying down electric systems. So between these three people we had a Fire Safety group that in the week before the eviction was working on getting

[11] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, October 17, 2013.

> the group up to fire code and wiring the park for electricity in a way that was not confrontational with the police...
>
> Things like this just randomly organically grew out of the group because the sample size was large enough; you just had someone, somewhere [who] had the right information or pertinent skills.[12]

Within formal hierarchical organizations with a clear division of labor, the process of finding the individuals with a particular set of skills is generally straightforward. In contrast, as the above account illustrates, the sheer concentration of the people in Zuccotti Park facilitated OWS participants' ability to acquire important resources and forge new and innovative paths of action. Insofar as channels of communication sustained the movement's vitality, and insofar as a shared space facilitated these forms of communication, the occupation was the organizational lifeblood of the movement.

Post-Eviction: The Loss of Organization

The extent to which the encampment served as a form of organization became especially clear after the police forcefully evicted protesters from Zuccotti Park, as the movement lost all of the organizational functions of the encampment. Of these functions was the ability during the encampment, as described above, for participants to easily "plug in" to the movement and identify ways to contribute. At the same time, participants who were more centrally involved envisioned a shift after the eviction from what they saw as the movement's formal decision making structure consisting of assemblies and working groups, to a form of collaboration based primarily on personal networks and ties of affinity. While ties between participants did not

[12] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, October 17, 2013.

entirely disappear, they proved not nearly as robust as those that had been forged during the encampment.

On the most superficial level, the Zuccotti Park occupation was a central location where the thousands of movement participants and supporters could congregate, get to know one another, and share information. While one may have expected that the large number of participants would have diminished the probability that participants would encounter each other from one day to the next, quite the opposite was true; in fact, it was not uncommon for participants to run into each other. One reason for this was that the spaces in which the movement manifested itself were subdivided both formally and informally: for instance, formal and informal groups tended to congregate in the same spaces in the park from one day to the next and certain recurring activities often took place in particular areas of the park.[13] As the occupation grew and it became increasingly difficult to hold formal meetings in the park, working groups congregated in spaces outside of the park, which soon became mostly concentrated in the atrium of the Deutsche Bank building located at 60 Wall Street (Figure 5). These concentrated clusters increased the likelihood that participants would run into each other, and in general, facilitated communication across the movement's decentralized network. Take, for instance, the following excerpt from my fieldnotes:

> *I sat in on a meeting at 60 Wall Street where I recognized [many actively involved participants]... About halfway through the meeting, Edward came by and announced to the group that "the Communications Cluster is meeting right now, over there [pointing]." As he started to leave, Elizabeth [another actively involved participant] caught his attention and*

[13] While some commentators interpreted this informal division as a form of "segregation," the point nonetheless remains that this situation increased the likelihood for the formation and/or strengthening of personal ties between participants.

said to him, "Hey, Spokes Council is meeting tomorrow at Trinity Church; spread the word!"

This instance represents how Occupy Wall Street participants relied on word of mouth, and how the close proximity of participants facilitated the spread of information.

[Figure 5 about here]

After the eviction of the encampment and the ensuing enforcement of restrictions within the plaza, activity in the area of Zuccotti Park steadily decreased, along with the likelihood of encountering familiar faces by chance. Even as it continued as a meeting space for many groups, activity at 60 Wall Street also steadily declined, as rules prohibiting "excessive use of space" and "loitering" were implemented simultaneously (Figure 6). Proximity in shared space had kept the cost of participation low: at the peak of activity within the 60 Wall Street atrium, with multiple working group meetings occurring simultaneously in the same space, individuals could often be seen moving back and forth between different meetings, and/or hovering at the periphery of a meeting for a few moments before moving on. In other words, it was possible for participants who were less involved to glean the flavor of discussions occurring in different working groups, and participate in them; with fewer working groups meeting in the same space at the same time, this became more unlikely, and obtaining a broader picture of the discussions taking place in various working groups became more time-consuming. With the low probability that individuals would encounter each other by chance, weak ties among acquaintances became weaker, and contact between individuals was essentially reduced to other members of the working group(s) one was involved in, and to stronger friendship ties. With fewer opportunities for connections

across working groups, the discussions and work carried out in each group also became increasingly isolated from the others.

[Figure 6 about here]

While decentralization was effective during the occupation, after the eviction it turned out to be detrimental, as decentralization gave way to fragmentation. As one participant described it:

> I saw connections being broken, polarizations setting in, as people found their own little politically ideologically agreeing groups, instead of a wide diaspora of you know, anyone willing to talk about anything—you know, 'I'm down with your politics as long as it works.' So we saw it seizing up, polarizing, and fragmenting because these connections were no longer being made.[14]

Another embedded participant similarly identified the occupation's role in connecting participants, as he stated in reference to the projects that developed after the eviction: "All those networks came from those two months in the park."[15] After the eviction, then, the movement faced the challenge of developing forms of organization to replace the functions provided by the Zuccotti Park encampment. Participants continued to call meetings and carry out direct actions; but they did not carry out all the organizational functions of the encampment.

While new projects and working groups formed after the eviction, the connections between them became increasingly less robust. The following participant's response, ten months

[14] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, October 17, 2013.

[15] Interview with Aaron Bornstein. Brooklyn, NY, November 21, 2012.

after the eviction, is worth quoting at length for its general description of what happened within the movement after the eviction:

> Because everything is so fractured now… we have no fucking clue what's happening with each other! There have been four or five separate attempts to restart the general assemblies—and none of them knew about each other until one person decided to track all of them down! [Here] is a meta-example: Because so few people know about events and information in the movement, people have tried to create aggregators for information, you know, to get information from all the various places, all into one spot, so people know where to go. There are four or five of these sites—and they don't know about each other!
>
> And this lack of information between us contributes a lot to I think a lack of engagement with the movement as a whole. It means that we feel so much more isolated... I mean, I have the people I interact with on a regular basis, other people do too, but unless we have some sort of link, we're not really going to meet each other, you know. And when we were all in the same park, it was kind of a different kettle of fish there.[16]

Because subgroups were free to create their own websites, information on the internet was itself decentralized. While a lack of coordination was common even during the occupation, only after the eviction did it result in detrimental consequences. As the excerpt above illustrates, without the shared space of the encampment, participants struggled to feel connected with each other, beyond their smaller working groups and personal networks. Overall, the above participant's response suggests that the encampment was important not only for facilitating concrete connections between participants, but also for giving individuals the feeling that they were connected to the movement as a whole.

[16] Interview with Christopher Key. New York, NY, July 10, 2012.

Among the many types of connection the occupation enabled, maintaining a strong link between insiders and outsiders proved particularly vital. After the eviction, those who were less centrally involved had more difficulty identifying ways to contribute, as the following participant describes:

> I think one of the big challenges was that people simply didn't know how to plug in anymore. Unless you were kind of plugged into the networks of communication that existed and came out of Occupy, you wouldn't know where the next planning meetings were; you wouldn't be able to just come in and check in one place.[17]

Ultimately, the most elemental organizational component of the occupation was the connections it fostered—in this case, connections between insiders and outsiders. These connections were essential for ensuring the continuation of the movement over time. Insofar as the resiliency of a movement can be reduced to the extensiveness of its networks, and insofar as the connections within Occupy Wall Street became less extensive after the eviction, with the eviction came the loss of the movement's very resiliency.

Both during and after the eviction, participants emphasized and enforced decentralization in theory and in practice. Throughout the movement's duration, networks formed the core of the movement's organizing principles. But even after the density of such networks diminished after the eviction, movement participants continued to encourage decentralized organization. Indeed, some expressed skepticism about forging any form of lasting structure. Take, for instance, the following account provided by a centrally involved participant:

> The structures we created in OWS were far from ideal or permanent…In bringing forward new processes and structures I am cautious. I do not

[17] Interview with Zoltán Glück. Brooklyn, NY, September 7, 2012.

> pretend to know the answers or impose models, but rather I enter processes humbly in the spirit of questioning (Holmes 2012:161).

Even if they could have developed a structure to replace the organizational functions of the occupation, participants expressed no desire to do so.

As Polletta (2002) has pointed out in her work on participatory democracy, a primary weakness of organizing on the basis of friendship ties is that they are extremely limited in reach. Even so, many movement participants came to see personal networks as a primary organizing mechanism after the eviction. Two years after the start of the occupation, an OWS organizer who was interviewed on the news program "Democracy Now!" referenced ties of affinity after being asked about the responses of various activists to how to keep the movement going:

> Well, the movement is a network at this point. And that's what's most important, is that we met each other…And I think that as long as those people still know each other, the movement always exists, in its networks, in its connections. It's not latent, you know. People are still active; they're still doing their own work and organizing and bringing the analysis from Occupy to it…[18]

This viewpoint was typical of many active participants, who throughout the movement's duration emphasized the importance of networks and saw its decentralized structure as a strength. Ultimately, however, personal ties alone did not prove nearly as effective as the occupation in augmenting the movement's organizational capacities.

Discussion and Conclusion

[18] "Two Years After Occupy Wall Street: a Network of Offshoots Continue Activism for the 99%." Democracy Now! September 19, 2013. http://www.democracynow.org/2013/9/19/two_years_after_occupy_wall_street

The evidence presented here indicates that the Occupy Wall Street movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park served to carry out a set of fundamental tasks required of social movements: it provided a central source of messaging, aided in the recruitment of outsiders, helped increase participants' commitment, and offered a spatial concentration of activities that linked participants together into dense networks. Insofar as it carried out these tasks, the occupation served as a form of organization. While scholars of social movements have discussed the importance of organization for carrying out a number of such tasks, these findings call into question the assumption that formal organizational structure itself is necessary for the accomplishment of these tasks, and that factors *outside of* formal organization can themselves play an organizing role. In doing so, they demonstrate the utility of accounting for a broader set of organizational resources at the disposal of social movement participants. While the data presented here cannot confirm it, the study additionally has potential implications beyond the study of social movements, and an area of future research could involve more systematically investigating the role of informal organizational factors in other areas of social life.

