

Occupy Wall Street:

An "Imaginative" Exploration of the September, 2011
Protests in New York City

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To my mother, whose encouragement and faith in my academic abilities gave me the motivation I needed to overcome the most trying obstacles throughout this process.

Abstract

The Occupy Wall Street Movement on September 17, 2011 that involved public protest and the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York City's financial district, is an important example of mass public dissent in American history. The conflict that lies at the heart of the protests is between two parties identified in the data as the 99% and the 1%. An abductive, grounded research strategy to explore the language used in interpreting the circumstances and details of the event, is used in conjunction with a theoretical framework provided by C. Wright Mills (1959) and Jock Young (2011), to uncover the motivations behind the 99%'s decision to protest. What is revealed upon completion of the analysis are two broad motivations for public protest by the 99% related to issues of fairness and access, set within an historical context of growing dissent against corrupt economic institutions and the governments that sustain them.

Preface

On July 13, 2011, the Vancouver-based Adbusters Media Foundation, an anti-consumerist group best known for its award-winning magazine *AdBusters*, issued a call to readers asking them to participate in a “US Day of Rage” scheduled for September 17, 2011. Frustrated by a growing disparity in wealth and the absence of legal repercussions for the corporations and bankers behind the 2008 global financial crisis, it suggested supporters set up camp in Zuccotti Park (in the heart of the financial district) in New York City, in order to peacefully demand change:

Are you ready for a Tahrir Moment?...
On September 17, we want to see 20,000 people
flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens,
peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street for a few months.

- *Adbusters*, issue no. 97

This action set in motion a series of protests, demonstrations, and a two month occupation that would come to be known as “Occupy Wall Street.” This thesis is an attempt at making sense of the dispute between the 99%, the protest group consisting of members of the poor and working class who represent the socio-economic circumstances of the majority of American society, and the ‘antagonists’ referred to as the 1%, a small group consisting of business owners and government officials who collude to control a disproportionate amount of wealth and power. The analysis performed is intended to draw insight and develop theory related to the motivations and impetus behind the actions of the 99%.

Blaikie (2007), Charmaz (2006) and Creswell (2013), establish the strategic foundation utilized for my investigation of Occupy Wall Street, listing the elements and detailing the procedures needed in order to complete a thorough examination of the event. To summarize the contribution of Blaikie (2007) and Creswell (2013), social inquiry must necessarily contain a method (or process for uncovering information and drawing conclusions that can be replicated by others and holds up to academic scrutiny), as well as theoretical ideas and assumptions about what constructs reality (ontological assumptions) and how knowledge of reality is produced (epistemological assumptions). For the purposes of my analysis, I orient myself within an “Interpretivist” and “constructionist” paradigm, recognizing that individuals come to construct their social reality by attaching subjective meanings to lived experiences, and that, a plurality of meanings and interpretations can exist for any given object or event. The meaning creation-association process is determined by individual perception and context. As a researcher, we cannot come to any “absolute truths” about the social phenomenon under investigation, but rather, accept the possibility that multiple interpretations, and therefore, multiple “truths,” are possible.

Elements of an Inductive and Abductive research strategy were incorporated in my examination of Occupy. Recognizing that different opinions surrounding the Occupy protests were bound to exist, I collected a substantial number of texts to ensure that a variety of perspectives would be represented. The goal of inductive analysis is the identification of generalizations, or patterns of ideas that can be found consistently throughout the source material, which are referred to throughout this thesis as “topics.” The underlying logic surrounding this research strategy is that the quantity of identifiable topics in the text is related to the importance and relevance that topic holds among commentators of the Movement. Abductively, the importance of language use

among those who commented on Occupy is emphasized, with individual meanings – that ultimately combine to form a general perception of reality - found in the word usage pertaining to Occupy. The analysis fundamentally explores the many narratives surrounding the Movement, acknowledging that the meanings individuals attach to the event are embedded in the language usage and vocabulary. The “reality” of what happened is constructed by those who experienced it, and is in part a function of how the event was interpreted, and how those interpretations were communicated and disseminated to others.

Being incapable of participating in the protests or witnessing the event first-hand, having been in Ottawa while protests occurred, prevented me conducting interviews with participants of the Movement directly. Thus, secondary accounts were used to examine interpretations of the event, consisting of three distinct data sets found using three online platforms: Google Search, the University of Ottawa Online Library, and Tumblr. These data sets can be seen as three “voices,” with each speaking about the Movement from a unique position. Media pundits offer facts and provide commentary on what they see unfolding before them. Their opinions are derived from personal experience in connection with documentary observation of the protests. Authors published in scholarly journals tend to abstain from providing personal opinions that cannot be substantiated with some form of evidence. The protests, for the most part, are examined critically and objectively, with many parallels and comparisons drawn between Occupy and other major social demonstrations in recent history. The incorporation of scholarly data is in keeping with the research practices of Mills (1959: 122), who noted the importance of considering the work of other scholars in helping establish a foundation from which to build your own research. Testimonials posted to the “We Are The 99 Percent” Tumblr thread are considered “first-hand accounts,” providing the best source of information regarding the personal biographies of those who supported Occupy Wall Street. They are understood as journal entries written by individuals who align with the 99%. Each post is intended to provide evidence of the consequences of wealth disparity and inequitable access to opportunities for the average American citizen; evidence that the claims being made by the 99% are true. They are taken at face value, ignoring the possibility of falsehoods and exaggerations.

Analysis of the source material is performed using a grounded approach outlined by Charmaz (2006). Charmaz (2006), offers a general outline for performing grounded theory, which includes the creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data, and the integration of categories into a theoretical framework. Mills (1959) provides insight into the creation of analytic codes, arguing that the identification of common ideas into “types,” and cross-classifying them in order to uncover the “conditions and consequences” of each type, is the best way to draw relevant conclusions from the source material. Mills (1959) differentiates between the terms “topic” and “theme,” words that are often used synonymously with “type.” A topic is defined as a broad concept requiring a section or chapter to discuss, for example, the topic of “Economic Inequality in America.” Themes are broader trends and “master conceptions” that are revealed by comparing topics and examining the logic in which topics unfold in the analysis, for example, “Social Stratification” or “Crony Capitalism.”

In the analysis performed for this thesis, the categories that emerge from the source material are referred to throughout the study as “topics” and sub-topics. These topics were identified by performing multiple close readings of the source material, “coding” the topics found within the content in a process involving three steps, borrowed from the coding procedures provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998). First, initial topics were identified during the first

round of close readings ("open coding"), followed by the grouping of important topics together into larger subjects or "conceptual families" ("axial coding") during the second round of close readings. For example, the initial topics of "social media utilization," "*Adbusters Magazine*," and the "occupation of Zuccotti Park," were eventually grouped together in order to discuss the "subject of place" in relation to Occupy Wall Street. The final stage of coding, involving the refinement of topics into a theoretical framework ("selective coding"), was accomplished by incorporating the Sociological and Criminological Imagination, defined and elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

Mills (1959) and Young (2011) contribute to the analysis in the form of a theoretical framework, translated into both a methodological model for grouping and comparing topics found in the source material, as well as a process for the development of theory. Mills (1959) and Young (2011), in their critiques of "Grand Theory" and "Abstracted Empiricism," argue that research intended to construct a unified theory, or that is motivated entirely by quantitative, empiricist studies in the natural sciences, ultimately produce no revelations of value. Grand theories draw conclusions that are broad with little practical application to everyday problems, while Abstracted Empiricism, suffers from issues of specificity, adding limitations to research stemming from the application of the Scientific Method. Mills (1959) argues that classical research "lies between abstracted empiricism and grand theory," requiring a level of abstraction both broad enough to facilitate the observation of everyday milieus, while having a targeted focus on social and historical structures (124).

Both authors draw the same conclusion: that a more imaginative approach to research must be employed if any meaningful insight is to be drawn from it. The primary tenet of the Sociological Imagination is the importance of understanding the relationship between biography, history and social structure, defined as the capacity to link biography, or the personal experiences of an individual life, with the impersonal workings of an historical era and social or institutional structure in which that life is located (Mills, 1959: 5). The "fundamental triangle" that Young (2011: 2) identifies, the inner life of human actors, and the social and historical setting in which they live, involves placing an individual within a social structure at a particular place and time. Applying the three elements of the "fundamental triangle" to my investigation of Occupy Wall Street resulted in the creation of three sub-studies, each intended to explore one aspect of the event, a format that is in keeping with Mills' (1959: 126) best practices. The first of these studies (Chapter 3) will identify and elaborate upon topics related to the historical context of the New York City protests in mid-September, 2011. This particular study will draw upon the "News" and "Academic" data sets, exploring commentary provided by media pundits and academic experts for insight. For the purposes of this study, the term "historical context" can also be understood as the "setting" for the protests, encompassing two broad topics: Time and Place. The first half of this study will elaborate on the subject of Time, highlighting the parallels that exist between Occupy Wall Street and other acts of social unrest that took place internationally in 2011. What the data reveals is that the Occupy protests were by no means an isolated incident, and that 2011 was an exceptional year for mass public uprisings against corrupt governments and social institutions. The second half of this study will focus on the subject of Space, elaborating on topics related to the notion that the act of "occupation" (a key feature of the Occupy protests) took place in both physical and virtual reality, having a significant, visible presence both on public streets and on the internet. Topics discussed include, how organizers of the protest were able to mobilize support using online media channels, the act of occupying Zuccotti Park, and the utilization of social media for both communication between protestors, and the dissemination of messages to garner further support.

The second sub-study (Chapter 4) will examine topics related to social structures and institutions. Topics explored in this study will also be drawn from the same data sets used in Chapter 3, and will cover a spectrum of issues, including, the core grievances and demands of Occupy protestors, political support and resistance to the movement, legal and law enforcement responses to demonstrations, political representation, “horizontalism” and participatory democracy. What analysis of the source material reveals is that economic inequality is the core public issue driving Occupy protestors to demonstrate, at least, from the news media and academic perspectives. The idea that Occupy has an official list of grievances and demands is a controversy explored in this study, but of those lists that have generated widespread public interest, many of the issues expressed have to do with an ever-widening income gap, caused by exploitative corporate interests that are perceivably given favorable treatment by the federal government. As well, many of the solutions recommended by protestors seek to create a more equitable distribution of wealth.

The final sub-study (Chapter 5) explores the individual milieu of those who align with the 99% protest group, expressing their support by contributing to the Tumblr blog thread “We Are The 99 Percent.” This study is unique, in that, it draws exclusively from the Tumblr data set, using it to identify commonly held beliefs and life experiences among protest participants and supporters. The goal of this sub-study is to shed light on the individual biographies of those who support the 99%’s efforts, pointing out the hardships and obstacles one faces being a participant in the established American social and economic system.

The final discussion (Chapter 6) draws conclusions regarding the motivations of the 99% to publically demonstrate by examining the connection between individual problems and public issues, placing those relationships within an historical context, in keeping with Sociological and Criminological Imagination presented by Mills (1959) and Young (2011). The discussion begins with a summary of the analytical approach and theoretical framework applied to this analysis of Occupy Wall Street, followed by a review of the topics that emerged as a result of the coding of source material. The final two sections of the discussion identify important themes revealed through comparative analysis of the topics; themes which are used to elaborate upon the relationships between private troubles and public issues illustrated within the source material, as defined by Mills (1959) and Young (2011). These relationships are then discussed in relation to the historical context established in sub-study 1, in order to draw two main conclusions regarding the primary issues laying at the heart of Occupy Wall Street demonstrations.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1
Analytic Approach.....	2
CHAPTER 2: Mills, Young, and an Imaginative Approach to Social Science Research	12
A Critique of Sociological and Criminological Research	13
Intellectual Craftsmanship	16
Seeking a Balance Between Two Extremes	22
CHAPTER 3 – PILLAR 1: Establishing an Historical Context for the Movement	27
The Subject of Time: Precedents and Influences	28
The Subject of Place: The Occupation of Wall Street in Physical and Virtual Reality	42
CHAPTER 4 – PILLAR 2: Systemic Issues & Responses	59
Economic Inequality as a Driving Force Behind Occupy Wall Street	60
Political Representativeness as a Driving Force Behind Occupy Wall Street	70
The Demands Debate.....	84
CHAPTER 5 – PILLAR 3: Who are the 99%?	93
The Tumblr Sample.....	94
The “American Dream” & “Broken Promises”	97
Employment & Debt	101
Discussion & Conclusions	109
A Summary of Research Purpose and Analytic Approach	110
A Review of Topics Revealed in the Three Sub-Studies.....	113
Private Troubles & Public Issues	117
The Fundamental Triangle	123
APPENDIX 1	136
APPENDIX 2	151
References.....	156

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I began my M.A. studies days before Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests erupted. Demonstrations began the morning of September 17, 2011, with individuals identifying themselves as members of the 99%, flooding New York City's downtown financial district. Images and videos of the demonstrations spread quickly online. Thompson (2011) credits popular social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook for being instrumental in growing awareness among the general public about a "leaderless resistance movement," and with the help of the large user bases both social networks boast, along with some assistance from online blogs and alternative news sources, an estimated 1,000 protestors came out in support of OWS in its first day (Addley, 2011). By early October, Occupy had become an international phenomenon, with demonstrations taking place in 95 cities in 82 countries, and as of December 20, the website occupytogether.org listed 2,571 Occupy communities worldwide.

The protests were a trending topic on the internet and on major social media platforms in the first few weeks. However, news of the growing dissent was virtually ignored by traditional media sources (such as television and print) until New York Police officers started arresting supporters in droves. Once the number of occupiers of the privately-owned public park referred to as Zuccotti Park (or Liberty Square) reached a critical mass, attracting a few key celebrities, inciting police brutality, prompting New York's municipal government to consider eviction measures, did major media outlets begin to cover the protests in a diligent, consistent manner. The entire event fascinated me, and I knew I wanted to explore it more in-depth. The problem I encountered when attempting to indulge my fascination was what appeared to be inconsistencies among various sources regarding details of the dispute. Admittedly, I was confused. I found it impossible to get the facts straight with so many differing perspectives and opinions available. The issue of clarity and consistency of fact was only exacerbated as the amount of information surrounding the protests grew. Eventually, I became convinced that making my Master's thesis a sense-making exercise, directed at better understanding the Occupy Wall Street Movement, might be a worthwhile endeavour to which others could benefit.

Having chosen the Occupy Wall Street protests as an event worthy of examination for my thesis, the most logical first step was to select an analytical approach from which to thoroughly and systematically examine the literature surrounding it. For me, on an entirely intuitive level, the best way to make sense of the protests was to explore it from multiple angles. This meant gathering as

many different accounts, interpretations and opinions of the event as possible, and examining them both individually, and in relation to each other. My over-arching goal early in the research process was to construct a “big picture” for what happened on September 17, 2011; to develop a well-rounded and detailed explanation for the event that took into account the variety of interpretations that existed, drawing comparisons between accounts in order to gather insights and develop theories. I began conducting my own research, gathering information from several sources including online news articles, comments and posts from social media websites, documents posted online on behalf of protest organizers, and articles published in academic journals. The research questions I initially intended to resolve were broad in scope, uncovering ideas about what happened, why it happened and who was involved on both sides of the dispute. Ideally, the conducting of interviews with individuals directly involved with protest initiatives would be the best way to obtain the information sought after. However, the location of protest demonstrations being held in New York City, prevented me from being there personally.

Analytic Approach

Norman Blaikie’s (2007) book entitled *Approaches to Social Enquiry*, provides a concise roadmap for researchers to follow when conducting social research. According to Blaikie (2007), any approach to social enquiry must necessarily include both the philosophical and theoretical ideas and assumptions about what constructs our social reality (ontological assumptions) and how knowledge of it can be produced (epistemological assumptions), as well as the “logics” (strategy and methodology) used to develop new knowledge and generate theory (5). He provides a detailed list of elements to be taken under consideration before social research can begin. These elements include a “research paradigm” containing assumptions about reality and how it is to be studied, the “research problem” to be investigated and the “research question” or questions that need answering (both of which were previously mentioned), the “posture” to be adopted by the researcher towards the researched, and the “research strategy” to be employed to answer the questions (Blaikie, 2007: 5).