In the case of Occupy Wall Street, what particular factors within the Zuccotti Park occupation enabled the accomplishment of the four organizational tasks described above? Given that all organizations consist of a certain kind of network, the different types of connections that formed as a result of the occupation undergirded its organizational functions. These connections ranged from small-scale interactions that conveyed the movement's message and helped recruit individuals, to relationships built over time that sustained individuals' feeling of connection to the movement, to larger-scale links between different groups within the movement. Without their ongoing presence and concentration in the park each day, those networks became much less resilient as organizing structures. And without the occupation or other alternative organizational

body, the decentralized, networked logic underpinning the movement proved much less effective overall. Future research might thus do well to more systematically consider the conditions under which specific network ties may play an organizing role.

To be sure, the Occupy Wall Street movement featured an organizational structure beyond the occupation itself, and the Zuccotti Park occupation was not sufficient for providing other essential organizational tasks such as planning, coordinating and executing direct actions; various smaller meetings and working groups were essential for carrying out these activities, which continued after the eviction. The movement also included more formally organized actors such as unions that significantly bolstered the movement's numbers and force, though such groups acted only in their own name. Indeed, the Zuccotti Park occupation was part of a larger movement which could not be reduced to the occupation itself. Even so, the eviction of the encampment entailed the loss of critical organizational functions unfulfilled to the same extent by any other organizational body. It should for this reason be clear that an account of *only* the formal organizational structures in place within Occupy Wall Street is vastly inadequate for capturing the other vital collective resources at the movement's disposal.

Because the tactic of occupation was similarly used in a variety of movements and cities around the same period—including Tahrir Square in Cairo, Puerta del Sol in Madrid, and Maidan Square in Kiev—it is worth briefly considering here these movements' divergent outcomes. In each of these cases, the accompanying movement either featured a more extensive and functioning organizational and decision-making structure alongside its occupation, and/or achieved a level of disruption which was effective at gaining some concessions. These differences imply that the tactic of occupation, in conditions of uncertainty, is best combined with an organizational

structure that can simultaneously contribute to a movement's longevity while also taking advantage of the network-bolstering capacities of the occupation tactic.

Ultimately, then, while the findings discussed here point to the possibility of alternative forms of organization, it is important to clarify that they do not in themselves discount the importance of organizational structure. In fact, as indicated above, some amount of organizational structure was necessary for certain tasks within Occupy Wall Street. Moreover, even as the Zuccotti Park occupation provided a form of organization, its susceptibility to police repression posed significant threats to the movement's continuity that a more extensive organizational structure may have mitigated. The point to be made here is that the kind of informal organization furnished by the occupation can exist within the context of formal organizational structure. The findings presented here may indeed prove all the more valuable to activists for this reason.

In summary, as Occupy Wall Street protesters were evicted from the park, the movement as a whole lost the organizational functions the occupation had carried out. To the extent that the occupation served as a statement in itself and provided a central source of messaging and visibility, after the eviction the American public began to wonder whether the movement was "still around;" to the extent that the occupation enabled the recruitment of participants and facilitated even only occasional participation, it became increasingly difficult for participants who could only afford to periodically contribute to identify ways to become involved; to the extent that it strengthened ties between participants and increased their commitment, individuals contributed less to movement activities over time; and to the extent that the occupation linked participants together and facilitated communication between them, participants later became unsure not only about where or how to "plug in" and contribute but also about the activities of

the various working groups, and general direction or center of the movement as a whole. Without the organizational advantages offered by the occupation, the movement as a whole suffered a blow from which it was ultimately unable to recover.

Ultimately, the findings presented here confirm the importance of organization in social movements, even as they highlight the disadvantages of exclusively relying on occupation as a form of organization. In addition, they point to the utility of extending analyses of the relationship between networks and organization in social movements. Most generally, they suggest the utility of additional research on organizational processes occurring outside of formal organizational structure.

Chapter 3
A New Repertoire: Occupation and Decentralized Structure

CHAPTER SUMMARY:

Recent years have seen the emergence of a global wave of social movements occupying central public squares in countries such as Egypt, Spain, the United States, and Turkey. While scholars have identified these movements as forming part of a new global repertoire, the recurrent presence of decentralized structure alongside the tactic of occupation has been largely unexamined. This chapter presents findings that suggest that the tactic of occupation and decentralized structure of OWS operated as mutually beneficial elements of a distinctive repertoire. In doing so, it provides an insight into the relationship between social movements' organizational structure and use of space, drawing attention to the way in which space can enable the formation of ties among participants.

Recent years have seen the emergence of a global wave of social movements occupying central public squares in countries as diverse as Egypt, Spain, the United States, and Turkey (e.g. Castañeda 2012, Schwartz 2011a, Schwartz 2011b). While the tactic of occupation or protest camp has a long history—appearing in struggles related to the environment, labor, education, civil rights, and numerous other causes—it "has largely been confined to the histories of individual movements" (McCurdy, Feigenbaum and Frenzel 2015:1). Moreover, while scholars have pointed out that the recent movements formed part of a new global repertoire (e.g. Pickerill and Krinsky 2012), the recurrent presence of decentralized structure alongside the tactic of occupation has been largely unexamined. Without an analysis of the relationship between these

two components, scholars risk overlooking the ways in which social movements' use of space and organizational structure may influence one another.

This chapter provides an insight into this relationship. In particular, the findings presented here suggest that the movement's three-month occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan was integrally tied to its decentralized organizational structure—and, in this sense, that the two elements of occupation and loose organizational structure formed part of a distinctive repertoire. These findings present two major implications. First, they demonstrate that elements in a movement's repertoire may be related and even mutually beneficial. Second, they point to a potential connection between a social movement's use of space and its organizational structure. In this way, a movement's organizational resilience may also be a function of its ability to control space.

In the two sections that follow, I discuss how the elements of occupation and decentralized organizational structure in Occupy Wall Street each provided benefits to the other. On the one hand, OWS's loose, decentralized structure enabled "self-organization," a process wherein the combined actions of participants produced an emergent order within the park without any strict or centralized management. On the other hand, the movement's ongoing occupation of Zuccotti Park provided a basis for the formation of ties between participants that compensated for the absence of extensive centralized organization. The complementarity of these two features, along with their presence in various movements around the world, may indeed shed light on how and why different elements within tactical repertoires may spread together.

Decentralized Structure and Self-Organization in Zuccotti Park

As a whole, the occupation of Zuccotti Park exemplified the capacity and potential of self-organization, where individuals and groups coordinated amongst themselves to produce an orderly and self-regulating space in the absence of any single organizing body. As a result of the movement's underlying antiauthoritarian ideals that militated against the development of such a body, people simply came to the park and contributed in ways they saw fit. The result was the development of a variety of informal self-reproducing spaces and forms of social organization wherein individuals carried out a particular type of activity in a dedicated area of the park. While the minimal presence of centralized or top-down management of the park was not without its problems, the process was sufficient for the construction of a relatively stable order within the encampment. Self-organization thus illustrates one way in which the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park and its decentralized structure complemented one another.

Here, "self-organization" refers to a situation where the sum of actions of individuals acting on their own behalf, in the absence of any overarching organization, results in the creation of a relatively orderly and self-reproducing system. Defined in this way, self-organization is a common feature of social life. For instance, if a certain level of traffic congestion develops in a street or a single lane of the road, drivers will attempt to change lanes or take an alternate route. In this instance, the behavior of various individuals produces a relatively efficient system wherein traffic is redistributed without any centralized management or direction. Such behavior is reminiscent of starling birds which, when flying in a flock, collectively and suddenly shift directions without any apparent leader. In the context of Occupy Wall Street, self-organization unfolded within the space of the occupation itself where, at the most basic level, participants observed others' behaviors and responded accordingly. Whereas, for example, it may have been possible to determine in advance the respective locations of the drum circle and meeting space

for assemblies, participants on their own came to hold them at opposite ends of the park. Self-organization in Zuccotti Park therefore developed in the absence of strict top-down regulation of the space.

It is important to note that this process of self-organization was accompanied by a widespread general ethic in the movement that promoted inclusiveness, "self-empowerment" and "Do-It-Yourself" (DIY) values.[19] In this sense, an actively involved participant described the organizational structure of OWS in the following way:

> *[A]s far as organizational structure goes, it really lends itself well to autonomy. You don't have to go through your party commissar to get something started. If you have a good idea, and you've got the initiative and the gusto to do it, nothing's stopping you; do it, man! Go for it!*[20]

As it turned out, the physical space of the occupation was particularly effective in providing a visible demonstration of this ethic. Just as anyone could visit the occupation, and just as anyone could consider themselves a "member" of the Occupy movement, individuals in the park could "participate" in the occupation in any conceivable number of ways.

To be sure, the range of ways in which individuals could participate had its limits. In one instance, for example, an individual visiting the park held up anti-Semitic signs with suggestions to "Google: Jewish Billionaires" and "Google: Zionists control Wall St." Others in the park soon responded: one person, for instance, stood next to him and held a sign with an arrow pointing towards him and the following message: "Who is paying this guy?" That this individual was eventually shouted down and forced out of the park illustrates how participants, in the absence of

[19] This sort of guiding ethic is also notable in other instances of self-organization. Take, for instance, organizers' description of the Burning Man event, a festival held once a year in the Nevada desert: "it's a do-ocracy, you come in and do" (Chen 2009: 55).

[20] Interview with Christopher Key. New York, NY, July 10, 2012.

centralized organization, themselves managed behavior perceived to threaten the stability of the movement.

More generally (especially during the first few weeks of the Zuccotti Park occupation, when space was still ample and before the widespread erection of tents), the open, mostly concrete space of the plaza served as a *tabula rasa* upon which individuals or groups could claim space and/or make claims within space, or as an open stage upon which people could enact any number of improvised or rehearsed performances. Even so, a largely informal though orderly division of the space developed organically over time, as certain areas of the park came to be used for different purposes. While, for instance, drummers, dancers, and onlookers proliferated on the lower end of the park facing Trinity Place, the upper end facing Broadway featured a more concentrated lineup of people displaying signs and chatting (and sometimes arguing) with passersby. While the location of some groups was rather arbitrary, in other cases it was logical: the side of the park facing Broadway received more foot traffic, and therefore attracted participants wanting to engage with passersby.

On the one hand, many of the working groups that were pre-formed at the beginning of the occupation—such as Media, Kitchen, Info, and Medical—established an ongoing spatial presence in the park. Figure 7 shows a map of the Zuccotti Park encampment drafted by an Occupy participant, which shows some of these groups. Beyond the more formal working groups, however, the remaining spaces in the park either came to develop groups of their own, or were open to more informal and unprescribed forms of participation. One group of friends and occupiers, for instance, set up a "Class War Camp," complete with a sign, table, and box soliciting donations. Others set up silk screening and button-making stations to disseminate images and phrases associated with the movement. At the opposite end of the park from the

drummers, the steps descending from Broadway created a kind of natural amphitheater, dubbed by some as the "soapbox," where individuals would make speeches to anyone that cared to listen. That many of these spaces came to be used no less regularly than spaces corresponding to certain, more "formal" working groups illustrates how participants established a self-reproducing, emergent order on their own.

[Figure 7 about here]

In short, the phenomenon of self-organization in Zuccotti Park illustrates that even in the absence of a centralized means of managing the space, participants were able to develop a self-reproducing and generally self-regulating order. However, it is important to note that the encampment was neither devoid of problems or conflicts, nor was the organization of the space completely decentralized or informal. As space in the park became an increasingly scarce resource and pathways for walking vanished, the Town Planning working group emerged to address the overall organization of the space; similarly, the Security working group was established to try to prevent crime and deescalate conflicts. The model in place relied very much on trust and good will: if an occupier was asked to move his tent in order to create space for people to walk through the park, there was no formal mechanism that could ensure that he would do so. Similarly, the abundance of space in the plaza in the earlier stages of the occupation reduced the likelihood of conflict—but as tents became more plentiful and the park became more crowded, disputes arose over who had "ownership" of the space. These issues importantly point to the weaknesses of an organizational model that lacks an effective means for centralized management. Nevertheless, the evidence presented here illustrates how at the very least, such a

means was not *essential* to the day-to-day functioning of the occupation. It therefore not only attests to the potential of self-organization among social movement participants in the absence of strict control, but also demonstrates how the elements of occupation and decentralized structure could coexist as part of a repertoire of contention implemented by various social movements around the world.

Occupation as Social Structure

While the process of self-organization illustrates how OWS participants were able to maintain a relatively stable order in the space of Zuccotti Park, the sustained occupation of the space itself enabled the formation of ties between participants that contributed to the movement's decentralized, networked structure. Overall, the occupation allowed individuals to connect with each other, obtain information, and more generally "plug in" to the movement. That the occupation facilitated such ties illustrates, along with the process of self-organization, the particular complementarity of occupation and decentralized structure as elements of a distinct, global repertoire.

In one sense, the entire space of the occupation presented a potentially infinite number of opportunities for discussion, meeting new people, and encountering familiar faces. For instance, people held signs with messages oriented not simply to the public, but other occupiers themselves, and that invited conversation: one person held a sign with one blank side and another that read, "for OWS demands, ask me to flip the sign over." In general, the fact that many participants spent sustained periods of time in one area meant that even if they were busy—say, making buttons, t-shirts, signs, or even cigarettes—they were nevertheless still open to conversation.

A central aspect that encouraged the formation of connections between participants (among having other effects) was the occupation's enduring physical presence. As described above, many groups maintained an ongoing presence in particular areas within the park. One of the consequences of this was that if someone wanted to find members of a particular group, all that was necessary was to simply visit that area. This regularity also effectively meant that one could visit the same area over the course of different days, and come across the same people in each area. In some cases, indeed, space was a crucial medium within which different groups manifested their presence and visibility: upon one visit to the park several days after the eviction, after people were prevented from bringing large objects into the park, one participant held part of a pizza box above his head with one word scrawled onto it— "Finance." Space thus provided, for the movement's different groups, an immediate form of visibility and accessibility. This accessibility crucially meant that individuals could not only find and connect with members of the movement's different subgroups, but also, participate by *joining* them in that space. Just as evidence discussed in the previous chapter suggests that the occupation carried out a number of organizational functions, the occupation was itself informally organized, physically, into different subareas.

This physical organization of the occupation not only allowed connections between the movement's participants, but also offered a spatial concentration of information that helped connect movement "insiders" and "outsiders." If someone had a particular question, there was not only a dedicated Information area within the occupation, but they could also ask others who were in turn more connected; many people who spent large periods of time in the park could at least introduce an "outsider" to the people they knew, or point them in a particular direction.

Similarly, the ongoing physical presence of the occupation provided a low threshold for participation. “Participation” was, in this sense, very broadly defined: one could “participate” in the drum circle, in a public discussion, by making a sign and holding it, or even simply visiting and spending time in the park. As one actively involved participant put it, “we embrace the support of any individual who wants to come out and share our concerns and make their voice heard. That's why we meet in public space.”[21] In this way, the occupation’s presence in *public* space, in addition to its central location and relative accessibility, helped convey the movement’s broader ethic of inclusiveness, as described above. But its ongoing presence in space also provided a kind of immediacy to participation, where individuals could simply visit the space and immediately “participate.”

That the movement as a whole operated on the basis of a “logic of networks” (Juris 2008) rendered the occupation’s capacity to facilitate connections all the more important, as these connections were indeed crucial. As one participant stated four months after the eviction, speaking of the need for spaces for conversation: “I think without [an] effort to get to know one another, it’s not going to work.”[22] Insofar as the occupation assisted in strengthening network ties between participants, and insofar as the movement’s organizational structure thrived on the density of these ties, the Occupy Wall Street movement’s form of organization and occupation of Zuccotti Park were intimately connected, and operated in conjunction.

Conclusion

[21] Justin Wedes. “Occupy Wall Street Tele-Forum: A Live Interactive Conversation with Justin Wedes and Sandra Nurse, Organizers for Occupy Wall Street in New York City.” <http://we.net/weevents/238-occupy-wall-street-tele-forum>

[22] George Machado. “Is This Really What Democracy Looks Like? Self-Governance, Leadership, and Autonomy.” Panel at Left Forum, 3/18/2012.

This chapter has discussed some of the ways in which the tactic of occupation and decentralized organizational structure in the Occupy Wall Street movement operated as mutually beneficial components of a distinctive repertoire. On the one hand, the process of self-organization within Zuccotti Park indicates that the construction of a relatively stable order within the space was possible in the absence of centralized organizational structure or top-down management of the space. On the other hand, the occupation itself provided a basis for the formation of ties between participants. In other words, just as the movement's decentralized structure shaped the distinct way in which participants developed a relatively stable order within the occupation, the occupation provided a critical contribution to the strength of the movement's structure. In modeling the tactical repertoire of occupying Tahrir Square used to oust President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt only seven months before, and the similarly organized occupations in Spain only four months before, Occupy Wall Street protesters themselves discovered the possibility of collective action through the combination of occupation and decentralized structure. While both features were similarly present in social movements in other countries such as Egypt, Spain, and Turkey, it is important not to obscure the distinct ways in which they may have been related to each other, and more research is necessary to confirm the presence of such a repertoire and account for differences within each case. Nevertheless, the evidence presented here confirms that in the case of Occupy Wall Street, the elements of decentralized structure and occupation were closely related.

While it could be theoretically possible to consider whether one element played a more vital role than the other, the evidence discussed here suggests that their *interaction* was crucial. In other words, the repertoire discussed here was only effective for as long as its two elements were present, and for as long as OWS participants could protect the occupation from repression.

One implication of the analysis presented here suggests that movements do not require extensive formal organization in order to engage in collective action. In addition, the analysis highlights the possibility that space can provide a basis for the formation of ties, and that these ties can themselves function as a kind of social structure. At the same time, it draws attention to the instability of movements whose livelihood depends on any particular repertoire. Repertoires may spread on the basis of their proven effectiveness, but activists ought to be especially attentive to their weaknesses. Ultimately, movements may be most resilient when they demonstrate a flexibility in implementing new tactics that, at the same time, capture the support of their participants.

Chapter 4
Explaining Activist Engagement: Networks and Agency

CHAPTER SUMMARY:

A vast body of scholarship in the area of social movements has demonstrated the utility of a network-based view of movements and shown how networks can help explain social movement emergence, participation, and recruitment. At the same time, however, surprisingly little attention has been given to the role of networks in sustaining the engagement of social movement participants. This chapter investigates why, despite evidence of an inclusive, decentralized structure that contributed to participants' engagement, Occupy Wall Street was unable to sustain a high level of engagement among its participants. In doing so, it identifies two factors that contribute to social movement participants' commitment: 1) a perceived ability to contribute to or shape the direction of a movement, and 2) dense ties among participants. These findings therefore provide insight into the dynamics that sustain engagement and the specific role of networks in this process.

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, scholarly work has increasingly drawn attention to the central role of networks in social movements (e.g. Castells 2012, della Porta and Diani 2006, Diani and Bison 2004, Gerlach and Hine 1970, Krinsky and Crossley 2013, McAdam 1982, McAdam et al. 2001). Social movements have even been theorized as "systems of relations" (Diani 2011:1)—an assortment of differently situated but connected actors. Scholars have moreover provided evidence of the usefulness of networks in recruitment (e.g. McAdam 1990) and social movement

emergence and activity overall (McAdam 1982, Morris 1984). Yet despite the abundance of research in this area, surprisingly little attention has been drawn to the role of networks in sustaining participants' engagement. In turn, while scholarship on engagement in social movements has discussed for example the effects of "transformational organizing" and internal organizational structure (Han 2014) on participant engagement, it has not explicitly considered the relationship between networks and engagement. The relative dearth of such scholarship has limited insight both into the factors that sustain participants' engagement, and the functions of networks in movements.