Ontological & Epistemological Assumptions

Blaikie’s (2007) “research paradigm” is essentially a combination of Ontological and Epistemological assumptions about the object under investigation. In social research, ontological assumptions refer to the nature of reality and its fundamental characteristics. Researchers embrace

the idea of multiple realities, which are investigated by exploring multiple forms of evidence from different individuals' perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2013). The ontological orientation for this investigation draws inspiration from Creswell's (2013) discussion of *Interpretivism*. To Creswell (2013), Interpretivists achieve an understanding of the world in which they live through the development of subjective meanings that are associated with life experiences. A social researcher, therefore, must recognize the abundance and variability of these subjective meanings for each individual (Creswell, 2013: 30).

Epistemological assumptions provide the philosophical grounding necessary for identifying what can be known, and the criteria for deciding how knowledge can be judged as being both valid and accurate (Blaikie, 2007: 18). Another way of thinking about epistemology is by looking at it in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the "things" they wish to acquire knowledge about. "Things" can either be real or ideal, exist in material reality or as ideas alone (Blaikie, 2007: 18). When researchers view things objectively or empirically, items have intrinsic meaning that the researcher must simply uncover. When things are perceived subjectively, meaning is not derived intrinsically, but is imposed onto objects by the perceiver, and because the object itself plays no part in the creation of meaning, multiple meanings by multiple observers are possible (Blaikie, 2007: 19). Having chosen Interpretivism as the ontological orientation for my thesis, it naturally lent itself to the adoption of a Constructionist epistemological orientation. Whereas Interpretivism is the realization that people attach subjective meaning to objects and events in the material world, *Constructionism* is recognition of the meaning-giving process that individuals undertake as they interact with people and objects in their daily lives. A constructionist's perception of objects sits in the middle of objective and subjective perception, with the observer playing an active role in meaning creation.

The "Thing" being examined in this thesis is the very real event that took place September, 2011 in New York City's Financial District. This examination of the protests will recognize that all the meaning attached to it is the result of hundreds of thousands of people speaking and commenting on the events with others. The only meanings attached to the protests that are useful for my analysis are the experiences of those who participated directly in the protests, or witnessed the events as they unfolded in real-time. My analysis will account for the variety of perspectives and opinions that exist in statements surrounding the Movement, during two stages of the research process: the data and source material collection stage, which will seek out sources in

several media formats from different authors, and during the analysis stage, where similar topics will be isolated and grouped in meaningful ways.

Researcher's Posture

Blaikie (2007) identifies two important decisions social researchers must make in regards to the extent of their role in the research process. The first decision considers the relationship between the researcher and researched; a choice relating to the stance the researcher intends to adopt regarding their involvement with research participants. This is essentially a decision as to whether to distance yourself from those being studied, or to immerse yourself deeply in their culture and environment; being either an "outsider" or "insider" (Blaikie, 2007: 11). The second choice a researcher must make has to do with whether they consider themselves to be an "expert" or "learner" in the area under investigation (Blaikie, 2007: 11). An "expert" researcher approaches the problem already possessing relevant existing research, using the theories and conclusions drawn from these studies to influence the way in which the research questions are formulated and research strategy executed. The "learner" does the opposite, trying hard to approach the research with as few preconceived notions as possible, the idea being, to allow the details of the event by those who participated to "speak for themselves" (Blaikie, 2007: 11). In this strategy, the questions to be answered emerge from the research process, and not an existing body of scientific work. The typical research strategy employs either an "outside expert" or "inside learner" approach, but Blaikie (2007: 11) admits that many variations exist in between.

In keeping with my intended research approach thus far, the role I will play as a researcher will resemble that of an outside learner. Because I was not present in New York City while the protests were happening, I am in no position to provide an ethnographic account of the events. Thus, all of the personal accounts I have gathered during the initial data collection were published online by those who witnessed and participated in the event as it happened, making me an outsider in this respect. Employing an interpretivist, abductive research approach for examining data, naturally positions the researcher as a learner, allowing insight to be grounded in the interpretations themselves, without any preconceived notions of what might be uncovered.

Research Strategy

This "logic" Blaikie (2007) discusses is referred to throughout his text as a "Research Strategy": a procedure for generating new knowledge that provides a series of steps needed to

answer “what” and “why” questions, with four major strategies being identified: Inductive, Deductive, Retroductive and Abductive (2007: 8). I intend to apply elements of both the Inductive and Abductive strategies, as described by Blaikie (2007), to my investigation of Occupy Wall Street. The *Inductive* approach begins with data collection, proceeding to determine what general conclusions can be derived after analysis of the data is complete (Blaikie, 2007: 9). Theory is derived from the generalizations that attempt to explain what was found in the data. The aim of the inductive process, according to Blaikie (2007: 9), is to “describe the characteristics of people and social situations, and then to determine the nature of the patterns of the relationships, or networks of relationships, between these characteristics.” The theories revealed, under this logic, are believed to predict and explain the occurrence of specific events by locating them within an established pattern. Blaikie (2007) admits that such an approach is great at answering “what” questions, but very poor at answering “why” questions (Blaikie, 2007: 9). The manner in which Inductive research unfolds strongly resembles the research process I intuitively undertook when originally embarking on this study, making it a natural fit. The first step I took was the accumulation of a large pool of data, and the theories developed out of this data (discussed in the final chapter) will be derived from the patterns and links founding during analysis and coding of the data, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The aim of the *Abductive* approach is to reveal how social actors construct their social reality, or the meaning individuals apply to their social world (Blaikie, 2007: 10). The primary means by which a researcher can assess these social constructions is by examining interpretations and productions created by social actors regarding the phenomenon under investigation, with the “reality” being embedded in everyday language usage towards a particular topic (Blaikie, 2007: 10). It is through examination of language that one can uncover motives behind actions (Blaikie, 2007: 10). Incorporating an Abductive approach to my study of Occupy Wall Street will involve examining interpretations of the event from various social actors that include members of the news media (both traditional and online), academics who have a documented interest in the event, and most importantly, protestors and protest supporters. It will also focus on the language used to describe the protests, and the meaning implied in the vocabulary choices.

Combining an Inductive and Abductive strategy together, where theories to explain a phenomenon are generated by the data itself, a process involving the examination of language use towards the phenomenon in order to get an understanding of the meaning attached to it, resembles a variant of *Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue

that, in social research, “verification of theory” has become more important than the discovery of theory itself, advocating a methodological approach where theory is revealed within the data using a comparative analysis of source material (1). A grounded analytical approach allows theory to evolve naturally, resulting from the continuous interplay between data collection and analysis; “generating theory and doing social research [as] two parts of the same process” (Glaser, 1978: 2). One of the primary tenets of grounded theory is that multiple perspectives must be systematically sought during the research inquiry. The social researcher is responsible for revealing the multiple “voices” that are embedded in the research material, and to examine them against one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 280). It is the only means for generating theory that ensures the “theory suit[s] its supported uses” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 3); the best way to conduct research to arrive at theory that has practical value and applications.

The analysis performed for this thesis draws upon three distinct collections of online source material, each of which is representative of the various “voices” who commented and reported on the protests as they happened. Texts and documents for analysis were found using three different resources: *Google*, the *University of Ottawa Online Library*, and the online blogging platform *Tumblr*. All three sample collections consist of what Charmaz (2006) refers to as “extant” texts (35); texts to which I had no hand in producing, and are treated as data in and of themselves, used to help answer the primary research questions, despite not being written explicitly for that purpose (35).

The collection of source material contains articles and editorials published by American and British news outlets on their individual websites. The rationale behind this collection was to achieve an understanding of the news media’s perspective on the demonstrations that took place in New York, and the goals of the Movement as a whole. Articles sampled for analysis were chosen on the basis of a two-step process. First, a broad search on the Google Search Engine was performed in late October, 2011, and continued periodically every few weeks. Below is a list of the Boolean search terms used throughout the research and analysis process, with terms being added as investigation into specific topics became necessary:

Keywords and Phrases used in Google Searches

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Occupy Wall Street"• "Occupy Movement"• "Occupy Protests"• "99%"• "1%"• "Zuccotti Park"• "New York City General Assembly"• "Adbusters" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Occupy+"• "Arab Spring"• "Tunisia"• "Egypt"• "Spain"• "Bloombergville"• "Social Media" |
|--|---|

Articles found on the first five pages of Google's search results that were published by reputable, internationally-renowned organizations were selected for initial review. At its peak, the collection of sources in the first phase was approximately 275 articles from a dozen news outlets. In the second stage of the sample selection process, several criteria were applied in order to reduce the sample size down, filtering out the articles that had little or no relevance. These criteria included: eliminating any articles that did not have a readily identifiable author, those that did not directly comment on any of the subjects raised in the previously mentioned research questions, and those that only reported facts about particular incidents related to the protest without offering any opinion or commentary on what was being reported (these articles often resembled small blurbs of approximately 250 words, intended to forward "Breaking News" to interested parties). The only exception to the "no author" rule was given to two articles published by *Adbusters* magazine, whose importance in helping to mobilize support during the organization of Occupy Wall Street cannot be understated, and is explored in Chapter 3. After an initial reading of all articles was conducted, and the criteria applied, the sample was reduced to 140 articles published by dozens of authors on behalf of nine different news outlets, beginning on September 17, 2011, and ending on September 17, 2012, a full year after protests began. For a complete list of online news articles selected for analysis, refer to Appendix 1.2.

The second collection of sources consists of articles published in scholarly journals. Texts in this sample were selected with the intention of achieving a better understanding of the insights presented by "experts," those with extensive experience studying acts of collective, public dissent. The rationale and process undertaken to select articles for this collection parallels that of the news article collection. The same keywords entered into Google's Search Engine for the purposes of finding news articles were also used to conduct searches within the University of Ottawa's online academic databases. These databases included Academic Search Complete, Criminal Justice

Abstracts, ProQuest (Political Science and Sociology databases), and Social Theory. The only selection criteria applied to these articles in the second sampling phase was relevance to any of the research questions. The final sample included 40 articles from two dozen scholarly journals, published between January, 2011 and December, 2013. A complete list of sources sampled for this collection can be found in Appendix 1.3.

The final collection of source material for analysis consists of a collection of personal testimonials posted on the popular blogging and social media platform *Tumblr* (owned by *Yahoo!*): a thread entitled “We Are The 99 Percent,” and consisting of posts containing both text and images.¹ Contributions to the thread are supplied by supporters of the Occupy Movement; those associating with the 99% protest group. Each contribution is both an account of personal and familial hardship, detailing the many obstacles and problems of the “average” American who feels cheated by the current social and economic system, as well as a proclamation of allegiance to the 99%. The purpose of this sample category is to get a sense of the biographies of individuals actively voicing support for the Movement by revealing common characteristics found within the testimonials. The selection process undertaken for creating this sample is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Charmaz (2006), despite recognizing the variation that exists among practitioners regarding the execution of grounded theory, identifies several features that all grounded theories must necessarily possess: the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, the creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data and not by pre-existing conceptualisations (“theoretical sensitivity”), the inductive construction of abstract categories, theoretical sampling to refine categories, and the integration of categories into a theoretical framework.

Dey (1999) elaborates on the concept of “theoretical sensitivity,” a term related significantly to Blaikie’s (2007) discussion of the “outside learner” research posture discussed earlier, describing it as a methodological “best practice,” one that encourages researchers to have as few predetermined ideas and hypotheses as possible before examining the data. This is said to ensure that the researcher remains “sensitive” to the material, being as open as possible to theories and connections that are drawn from the text, and may not be readily apparent; being deeply immersed in the material affords the researcher the best opportunity for understanding what those affected by the phenomenon recognized as being significant (Dey, 1999). Dey (1999) is clear to point out that immersion in the material without preconceptions does not mean ignoring existing

¹ “We Are The 99 Percent” Tumblr thread: <http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/>

literature and theory on the subject, arguing that this, along with the researcher's own personal experiences, can become instrumental in the formation of meaningful categories later in the analysis. Prior literature and knowledge should be used to inform our analysis rather than direct it. Strauss and Corbin (1994), acknowledge that existing theories may be included in research if it is deemed appropriate to the area of investigation, but they must be elaborated upon and modified as new data is introduced (273). Also, it is not enough to simply reconsider the usefulness of any pre-existing theory when new data is introduced, the theory must be matched and compared to other theories introduced through data collection, and that this action be performed rigorously (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 273).

In Glaser and Strauss' (1967) model, the process of theoretical sampling (the data collection procedure for generating theory) involves the collection, coding and analysis of sources as they are found, deciding upon future courses of action with the research based on what is uncovered (45). Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998), distinguish between open, axial and selective coding types: "Open coding" refers to the process of generating initial concepts from data, "Axial coding" to the development and linking of concepts into conceptual families (formation of a coding paradigm), and "Selective coding" to the formalising of these relationships into theoretical frameworks. Grounded theory is intended to guide researchers in producing theory that is "conceptually dense," containing many conceptual relationships presented as propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 278). Theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts, and are comprised of propositions. The process of theoretical conceptualization involves pattern recognition, identifying trends in the actions and interactions of various social units ("actors"). More specifically, the patterns being identified should have something to do with the process of change itself, how changes to internal and external conditions cause changes to actions/interactions among individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 278).

Modes of interpretation for grounded analysis, according to Strauss and Corbin (1994), run the gamut from, "let the information speak for itself," on through theme analysis and the elucidation of patterns (biographical, societal, and so on), theoretical frameworks or models (sometimes only loosely developed), and theory formulated at various levels of abstraction (278). They elaborate on the idea of "theoretical frameworks," stating that they provide a conceptual guide for choosing the concepts to be investigated, suggesting research questions, and framing research findings (39). Frameworks, essentially, provide structure to social inquiry. Anfara Jr. and Mertz (2006), note that a substantive body of work exists that equates theory in qualitative

research with the methodologies used to conduct the research and the epistemologies underlying those methods (xx). They point to the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 33), who equated methodological paradigms (including positivism/ postpositivism, constructivism and interpretivism, critical theory, hermeneutics, and others) with theory, arguing that these paradigms contain the epistemological, ontological and methodological premises that guide research (xxi). The typical research project unfolds such that, the researcher approaches the investigation with a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she examines in some specific way (methodology, analysis). They define “theoretical framework” as any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of levels (e.g., grand, mid-range, and explanatory), that can be applied to an understanding of a phenomenon (Anfara & Mertz, 2006: xxvii). They go on to describe them as “lenses,” (xxvii), suggesting that the adoption of a theoretical framework allows the researcher to “see” certain aspects of the phenomenon, while negating others (xxviii).

A detailed theoretical framework, employed within my grounded analytical approach to assist in the organization and examination of the selected source material, is developed and discussed in Chapter 2. It is important to note at this juncture that the model draws entirely from the work of C. Wright Mills in his seminal text *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), and Jock Young’s application of Mills’ critique to the discipline of criminology, in his text *The Criminological Imagination* (2011). Each author provides an evaluation of the popular research philosophies being adopted in their respective disciplines, offering an “imaginative” alternative that is argued to provide more useful insight and theories. Social researchers must strive to be less like natural scientists, and instead, become “intellectual craftsman.” Analysis of sources must take into account the plight of those affected by the phenomenon, and examine personal troubles in relation to social structures and issues, as well as their place within a broader historical context. In summary, in order for an examination of Occupy Wall Street to be indicative of Mills (1959) and Young’s (2011) imaginative approach, the analysis must take into account personal biographies, historical context and social structures / processes. The categories and themes that emerge from the analysis will be used as a means of exploring the different dimensions of the protest that fit Mills’ (1959) and Young’s (2011) criteria.

Summary

Considerable variation exists among available sources regarding the facts and details of Occupy Wall Street. In order to achieve a better, and more informed understanding of the OWS, I believe a sense-making exercise that follows a credible research method, would benefit both myself and the academic community at large. This thesis will be the culmination of my efforts to make sense of what transpired on Wall St. on September 17, 2011. It seeks to explore several aspects of the protests for the purpose of achieving a better understanding as to what happened, why it took place, and who was involved. Using a grounded analytical approach, set within a theoretical framework influenced by Mills (1959) and Young (2011), the goal of this thesis will be to develop theory surrounding OWS. Three collections of sources will be analysed and re-analysed for the purposes of identifying meaningful topics, and grouping similar ideas into categories or themes within the theoretical model inspired by Mills (1959) and Young (2011). The following Chapter provides an overview of the ideas presented by Mills (1959) and Young (2011) in their respective texts, using overlapping tenets to construct a model for approaching the analysis of source material.