This chapter investigates why, despite evidence suggesting that OWS's inclusive, decentralized structure initially contributed to participants' overall level of engagement to the movement, the movement was ultimately unable to sustain a high level of this engagement among participants overall. It finds that while the movement's decentralized structure and general ethic of inclusion gave participants the feeling that they could influence the direction of the movement, the dense internal ties provided by the movement's ongoing occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan, weakened by the eviction of the occupation, were equally crucial for sustaining participants' engagement, and in the movement's continuity overall. While the network ties formed during the occupation allowed participants to connect their work to that of others in the movement, their weakening following the eviction of Zuccotti Park meant that many participants had a harder time apprehending the relationship between the movement's various working groups, and their own role within the broader movement. Based on these findings, the chapter identifies two factors that contribute to individuals' engagement in social movements: 1) a perceived ability to shape the trajectory of the movement, and 2) dense ties

among participants. These findings support previous scholarship by highlighting the critical role of personal ties in social movement participants' overall level of engagement.

In what follows, I briefly discuss the significance of the chapter's contribution within the broader scholarship before describing some ways in which participants saw the movement as creating "space." In two subsequent sections, I then show how the movement's decentralized structure and culture of inclusion, and the occupation of Zuccotti Park respectively contributed to the commitment of participants. The eviction of the occupation in particular entailed a critical loss of ties among participants, which proved essential to sustaining activism. I conclude the chapter by discussing the broader implications of these findings for the study of social movements in general.

Theoretical Background

While little has been written explicitly about the relationship between networks and engagement, Han's (2014) recent book, *How Organizations Develop Activists*, provides valuable insights into some of the factors that generate higher levels of engagement. Han centers her argument in the ability of highly active associations to engage in "transformational organizing" which, in contrast to "transactional mobilizing," involves "transform[ing] members' motivations and capacities for involvement" (2014:2). Reminiscent of the "developmental benefits" of participatory democracy described by Polletta (2002), wherein actively involved participants seek to develop the skills and capacities of those who are less involved, this form of organizing entails granting participants a sense of ownership over their activities, which leads to a greater investment in and willingness to contribute to the movement. Han also notes that associations that engaged in transformational organizing were more likely to feature a "distributed leadership

structure" (Han 2014:81). This work provides a preliminary indication of how participants' feelings of agency within an organization can help sustain their commitment. Building upon these insights, the research presented here finds that OWS's decentralized structure and general ethic of inclusion, combined with the density of networks afforded by the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park, endowed participants with the perception that their work could shape the trajectory of the movement in an important way, and in so doing, increased their willingness to contribute to the movement.

The research also incorporates insights from the scholarship on networks and space in social movements demonstrating that space can serve as a central source for the creation and maintenance of networks (Nicholls 2009:78), and that networks themselves can serve as a form of organization (Tarrow 1998:123-4). In reference to the Occupy movement, Juris (2012:259) found that it employed a "logic of aggregation… that involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces," and rightly identified the movement's long-term sustainability, especially in its "post-eviction phase," as a primary challenge. The research presented here is consistent with these insights in finding that the occupation of Zuccotti Park provided a critical means for developing and preserving the movement's internal networks, but builds upon them by arguing that dense network ties are essential for sustaining participants' engagement.

Creating (a) Space

In considering how Occupy Wall Street provided individuals with a sense that they could influence the direction of the movement, it is significant to note how many actively involved participants described the movement as providing a "space." The term was used both literally

and figuratively, in reference to the movement's decentralized structure and ethic of inclusion, but also to the space of the occupation itself. Participants in this sense mentioned, for instance, "space" to choose how to get involved, space for dialogue, and space from which to develop direct actions. This "space," in its many senses, conveyed the possibility that individuals could play a role in shaping the direction of the movement.

In practice, participants often simultaneously referenced the term's multiple meanings when invoking it. For example, in a radio interview conducted approximately one month after the start of the occupation, the following actively involved participant described the movement as creating and taking back "space" for a variety of purposes:

> It's not just about rallying around specific issues or creating specific demands. I think what's a more interesting angle of this movement is that it's creating a *space*, it's taking back a space for public discourse that's not necessarily shaped by electoral politics; it's taking back space for public dissent, and for allowing people to organize in a way that is more people-oriented, more face-to-face oriented, *allowing an environment to flourish that allows you to turn to your neighbor and say, 'Hi, what's bothering you? What issue is on your mind, and how can we pool our resources, pool our networks, pool our knowledge and work towards that?'* [emphasis added].[23]

The comment, part of a broader response explaining why the movement refused to issue specific demands, illustrates what the participant perceived as the movement's open-ended character, and its effect of "creating a space." In this case, she describes the purpose of the "space" as enabling both dialogue and dissent. At the same time, she also touches upon the central role of the occupation as providing a more literal space where people could come together and "start

[23] Sandra Nurse. "Occupy Wall Street Tele-Forum: A Live Interactive Conversation with Justin Wedes and Sandra Nurse, Organizers for Occupy Wall Street in New York City." <http://we.net/weevents/238-occupy-wall-street-tele-forum>

brainstorming ideas"[24] which could serve as the basis for collective action. Participants thus represented the "space" that the movement created as one that allowed a wide variety of ways to participate.

In a similar way, another actively involved participant used the concept of "space" both literally and figuratively to describe what he saw as the main goals of OWS:

> The occupation of Wall Street was a thing that happened. And in many ways it's a thing that's still happening. It was not a movement. *It was a platform, it is a platform, it's a network of people, it's a set of tools, right.* So people didn't show up at Occupy Wall Street and say, 'okay, this is stage one of our campaign.' They showed up and they said, 'we're going to occupy this space and we're going to build alternatives. *And people can come and we can create a space, and we can talk.*'
>
> And so through that, *people found each other*. And that movement began every day anew for every person who showed up in that park for the first time. It opened space within themselves and in the world. *From that*, many many people said, 'okay, I see something new now and I see all these people who also want to create; let's create.' And from that, many many many initiatives have sprung… [emphasis added].[25]

Like the previous participant's statement, this participant's depiction describes how Occupy Wall Street provided "space" to participants in two primary ways—through the literal occupation of Zuccotti Park, and through the movement's more general open-endedness. This open-endedness, in turn, conveyed the idea that individuals were welcome to "contribute" to the movement in a variety of ways. As one actively involved participant more explicitly put it:

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[24] David Graeber. "'Occupy Wall Street': Thousands March in NYC Financial District, Set Up Protest Encampment." *Democracy Now!*, September 19, 2011. <http://www.democracynow.org/2011/9/19/occupy_wall_street_thousands_march_in>

[25] Interview with Aaron Bornstein. Brooklyn, NY, November 21, 2012.

> we embrace the support of any individual who wants to come out and you know share our concerns and make their voice heard. That's why we meet in public space. Now if they're going to come out with their ego or with an agenda, that's another story. You know I speak for myself, always… [but that kind of] support is really important to me, as long as it doesn't come with baggage.[26]

This open-endedness dovetailed with the movement's decentralized structure, which allowed participants to spearhead their own initiatives.[27]

In a similar way, many participants described the Occupy Wall Street movement as generally giving individuals some autonomy and "space" to choose how to get involved. Here are the words of one participant who, in narrating his involvement in OWS, again invoked the concept of "space" to describe the movement's general inclusive ethic:

> My first encounter with Occupy Wall Street was on this opening day, in September. I didn't know what the plan was going to be. I definitely was taken by surprise at our arrival at Zuccotti Park, that the first plan was to have a general assembly [to decide what to do next]. In part because I've been in a lot of social movements that use open, democratic horizontal organizing—but we usually did that before the action, and not as the centerpiece of the action. And I think there's this really radical move in doing that…to presume that a much larger set of people was going to be directing things.

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[26] "Occupy Wall Street Tele-Forum: A Live Interactive Conversation with Justin Wedes and Sandra Nurse, Organizers for Occupy Wall Street in New York City." <http://we.net/weevents/238-occupy-wall-street-tele-forum>

[27] The concept of space in reference to this open-endedness was often invoked in response to questions about the movement's overall demands, and further instances of participants doing so are available. Take for instance the following passage written by Marina Sitrin, an active OWS participant and scholar:

> "We discussed and debated the question of demands and what would define the movement, but we agreed not to use the framework of demands at all. So what are we about? Most of us believe that what is most important is to open space for conversations… And from there, once we have opened up these democratic spaces, we can discuss what sort of demands we might have and who we believe might be able to meet these demands" (Sitrin 2011: 8).

> From very early on one of the things Occupy Wall Street was doing was *making space for scaling up, and making space for a lot of other people to become involved in it*. And so you had a really impressive set of many political and tactical moves that facilitated that. And everyone was kind of aware that from the beginning, they didn't necessarily represent the entire group…
>
> In some ways, what happened in Zuccotti Park (and what happened in the replication of Occupies throughout the country)—it wasn't direct action-focused except for insofar as *it was a space from which to develop direct actions*… And that opened up the agendas of working groups; they were open to new proposals and ideas, and that structure allowed it to be more democratic than during the mass direct action anti-war, anti-globalization phase [emphasis added].[28]

This participant's account echoes the idea from other participants' statements above that the movement's primary purpose was to serve as a platform for developing direct actions. He also, perhaps more importantly, describes aspects of the movement's open-ended character when he mentions the common understanding that participants' actions "didn't necessarily represent the entire group," and that the agendas of working groups were rather "open." This openness meant that individuals could choose to participate in the movement in a variety of ways, and that a "larger set of people was going to be directing things." In other words, the lack of a decided slate of potential issues the movement could address, along with the movement's decentralized structure and ethic of inclusiveness, provided participants with "space" in which to form working groups around issues of concern to them. In short, the different kinds of "space" provided by the movement, in addition to allowing network connections to form between participants,

[28] Carwil Bjork-James. "Is This Really What Democracy Looks Like? Self-Governance, Leadership, and Autonomy." Panel at Left Forum, 3/18/2012.

contributed to the perception that individuals could play a role in shaping the movement. In the next section, I provide evidence illustrating how the movement's decentralized structure and general ethic of inclusiveness additionally contributed to this perception.

Engaging Occupiers: Decentralized Structure, Inclusion, and the Cultivation of Leadership

> "We need a movement where we are constantly encouraging each other to step into our full potential and shine as a collective of leaders working together for a better world. Let's all be leaders. Let's be leaderful, not leaderless" (Smucker 2012:203).

Alongside the movement's decentralized structure, which offered a number of leadership opportunities[29] to participants, the movement featured a widespread ethic of inclusion which encouraged the participation and development of its members.[30] While some participants referred to the movement as "leaderless," others disagreed and chose to describe the movement as "leaderful." Figure 8 shows an image advocating for the latter position, whose subtitle encourages readers to "become the movement." Despite these differing understandings, however, no one disagreed with the general practice of distributing leadership within the movement. The movement's decentralized structure and general ethic of inclusion are reminiscent of the work of "transformational organizers" described by Han (2014:16), who sought to actively invest in their membership and offer leaders an amount of "strategic autonomy." The evidence presented here

[29] For the sake of the argument presented here, a leadership role is defined broadly as any opportunity in which an individual has the ability to in some way influence the actions of others.

[30] In practice, many occupiers acknowledged the movement's overall inadequacy in ensuring full inclusion for everyone, especially those who had limited time and resources to dedicate themselves to the movement. Nevertheless, the explicit value of inclusion produced an effect itself.

is consistent with this account, as many OWS participants indeed cited the movement's decentralized structure and inclusive ethic as reasons for their involvement and commitment.

[Figure 8 about here]

Actively involved participants expressed the movement's inclusive ethic by encouraging those who were less involved to assume roles involving an increased level of responsibility, such as volunteering for a particular task, offering to "bottom-line" (or assume primary responsibility for) an area of concern, or participating in any other number of opportunities. As one participant put it to me, "we encourage folks to come in and start coming to meetings and be willing to bottom-line certain things."[31] To be sure, the availability of opportunities differed according to the general level of skill involved in the task: while anyone could volunteer for tasks such as putting up or handing out flyers (indeed, facilitators often encouraged participants to do so), other tasks such as serving as a facilitator involved some more experience. Even so, the Facilitation working group held regular trainings for individuals with no prior facilitation experience. In these ways, participants strove to follow a process for ensuring rotating leadership roles. Therefore, even while it was perhaps not possible to entirely escape all of the pitfalls within "the tyranny of structurelessness" (Freeman 1972), participants did their best to avoid them. This general ethic of inclusion, wherein individuals were encouraged to assume various leadership positions, provided the sense that it was possible to play a role in shaping the direction of the movement.

In turn, the decentralized structure of OWS itself provided a variety of leadership opportunities. As described in previous chapters, the movement formally divided itself into

[31] Interview with Mark Adams. Brooklyn, NY, November 16, 2012.

various working groups dedicated to different areas of concern. Working group meetings could attract anywhere between roughly 10 and 70 people, with some of the more active groups meeting as often as every day. In addition, anyone could create a new working group. Indeed, approximately two months after the start of the Zuccotti Park occupation, the number of groups registered on NYCGA.net (the movement's *de facto* website during the occupation) reached two hundred. This suggests many participants took advantage of the opportunity to become "leaders" by forming new working groups.

Moreover, each group itself offered opportunities for individuals to assume leadership positions. In addition to instances that presented the need for bottom-liners, the consensus-based decision making process, used in all working groups and assemblies, offered other opportunities for involvement. Every meeting and assembly required individuals to volunteer as "facilitator," minutes-taker, and a handful of other rotating roles. In some cases, for instance, individuals would even acknowledge that they had served as a facilitator recently, and requested that someone else assume the role. In every case, the chosen facilitation team for that meeting needed the consensus of everyone present at the meeting to serve as such.

Within the consensus-based decision making process more generally, individuals were invited to offer proposals and voice their opinion, both orally and through the use of gestures, about topics under discussion. Here is, for instance, one participant's description of the strengths of consensus-based decision making:

> [The way the movement is structured] definitely allows everyone to have their time in the sun. Because of the consensus process… everyone gets to speak... It is inclusive; it brings people together; it brings in as many voices as possible into the conversation. It is transparent. And also, it is reflective of the group as a whole for the most part. You don't get things where a position wins by one vote, and all of a sudden there's a mandate.

> You get something where every person, even if they're not happy with it, is at least okay with it.[32]

Meetings and assemblies indeed followed a particular process. The facilitators began by soliciting any proposals from those in attendance, and the meeting then proceeded by discussing each proposal in turn. During the discussion of each proposal, those in attendance could voice their concerns or offer "friendly amendments." If any individuals strongly disagreed with the proposal, they could "block" it (though in OWS, at least 10 percent of those in attendance needed to block a proposal for it not to pass). By providing a means through which individuals could either make proposals or voice any concerns about the proposals raised, [33] the consensus-based decision making process therefore provided "space" for individuals to shape the trajectory of the movement.

Facilitators also engaged in other practices that sought to provide leadership opportunities to participants who were less involved, or to prevent the development of informal hierarchies. For instance, two common principles were "Step Up, Step Back" and "Progressive Stack," described in the following way in a public document created by the Facilitation working group:

> ***Step Up, Step Back*** *– This concept is used to ensure individuals check their privilege and step back to ensure that those who have been silenced all their lives are encouraged to step up. It also means those who have spoken a lot, recognize that and step back while encouraging those who have not spoken to step up.*
>
> ***Progressive Stack*** *– This concept is utilized to ensure that the general assembly stack, a list of speaking order, is diverse and consists of a variety of voices. Individuals from traditionally marginalized groups or*

[32] Interview with Christopher Key. New York, NY, July 10, 2012.

[33] Indeed, this kind of inclusiveness is at least part of the reason why consensus-based decision making has been criticized for resulting in lengthy meetings.

who have not spoken may be moved ahead in speaking order to create balance and fairness.

The result of these practices, taken together, was that many participants explicitly attributed their involvement and commitment to what they saw as their ability to potentially shape the movement's overall direction. Take, for instance, the following participant's disillusionment with another social movement organization, which in the spring of 2012 organized an event in the name of the "99 Percent." Below is an excerpt from my fieldnotes:

> *After the debriefing meeting, I spoke with Hank for a bit. He shared how he had recently participated in an action organized by [a group mostly known for mobilizing their adherents to sign online petitions], but did not find it appealing at all.*
>
> *Firstly, he said, it was "too structured," as people from a formal organization against Citizens United essentially led the discussion. He said the event was advertised as a "civil disobedience training," but it ended up being more of a teach-in on the history of civil disobedience. Finally, he said the last straw for him was that many people in the group had signs supporting [a Democratic candidate running for office]. He went up to them and said, "What are you doing? I didn't come here to support a politician," at which point they responded to him: "well, you can leave." Overall, he was so frustrated that he left the event early.*

On the surface, Hank's frustration could be attributed to his preference for more radical, direct action and his reluctance towards supporting any particular politician or political party. But in criticizing the organization for being "too structured," Hank suggests that the more fundamental source of his disillusionment was that he was not solicited for his opinion or given the opportunity to shape the agenda at hand, and therefore more broadly play an active role in shaping the organization itself. This sharply contrasts with the decentralized structure in OWS,

which allowed individuals to spearhead initiatives of interest to them, in addition to individuals' ability, within the context of consensus-based decision making, to raise topics of concern and collectively determine the outcome of a particular meeting. It is also important to note that the group primarily responsible for organizing the meeting described above was largely known for engaging in "transactional mobilizing," rather than the "transformational organizing" that Han (2014) identifies as critical for producing high levels of engagement among social movement participants. In this way, the anecdote also provides a contrast between these distinct associational practices among group members.

In a similar way, during an informal conversation that took place several months after the eviction, another participant described his disillusionment with Bloombergville (a smaller occupation that took place on the sidewalk outside of City Hall during the summer before Occupy Wall Street began, in protest of budget cuts). Below is a selection of my notes from the conversation:

> *I asked John if he had visited Bloombergville, and how it compared to OWS. "Yeah," he said, "But it almost felt too political. At Zuccotti, it felt like we were doing something more. The General Assemblies were amazing—like the fact that anyone could talk at them.*
>
> *You could do anything. Like one time I had a sign that said, 'Fuck the NYPD.' And someone said to me, 'Hey, they're our friends; we want them on our side.' And right after that, someone else [told him] 'He can hold any kind of sign he wants to.'"*

In the first part of this passage, John cites the open-endedness of the movement, as he felt that it was about "more than just politics," and its related inclusiveness through structures such as the General Assembly. His anecdote, in turn, illustrates how many OWS participants believed in

enforcing the movement's general open-endedness. This context, in which nothing was formally proscribed, functioned to include a diverse group of people (even as, as the anecdote shows, this diversity was not entirely devoid of conflict). More importantly, it granted individuals a certain amount of autonomy in which they could develop any kind of working group they wanted.

Another participant even more explicitly attributed his level of engagement to OWS's structure and ethic of inclusion:

> I think if I had come into an action—a structured one, with 2000 folks, and leaders, and I'm a body in a crowd…I think I would've been less inclined to participate. See, it was the ability to come in off the street and participate in this large assembly and just get in and meet folks, and talk to folks and get to know who they are as people, and see where they're coming from…For me the thing that everyone was just kind of open to talking to one another and actually changing something, and *making that ours*, was what kind of cemented me in this movement. And if it was me, coming to this thing that these larger community groups had planned and not really knowing how to get in contact with them… I would have felt like participating in this mass action, and then going home, and back to my daily grind, and not actively try and do something [more] [emphasis added].[34]

While representative of the perspective of many participants, this comment perhaps most directly credits OWS's organizational structure and ethic of inclusion for contributing to this participant's level of commitment. Like Hank, George criticizes "structured" organizations for preventing their constituents from contributing in any meaningful way or having a say in shaping their direction. In citing the importance of being able to "get in and meet folks, and talk to folks and get to know who they are as people, and see where they're coming from," George's statement

[34] George Machado. "Is This Really What Democracy Looks Like? Self-Governance, Leadership, and Autonomy." Panel at Left Forum, 3/18/2012.

also importantly touches upon the ability for participants in the movement to connect with one another. Indeed, as described in the next section, the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park greatly enhanced this ability, and ultimately proved essential for ensuring the commitment of many participants. Nevertheless, as this section has shown, the perceived ability to shape the direction of the movement also played a notable role in cementing participants' commitment to the movement.