CHAPTER 2: AN IMAGINATIVE APPROACH TO SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Mills insists on the need to see the individual in the context of the social structure and place this is in historical period: he demands an analysis which moves from the macro to the micro and back again; he points to the gross inequities of our time in terms of the domination of the political elite in an intensely divided class society; he sees the sociological imagination not just as an attribute of highly trained sociologists (indeed often the reverse) but as a world view which can arise out of the individual's attempts to make sense of a dizzying world;

Young, 2011: 7

* * *

Having some familiarity with the writings of C. Wright Mills, I began toying with the idea of applying some of his ideas and techniques pertaining to social science research and his concept of the *Sociological Imagination* to my own investigation of OWS. Widely considered C. Wright Mills' most influential book on the practice of sociology, *The Sociological Imagination* (originally entitled *The Autopsy of Social Science*; 1959) offers both a critique of the then state of American sociology, and a justification for the mode of sociological scholarship that Mills had already begun to explore in earlier books like *White Collar* (1951) and *The Power Elite* (1956) (Gane & Back, 2012: 404). According to Gane and Back (2012), the purpose of Mills' book is the promotion of a renewed critical sensibility; presenting a broader set of arguments about the ambition and form of sociology, or what Mills calls its "promise" and "craft" (404). My goal was to transform Mills' critique of social inquiry, along with his recommendations for correcting the issue, into a viable theoretical framework, one that complies with the methodological guidelines provided Strauss and Corbin (1994) and discussed in the previous chapter. With this general direction in mind, I continued gathering literature surrounding OWS from several online sources, while simultaneously conducting a close reading of C. Wright Mills' text, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959).

It became apparent part way through reading Mills' text that, if I were to draw an analytical approach from his critique and recommendations pertaining to sociological research, it would need to be substantiated with additional sources. Mills' critique of sociological research in late 1950's America may be insightful, but it lacks direct applicability to my criminological investigation of Occupy Wall Street. Fortunately, a more recent publication by cultural criminologist Jock Young entitled *The Criminological Imagination* (2011), recommended to me by my thesis supervisor, could provide the information and analysis needed to bridge that gap. Young draws directly from Mills'

concept of the Sociological Imagination, dedicating an entire chapter to his interpretation of Mills' text. The purpose of the book is made overtly clear on page one, "...to examine the way in which Mills' predictions have panned out today, and to gauge the extent to which his warnings have been heeded" (Young, 2011). Young's conclusion is essentially the same as Mills': that a more imaginative approach to research must be employed if any meaningful insight is to be drawn.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the process I underwent in developing a theoretical framework to examine the Occupy Wall Street protests, that incorporates the fundamental tenets of Mills' Sociological Imagination (1959) and Young's Criminological Imagination (2011). Upon completing multiple close readings of each of these texts, a list of features and characteristics for "ideal" sociological and criminological research began to emerge; this "ideal" being grounded in Mills' concept of the "intellectual craftsman." I begin by presenting a summary of findings and conclusions that were drawn from the close readings performed on each text. From there, I present a summary of the characteristics for "ideal" sociological and criminological research stemming from the conclusions identified in the previous section. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion on how I intend to apply these characteristics to my investigation of Occupy, using the features outlined in the second section, and moulding them into an analytical approach that can then be employed when sorting through the source material.

A Critique of Sociological and Criminological Research

The bulk of *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) discusses what Mills identifies as major trends within academic sociology that serve to compromise his ideal vision for the discipline, an ideal which he refers to throughout the text as a "classical" sociological approach. At its core, the Sociological Imagination is really an appeal to social scientists to bring sociological research back on course, striking a balance between two methodological extremes, which Mills (1959) identifies as "Grand Theory" and "Abstracted Empiricism." Young (2011) maintains that these diametrically opposed tendencies are what is causing research in the social sciences to, "lose contact with social reality" (5). Both tendencies abstract the research, distancing itself heavily from the object being studied. However, according to Young, where they truly differentiate is in their scope, which is in line with the public/private duality expressed consistently throughout both Mills' (1959) and Young's (2011) texts. He notes that the process of thinking imaginatively involves a movement from micro to macro and back again, but that each of the tendencies only focuses on one aspect of

the phenomenon, with Abstracted Empiricism concentrating solely on the local, while Grand Theory, on the system as a whole (Young, 2011: 5).

Mills (1959) states definitively that no single universal scheme or unified theory exists that, "can understand the unity of social structure," or provide an "answer to the tired old problem of social order" (45), insinuating that the formation of grand theory is inherently a flawed process. It is evident that Mills questions the practicality of grand theory, arguing whether broad assumptions about society have any real-world value. Grand theory does not seek to solve or restate any problem more clearly, instead, observations remain abstract and conclusions highly theoretical (Mills, 1959: 45-47). The analysis conducted by grand theorists begins at a level of abstraction so broad, that it is impossible to make specific observations and identify particular problems relating to the historical and structural context of the phenomenon in question (Mills, 1959: 33). This level of inquiry does not improve our understanding of the phenomenon because its practitioners have difficulty moving from generalities to specific issues (Mills, 1959: 33).

According to Young (2011), in Grand Theory, the concepts dissociate from reality, 'The Concept' and the concepts interact together, but in *Abstracted Empiricism*, the methods detach from reality, "methods become methodology" (6). Mills (1959) also expresses contempt for the growing popularity of Abstracted Empiricism, or the application of research methods typically used in the natural sciences to the social sciences, which he believes brings nothing substantive to the table in terms of original propositions, theories and conceptions of the world (55), a critique that parallels the one made in regards to grand theory. Despite being an admirer of the physical sciences, Mills (1959) is critical of the scientific process as a whole, arguing that "the splitting of concepts and their endless rearrangement becomes the central endeavour" (23). As theory becomes less of a priority, the complexities of statistical manipulation involved in the method become a ready substitute (Young, 2011: 13-14). The reality of what is being studied gets lost in the method and measurement; the tools of observations become more important than what is being observed (Young, 2011: viii). Scientific investigation is more concerned with clarifying concepts than examining causes.

Young (2011) dedicates a portion of his book to describing examples of the influence abstracted empiricism has had in criminology, because "it is here where abstracted empiricism has flourished to the greatest extent" compared to other branches of social science (viii). In order to demonstrate the effect that Abstracted Empiricism has had on criminological inquiry, Young (2011), draws samples from a study published in *Criminology* entitled "Estimating Intervention

Effects in Various Risk Settings: Do Police Raids Reduce Illegal Drug Dealing in Nuisance Bars?"

Recalling his first impressions upon reading the study, Young (2011: 11) writes:

The confetti of Greek letters, beta, lambda, epsilon, the masquerade of science, the strange litany of indicators: Time, Unemp, Risk, Nuisance, Closed, Dosage, and Duration seems in a different universe from the louche bars, dope smokers, snitches and police harassment of downtown Pittsburgh.

Young's (2011) utilization of the article is intended to highlight the fact that abstracted empiricists have a "fetishism with numbers," resulting from the belief in the infallibility of statistical findings and results, what he refers to as the "illusion of precision" (Young, 2011: 44). Young (2011) highlights the motivation for such an approach, arguing that the goal of collecting and rearranging countless details and statistics is to generate as accurate a picture of the whole as possible, and that an understanding of the phenomenon as being the sum of all its individual parts necessarily establishes a level of precision that ensures "truth" is found in the research findings (Young, 2011: 7). He uses the analogy of a "House of Cards" in describing abstracted empiricism, suggesting that quantitative findings "lean" on each other, reinforcing one another to enhance the impression of accuracy and validity they possess (Young, 2011: 47). This fetish for quantification of research inevitably results in a "numerical othering" of the subject matter, increasing the distance between the researcher and what's being studied (19). Young (2011) attributes this tendency to "the increasing commodification of scientific research in the social sciences" - for example, referring to data sets that eliminate the need for administering a survey, outsourcing the research to commercial survey organizations - causing contact between the researcher and those being studied to become a far more rare occurrence (45).

Mills (1959) argues that this form of empirical social research is "methodologically inhibited" to a point where it has abandoned substantive questions relating to conditions of historical formation and the moral experience of social life (Mills, 1959: 55; Wilkinson, 2012: 182). To Mills, abstracted empiricists "are systematically a-historical and non-comparative," dealing with "small-scale areas" and "microscopic findings" that shed no light on the influence history has on social structure (68). Young (2011) reiterates this idea poetically, stating that, "the structure fades out of sight, history is banished from thought, and the myopic eye of the researcher focuses on the immediate" (6). Abstracted Empiricism, in order for it to be able to account for the variety of individuals and problems under investigation in social research, must become both comparative and historical. To adequately examine social structures, the social researcher must be prepared to compare them to other modern social structures, as well as similar examples from the past (Mills,

1959: 68). This “inhibition” to which Mills (1959) refers, is a tendency that empirical researchers have to formulate and investigate problems in a limited way, resulting from the constraints imposed by the Scientific Method (57). Mills (1959: 71-72) goes on to define “methodological inhibition” in a concise way later in his book:

“Methodological Inhibition”: nothing gets said unless it has been put through the rigorous “statistical ritual” that is part of the “Scientific Method” Those in the grip of the methodological inhibition often refuse to say anything about modern society unless it has been through the fine little mill of The Statistical Ritual.

These constraints imposed by the “Statistical Ritual” result in what Mills (1959) describes as an issue of detail over form, arguing that numerous pieces of information accumulate throughout the research process, with little consideration paid to how the information is structured and presented (Mills, 1959: 54). In addition, the details themselves are not substantive enough to convince us of anything worth our effort to investigate (Mills, 1959: 55).

What Mills (1959) reveals, and Young (2011) reinforces, is that social research intended to construct a unified theory or explanation for some phenomenon, as well as research that glorifies numbers and statistics, ultimately produce no revelations or discoveries of value. Grand theories draw conclusions that are often too broad to have any practical application to everyday problems, while presupposing certain qualities of human interaction that make it impossible to investigate social conflict, a cornerstone of sociological investigation, especially from a critical perspective. Abstracted empiricism, on the other hand, suffers from issues of specificity, forcing research to be severely constrained when examining social phenomenon because of limits imposed stemming from the application of the Scientific Method. Also, the conclusions drawn from empirical inquiry tend to be applicable only under specific conditions. Mills (1959) states that most classic work “lies between abstracted empiricism and grand theory,” requiring a level of abstraction both broad enough to facilitate the observation of everyday milieus, while having a targeted focus on social and historical structures (124). He elaborates further on the level of abstraction necessary, pointing out that it exists on a level of historical reality that frames social problems as they relate to social and historical structures (Mills, 1959: 124).

Intellectual Craftsmanship

The key motif of *The Sociological Imagination* is the importance of understanding the relationship between biography, history and social structure. Mills (1959) defines the “sociological

imagination" as the capacity to link biography, or the personal experiences of an individual life, with the impersonal workings of an historical era and social or institutional structure in which that life is located (5). Young (2011), draws a similar conclusion from his review of Mills' text, stating that the key nature of the sociological imagination is to "situate human biography in history and in social structure" (2). In order to simplify Mills' concept, Young (2011) emphasizes the importance of the relationship between three key elements: the inner life of human actors, and the social and historical setting in which they live, arguing that the three form a "fundamental triangle" (2). Put bluntly, the sociological imagination involves placing an individual within a social system (and the institutions that comprise that system) at a particular place and time (Young, 2011: 2). Mills (1959: 5) writes:

What they need, and what they feel they need, is a quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves. It is this quality, I am going to contend, that journalists and scholars, artists and publics, scientists and editors are coming to expect of what may be called the sociological imagination.

Having this capacity to link history and biography, Mills argues, enables us "to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals" (1959: 5, 11). His praise of the sociological discipline as the cultural means by which to "grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society," is undoubtedly a core tenet of Mills' philosophy (Mills, 1959: 6). For Mills, the sociologist must be able to identify the relation between current experiences and less visible historical structures and forces, connecting autobiographical, personal challenges to social institutions (Fraser, 2009: 64; Gane & Back, 2012: 404).

Mills (1959) contends that a relationship exist between "the personal troubles of milieu" and "the public issues of social structure" (14). Young (2011) claims that this is the most forceful distinction of the sociological imagination, and that without it, personal troubles remain personal – "isolated pain often tinged with self-blame and doubt" (3). Imaginative help is needed to understand that, in actuality, the personal troubles of the many often equate to collective political and social issues, affecting the individual on an everyday, personal level (Young, 2011: 4). Scimecca (1976), based on his interpretation of Mills' text, maintains that individuals who examine and explore social structure the way Mills advocates will ultimately come to realize that broader social issues are the source of personal hardship (188-189). Mills (1959: 8) defines "troubles" as

problematic circumstances and events that “occur within the character of the individual and within the range of his immediate relations with others.” “Issues” have to do with “matters that transcend these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner life” (Mills, 1959: 8). Issues have far more to do with the complications that inevitably result from the intersection of various individual milieu, which overlap and bond to become large social structures; the social fabric we all recognize today (Mills, 1959: 8-9). According to Mills (1959), a social issue is typically related to a “crisis of institutional arrangements,” or what Marxists refer to as “contradictions” in the social order, which cannot easily be resolved by examining the personal milieu from which the issue stems (9). Whereas a “trouble” involves individually cherished values being threatened, “issues” involve publically agreed upon values being threatened (Mills, 1959: 8-9).

Research Methodology & Theory Development

The idea of intellectual craftsmanship is linked closely with the concepts of “method” and “theory,” with the definition that Mills (1959) provides drawing reference to the connection between the two concepts. Mills (1959) differentiates between “methods” and “methodology,” stating early on in the text that methods are “procedures used by [researchers] trying to understand or explain something,” while methodology is the study of these methods, both specific procedures and general frameworks alike (57). Towards the end of the text, Mills (1959) adds to his definition, adding a dimension of academic credibility to the concept. “Method” is defined as a procedure for looking at information that provides some assurance that the answers to the questions being asked have some “durability,” or weight, behind them (Mills, 1959: 120). Statements of method are no more than promises that the conclusions being drawn from the investigation will have some degree of truth supported by observable facts (Mills, 1959: 122).

“Theory” is concerned primarily with the vocabulary being used when describing or examining an event or phenomenon, with particular attention paid to the extent to which word usage is broad and abstract, as well as their “logical relations” with other terms and constructs (Mills, 1959: 120). Theoretical statements are “alerts” that draw attention to distinctions that we may encounter when interpreting the data (Mills, 1959: 122). In accordance with the New Criminology, an adequate theory must address the problem of human nature and social order while being cognizant of the fundamental human predicament: human beings “make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing” (Young, 2011: 213). As such, theories that are formulated using the New criminological paradigm must consider the class nature of society, the inequalities of

wealth and power and the extensive pluralism of values in modern capitalist societies (Young, 2011: 213).

Mills (1959) identifies the purpose of theory and method to be “clarity of conception and economy of procedure,” effectively advocating for the simplification of sociological research procedures for the purposes of freeing one from the limitations imposed by traditional scientific research methods, while still allowing the researcher to be both rigorous and systematic (120). By not adhering to a rigid set of theoretical and methodological protocols, the social science researcher can truly exercise his/her sociological imagination. Mills (1959: 121) writes:

For the classic social scientists, neither method nor theory is an autonomous domain; methods are methods for some range of problems; theories are theories of some range of phenomena.

Mills (1959) argues that, in practice, social scientists must be both their own methodologist and theorist; that in no way are the two roles mutually exclusive (121). In essence, Mills (1959: 128) is asserting that classical sociological research need not take either a “top-down” approach, one that begins with broad theories and attempts to find evidence to support or disprove them (i.e., deduction), or a “bottom-up” (grounded) approach, that begins with small observations that form the foundation for larger explanations and conceptions (i.e., induction). Instead, the classic craftsman must attempt “to build and to deduce at the same time,” which is essentially a process of formulating and re-formulating both problems and solutions (128).

To illustrate his own methodological process when conducting research, Mills (1959) dedicates an entire chapter to discuss the topic, drawing on examples from the process he underwent to write a book on the economic and political elite in American society. It is clear, upon reflection of his process in its entirety, that several unique phases emerge that provide a basic framework for social study, without making the process too rigid or finite.