Connecting Occupiers: The Zuccotti Park Occupation

An equally important component for maintaining high levels of engagement among participants was the presence of sufficiently robust internal networks among participants. Whereas formal organization may have otherwise provided a means to reproduce such networks, in OWS they primarily formed through the occupation of Zuccotti Park. Due to its ongoing presence in a central, public space, the occupation provided a means for outsiders to join the movement, a means for individuals and groups more generally to be put in touch with one another, and a means for information to easily spread, as individuals could simply visit the occupation and connect with either old or new members of the ongoing network. Ultimately, as rendered most clearly after the eviction of the occupation, this density of ties proved essential for sustaining participants' overall level of engagement.

Just as organizational structure itself represents only one component of activity within organizations, the conditions that contributed to the formation of network connections in Occupy Wall Street went well beyond its formal working group structure, and extended to the space of the occupation itself. As one participant put it, "connections were very easy to make when you were sharing a space and living together; connections were impossible to make when you had

nothing shared whatsoever."[35] In particular, the occupation contributed immensely to the formation of new working groups, as reflected in the following participant's description of Think Tank,[36] itself a working group that hosted a variety of open-ended discussions of interest to participants:

> When people were sharing a space, people would just walk around or join the meta-groups like Think Tank. You could show up to the Think Tank and have a conversation about what you were talking about, what you were interested in, and three or four people might be interested and they'd go off and form a working group.[37]

In this way, the movement's ongoing presence in space, which facilitated the formation of network connections, served as the basis by which many new working groups formed. Indeed, following the eviction of the occupation, the number of working groups registered on NYCGA.net steadily declined. Connections formed in the space of Zuccotti Park thus effectively put into practice the movement's decentralized structure and ethic of inclusion by providing the means through which individuals could form new groups.

The extent to which the encampment provided a concrete means by which individuals could get involved and connect with one another became especially clear after its eviction by the police. As working groups became more insular, personal ties in the form of affinity groups came to serve as the primary organizing logic in the movement. As one participant stated, "once we lost the park, basically you could ignore the people you didn't really like in the movement."

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[35] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, March 18, 2013.

[36] Think Tank, which emerged approximately halfway through the occupation, was a working group and space within Zuccotti Park where participants sat in a circle and engaged in open-ended discussions on a variety of topics. After it was established, the Think Tank had an ongoing presence in the park, which often lasted for several hours every day. Anyone could join the group and participate in the conversation at any moment, and the topics discussed, which would sometimes be announced on a small sign at the periphery of the group, could range anywhere from the significance of the Egyptian revolution to the influence of corporate money on politics.

[37] Interview with Sean McKeown. New York, NY, March 18, 2013.

While groups still largely made decisions on the basis of consensus, the connections between them seemed to grow increasingly tenuous. Several campaigns persisted and new ones emerged, but they did not in themselves provide as many opportunities for new ties between participants to form. This was what one participant meant when he said "following the raid, you lose the focus on community." When asked how he viewed his own role in the movement, he replied:

> Really my main interest was community-building, because I thought that an event where we got together, not for a meeting, just to sort of be around each other and have like teach-ins, and tables, and you could find a working group you had always been looking for and whatnot, would be really good for the community.[38]

In this comment, this participant touches upon precisely the role of the Zuccotti Park occupation: putting individuals and groups into contact with one another, and facilitating the organic formation of new relationships. With the loss of a centrally shared space, the development of new ties became less likely.

At the same time, it became more difficult for participants to obtain information about other areas of the movement in which they were not directly involved. As one participant shared with me in an informal conversation several months after the eviction, "once we lost the park, I don't know where everyone else went. I mean, I feel like everyone is out doing the same thing they were doing before, but the difference is that we don't see each other anymore." While new projects and working groups formed after the eviction, the connections between them became increasingly less robust. The following participant's response, eight months after the eviction, is worth quoting at length to illustrate this:

> Because everything is so fractured now, and so scattered, we have no fucking clue what's happening with each other! There have been four

[38] Interview with Max Bean. Brooklyn, NY, October 5, 2012.

> or five separate attempts to restart the general assemblies—and none of them knew about each other until one person decided to track all of them down! You get this, there are so many attempts—This is a meta-example: Because so few people know about events and information in the movement, people have tried to create aggregators for information… so people know where to go. There are four or five of these sites—and they don't know about each other! That in a nutshell.
>
> And this lack of information between us contributes a lot to I think a lack of engagement with the movement as a whole. It means that we feel so much more isolated. So even though we're technically under this big movement, we're now much more isolated to our individual circles. I mean, I have the people I interact with on a regular basis, other people do too, but unless we have some sort of link, we're not really going to meet each other, you know. And when we were all in the same park, it was kind of a different kettle of fish there [emphasis added].[39]

As the statement above illustrates, without the shared space of the encampment, participants struggled to feel connected with each other, beyond their smaller working groups and personal networks. The movement's broader networks were thus essential for maintaining a large body of committed participants.

For individuals who supported the movement but who were otherwise not actively involved or had few personal ties to other participants, finding out opportunities for involvement became increasingly difficult. Take for instance the following statement, from an interview carried out approximately eight months following the eviction of Zuccotti Park:

> [The camp] created a high visibility for the movement; it made us accessible to people. Passersby could come into the park, talk to someone, and join a working group immediately, and figure out what projects were

[39] Interview with Christopher Key. New York, NY, July 10, 2012.

> happening, what conversations were taking place—and just, people knew where to go. Right now, if I were coming from out of town, I would not know where to go. Some meetings are posted on various Occupy websites, but also figuring out which website to go to is often confusing. Unfortunately it's become a bit exclusive in terms of—you have to know the right people in order to figure out what meeting to go to, or you have to happen upon the right website or something.[40]

The encampment's presence in a central, public space therefore provided an important means for outsiders to join the movement. Just as it became increasingly difficult after the eviction for outsiders to obtain information about how to get involved, during the occupation all that was needed was to simply visit Zuccotti Park and talk to any number of participants. The following participant, for example, attributes this ability of the encampment to his own involvement:

> A lot of why I got so involved was, I showed up—hadn't been involved at all—I saw something I wanted to work on, and I could very, very quickly be like, in that… I think that ceased to be as true.[41]

Even more important than simply providing a source of information was the ability of the encampment to facilitate the creation of ties—between insiders and outsiders, and among participants. Because social movements often experience high levels of turnover, the recruitment of new participants was particularly important to replace actively involved individuals who felt burnout. More generally, the presence of denser and more robust ties among participants ultimately proved critical for sustaining the movement's overall level of engagement.

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[40] Interview with Matthew Presto. Brooklyn, NY, July 16, 2012.

[41] Interview with Max Bean. Brooklyn, NY, October 5, 2012.

Relatedly, the following participant provides a particularly insightful analysis of what happened both before and after the eviction, along with the movement's strengths and weaknesses:

> We were so dependent on the occupation, the space of the occupation, that once that was taken away from us, we weren't able to really recuperate in a way that continued to allow people to plug in. So the strength of the movement back when the occupation was happening is that it was there, it was open, anyone could come in, and there was like, infinite ways in which anyone could find ways to participate. You could start a working group and find similar interests. And like, that was like this very dynamic and prefigurative anarchistic way of organizing networks—a huge strength…
>
> … I think the strength was that it was spontaneously appealing to a lot of people, who don't have a lot of agency over their decisions in their daily lives. One of the huge things was like, the tremendous amount of kind of porousness of the occupation—people could [just] come and be a part of it [emphasis added].[42]

This participant's account touches upon both of the factors discussed here that contributed to participants' engagement. On the one hand, the tactic of the occupation combined with the movement's decentralized structure, inclusive ethic, and general open-endedness allowed participants to contribute to the movement in a variety of ways, which in turn contributed to the widespread perception that they could help shape the movement's direction ("agency"). On the other hand, the occupation served as an important source for the formation and strengthening of the movement's internal networks.

[42] Interview with Zoltán Glück. Brooklyn, NY, September 7, 2012.

While participants continued encouraging others to assume leadership roles and spearheaded new projects after the eviction, there were less opportunities for new ties between participants to form. Personal ties continued to serve as a form of connection between participants, but their limited reach meant that groups became generally smaller and more isolated. Another active participant viewed this situation in the following way:

> Without the space, class comes back into the organizing. When we had the space, people who had never been to anything were like, 'I'm in Sanitation now and I'm cleaning up the park,' or 'I'm in Kitchen' or 'I'm at the info Desk and I'm valued.' People who had never interacted with each other were interacting, to get stuff done. Without the space, those people don't have that stability and don't have that privilege. You start to operate in these small, private spaces again, and there's exclusion that happens. Class comes right back in your face and it becomes comfortable again (Milkman et al. 2013:34).

While the research discussed here cannot confirm whether OWS became more internally segregated by class after the eviction, it should nevertheless be clear that participants became more isolated and disconnected from each other. Ultimately, the density of interactions among participants proved vital for providing participants with a sense of how their work was connected to the larger movement. Without this sense, and without the ability to form meaningful ties between newcomers and those already involved, the movement was unable to sustain the level of engagement of its participants overall, and as a result, unable to capitalize on the strengths of its decentralized structure and inclusive ethic. In this way, a movement's ability to sustain its internal networks is as important for ensuring participants' commitment as its ability to grant participants a feeling of ownership over and agency in their contributions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings discussed in this chapter shed insight into the factors that influence high levels of engagement in movement organizations. In the case of Occupy Wall Street, two factors contributed to the engagement of participants: its decentralized structure and inclusive ethic, and the ability provided by the Zuccotti Park occupation to forge ties among participants. On the one hand, participants cited as a source of their commitment the movement's decentralized structure and inclusive ethic—which respectively granted the movement's working groups a certain amount of autonomy and generally encouraged those who were less involved to assume leadership positions. In doing so, these features of the movement gave participants the feeling that their work could make a difference and influence its general trajectory. After the occupation's eviction, however, the movement became largely unable to sustain the commitment of many participants, as the loss of the occupation weakened its ability to forge ties between participants. Ultimately, these ties were critical for providing participants with a feeling of investment in the movement and an understanding of how their work was connected to that of others. In demonstrating the importance of networks for participants' engagement, the findings presented here are consistent with and expand upon previous research on the benefits of networks in social movements.