When formulating a “problem,” the intellectual craftsman must seek to identify “substantive” problems, those whose solutions can be found by examining them historically (Mills, 1959: 128). In what amounts to a restatement of the sociological imagination, Mills (1959) asserts that the proper formulation of problems occurs when the researcher identifies the private troubles of a variety of individuals within specific milieus, placing them within larger historical and social structures (129). The problem must make explicit reference to the range of personal troubles and public issues involved, allowing for the investigation of the “causal connections between milieu and social structure” (Mills, 1959: 130). In establishing these causal connections for the purposes of developing theory, what must be made readily visible are the values that are being threatened by

the troubles and issues involved, with consideration paid to the individuals and groups who accept the values, along with who or what is threatening them (130).

In terms of the overall format and structure of the investigation, Mills (1959) returns to the general versus specific distinction, arguing that the classical intellectual craftsman must strike a balance between "macroscopic conceptions and detailed expositions" (126). This can be accomplished only by avoiding the development of large all-encompassing studies, and instead, dividing the investigation up into a series of smaller-scale studies (Mills, 1959: 126). Each sub-study addresses one aspect of the problem being investigated, the solution to which, can be modified or refuted as conclusions are drawn from each (Mills, 1959: 126). "Good work" in social science is comprised of multiple studies, each providing substantive evidence to support general statements about a topic under discussion (201).

Mills (1959) places emphasis on the importance of familiarizing oneself with the existing body of work surrounding the topic or object of inquiry. He goes as far as to say that, in order to have a full grasp of the problem being addressed in the research, the researcher must be "very well acquainted in a substantive way with the state of knowledge in the area with which the studies being examined are concerned" (121). He stresses the significance of considering and incorporating the work of other scholars immersed in the same subject, noting that advances in sociological methods as a whole can only be achieved through "modest generalizations" of current work in progress (Mills, 1959: 122). Mills is essentially making a case for an "open source" strategy for social science research, contending that researchers must contribute and build on each other's work if true discoveries and revelations are to be made.

To Mills (1959), new ideas are often borne out of older ones. It is important to be a constant gatherer of new information in order to be as up-to-date and informed on the topics one is curious about. He draws on his own personal experience to illustrate this point, noting that, the idea to write a book on the power elite and social stratification did not occur to him overnight. Instead, having collected information and conducted research previously on surrounding issues for two books, a "file" began to take shape naturally, one that leant itself to the thorough investigation and analysis of stratification (Mills, 1959: 200). Mills (1959) gives credit for much of his academic inspiration, and hence, his sociological imagination, to the adoption of a "filing system" brainstorming process that he gradually developed. When it comes to the formulation of ideas pertaining to aspects of the social world worthy of investigation, Mills (1959) appears to align himself with the notion that inspiration can strike an individual at any time, advocating the creation

of a “file” of ideas to add an element of organization to the chaos. This file is comprised of two things: first, a rough list of thoughts that can be revisited, added to, and edited on a consistent basis as ideas come to mind, and second, a collection of books and articles related to those ideas (198). With regards to note-taking, the object is to collect and reflect on as much information as possible from any and all books you read in an academic capacity (Mills, 1959: 199). Almost as a safeguard for later, as a social science researcher, you can never really predict if and when that information might someday be useful.

Ideas and notions that are found during the file re-arrangement process will naturally begin to fall into different “types.” Mills (1959) maintains that a “new classification” is the first step towards “fruitful developments,” acknowledging that merely identifying a type is not enough, that researchers must also “search for the conditions and consequences of each type” (213). A proper type is one that requires the criteria for classification to be “explicit and systematic,” which can only be accomplished by adopting the practice of cross-classification (213). The researcher’s imagination is invoked by identifying recurring ideas that are both relevant and irrelevant within each type during the file audit process, making attempts along the way to draw connections between ideas that may, at first glance, appear to have no connection whatsoever (Mills, 1959: 201).

In order to clarify and elaborate on his discussion about “types,” Mills (1959) thought it necessary to differentiate between the terms “topic” and “theme,” words that are often used synonymously with “type.” A “topic” is defined quite simply as a subject, for example, ‘the careers of corporation executives’ or ‘the increased power of military officials,’ all of which can be elaborated on in a single chapter or a section of a chapter (Mills, 1959: 216). However, the order or arrangement of topics is often what helps to readily identify “themes,” which Mills (1959) describes as trends, master conceptions, or key distinctions, for example, ‘rationality’ or ‘reason’ (216). Themes are easy to recognize but they will appear across a variety of different topics, becoming almost repetitive (Mills, 1959: 216). The process of dividing the research content into different types is essentially the process of cross-classifying different topics with different themes, asking yourself how each topic is affected by each theme (217).

Mills (1959) offers several suggestions for ways to loosen one’s sociological imagination, enabling the “outside-the-box” thinking necessary for being a good social scientist. He reiterates the importance of “re-arranging” and reviewing your file on a specific topic; the mixing and sorting of various materials is intended to establish connections between elements otherwise thought impossible (212). He also recommends that we choose our words for definitions and terms in a

relaxed and playful way, seeking synonyms for words and looking up meanings in order to get a sense of their full connotation (212). This practice will help to make writing more concise, and thus, less confusing and difficult to comprehend (Mills, 1959: 212).

Seeking a Balance Between Two Extremes

Having completed several close readings of Mills' *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) and Young's *The Criminological Imagination* (2011), an analytical framework and process for theoretical development began to emerge, one that complies with the methodological guidelines provided by Strauss and Corbin (1994), and incorporated into my grounded approach to Occupy Wall Street. I began to ask myself a question. If I was to construct a research strategy inspired by Mills' (1959) and Young's (2011) critique of traditional social science approaches, what might that strategy look like? And, what would the execution of that strategy resemble when applied to my investigation of Occupy Wall Street?

The concept of intellectual craftsmanship is best understood as "the imagination in action," encouraging the observation of phenomenon on a level of abstraction that recognizes the connection between everyday individual problems and broader social issues, taking into consideration changes that occur to social structures and institutions over a given period of time. The researcher is not restricted by strict procedures or anchored by problems with definitions or a preoccupation with statistics, but instead, is granted a degree of freedom to explore the phenomenon in a way that is more fluid, and of course, imaginative. A method is no more than a framework set in place for understanding something better, a framework that lends credibility to the accuracy of the observations and conclusions being drawn in the research. Theories are articulated statements that detail certain distinctions about the phenomenon that are apparent upon comparative review of the research. They alert the reader to observable facts and trends about the phenomenon identified by the researcher during the investigation. The investigative process must be freeing enough to allow for the formulation and re-formulation of theory, in a constant cycle of revision.

If my method is to adhere to the recommendations made by Mills and Young, It would have to avoid many, if not all of the shortcomings of "Grand Theory" and "Abstracted Empiricism," and would instead adopt a "Classical" approach to social research. Grand Theories, it is argued, are so broad, that more detailed observations on specific issues or topics get neglected. The application of natural science methods in social science research, which amounts to the overuse of quantitative,

statistical analysis in the investigation of social phenomena, tends to significantly diminish the value of theory and abstract conceptualization. Seeking a balance between these two extremes does not necessarily imply that the research cannot explore all-encompassing explanations for social phenomena. Nor does it suggest that quantitative or empirical analysis will unequivocally render the conclusions meaningless. It means that the research cannot be heavily weighted one way or the other, and instead, utilize elements from both approaches in order to achieve the most informed, thorough understanding possible of the phenomenon being investigated. Ultimately, exploring the question of who was involved in the Occupy protests, what unfolded, and why, will require the incorporation of elements from both approaches.

Adhering to the guidelines offered by Mills (1959), I found it necessary to reformulate my research question in order to ensure that references to the personal troubles and public issues being explored, as well as the social structures and historical circumstances that surround them, are included. My initial reason for wanting to examine the Occupy Wall Street protests has remained unchanged since the research was initiated, which is to make sense of the countless facts and details being published by a wide array of sources, hoping to derive insight to help explain the broad who, what and why questions related to the event. To make the analysis more meaningful, the issue under investigation needs to be more specific. The progress I made up to this point in the research process, fortunately, made the formulation of a more specific problem easier to accomplish. The initial gathering of sources for this study described in Chapter 1, came to form the contents of my "file" on Occupy Wall Street. A first round of close readings of every document in the file was necessary in order to achieve two ends. The first was the division of texts into three categories: "News," "Scholarly" and "Personal Testimonials." The second was the identification of major topics, which divided the source material into further sub-categories. The information I was able to obtain during this preliminary classification process made it abundantly clear that the dissenting group in this particular dispute, the 99%, are protesting collective concerns regarding what they perceive to be corrupt social institutions and practices, and how those social problems translate into individual hardship and struggles. Instead of, 'Why did Occupy Wall Street happen?', the question should be, 'Why are the 99% protesting against corporations and the government, a group consisting of exceedingly wealthy individuals they have designated as the 1%?' 'What are their grievances and demands?' 'What are the historical and social circumstances surrounding the Movement?' And perhaps most importantly, 'Who are the 99%?'

When one delves into Mills' process for developing theory, his assertion that method and theory are intimately connected becomes easier to see. The process of repeatedly reviewing source material, a process that involves making connections between themes found across different topics identified in the source material, is instrumental to the development of theory. The researcher exercises his or her sociological and criminological imagination through this comparative work, first by grouping content into "topics," followed by the identification of consistent "themes" throughout the source material, concluding with the establishment of causal and explanatory connections between the themes that are both implicit and explicit. The process of 'review – classification - cross-classification – imaginative reflection,' is to be performed repeatedly until all relevant connections have been revealed, with theories pertaining to the research questions being generated from this cycle..

Exercising the sociological and criminological imagination, linking individual problems with larger social structures and institutions within an historical context, is unquestionably the most important feature of intellectual craftsmanship, a philosophy that will be the driving principle behind the grounded analysis performed in this study. A focus on the three "pillars" – history, social structure and the individual – is paramount to both Mills (195) and Young (2011), and will serve as the foundation for my analysis into Occupy Wall Street. Examining the connection between "private troubles" found within "public issues" and social structures, the relationship between history and biography, provides a dimension for examining the relationships that exist between the three pillars mentioned above, and will aid in the development of theory during the latter stages of the analysis process. A discussion regarding the links between private and public problems that exist and thrive within a historical context, stemming from the themes identified in the analysis of source material, can be found in Chapter 6.

Research projects, according to the Mills (1959) process, benefit from being divided into smaller sub-studies, each addressing one aspect of the phenomenon or issue being investigated. General statements about the phenomenon are tested with individual studies, each contributing to a broader understanding of the topic as a whole. Following this recommendation and incorporating the three pillars, the analysis performed on the data surrounding Occupy Wall Street, drawing from the three data sets outlined in Chapter 1, will be divided into three sub-studies. Each sub-study, making up the contents of Chapters 3 through 5, uses one of the three pillars – history, social structure, and the individual – as its primary focus.

The first of these studies (Chapter 3) will identify and elaborate upon topics related to the historical context of the New York City protests in mid-September, 2011. This particular study will draw upon the "News" and "Academic" data sets, exploring the statements made by media pundits and academic experts for insight. For the purposes of this study, the term "historical context" can also be understood as the "setting" for the protests, encompassing two broad topics: Time and Place. The first half of this study will elaborate on the subject of Time, highlighting the parallels that exist between Occupy Wall Street and other acts of social unrest that took place internationally in 2011. What the data reveals is that the Occupy protests were by no means an isolated incident, and that 2011 was an exceptional year for mass public uprisings against corrupt governments and social institutions. The second half of this study will focus on the subject of Space, elaborating on topics related to the notion that the act of "occupation" (a key feature of the Occupy protests) took place in both physical and virtual reality, having a significant, visible presence both on public streets and on the internet. Topics discussed include, how organizers of the protest were able to mobilize support using online media channels, the act of occupying Zuccotti Park, and the utilization of social media for both communication between protestors, and the dissemination of messages to garner further support.

The second sub-study (Chapter 4) will examine topics related to social structures and institutions. Topics explored in this study will also be drawn from the same data sets used in Chapter 3, and will cover a spectrum of issues, including, the core grievances and demands of Occupy protestors, political support and resistance to the movement, legal and law enforcement responses to demonstrations, political representation, "horizontalism" and participatory democracy. What analysis of the source material reveals is that economic inequality is the core public issue driving Occupy protestors to demonstrate, at least, from the news media and academic perspectives. The idea that Occupy has an official list of grievances and demands is a controversy explored in this study, but of those lists that have generated widespread public interest, many of the issues expressed have to do with an ever-widening income gap, caused by exploitative corporate interests that are perceivably given favorable treatment by the federal government. As well, many of the solutions recommended by protestors seek to create a more equitable distribution of wealth.

The final sub-study (Chapter 5) explores the personal biographies of those who align themselves with the 99% protest group, expressing their support by contributing to the Tumblr blog thread "We Are The 99 Percent." This study is unique, in that, it draws exclusively from the

Tumblr testimonial data set, using it to identify consistencies for the purposes of constructing common “protestor profiles.” The goal of this study is to investigate any recognizable patterns in terms of the complaints made by contributors, as well as any shared life experiences that speak to the hardships and obstacles one faces being a participant in the established American social and economic system. The Discussion that follows these three studies in Chapter 6 will draw links between the topics and themes found in each sub-study. Particular attention is the paid to the linking of private troubles with public issues, drawing relevant connections to social institutions and processes, and historical influences.

PILLAR 1: ESTABLISHING AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE OCCUPY PROTESTS

No one could have known that when a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire in a public square, it would incite protests that would topple dictators and start a global wave of dissent. In 2011, protesters didn't just voice their complaints; they changed the world.

- Andersen, 2011

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This section of the analysis, the first of the three sub-studies, will identify and elaborate upon topics related to the historical context of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City in mid-September, 2011, in keeping with the “imaginative” theoretical and methodological framework presented in Chapter 2. Drawing upon the News and Academic data sets for data, this study examines the statements made by media pundits and academic experts for insight. For the purposes of this study, the term “historical context” is understood as the “setting” of the protests, encompassing the two broad subjects of *Time* and *Place*.

The first half of this study will elaborate on the subject of Time, highlighting the parallels that exist between Occupy Wall Street and other acts of social unrest that took place internationally in 2011, creating an historical timeline of major international uprisings that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Wisconsin and New York City in the months leading up to the Occupy Wall Street protests in September. The timeline is used as a means of exposing the parallels that exist among the precedent setting protests. What is revealed later in the chapter and throughout the study is that Occupy Wall Street possesses many of the same features as these protests, lending academic weight to the idea that Occupy is, in actuality, a culmination of all the protests that preceded it that year. The second half of this study focuses on the subject of Place, discussing topics related to the notion that the act of “occupation” (a key feature of the Occupy protests) took place in both physical and virtual reality, having a significant, visible presence both on public streets and on the internet. Analysis of the source material reveals that this dual strategy for mobilizing support and garnering media attention, was instrumental in helping Occupy reach a national and international audience, becoming engrained in popular and political discourse during that time in history. Themes that are identified upon comparative analysis of the topics discussed in this sub-study, will appear in Chapter 6.

The Subject of Time: Precedents & Influences

On December 14, 2011, *Time Magazine* published its annual *Person of the Year* edition, proclaiming "The Protester" to be the most influential global figure of 2011. The exposé, written by Kurt Andersen, is an overview of a series of "massive street protests" that took place in the Middle East, Europe and North America in 2011, most notably, in Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Wisconsin and New York City. The image on the cover is an anonymous figure wearing a mask, ambiguous enough that it is impossible to determine the gender or ethnicity of the figure, or whether he/she was part of the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia or Egypt, the indignados in Madrid or Barcelona, or any of the hundreds of Occupy camps that emerged throughout the United States (Alexander, 2013: 21). To reinforce his assertion that "protest" constitute the defining characteristic of the year, Andersen (2011) claims that, "do-it-yourself democratic politics became globalized," and that the act of protest went "massively viral."

Aside from elaborating upon the various protests and demonstrations that took place, Andersen (2011) presents an argument that the timing of each protest was not coincidental; that the initial "Arab Spring" protests that began in January 2011, set off a domino effect of worldwide dissent, with each successive protest borrowing elements and tactics from the previous. Andersen (2011) is only one of the many authors, scholars and news pundits who support the statement that Occupy Wall Street draws direct inspiration from the international demonstrations that preceded it that year (Barnard, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011: 1; Pepitone, 2011; Bennett, 2012: 37; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Hatem, 2012: 401; Hickel, 2012; Kern & Nam, 2013: 199; Milkman, Lewis & Luce, 2012; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Wagner-Pacifici, 2012). Hardt and Negri (2013) argue that a thorough understanding the Occupy Wall Street protests from a political standpoint requires one to "situate it alongside the other "encampments of the past year," and once the protests are examined in connection to one another, an "emerging cycle of struggles" can be identified (1). Friedman, in one of his articles written in *The New York Times* in November 2011, suggests that the string of social protests that year are telling signs of some larger phenomenon happening globally that requires definition and examination, pointing out two schools of thought that immediately intrigue him: the first, suggesting that 2011 is actually the beginning of "The Great Disruption," another that suggests it is part of a "Big Shift."

There is some disagreement in the text, however. Pickerill and Krinsky (2012), and Wagner-Pacifici (2012), remind us that, although many similarities exist between Occupy Wall Street and the protests those that preceded it internationally, we cannot discount the "local circumstances

and politics” that may have influenced the protest tactics employed (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012: 284). That, even though obvious parallels exist, there are also many fissures that muddle the progression from the Arab Spring to similar demonstrations in the West (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012: 279).

The protests in Tunisia, Egypt and Spain, sparked a wave of global dissent that inevitably found its way to the Western world in Wisconsin, ultimately contributing to the organization and execution of the “Bloombergville” and Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City. This section of the analysis, which makes up half of the first sub-study, will attempt to establish an historical timeline for the Movement, starting with revolution in Tunisia, leading up to the initial Call to Action for OWS published by *Adbusters*. It will elaborate on the five protests – Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Wisconsin, U.S., and “Bloombergville” in New York City - mentioned most frequently in the source material as being a precursor to Occupy. This portion of the sub-study will conclude with a discussion about the similarities that exist between the protests, highlighting the features adopted directly by OWS organizers and supporters. Topics, sub-topics and themes that emerge from this timeline will be listed and comparatively analyzed in the Discussion found in Chapter 6. A table is provided in Appendix 1.1, offering an at-a-glance reference of the key characteristics of each protest discussed in this section.

The Arab Spring

Many who have examined Occupy with some diligence, including both academics and members of the press, tend to agree that Occupy Wall Street draws inspiration from a series of major protests and revolutionary movements that took place in the Middle East starting in January, 2011, in countries including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, that collectively came to be known as the “Arab Spring” (Abouzeid, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011; Kerton, 2012; Alexander, 2013: 343). The Arab Spring earned its name, according to Hatem (2012: 402), because it offered a “refreshing” challenge to the regimes that had been in power in Tunisia and Egypt for several decades. Regimes, which he claims, align with “crony capitalist” and “authoritarian national security states” that enjoyed overwhelming international support particularly in the last three decades (Hatem, 2012: 402).

The consensus in the source material is that the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt both operated under a single goal, the “demand for new democratic politics” (Ross, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 410; Pepitone, 2012), which Hatem insists is the fundamental feature that connects the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. As a whole, the demands of the protestors were not reflective of any one

citizen's political affiliation, but instead, were reflective of broad-based political and economic concerns (Hatem, 2012: 409). According to Hatem (2012: 410), the majority of citizens in Tunisia and Egypt experienced economic deprivation, fueled mostly by the absence of decent and well-paying jobs. Protestors in these regions still supported democracy, viewing it as a vehicle for the reconstruction of the economy, but demanded that changes be made in order promote and ensure their political engagement and participation (Hatem, 2012: 410). The Arab Spring's pursuit of a new, refreshing outlook, hindered on two important factors: the participation of liberal, mostly secular youth, and the utilization of the internet and social media for the purposes of disseminating fact and mobilizing support. The uprisings illustrate the complexity of concerns of a large and influential generation of youth (Hatem, 2012: 409)

Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia

The suicide of Mohammed Bouazizi is widely recognized as the primary catalyst that sparked the demonstrations and riots leading to the downfall of the Tunisian dictatorship of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, starting a chain reaction that would ultimately result in a series of similar protests in neighboring countries (Abouzeid, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Fahim, 2011; Ross, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408; Kerton, 2012; Walt, 2012). In an article written by Peter Beaumont in *The Guardian* on January 20, 2011, Bouazizi is portrayed as a loving and humble 26-year-old fruit vendor who struggled to provide financially for both his mother and younger sister living in Sidi Bouzid. Rania Abouzeid's investigation into Bouazizi's death, published in a *Time Magazine* article entitled "Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire" (January, 2011), describes Bouazizi as a poor and desperate man, consistently harassed by police officers who would frequently close down his fruit stand for lack of proper licensing, which Bouazizi claims, is the result of having his application routinely and arbitrarily denied by local government. According to Abouzeid's (2011) account, it was during one of these typical police "shakedowns" on December 17, 2010, that Bouazizi reached a tipping point for his anger and frustration. This particular shakedown was unique, in that, Bouazizi was lead to believe that his entire livelihood (i.e. the vegetable cart and its contents) would be confiscated, rather than closed down temporarily as was the norm up until that point (Abouzeid, 2011; Beaumont, 2011; for a similar account, also read Fahim, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 5; Hatem, 2012: 408; Walt, 2012).

Bouazizi's attempt at a bribe, which often amounted to a good day's wages (the equivalent of \$7 USD), was apparently rejected by a policewoman, who witnesses allegedly saw slap and spit

on Bouazizi's face while being subjected to insults about his deceased father (Abouzeid, 2011; Beaumont, 2011; Fahim, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408). After demanding to speak to municipal authorities located in the provincial government headquarters found in town, and being rejected, Bouazizi returned to the building's decadent front entrance, poured fuel over himself and set himself on fire (Abouzeid, 2011; Fahim, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408; Kerton, 2012; Walt, 2012). The self-immolation did not end Bouazizi's life right away, as he remained in critical condition in hospital for four days, during which, President Ben Ali made an attempt to visit him to try to quell some of the anger and blame that was being directed his way following the event (Abouzeid, 2011; Fahim, 2011). The immense public outcry that emerged as a result of his death on January 4, 2011, saw protests engulf the country, until, on January 14, they forced President Ben Ali to step down — the first Arab leader ever to be overthrown by a popular uprising — ending his 23-year dictatorship (Abouzeid, 2011; Fahim, 2011; Walt, 2012).

Bouazizi's suicide, Mabrouk (2011) argues, could have been prevented had efforts been made to address areas of public distress evident during Ben Ali's regime (629). His two decades in office saw the increased liberalization of public policy, which argues for a reduced role for the state and a bigger role for the private sector. Governments and corporate business collude to share power, creating a cozy relationship between Tunisian businessmen and bureaucrats, necessarily giving corporate interests stake and influence in policy making (Mabrouk, 2011: 629). This overwhelmingly had negative social consequences, widening the net in terms of the number of marginal persons susceptible to exploitation and corruption by government and law enforcement officials during that time (Mabrouk, 2011: 629).

Tunisia's nationwide unemployment rate in 2011 hovered around 14%, with the rate in Sidi Bouzid over double that, at approximately 30%, a group consisting primarily of youth (Fahim, 2011). This disenfranchised group of young and educated men, according to Fahim (2011), felt consistently neglected by successive government regimes; regimes, "seized with corruption and rife with nepotism." Sheer idleness stemming from unemployment likely contributed to the collective decision to demonstrate publicly, but recognition of larger social issues plaguing the country was also a factor, horrendously unequal distribution of wealth, high inflation on essential items and fears over tawarith (family inheritance of the throne) (Aysha, 2011: 29)

Bouazizi became such an influential figure and popular symbol among young Arab man, many of whom considered Bouazizi to be a martyr, that his actions were emulated (Abouzeid, 2011, Mabrouk, 2011). With the help of mobile smartphone technology, devices commonly

equipped with cameras and internet capabilities that enable the user to take photos and video recordings and instantly post them online, captured incidents of copycat martyrdom (Mabrouk, 2011: 632). At the same time, information was also shared online regarding the whereabouts and location of security forces – a particularly important function served by the social networks in the early days of the Tunisia's revolution (Mabrouk, 2011: 632). According to Mabrouk (2011), the success of the Tunisian revolution hinged on the system by which information was transmitted and broadcasted to the masses, both nationally and internationally. The horrific and shocking nature of Bouazizi's death propelled the story through the internet extremely quickly, going viral through the help of various social media channels like Twitter and Facebook (also see Walt, 2012). According to Andersen (2011), on the second day of protests a middle-class 29-year-old software developer, recorded video of masses of people taking to the streets, as well as the response by police officials, on his BlackBerry. This video was uploaded to Twitter soon after, receiving a million views in under 24 hours, the exposure of which, many believe, forced President Ben Ali into exile in Saudi Arabia, where he would remain for four weeks until his official removal from political office (Andersen, 2011).

According to Mabrouk (2011), social media websites also became powerful tools needed to combat the "official" narratives presented by the mainstream media; a narrative that suggests the protest amounted to little more than a riot by criminals and terrorists, providing justification for the brutal and lethal forms of repression practiced by security forces against rowdy protestors in the interest of self-defense and general public safety (632). Rehabilitating the image of protestors was not as taxing as one would assume, as public opinion became easily swayed by the viral spread of media content including video clips showing security abuses and financial corruption linked to the ruling regime. Such detailed documentation of their abuses created a vivid impression amongst the wider public, inciting it to ever greater mobilization in order to reach its revolutionary goals (Mabrouk, 2011: 632).

Cairo, Egypt

For Andersen (2011), evidence of the Tunisian protest model in Egypt can be found both by examining the events that unfolded, and by speaking to protest supporters themselves, "Among all the Egyptians I met, there is absolute agreement about one thing: Tunisia was the spark of their revolution." He suggests that the protests in Tunisia were a kind of learning experience for Egypt, referring to the events in Tunisia as being both "inspirational" and "practical," a sort of "user's

manual” as one Egyptian was quoted as saying (Andersen, 2011). Based on his interviews with Egyptian protest organizers and supporters, Tunisian protestors were actually instrumental in supplying information and strategic guidance:

In January, Tunisians "sent us a lot of information," says Ahmed Maher, a Cairo civil engineer and one of Egypt's most prominent activists, "like use vinegar and onion" — near one's face, for the tear gas — "and how to stop a tank. They sent us this advice, and we used it."

- Andersen, 2011

The first protests took place in Cairo on January 25, 2011, and by the 31st, approximately 250,000 people had begun to occupy Cairo's Tahrir Square, one of the central hubs of protest activity in the country (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 5-6; Lubin, 2012: 186).

Many credit the actions of 31-year President/Dictator Hosni Mubarek for being the impetus behind the revolution. The protests and riots are believed by some in the source material to be a direct response to decades of neoliberal policies enacted during Mubarek's reign, which radically transformed Egyptian society by transferring social power to the hands of an elite while disempowering both workers and the peasantry (Joya, 2011: 370; Hatem, 2012). Mubarek began his presidency in 1981 after quickly ascending to power following the assassination of the previous president, Anwar Sadat (Ahmed et al., 2011). Changes were introduced to the country almost immediately. That year, Egypt implemented a major Economic Restructuring and Adjustment Program (ERSAP), which entailed the privatization of public sector enterprises, the liberalization of trade and prices, the introduction of flexible labour legislation, and the removal of "progressive social policies" (Joya, 2011: 370). The privatization of state enterprises served to transfer public resources and wealth into the possession of a newly emerging economic elite, who had allies within the ruling National Democratic Party (Joya, 2011: 370). In the years to follow, worker strikes were organized to demand higher living wages in order to afford the rising cost of food, housing, and health care, a consequence of the privatization of these industries (Joya, 2011: 370). As recently as January 2011, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that rising food prices, high levels of unemployment and the uprising in Tunisia would mean that the Egyptian state would have to increase subsidies and social welfare in order to maintain social stability (Wahish 2011; as discussed in Joya, 2011: 367).

To many Egyptians, finding a solution to escalating food prices and unemployment rates meant removing the man who had assumed the leadership role in the country. Mubarek's rule, as well as the riots and demonstrations, ended with his resignation on February 11, 2011, 18 days after

mass protests began across the country, with a one-minute announcement by Vice President Omar Suleiman broadcasted on state television, declaring that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces would thereby "run the affairs of the country" (Ahmed et al., 2011; Goldstein, 2011; Joya, 2011: 367).

Barnard (2011) of *The New York Times*, lists some of what he considers are some of the obvious ways that Occupy Wall Street bears no resemblance to Tahrir Square, including, most importantly, the fact that no protestors were killed during OWS, at no point did protestors make a unified plea for President Obama to resign, and unfortunately, crowds in Manhattan's financial district never swelled to the six-figure numbers that Tahrir Square saw. However, Hatem (2012) highlights several OWS tactics that were heavily influenced by events in Egypt, primarily the occupation of public space, which allowed for protestors to engage in political conversations about the major issues plaguing society, drawing enough attention to make these conversations part of the national and global discourse (413). Like protestors in Egypt, participants of Occupy Wall Street also created Facebook page, which enables an even larger audience to become part of the conversation (Hatem, 2012: 413).

To Nanabhaya and Farmanfarmaian (2011), the Egyptian protests are best understood by grasping the interplay between social media and mainstream media, with the activity of Twitter, Facebook, Wikileaks and Al Jazeera all being attributed to fueling the revolution (573; also see Alexander, 2013: 344). According to Andersen (2011), the Egyptians had their own Mohamed Bouazizi: an underemployed middle-class 28-year-old named Khaled Said. After being accused of hacking a police officer's cell phone and lifting a video of officers displaying narcotics and large quantities of cash, Said was arrested and beaten to death (Andersen, 2011; Preston, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408). Videos of this tragic beating went viral, prompting Wael Ghonim, a 29-year-old Google executive, to create a Facebook page entitled We Are All Khaled Said in order to commemorate his death, which also quickly went viral (Andersen, 2011; Preston, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408). In January, Ghonim returned from Dubai to Egypt to help plan a protest set for January 25, a day he called a "day of rage" in Tahrir Square (Andersen, 2011). Ghonim, whose Facebook page is credited with triggering the uprising specifically, having accumulated approximately 400,000 followers, was seized by security forces and held for 10 days for his actions (Ahmed et al., 2011; Andersen, 2011; Preston, 2011; Hatem, 2012: 408). These online social networking and news outlets provided individuals like Ghonim and many others with a forum to formulate and communicate messages which could then be broadcast to the entire country. A dynamic cooperative among protestors developed quickly and organically; activists on the front lines fed information onto social networks

and to the media, which was then diffused nationally and internationally, serving to strengthen protestor resolve and bolster their numbers (Nanabhaya & Farmanfarmanian, 2011: 574).

Spain – Madrid & Barcelona

Numerous comparisons are also drawn between the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City, and the encampments that formed in the central squares of Spain beginning on May 15, 2011 (referred to as "15M") (Andersen, 2011; Beas, 2011; Francis, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011: 1; Moreno-Caballud & Sitrin, 2011; Tharoor, 2011; Castaneda, 2012: 309). On May 15, protestors marched in masses numbering in the tens of thousands, united by slogans like "We are not goods in the hands of politicians and bankers," calling themselves *Los Indignados*, or "The Outraged" (Andersen, 2011). Approximately 60 Spanish cities participated during the entirety of the 15M movement, with 6-8 million protestors setting up encampments (*Las Acampadas*) in public squares; the largest camps being established in major cities like Madrid and Barcelona. La Puerta del Sol Plaza in Madrid became one of its symbols (Andersen, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 7; Castaneda, 2012: 310)

The 15M protests were scheduled a week prior to the date set for national elections; an election where the majority of the electorate, according to Castaneda (2012), saw no viable alternative between a neoliberalized left, represented by Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, and a neoliberal and conservative right, represented by leader of the opposing Popular Party, Mariano Rajoy (Beas, 2011; Castaneda, 2012: 310; Taibo, 2012). The word Indignado was inspired by the influential 32-page activist manifesto written by French diplomat Stephane Hessel entitled *Indignez-vous!*, which calls on contemporary youth to search for injustices around them and mobilize into action (Hessel & Duvert, 2011; as discussed in Castaneda, 2012: 310). The term loosely translates into English as 'The Outraged'. This outrage is believed to have developed as a result of budget cuts made to education, welfare and social programs that were first put in place during Zapatero's rule, and later adopted by Rajoy (Castaneda, 2012: 309). These cuts were made as part of a package of structural adjustment measures promised by the Spanish government to international financial organizations, all while Spanish banks were being bailed out with taxpayer funds (Tharoor, 2011; Castaneda, 2012: 310).