In general, the argument presented here suggests, on the one hand, that participants will more likely feel engaged if they sense that their opinions and actions matter—that they will feel more invested in the actions of a movement if they feel the tangible impact of their own actions. It also suggests, in turn, that participants will also feel more invested when they are more closely connected to other participants, and able to situate their work in relationship to other participants.

The implications of each of the study's findings are worth discussing in turn. While adopting a decentralized structure and/or promoting an internal culture of inclusion may be effective means for sustaining participants' engagement, the study's findings suggest that more important than these factors alone is that together, they grant participants the feeling that they can shape the trajectory of the movement. Similarly, more important for OWS participants' engagement than the occupation *per se* was the ongoing presence of a means by which the movement could reproduce its internal networks. In this sense, future research ought to investigate other means with which to grant an organization's members a feeling of agency and/or connect participants to each other. Ultimately, had Occupy Wall Street developed a source for the reproduction of its massive network of participants, it would have perhaps been able to carry out even more profound changes.

Conclusion

This dissertation has discussed three variations on a single theme—the connection between a social movement's internal networks and its uses of space. Chapter 2 presented evidence illustrating that the Occupy Wall Street movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park carried out a set of organizational functions which, in doing so, effectively contributed the organizational structure of the movement. At their most basic essence, organizations are networks. This was all the more true in the case of Occupy Wall Street, where a minimal formal organizational structure was present. In fact, as I argued in Chapter 3, the movement's decentralized structure and tactic of occupation served as elements of a global repertoire, where the two often appeared and interacted together. This interaction is itself illustrative of the connection between social movements' use of space and their networks, as the movement's decentralized structure thrived as long as the occupation of Zuccotti Park helped maintain relatively dense network connections between participants. In Chapter 4, I showed how these dense network connections, along with the perception that participants could play a role in shaping the movement's overall direction, in fact contributed to participants' engagement. Ultimately, the findings discussed here demonstrate the benefit and importance of understanding the ways in which networks, organization, and space are interrelated.

The evidence presented in this dissertation has suggested that a social movement's networks and its use of space are mutually constitutive; just as a movement's existing internal networks can provide the basis for different collective uses of space, space can itself serve as the

basis for the physical manifestation and creation of new network connections between participants. In this sense, a feedback loop between the two is possible, wherein a movement's networks develop certain uses of space which in turn result in the creation and/or strengthening of a movement's networks. These findings thus not only suggest that more attention be placed on how social movements use space and the different processes through which movements expand their networks—but, also, on relationship between these two phenomena.

One of the limitations of this study is that it has primarily focused only on a single use of space—the occupation of Zuccotti Park. This decision was justified in order to obtain in-depth detail on the use of space in one particular context. In doing so, the study has laid the foundations for future research on the various ways in which social movements may use different kinds of spaces, and their consequences.

Generally speaking, of course, social movements use different spaces in different ways, and for a variety of purposes. There are spaces for meeting and making decisions; spaces for networking; spaces to engage in various forms of disruption and direct action; spaces for recruitment; spaces, more generally, for developing a movement's resources or power. Perhaps it is useful to categorize these uses in terms of a movement's objectives: there are, in this sense, spaces for carrying out a movement's basic organizational functions, and spaces for a movement to demonstrate its disruptive power. The evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that in the case of Occupy Wall Street, the occupation of Zuccotti Park served both as a form of disruption and as a means for carrying out basic organizational functions. Because effective forms of disruption often invite repression, perhaps it was a mistake for the movement not to keep these functions separate. In any case, it should be clear that all social movements stand to

benefit from a more sophisticated understanding of the functions and consequences of different uses of space.

While this dissertation has referred to space literally as a physical area or location, future research may benefit from incorporating a broader understanding of the concept—to incorporate, for example, virtual spaces. Just as physical space can allow for different types of conversation and networking, so too can virtual spaces. In this sense, the relationship between the uses of other types of space and the internal networks of a social movement is well worth investigating. How do these different types of space compare with one another? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Furthermore, what is their relationship to each other? Are embodied and online protest similarly mutually constitutive (Juris and Razsa 2012)? How do the various uses of these different forms of space either help or hinder the effectiveness of a social movement?

While much remains to be explored, the arguments presented in this dissertation draw attention to the overall importance of analyzing the relationship between networks and space. Of course, my point here has not at all been to suggest that case of Occupy Wall Street represents an exemplary model. My point, instead, has been to analyze it in order to understand what we can learn. The worst we can do—as both social movement scholars and participants—is to not learn from our successes and failures. The least we can do, then, is to develop useful knowledge so that movements can be better positioned to make the changes they want to see in the world, and ultimately, to help construct a better world. That such knowledge and learning is possible should serve as a source for hope.

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Appendix A: Figures

Fig. 1. “This Space Occupied.” Photo of Zuccotti Park occupation on Day 55 (11/11/2011), shortly before the eviction.

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/scottlynchnyc/6333685920

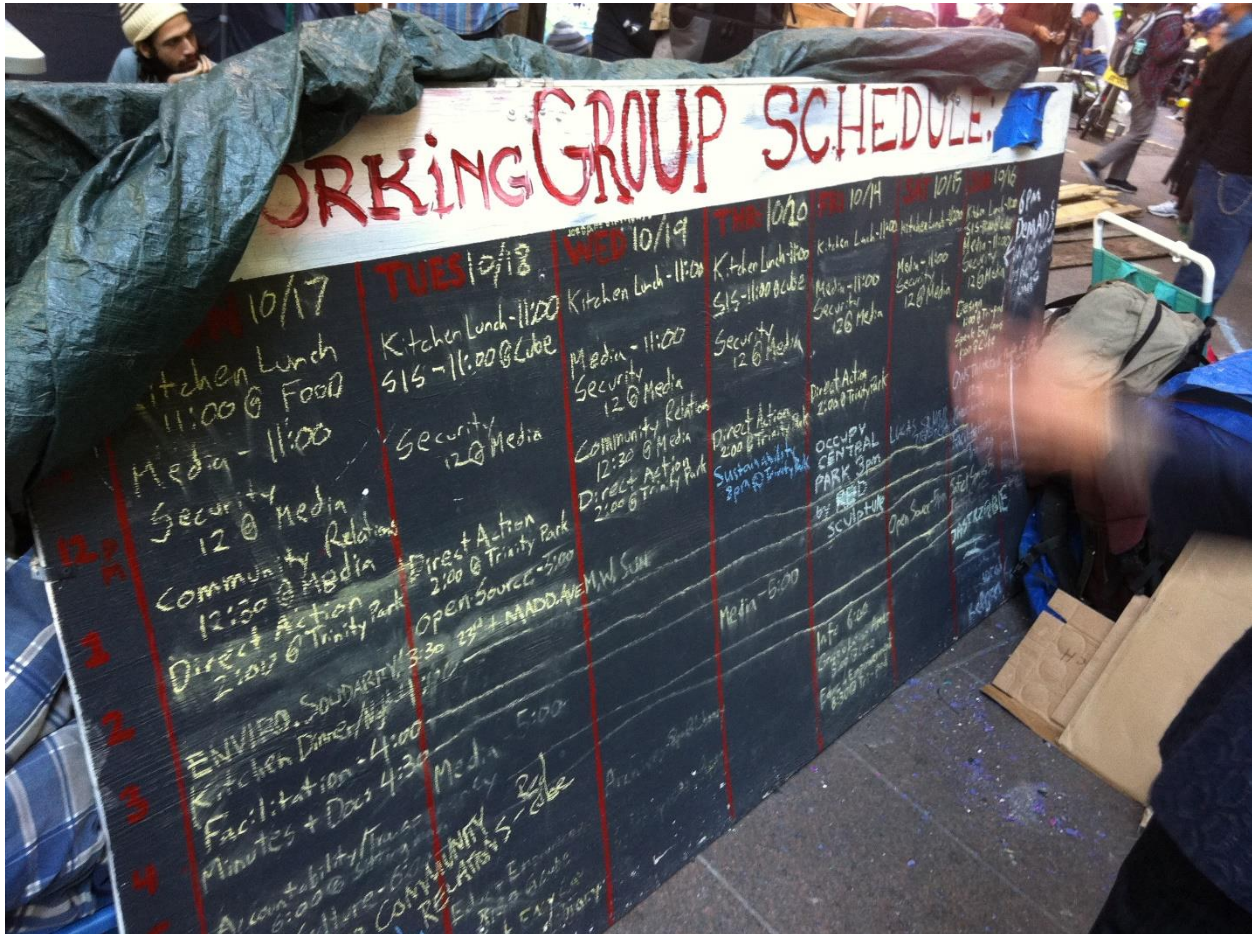
Fig. 2. Cardboard signs on display in Zuccotti Park.

Source: http://emajmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/occupy-wall-st-2-e1319097422425.jpg

Fig. 3. Visions & Goals Working Group meeting, Zuccotti Park, September 2011.

Source: http://www.salon.com/2011/09/29/at_occupy_wall_street/

Fig. 4. Chalkboard displaying working group meeting times and places.