As was the case in both Tunisia and Egypt, the Indignados movement created a venue for the discontented college-educated youth who were unable to find meaningful employment lucrative enough to cover rent and basic expenses (Castaneda, 2012: 309). Spain's national

unemployment rate at the time was approximately 21% overall, including 32% of foreign born residents and 43.6% for those under the age of 24 (Castaneda, 2012: 309). In total, it was estimated that 650,000 people between the ages of 16 and 29 were neither studying nor working (López Blasco, 2008; as discussed in Taibo, 2012: 156). Large organizations with a considerable online presence in Spain, such as *Democracia Real Ya!*, *Juventud sin Futuro* and *No les Votes*, collectively put out a call for people to occupy the streets on May 15 for the purpose of a “#SpanishRevolution” (Castaneda, 2012: 310). It wasn’t long before a critical mass of people began to form, with large organized groups taking their disenchantment with the existing political parties to the streets (Castaneda, 2012: 310).

According to Moreno-Caballud & Sitrin (2011), the defining element that connects that 15M protests with Occupy Wall Street is related to the notion of “inclusivity.” Unlike other movements that have strongly identified with concrete social groups (workers, students, etc.), both the Indignados and Occupy allow participation from anyone who supports the cause. The existence of solidarity slogans, such as “We are the 99%,” in both protests is cited as evidence to support this claim. Also, each of the movements were successful at mobilizing “many people who had never been to a demonstration before, and made them feel welcome and useful.”

Wisconsin

Protests broke out between February 14 and 20, 2011 (after protests broke out in Tunisia and Egypt, but before they began in Spain) in Madison, Wisconsin, marking what some call the “first wave of American unrest” (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 6; Lewis & Luce, 2012: 43). Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker took office in January 2011, at a time when the state had no deficit in its current budget, and the long-term deficit, while still significant, was smaller than that faced by former governor Jim Doyle (Collins, 2012: 10). In the first week of Walker’s term, he gave away \$137 million in tax breaks to corporations, transformed the state’s Department of Commerce into a public–private hybrid that was funded by (but not accountable to) taxpayers, and passed an executive order limiting lawsuits against corporations (Collins, 2012: 10). Even with all these immediate changes, Walker’s actions did not capture state-wide attention until February, when he introduced a “Budget Repair Bill” that threatened to prohibit public sector unions, most notably teachers, from collectively bargaining, all while saving the state an estimated \$30 million in the current fiscal year, and \$300 million over the next two years (Curry, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 6; Collins, 2012: 10; Lewis & Luce, 2012: 43; Squirea & Gaydos, 2013: 57). The proposed bill also

included major decreases in funding for public services, including public education (Squirea & Gaydos, 2013: 57). And in what Collins (2012) refers to as “a seemingly random set of neoliberal gestures”, the Bill also offered state subsidies for commercial development of protected wetlands, put 37 state-run power plants up for sale on a no-bid basis, and gave state administrators the ability to rewrite Medicaid rules and cut funding without public hearings or legislative input (State of Wisconsin 2011; as discussed by Collins, 2012: 10).

The weekend after the bill was unveiled, public sector employees, including university faculty and graduate teaching assistants, gathered around the State Capitol building and the governor’s mansion (Collins, 2012: 11; Squirea & Gaydos, 2013: 57). The first group to march in protest to the square was the University of Wisconsin Teaching Assistants Association (TAA), followed the next day by over 13,000 Madison teachers joining in an attempt to interrupt hearings taking place by the Joint Finance Committee in regards to the bill (Collins, 2012: 11). By day three, the demonstration had 20,000 protesters, including teachers, nurses, and prison guards (Collins, 2012: 11). After six days of protesting and some negotiation, union leaders representing the protest group agreed to except whatever losses in pay and pension that would result from the passing of the bill, but stood firm on the notion that Walker should eliminate the limitations to collective bargaining rights, which he eventually conceded (Curry, 2011).

Digital media played a pivotal role in supporting and coordinating the work of grassroots activists at the State Capitol in Madison (Squirea & Gaydos, 2013: 57). Within the group of graduate students who participated in the demonstrations, a small subset volunteered for the job of developing and monitoring DefendWisconsin.org and its associated email, Twitter, and Facebook accounts (Squirea & Gaydos, 2013: 58).

New York City - “Bloombergville”

Just a few months before Occupiers would flood Lower Manhattan, the struggle in New York City took the form of a small protest organized by a loose coalition of individuals called New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts (NYABC) (Sledge, 2012). Early in the spring of 2011, labor and community activists in New York who called themselves the “May 12th Coalition,” organized a demonstration on Wall Street that involved conducting training sessions on civil disobedience and disruptive activity, as well as teach-ins on the contributions made by banks and Wall Street to the current economic downturn (Lewis & Luce, 2012: 44). Members of the May 12th Coalition later came together to form the NYABC, and with the aid of the International Socialist Organization

(ISO), staged a small occupation at the corner of Broadway and Park, just outside of city hall in New York's Hall Park, called "Bloombergville" (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 8-9; Lewis & Luce, 2012: 44; Sledge, 2012). The Green Party and the South Bronx Community Congress were also among its endorsers, with food and supplies for protestors being provided by AFSCME DC 37, the city's largest municipal union (Sledge, 2012).

Protests began on June 16, 2011, the purpose of which was primarily to voice public opposition to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget, which, had it been passed, would have laid off 4,000 city school teachers, and closed 20 firehouses (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 8-9; Lewis & Luce, 2012: 44; Sledge, 2012). On the advice of lawyers, protestors were told they could take advantage of a loophole in New York's municipal law that permitted individuals to sleep on the edges of city sidewalks, which protected them from arrest and prosecution (Sledge, 2012). Bloombergville had tents and sleeping bags, a makeshift library, teach-ins, and an open assembly that took place nightly (Sledge, 2012). After two weeks into the occupation, 13 members of the NYABC were arrested for barricading themselves in the lobby of the City Council to prevent a vote on a compromise budget deal. But June 29th, the modified budget was drafted and passed by city council, effectively ending the Bloombergville protests (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 8-9). The revised budget was meant to spare the majority of teacher jobs and spending cuts, however, 2,600 teachers still lost their jobs and \$178 million was cut from education (Lewis & Luce, 2012).

Parallels

Several similarities exist between the "massive street protests" that erupted in Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Wisconsin and "Bloombergville," in 2011. Understanding these parallels will help us to identify the origin of some of the more defining characteristics of Occupy Wall Street pertaining to its organization and execution. Of all the notable consistencies found among the protests preceding Occupy, one the most glaring (extending to all five), is the notion that the demonstrations were a response to changes in public policy, in keeping with a neoliberal economic strategy, that were widely perceived to favour a small, wealthy elite; an elite who enjoy a mutually-beneficial and profitable relationship with their respective governments. The second parallel is the occupation of public space, a tactic that is portrayed as an effective means of ensuring protestor demands are met in a timely manner. The third parallel is the involvement of youth in the mobilization of support and coordination of protest demonstrations, a feat accomplished with the utilization of social media and networking technologies (identified as the fourth major similarity

between protests) that enabled the communication and transmission of information to large numbers of people very quickly.

The *neoliberalization of public policy* is identified in the source material as having contributed significantly to the public's zeal to demonstrate in every major instance of public dissent leading up to Occupy. According to the definition provided by Heikki (2009), "neoliberalism" is an economic strategy for resolving problems faced in society by means of facilitating "competitive markets," and includes theories related to market-libertarian political philosophies, the traditional theory of neoclassical economics, and the New Public Management philosophy of modernising the public sector (433). Government support for the privatization of public services, free trade, open markets and de-regulation, and reductions in government spending, are all hallmarks of neoliberalist policy, intended to expand and enhance the role of the private sector in the economy (Heikki, 2009: 433). The implementation of a "social market economy," a phrase that is used as a more positive-sounding alternative to the term "competitive markets," is not intended to be detrimental to individual or collective well-being, as it is assumed that such a system fosters the growth and maintenance of an efficient and fair economic system, one that maximises freedom of choice (433). A neoliberalist strategy is in direct contrast with a Keynesian economic model, which advocates for government intervention and demand-side management of the economy to achieve as close to full employment as possible. In Keynesian thinking, government deficit spending and fiscal stimulus are needed at times of economic duress, because free market conditions do not necessarily lead to optimal market outcomes (Heikki, 2009: 436).

In a neoliberal economic strategy, "market-libertarianism" translates into reduced (or non-existent) government intervention in the private sector, which can result in the enactment of legislation intended to relinquish governments from the responsibility of delivering essential services to citizens - a responsibility that is ultimately delegated to private businesses and organizations. The transformation of a national economy towards neoliberalism can be viewed as a conflicting and contradictory process, requiring governments to be Keynesian at times, intervening heavily by drafting and enforcing policies in the hopes of creating an economic system where their intervention is no longer necessary. In effect, de-regulating the economy requires a series of regulatory interventions in order for a truly open system to be set in motion. Ironically, it is these regulatory measures that supporters of each protest refuted, on the grounds that policies stood to benefit only a select few, instead of improving the market by making it more equitable.

Typically, government bodies justify their neoliberal legislative changes by arguing that cost-saving measures are needed to reduce budgetary deficits and national debt. The act of protest suggests heavy skepticism among supporters for these justifications. Recent economic and social policies and decisions provide evidence of collusion between government entities and corporate interests that can potentially consolidate wealth and power in the hands of a small group of people. The legislative decisions that are borne out of this relationship, it is argued, serve to transfer wealth away from the greater public, and into the possession of an economic elite. A process, because of its visibility and negative impact on the day-to-day lives of most citizens, provides part of the impetus needed for a critical mass of people to protest publically.

In Tunisia and Egypt, the legislative decisions made by Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarek under the guise of neoliberalist market correction, resulted in skyrocketing unemployment and substantially lower wages. In Tunisia, the policy decisions made in the two decades President Ben Ali assumed control are credited with causing nationwide unemployment to hover between 14-30%. In Egypt, the *Economic Restructuring and Adjustment Program* initiated by President Mubarek in the 1980s, is credited with causing labour disputes, a consequence of lower wages that resulted from the privatization of certain industries. Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarek were each held personally accountable by their citizenries for the policies enacted during their reign that contributed to the economic downturns in each state, with each protest group demanding their leader's immediate resignation. In Spain, Wisconsin, and Bloombergville, the government's decision to implement "structural adjustments," translated into drastic budget cuts to social services and welfare programs, the stripping of certain union rights away from employees in the public sector, and the bailout of large financial institutions using taxpayer funds. Opposition to Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's "Budget Repair Bill," and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget reform, are noted specifically in the source material for "adding fuel to the fire," prompting concerned citizens and unionized workers affected by the policy changes to create a public spectacle. The underlying implication expressed in the source material is that, in environments with high unemployment, low wages, and powerless unions, it is not surprising to witness growing tension among the general population; a tension that is the by-product of individual hardships stemming from financial deprivation, as well as the idleness and boredom associated with being unemployed. It is this tension that also fuels the desire to publically protest.

Though it may seem obvious to point out, the *occupation of public space* is another characteristic shared among a majority of the protests that preceded Occupy Wall Street in 2011. It

only required six days from the moment protests broke out in Egypt's Tahrir Square for approximately 250,000 supporters to occupy Cairo's landmark, setting up a permanent presence until their demand to have President Mubarek removed from office was realized. In Wisconsin, it took only three days before a group of public sector workers and teachers numbering approximately 20,000, occupied the public space facing the State Capitol Building and Governor Walker's private residence. The occupation of these spaces was only necessarily for six days, as legislators were more than willing to negotiate terms for the proposed budget in order to end the demonstrations. Protests in Spain and Bloombergville are both notable because of the erection of encampments, with sleeping accommodations and utilities made readily available so that protestors could extend their occupations indefinitely. In every instance where the occupation tactic was used, protestors were successful at persuading the government to meet or negotiate terms. The success of Tunisian and Egyptian protest efforts in particular, having forced their respective dictators to step down from power after only weeks of occupation, is a testament to the gravity and scope of changes that are possible when large groups of people convene against a common enemy. Such demonstrable success must have contributed to the decision by organizers to implement such a tactic for Occupy Wall Street, and will be discussed in greater detail in the second half of this sub-study.

The *involvement of youth* in the organization and execution of protest initiatives is also a recurring feature of the protests that precede Occupy. Their involvement, particularly in the Arab Spring and Indignados protests, is largely a consequence of national unemployment being heavily concentrated in the young-adult age demographics. The Spanish national unemployment rate in the Spring of 2011, for example, was over 20% for the general public, and over 40% for individuals under the age of 24. What is important to note is that the participation of youth also accounts for the *utilization of social media and networking technologies* for organizing demonstrations and communicating with other activists. Data and analysis offered by the Pew Research firm regarding age demographics and social media use, suggests that the predominant user base for services such as Facebook and Twitter is 18-35.² Young Tunisian men, impacted by the suicide of Mohammed Bouazizi, shared videos and images with one another of demonstrations and incidents of copycat martyrdom, using smartphones and social media applications to do so. The actions of 29-year-old

² Read the report published by the Pew Research Internet Project on June 16, 2011, entitled "Part 2: Who is Using Social Networking Sites?" Visit <http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/06/16/part-2-who-are-social-networking-site-users/>

Wael Ghonim in Egypt, broadcasting the unjust murder of Khaled Said to a wide audience on Facebook, was instrumental in the mobilization of support for the mass protests that would ensue. In Wisconsin, because proposed policy changes centered around education, students and teachers both became heavily involved in distributing information online, allowing demonstrations to be coordinated in an timely manner.

Throughout the remainder of this thesis, features of the Occupy Wall Street protest that resemble the four parallels will be identified and discussed in greater detail. Evidence of the direct influence these protests had on Occupy Wall Street will be integrated into the discussion of other topics; topics identified in relation to the subject of Space (which comprises the second half of this chapter), to the issues of social structure found in Chapter 4, and the personal biographies of protest supporters discussed in Chapter 5. The purpose of revealing and elaborating upon these influential features is to establish that Occupy Wall Street was not an isolated incident, but instead, one protest along a line of protests; the final domino in a sequence that began to topple in Tunisia in early January, 2011. In keeping with the assertion made by Hardt and Negri (2013), an enhanced understanding of Occupy can only be achieved by analysing it in relation to the other protests that occurred alongside it, revealing an “emerging cycle of struggles” (1), a much broader theme that will be discussed in the final chapter. Considering that at least four major similarities exist between the Occupy Movement and other mass uprisings that preceded it (the parallels I was able to identify), it is more than likely that Occupy was a by-product of a strengthening “zeitgeist of public dissent” that was sweeping the globe that year.

The Subject of Place: The Occupation of Wall Street in Both Physical and Virtual Reality

In the opinion of *Adbusters* (2011), the true beauty of using “occupation” as a method of protest and act of defiance is its “pragmatic simplicity”: gathering together in both physical and virtual assemblies in order to hone in on a single unifying demand that “awakens the imagination and, if achieved, would propel us [the 99%] toward the radical democracy of the future.” Lubin (2012: 185) agrees with this statement, maintaining that, in an era where major events are broadcasted live across the world instantly, the Occupy Movement has demonstrated that modern urban protests will increasingly manifest on two different planes of existence, both in physical and virtual spaces. To Lubin (2012: 184), “protests configured for virtual audiences are likely to become

mainstays of urban social movements,” stating that the Movement’s presence online is fundamental, if not crucial, to its longevity in the physical world.

The variety of media used to mobilize support for the occupation of Wall Street, and in addition, serve as tools for communication within and between Occupy encampments, can be viewed as the incorporation of “low-tech” forms, such as newsletters, coupled with modern technological developments such as Livestreaming, blogging, tweeting, and various other forms of social media (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 378). This phenomenon, the combined use of traditional and modern communication technologies for the purposes of organizing and mobilizing around a single cause, is referred to by Costanza-Chock (2012: 378) as “transmedia mobilization,” and is a topic worthy of exploration in relation to Occupy Wall Street.

The “occupation” of physical and virtual spaces is an element of the Occupy Wall Street protests that is explored in-depth by several authors. This section of the analysis, that makes up the second half of this sub-study, will explore topics including the participation of *Adbusters Magazine* in promotion of a “US Day of Rage,” which became the basis for the mobilization of support for Occupy Wall Street; the encampment created by Occupy supporters in Zuccotti Park; the utilization of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tumblr for the purposes of distributing Occupy information and garnering support; as well as the publication of the *Occupied Wall Street Journal* for the same purposes. The incorporation of traditional and social media platforms for the mobilization of support and the organization of demonstrations is a feature unique to “modern” movements, particularly those that took place throughout 2011. The availability of computer and mobile technologies with image capture and internet capabilities to a youthful market, undoubtedly contributed to this trend, and phenomenon explored earlier in this analysis. Themes that emerge from this section will also be comparatively analyzed in the Discussion found in Chapter 6.

Zuccotti Park

Until late September, 2011, the vast majority of Americans knew nothing about Zuccotti Park, a privately-owned public plaza tucked between the Federal Reserve Bank and the World Trade Center site (Andersen, 2011; Orden, 2011). Formerly Liberty Park, the site was renamed in 2006 after John E. Zuccotti, chairman of Brookfield Office Properties Limited, the park’s owner (Grossman, 2011). The park does not adjoin the 54-story office tower, 1 Liberty Plaza, but rather, is bounded on all four sides by streets: Broadway, Trinity Place, Cedar and Liberty Streets (Foderaro,

2011). According to Foderaro (2011), the attractiveness of the location was based primarily on two factors: first, that the park was situated in the heart of the financial district, and second, that it was one of the largest private parks in the city, featuring all of the physical characteristics and amenities some would deem necessary for a long-term occupation, such as low stone benches, large beds of ornamental grasses and a dense canopy of trees

The number of participants *Adbusters* hoped would come out on September 17th in support of the “US Day of Rage” and participate in the occupation of Wall Street by setting up tents, kitchens, and peaceful barricades, was 20,000 (*Adbusters*, 2011a; Andersen, 2011; Farrell, 2011). But as Schneider (2011) points out, at that moment in time, trying to estimate the number of participants who would make it that first day was anybody’s guess. The demonstrations planned for the 17th were supposed to unfold in a relatively straightforward manner, with protestors kicking off festivities by spending part of the morning and early afternoon marching through the Financial District (Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 84). Initially, a “General Assembly” (or GA, a topic that will be discussed in greater detail in the Chapter 4) had been planned for Chase Manhattan Plaza following a scheduled march through Wall Street, however, the meeting was prevented by police enforced barricades surrounding the plaza and entrance, having been tipped off in advance about possible plans to set up camp in Zuccotti Park (Kleinfield & Buckley, 2011; Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 84). In addition, barriers were also erected around the Charging Bull statue that protestors had planned to make a rallying point, and by early that afternoon, two dozen uniformed police officers surrounded the statue (Moynihan, 2011; Pepitone, 2011). The topic of police intervention and tactics used by NYPD officers to deter specific demonstrations, is another topic that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

At approximately 3:00pm that day, resorting to a backup plan, activists selected Zuccotti Park for the location of their General Assemblies, largely because of the convenience of its proximity to Wall Street, particularly the New York Stock Exchange, becoming their home and self-created “free-speech zone” until their eventual eviction by police in mid-November (Kleinfield & Buckley, 2011; Moynihan, 2011; Brucato, 2012: 78; Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 84; Rehmann, 2013: 3). The final decision to set up an encampment in Zuccotti Park was made during a GA meeting that evening, and as a result, estimates ranging between 200 to 700 activists camped in the park that first night (Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 86). The idea, according to some organizers, was to camp out for weeks or even months (Moynihan, 2011), to replicate the kind, if not the scale, of protests that erupted earlier in the year in Egypt’s Tahrir Square and major cities in

Spain (Kimmelman, 2011; Moynihan, 2011; Rushkoff, 2011). It is clear, however, after the analysis provided in the first half of this sub-study, that the use of occupation as a tactic was influenced by not only what transpired in Tahrir Square, but also in Spain, Wisconsin and during Bloombergville in New York City.

According to Weidner (2011) of *The Wall Street Journal*, for the weeks that followed that initial day of protest, you could expect to see anywhere from a few hundred, up to a thousand people demonstrating in the park, with approximately 100 to 300 people making the park their permanent residence. There is a noticeable lack of hard figures in the source material pertaining to protest participation, with the best estimates coming from the few news reporters that visited the park personally, as opposed to just commenting on it from afar as so many others did. Andrew Grossman (2011), also of *The Wall Street Journal*, reported on a unique aspect of the Zuccotti Park occupation that sheds some light on what attendance might have been. Apparently, after approximately five weeks of protest, it became evident to organizers that the demand for space in the small one-acre plaza significantly outweighed supply. He points out that the occupation itself had quickly evolved, having started out as people in sleeping bags sleeping in open air, to the erection of a "tent city" as the temperature gradually dropped with the approaching winter. Early on, protesters founded a committee called "Town Planning" to help manage space in Zuccotti Park, which they accomplished by obtaining official plans for the park and mocking up a crude zoning map. In order to allow for a higher density of occupants within the limited space provided, the proposed solution, which Grossman (2011) jokingly quips is "classically Manhattan," was to "build upward." Spending money collected through donations and various charitable sources, the Town Planning Committee purchased a dozen large military-style tents, and were even considering the temporary installation of bunk beds (Grossman, 2011). If space in Zuccotti Park had become that scarce, it is safe to assume that Weidner's (2011) attendance estimate of a few hundred to one thousand protestors in a given day, is as close to accurate as can be found in the source material.

Ownership of Zuccotti Park by Brookfield Properties Limited, as well as their involvement and intervention in the Occupy protests, is a topic mentioned on several occasions throughout the news sources in particular. Media pundits seemed fascinated by the park's "origin story," which I suppose can be considered interesting if you believe municipal zoning variances to be the slightest bit intriguing. A privately-owned public space (a designation some consider oxymoronic; see Kimmelman, 2011; Chiaramonte 2011; Foderaro, 2011), the park was created as part of zoning concessions to developers working on the construction of 1 Liberty Plaza and the municipality of

New York. The deal, which included an additional 300,000 square feet of rentable space to be added to the tower, required Brookfield to also build the park (Chiaramonte 2011). A large concession, however, was made by Brookfield as part of the negotiations, with the same zoning variance requiring the park, unlike a typical public, city-owned park, remain open 24 hours a day. (Foderaro, 2011; Kimmelman, 2011; Moreno-Caballud & Sitrin, 2011). Foderaro (2011) and Lubin (2012: 189), both suggest that protestors benefited heavily from the municipal zoning variance, particularly the 24-hour condition. Certain restrictions applied to city parks, such as curfews spanning anywhere from 9pm to 1am depending on the area of the city, to prohibitions on the erection of tents and other structures, both of which would have occupation in city-owned parks unquestionably illegal.

Brookfield Properties have not publicly objected to the protests taking place on their property, but in public statements released by the company, they haven't exactly condoned them either. As reported on by Buckley (2011) and Chiaramonte (2011). Melissa Coley, a spokeswoman for Brookfield Office Properties, released a statement recognizing people's right to peacefully assemble, but reaffirmed the company's obligation to ensure that the park remain safe, clean and accessible to everyone, remarking that the company was working with the city to "restore the park to its intended purpose." The statement goes on to cite Brookfield's inability to uphold the park's sanitation requirements (Buckley, 2011; Chiaramonte, 2011). The statement reads, "Because many of the protestors refuse to cooperate by adhering to the [park] rules, the park has not been cleaned since Friday, September 16th, and as a result, sanitary conditions have reached unacceptable levels" (Brookfield Properties, as reported on Buckley, 2011 & Chiaramonte, 2011)

The agreed upon opinion of several authors is that the act of occupying public/private space, or the "re-appropriation of the commons" as Rehmann (2013: 3) called it, actually possesses deep symbolic meaning, particularly in regards to the act of occupying physical space, as well as the selection of Wall Street as a hub for demonstrations. Two theories are presented in the source material as what this meaning might be. First, the occupation of Zuccotti Park can be understood as an attempt by protestors to create an "equitable space," an area that facilitates group decision-making and accountability (Sifry, 2011). The occupation of public space and the adoption of consensus-driven protocol are meant to demonstrate the organization and functionality of an ideal democracy, one that supports all members of society equally, providing everyone with an equal voice (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Syrek, 2012: 73). A more detailed discussion of this topic is presented in Chapter 4 to coincide with a much broader discussion on "Horizontalism" and participatory

democracy. However, it is important to note at this juncture that a substantial amount of attention is paid in the source material to features of the Zuccotti Park encampment that render it a “sustainable protest village” (Rushkoff, 2011). In keeping with the concept of building an “ideal” society, many authors makes a reference to how the Zuccotti Park encampment evolved into a self-sufficient, self-sustaining entity, capable of delivering its own services and providing its own amenities to residents, without the need for a centralized, hierarchical system of governance.

Kimmelman of *The New York Times* (2011) refers to this evolved encampment as a “miniature polis, a little city in the making.” Weidner (2011) called it a “new Manhattan neighbourhood,” while Brucato (2012: 77) used the term “microcommunity.” As permanent resident numbers grew, several community-like structures and services were inevitably created. Such amenities included a Food Station located at the park’s center, where various donated meals from both private citizens and nearby fast food establishments are disbursed to the crowd, a Media Station, where gasoline generators powered computers were used to both report on the event live via social media, as well as to communicate with other encampments mobilizing across the U.S. (for more on this, see Marzec, 2011; Costanza-Chock, 2012: 278; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 369), an Information Booth, a Recycling Centre, stations for first aid, phone charging and poster-making, and a “People’s Library” in order to facilitate the collection of donated books and other reading materials (Kadet, 2011; Kleinfield & Buckley, 2011; Weidner, 2011).

Second, several authors claim the decision to occupy New York’s Financial District was made because it is widely recognized as a symbol of relentless materialism (Wagner-Pacifi, 2012: 191-192; Lubin, 2012: 184-185). It is the recognition on the part of protestors and those who support them, that Wall Street is a locatable source of gross inequity and the machinery controlling the concentration of wealth in the United States (Wagner-Pacifi, 2012: 191-192; Lubin, 2012: 184). The camp created at Zuccotti Park reasserts the spatial dimensions of exclusion and inequality, according to Pickerill and Krinsky (2012: 280-281), by “forcing society to recognize that capitalist accumulation happens in certain places,” or the “geography of capitalism,” and that these places can be named and located. The selection of the Financial District in Lower Manhattan as the location for protests, sit-ins, marches and overnight occupation, must be viewed as a metaphor for grievances related to broader economic forces (Porter, 2011). Kohn (2011b) and Censky (2011) make a notable distinction, insisting that protesters aren’t opposed to free market capitalism, but rather, want to see eliminated the “crony capitalist system” that has replaced it. The term “crony capitalism” appears in several texts, a phrase that suggests that the capitalist economic system has

been tainted in some way, abused and corrupted in a criminal manner. Tabb (2012: 272) says it best, that in calling attention to the crimes of Wall Street financiers, Occupy challenged the “bipartisan protection of the criminal workings of the financial system as it exists.” Along the same lines, Kristoff (2011b) suggests that Occupy challenged progressive political discourse by exposing the “violent antagonisms intrinsic to capitalism.”

Adbusters & Anonymous – Mobilization of Support

The overwhelming consensus in the source material is that Adbusters Media Foundation, the Vancouver-based publisher of the critically acclaimed bi-monthly magazine *Adbusters*, was largely responsible for acting as a catalyst for “Occupy” affiliated protests and demonstrations across North America (Blow, 2011; Kleinfeld & Buckley, 2011; Pepitone, 2011; Costanza-Chock, 2012: 376; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Hatem, 2012: 413; Kern & Nann, 2013: 199; Pepitone, 2012; Rehmann, 2013: 3). Egan and Nichols (2011) of *Fox News* refer to the Adbusters Foundation as an “anti-capitalist group” that employed an “inventive” marketing campaign aimed at reproducing an Arab Spring-type uprising on Wall Street. They offer a belittling, sarcastic tone in regards to *Adbusters*, referring to it as “zany,” suggesting that its attempts at being a resource for “activists fighting to change the way information flows and meaning is produced in our society” can be reduced to a form of pandering to the masses. *Adbusters* refers to itself as “a global network of culture jammers” (also see Blow, 2011), an important hub for “high production value ad-hacking,” what Costanza-Chock (2012: 376) call “brand contamination.”

In 1989, Kalle Lasn helped found the anti-consumerist magazine (Haiven, 2007: 85; Yardley, 2011). Lasn, who would later appoint himself as chief editor, using the publication primarily to attack corporate America, creating “subvertising” campaigns like “Joe Chemo,” which openly mocked the Joe Camel cigarette ads of the 1990s (Yardley, 2011). Long before Occupy Wall Street was even a thought, *Adbusters* had many smaller campaigns, most notably “Buy Nothing Day,” which has since been adopted by occupiers and advocates of the movement alike (Yardley, 2011). *Adbusters’* iconic “brand” of cultural resistance, “culture jamming,” is defined as the remixing of advertisements in an attempt to unmask (rather than ornament) corporate evils (Haiven, 2007: 85). Lasn even wrote a book on the topic entitled, *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America’s Suicidal Consumer Binge — and Why We Must* (Haiven, 2007: 85; Yardley, 2011).

The seeds of Occupy Wall Street were planted by *Adbusters* months before protests would break out in mid-September. On February 2, *Adbusters* published a blog on their website authored

by Konos Matsu entitled, *A Million Man March on Wall Street: How to Spark a people's revolt in the West*, the first of a series of posts inspired by the spectacle of Tahrir Square (Farrell, 2011; Matsu, 2011). This incitement to action was connected to the successes of Egypt, implying that what happened in Cairo was an excellent example from which to model Western resistance practices (Kerton, 2012: 303). The article states, "Tahrir succeeded in large part because the people of Egypt made a straightforward ultimatum—that Mubarak must go—over and over again until they won. Following this model, what is our equally uncomplicated one demand?" (Adbusters, 2011a). For *Adbusters*, the success of Tahrir Square centered directly on the ability of protestors to repeat their single, unifying demand of removing Hosni Mubarek from political office.

Lasn, among the list of his numerous accomplishments, is also credited for giving the Occupy Wall Street Movement brand name recognition (Yardley, 2011). On July 13, in an attempt to initiate a new internet "meme" (a term coined by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins for a kind of transcendent cultural message), Lasn and his colleagues created a hashtag (#) on Twitter: #OCCUPYWALLSTREET (Yardley, 2011). July 13th stands out as a significant date in the text, recognized widely in the source material as the formal initiation of the Occupy Movement (Andersen, 2011; Davenport, 2011: 88-89; Kleinfeld & Buckley, 2011; Schneider, 2011; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Kern & Nann, 2013: 199). Lasn and other editors of the magazine published a mass email that afternoon, forwarding it to all 90,000 members on their distribution list. In an interview conducted by Pepitone (2011) on the day protests broke out, Lasn told *CNNMoney* that the editors at the magazine were upset that leaders in the financial sector "had not been brought to justice," questioning why a similar backlash to the one that erupted in Egypt had not also occurred in the U.S. He called the compulsion on the part of the staff to organize a day of protest an attempt at doing "something radical" in order to "shake things up" (Pepitone, 2011 & 2012). The email included a full-page photo-illustration of a barefoot ballerina posed atop Wall Street's iconic "Charging Bull" statue (see Appendix 2.2 for image), insurgents in a tear-gas fog in the background, along with four lines of copy (Andersen, 2011; Farrell, 2011; Schneider, 2011; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Kerton, 2012: 306):

"What is our one demand?
#occupywallstreet
September 17th.
Bring tent."

A similar, but slightly more detailed Call-to-Action was released simultaneously on the magazine's website:

"#OCCUPY WALL STREET

Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?

On Sept 17, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents,
kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy wall street."