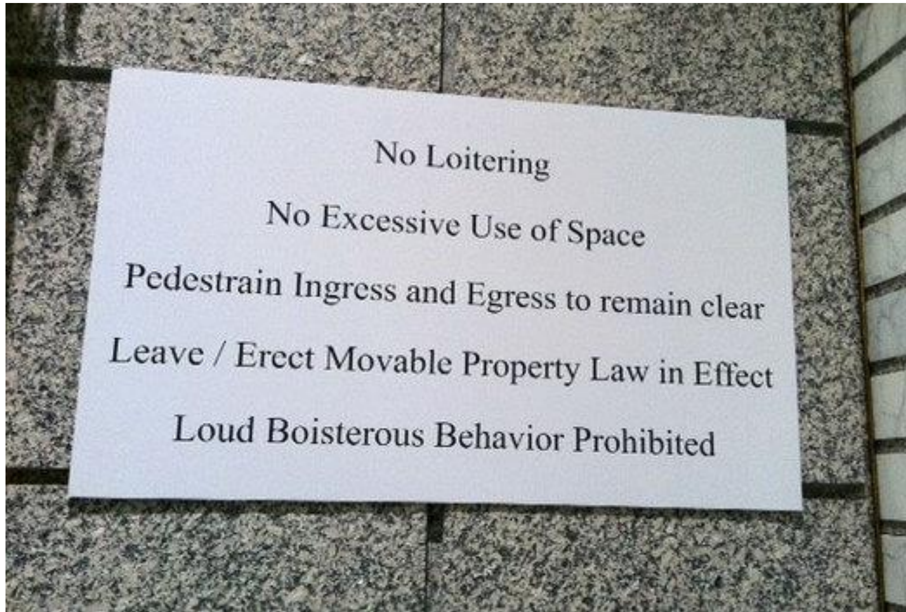


Source: Author.

Fig. 5. Working group meeting at the 60 Wall Street atrium.

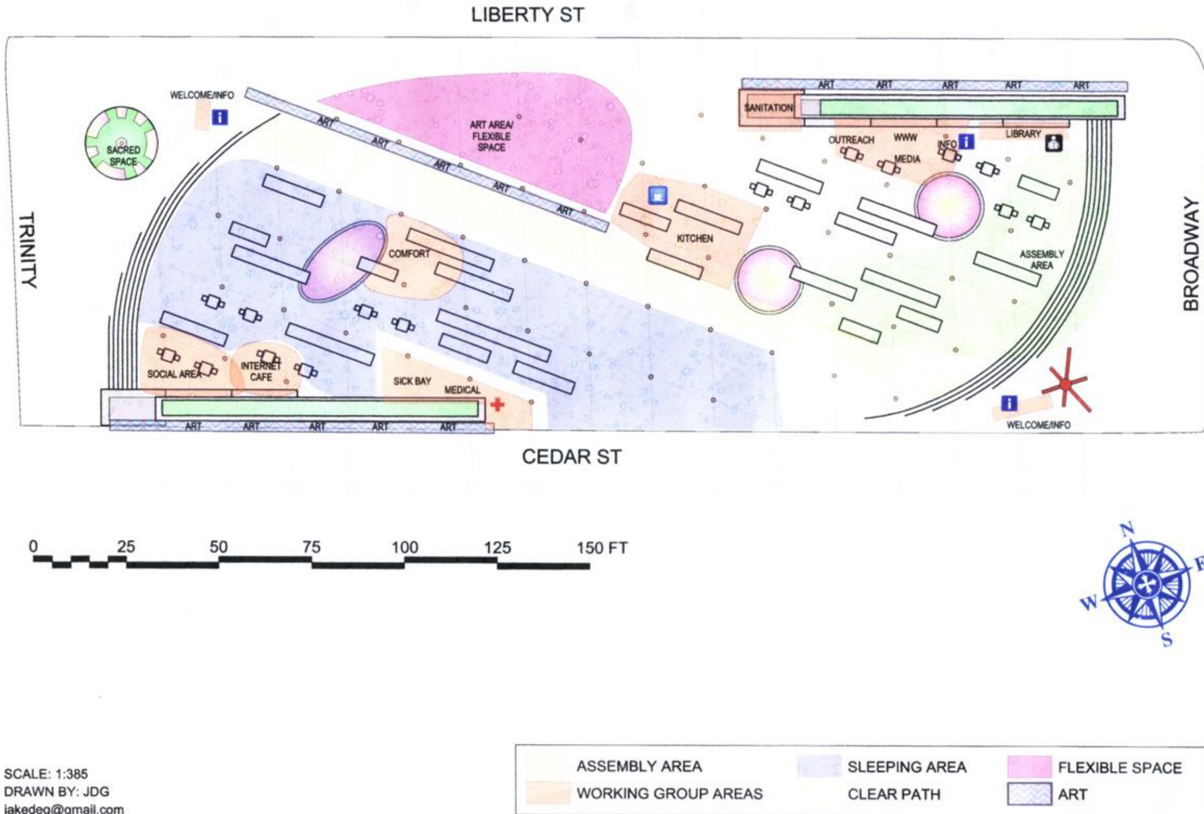
Source: http://bobplain.com/features/occutour/where-ows-does-its-daily-business-60-wall-st/

Fig. 6. Sign posted at the 60 Wall Street atrium following the occupation's eviction.



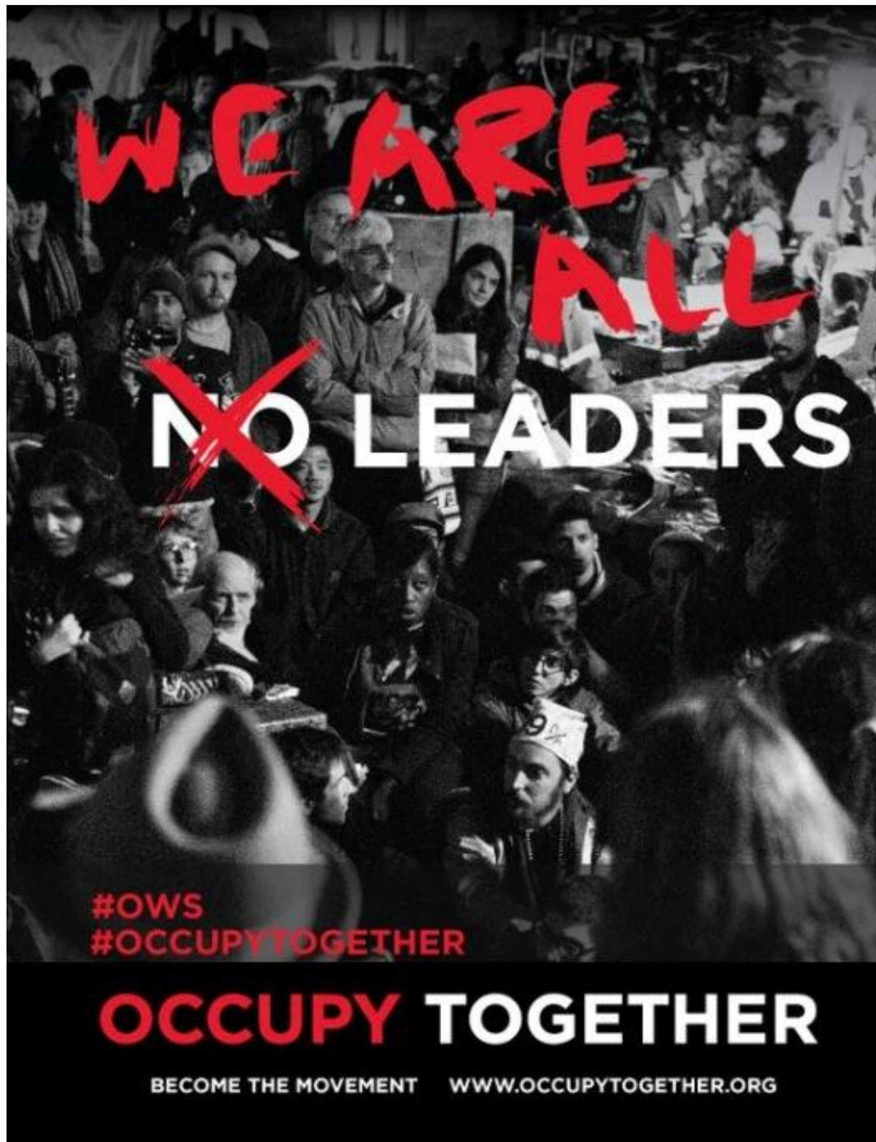
Source: http://places.designobserver.com/feature/occupy-wall-street-places-and-spaces-of-political-action/35938/

Fig. 7. Map of Zuccotti Park encampment drawn by Occupy participant. October 10th, 2011.



Source: http://places.designobserver.com/feature/occupy-wall-street-places-and-spaces-of-political-action/35938/

Fig. 8. “We Are All Leaders.” Image circulated in the Occupy movement.



Source: http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/we-are-all-leaders/

Appendix B: Protocol for Interviews

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES:

7/10/2012 Interview with Christopher Key

7/16/2012 Interview with Matthew Presto

9/7/2012 Interview with Zoltán Glück

9/15/2012 Interview with Jonathan Smucker

10/5/2012 Interview with Max Bean

11/2/2012 Interview with Mike Diamond

11/15/2012 Interview with Leo Eisenstein

11/16/2012 Interview with Mark Adams

11/21/2012 Interview with Aaron Bornstein

3/18/2013 Interview with Sean McKeown

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

Where are you originally from?

How long have you been in New York?

Are you working now?
(If no) When was the last time you were employed? (What was your job then?)
(If yes) What kind of work do you do? (Do you like it?)

Personal Involvement

How did you initially become involved in OWS? (When was this?)

Why did you become involved?

Have you been involved in other political causes before OWS?

How would you describe the work you've done in OWS so far?

How do you see your own role within the broader movement?

Movement Characteristics

Moving on to talk about the way you see the movement as a whole: What do you see as the main goals of OWS?

Generally speaking, what do you see as the movement's main strengths and weaknesses?

Moving on to talk about the way the movement is organized: How would you describe the organizational structure of the movement, and what do you see as its strengths and weaknesses?

What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the consensus process?

Specifically talking about the movement's structure, I've heard people use the word "autonomy." How do you understand autonomy, and what role does it play in the movement?

Would you say there are leaders in OWS?
(If yes) What does leadership in this movement mean to you?
(If no) What does it mean for a movement to be leaderless?

Understandings of Politics

What do you see as the relationship between OWS and party politics?

Do you vote?
(If yes: Why?
Are you a member of a political party or do you support any candidates? (Why/Why not?)
(If no) Why not?

Would you say you are politically involved in other ways, in addition to OWS?

Concluding Questions

Moving forward, what do you think the priorities of the movement should be?