- Adbusters, 2011

The blog entry that followed urged readers to join the zeitgeist and fashion themselves into a movement that was, "a fusion of Tahrir with the acampadas of Spain" (Farrell, 2011). Farrell (2011) envisions a crowd of 20,000 descending on Wall Street "for a few months", in order to "incessantly repeat one simple demand in a plurality of voices". Ironically, the movement would soon be criticized heavily for lacking a clear demand, despite the fact that *Adbusters* had overtly suggested the occupation should revolve around a single demand (an idea first introduced by Matsu, 2011), that "Barack Obama ordain a Presidential Commission tasked with ending the influence money has over representatives in Washington", a reformist proposition that shares relatively little relation to the overturning of an entire political regime, as suggested by the Egyptian revolution (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 10; Kerton, 2012: 305). A more in-depth discussion of protestor demands is offered in Chapter 4.

The infamous group of "hacktivists" or "internet collective" known as *Anonymous* are credited in the source material with having amplified the initial call-to-action to a much broader, wider audience (Farrell, 2011; Costanza-Chock, 2012: 376; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Pepitone, 2012; Turnham & Lyon, 2012). *Anonymous*' endorsement of the Movement came in the form of tireless promotion through social media, as well as a series of Internet campaigns, known as "ops," targeting influential bankers and politicians, in August and September of 2011 (Turnham & Lyon, 2012). Most importantly was the circulation of internet videos (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 376), prominently featuring the tagline "Expect Us," which Turnham and Lyon (2012) believe, comes across as both a promise and a threat. They contend that the aura of intimidation apparent in the videos was intended to "serve as a warning to riot cops facing difficult decisions in the heat of often chaotic protests," a not-so-subtle jab at police officers who use excessive force in protest situations. Turnham and Lyon (2012) dedicate an entire article to *Anonymous*' involvement, but work diligently to attempt to convince the reader that *Anonymous*, and anyone who associates with them, are dangerous criminals, using the terms "threat," "intimidation" and "savage" in reference to their actions.

The group's intervention in the spreading of the word and the mobilization of supporters referenced in the source material as both a blessing and a curse to the Movement's goals and purpose (Schneider, 2011). Schneider (2011) points out that association with a group that is both under heavy scrutiny by segments of the public, and highly sought after by the FBI, may not accomplish much in terms of boosting the protestors' credibility. Schneider (2011) also notes the possibility of an intensified police presence and increased arrests at the site of protests, of particular vulnerability are participants who choose to wear a "Guy Fawkes" mask, an iconic symbol adopted by supporters of the group (see also Gainer, 2011). Alternatively, In Lasn's interview with Pepitone (2012) of *CNN*, he jokingly remarks that Anonymous' involvement and participation in disseminating the message of Occupy gave the movement "more street cred."

Social Media & Blogging Platforms

How did this happen? How, in a mere month, did a marginalized menagerie of political protesters manage to shake the banking and political foundations of the United States and transform the political debate of the nation? A simple answer is "social media," but such simplicity needs nuance.

- DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 485

Based on the analysis of Occupy Wall Street conducted by DeLuca, Lawson and Sun (2012: 483), on "old media" platforms such as newspapers, radio and television, the protests were "stillborn, first neglected, and then frivolously framed." On social media, however, they contend that the circumstances are markedly different, with OWS emerging as "vibrant" and heavily discussed, both celebrated and attacked. The importance of social media tools for the mobilization of protest support, as well as the broadcast and spread of protest messages and information, is an unavoidable truth in the source material (Pepitone, 2011; Bennett, 2012; Costanza-Chock, 2012; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 369). The utilization of social media tools, as discussed earlier in the chapter, is another parallel Occupy Wall Street shares with protests that preceded it that year. Of particular importance is the deployment of exceedingly popular online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, with some recognition going to live broadcasting platforms such as LiveStream. On YouTube, an estimated 10,000 videos tagged "Occupy Wall Street" were uploaded within the first month of protests alone, the most popular of which was video captured on a smartphone that shows female protestors getting pepper-sprayed by NYPD officers, according to YouTube spokesman Matt McLernon (Preston, 2011). Estimates of the number of Facebook pages and Twitter accounts created for purposes of disseminating

Movement updates and literature, as well as the recruitment of volunteers and the engagement of supporters in discussion and debate, range anywhere from 200 (Preston, 2011), all the way up to 1500 (Gaby & Caren, 2012: 367).

In an examination of how protest participants and supporters interact on Occupy-related Facebook pages, Gaby and Caren (2012: 368) isolate the top 100 posts in terms of drawing in new “fans” or followers (a metric that can be measured using Facebook’s internal “Insights” dashboard). They found that the most popular posts for fan acquisition involved the recruitment of people and resources to local occupations, information sharing and storytelling and inter-group exchanges. They also note the popularity of posts that highlight “surprising alliances,” including quotes from members of the elite 1% that were interpreted as support for the Movement (Polletta, 2006; as cited in Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368).

Analysis of the results of a survey distributed to protest participants in the Costanza-Chock (2012) study, reveal some statistical insight into the usage behavior on the popular digital media platforms. Not surprisingly, Facebook ranked as the most popular social network as a whole for posting and receiving information and updates, with a 64% usage rate among respondents, with just under a quarter of respondents using Twitter (23%) or blogs (24%) for the same posting purposes (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 379). In terms of media used for receiving Occupy information throughout the day, 29% of respondents said they viewed videos on YouTube, 5% higher than those who said they used newspapers, 10% higher than livestreaming websites, and 12% higher than those who used television and radio for the same information consumption purposes (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 379). Facebook also ranked as the most popular medium for sharing information with others (74%), narrowly winning over face-to-face communication (Facebook really beat out face-to-face interaction?) that came in a close second at 73%. Information shared via Facebook or word-of-mouth was considered more “casual” by the author, with a smaller sub-group of protest supporters engaging in more “intense” forms of media production. Blog posts were written and published online by 18% of respondents, with under 10% making a video, a far more labour and time intensive endeavor (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 380).

Returning to the study conducted by DeLuca, Lawson and Sun (2012), despite the fact only a handful of articles were published in major U.S. newspapers covering Occupy activities during the first month of the protest, the same could not be said for independently written blogs, with a search using the Google Search Engine for blogs mentioning “Occupy Wall Street” yielding over 10 million results in the same timeframe (492). The qualitative analysis of internet blogs conducted by

the trio to identify instances of framing on the internet, includes an interesting dimension that adds a considerable amount of depth to the results. In selecting the U.S. political blogs for analysis, each source was categorized as either having a liberal (left-leaning) or conservative (right-leaning) orientation, later using this distinction as a basis for comparison (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 492). The analysis begins by presenting consistent themes found within each category, followed by a comparative analysis to identify the major differences between the two categories.

The most consistent theme identified in the analysis of conservative blogs is the discrediting of Occupy protestors. Some of the more popular themes identified include challenges to the protestors' authenticity by discrediting claims that OWS represents a diverse grassroots movement, the delegitimization of protestors by linking them to dangerous political groups or ideologies, the framing of protestors as non-productive, degenerate members of society, or as an "undifferentiated mob" who are uninformed and are incapable of thinking for themselves (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 493-494). Most common, however, was the portrayal of protestors as freeloaders; irresponsible individuals who are a drain on society, with several right-leaning bloggers fixating on the presence of unemployed and homeless individuals among the protestors (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 494). With the protestors framed as dirty, degenerate, and dangerous, it is not surprising that right-leaning blogs were generally unsympathetic to protestors' concerns, as well as either dismissive or fearful of their goals (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 495). Right-leaning bloggers also consistently challenged the legitimacy of Occupy protests by framing it as a "violent riot" that is carrying out "general mayhem, destroying private property and battling the police in the streets" (Martin, 2011; as cited in DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 496).

It is the interpretation of the authenticity and legitimacy of the protests that is the main point of differentiation between right and left-leaning political blogs (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 496-497). Left-leaning blogs, in complete contrast to blogs on the right side of the spectrum, maintain that the movement was in fact grassroots, with pundits on the left applauding labor union involvement and support in OWS. Left-leaning bloggers were also not shy about highlighting support from liberal political leaders like President and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, as well as a number of celebrity endorsements (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 497). Instead of trying to portray protestors in a negative light, liberal oriented blogs focused instead on the comprehensive list of grievances identified as being important motivators of OWS activities. The list included bank bailouts, corporate greed, a sense that the American dream is no longer attainable, the ongoing economic crisis, the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, rising income

inequality, increased homelessness, lost homes and jobs, a lack of effective financial regulations, the influence of corporate money in the political system, and several others (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 497-498). In order to combat the “violent mob” portrayal of protest supporters, left-leaning blogs emphasized that the success of OWS at being nonviolent and law abiding compared to its international counterparts (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 498)

The importance of the blogging website Tumblr cannot be understated in the source material, receiving specific attention from several authors for its role in adding to the legitimization of the protest group, helping it to establish a cohesive group identity (Dewan, 2011; Luhby, 2011; Preston, 2011; Sutter, 2011; Winter, 2011). Tumblr – a website that gives anyone the ability to create a free blog website, lying somewhere between Twitter and WordPress on the social media spectrum in terms of blogging functionality – has become a forum for debate among supporters and critics alike. Each blog account appears as a thread or stream, with users having the ability to post to public threads, such as the thread that helped propel Occupy into mainstream dialogue, “We Are the 99 Percent.” In this particular thread, thousands of individuals shared personal testimonials divulging reasons (linked to personal experiences) that justify their support of the Occupy Movement (Preston, 2011; Sutter, 2011; Winter, 2011). Each post features a photo of its author holding up a paper sign that tells a bit of the person’s story and says “We Are the 99 Percent,” a reference to the elite’s command over the nation’s wealth (Sutter, 2011). These first-person stories of hardship, primarily include themes related to unemployment, accumulated student debt, unaffordable health insurance, home foreclosures, environmental pollution, wealth inequality, Wall Street and government corruption, and several others (Dewan, 2011; Preston, 2011; Sutter, 2011). According to Dewan (2011), and consistent with the opinion of a vast majority of sources, the primary grievance of the 99 Percenters who posted on Tumblr is the fact that 1% of Americans control about a third of the country’s wealth.

As attention for that Tumblr thread grew, a competing blog with a more conservative ideology also began to garner mainstream attention, titled “We are the 53%.” Created by Erick Erickson, an editor at the conservative site RedState.com and occasional commentator for CNN, contributors to this blog argue that they represent the 53% of Americans who must pay federal income tax, as opposed to those who make under \$30,000, entitling them to pay no substantial federal tax on earnings (Dewan, 2011; Luhby, 2011; Sutter, 2011;). One of the fundamental flaws of the thread is the assumption that Occupy Wall Street protestors and sympathizers on the “We Are the 99 Percent,” site do not pay taxes. This claim originates from an estimate from the 2009 U.S.

Tax Policy Center report that claims roughly 47% of Americans do not pay federal income tax (Luhby, 2011; Sutter, 2011). The primary grievance of the 53 Percenters is the fact that they are shouldering a heavier tax burden, which ultimately goes to fund the government assistance programs the 47% benefit from (Luhby, 2011). The content of these two Tumblr feeds serve as the primary source material for analysis in Chapter 5, where the personal biographies of those who supported and participated in the protest serves as the primary focus.

Social media fosters an ethic of both individual and collective participation during politically-charged events (Bennett, 2012; Costanza-Chock, 2012: 378; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 483). Bennett (2012), in an article entitled *The Personalization of Politics*, proposes a framework for understanding "large-scale individualized collective action" orchestrated using digital media (20), essentially explaining the reason behind both the use and popularity of social media throughout Occupy Wall Street. Bennett's (2012) argument begins with the premise that the rise of "personalized forms of political participation" is the defining characteristic of modern political culture, blaming this rise on social fragmentation and the overall decline in society of group loyalties. The interesting feature of the modern participation landscape is that widespread social fragmentation has caused individualization to become the norm, a "modal social condition in postindustrial democracies," particularly among younger segments of the population (Bennett, 2012: 22). Bennett (2012) states, "While individuals may be at the center of their own universes, those universes can be very large thanks to the social networking potential of ubiquitous communication technologies" (22), maintaining that new forms of social media and networking have not eliminated political participation and expression, but instead, allow for a different form of participation, one that doesn't require central leadership or affiliation with any "official" organizations. This new form of participation is channeled through dense social networks over which people can share personal stories and concerns, enabling individuals to become important catalysts of collective action processes as stories begin to generate interest and support online (Bennett, 2012: 22). Social networking sites offer a tremendous benefit to protest organizers, creating a short cut that allows movement sympathizers to be involved without requiring the development of a new and separate communication infrastructure, or a sympathizer's physical presence at the site of protest (Gaby & Caren, 2012: 372).

Costanza-Chock (2012) investigates the relationship between social media and social movements, examining media practices used during Occupy protests as a case study. The concept of "social movement media cultures" is developed throughout the analysis, and is defined as "the

set of tools, skills, social practices and norms that movement participants deploy to create, circulate, curate and amplify movement media across all available platforms” (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 375). All social movement media cultures can be placed along an axis with vertical (top-down) message control on one extreme, and participatory (horizontal) media making on the other – the extreme the Occupy Movement is on. Practices that promote horizontal communication were evident throughout the protests including live public addresses during General Assemblies, live streaming of General Assemblies over the internet, and the practice of printing out important materials for distribution (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 382). Gitlin’s (2011) article in *The New York Times* presents a similar argument, discussing how the use of social media and other internet resources helps to facilitate “horizontalism.” A thorough discussion of horizontal power and the General Assembly practice will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The Occupied Wall Street Journal

Three journalists in the media deemed it newsworthy to report on the publication of a newspaper circulated internally within the Zuccotti Park encampment entitled *The Occupied Wall Street Journal* (Carr, 2011; Mirkinson, 2011; Moynihan, 2011). What makes the newsletter so fascinating to the authors is the irony in the fact that such an old method of communication would be adopted, and eagerly received, for a protest that had, up until that point, relied heavily on new and social media. Carr (2011) finds this fact reassuring – that newspapers as a medium still have some traction – suggesting that its popularity among protestors makes logical sense as it conveys a sense of place, of “actually being there” that digital media simply cannot reproduce: “When is the last time somebody handed you a Website?” Carr (2012) asks. The notion of possessing something material and tangible that embodies the spirit and purpose of Occupy, is echoed by the newspaper’s creator and lead editor, Arun Gupta (Carr, 2011; Moynihan, 2011)

The origins of the newspapers are equally fascinating. H. Gupta, 46, and his partner Jed Brandt, 38, worked together for a small publication called the *Independent*, a left-leaning paper that publishes 16 issues a year and that Mr. Gupta co-founded in 2000 (Moynihan, 2011). Financing for the publication having been achieved through the crowdfunding website Kickstarter.com, having set out to raise \$12,000, instead raising more than \$75,000 (Carr, 2011; Moynihan, 2011). The initial printing of the document was supposed to be 50,000 copies, but was quickly raised to 70,000 copies once demand for it was established (Carr, 2011; Mirkinson, 2011; Moynihan, 2011). Some of the stories include one Gupta himself entitled *The Revolution Begins at Home*, an essay

written by former *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges, urging people to participate in the protests, as well as the “Declaration of the Occupation of New York City” (see Appendix 2.1), a document approved at a meeting of protesters on September 29, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter (Moynihan, 2011).

Summary

The analysis of source material presented in the second half of this sub-study, an examination into the “spatial” features of Occupy Wall Street, exposes two important commonalities that exist between Occupy and other protests that took place in 2011. Having a visible presence both on popular internet websites, social media networks, and heavily traversed public streets and squares, offers insight into a two-pronged “occupation” strategy, with manifestations of Occupy activism and support found in both physical and virtual reality. The convergence of large numbers of people in show of support for the 99%, took place both in Zuccotti Park, as well as internet forums like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.

The long-term occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York’s Wall Street Financial District - a park accessible to all members of the public, 24 hours a day, despite being privately owned by Brookfield Properties – was a tactic employed by Occupy organizers and supporters for three proposed reasons. First, the success of previous occupations in the Arab Spring, Spain and U.S. likely factored into the decision to use a similar tactic for Occupy Wall Street. Second, the act of “re-appropriating the commons” was performed to create an “equitable space,” one that embodies the principles of consensus-based decision making and responsibility, as a way of demonstrating what “ideal” democracy might resemble. Discussion of this topic was limited in this particular sub-study, having been moved to the next chapter in order to coincide with a broader discussion on “Horizontalism” and participatory democracy. Along the same lines, however, the evolution of makeshift protest encampments into self-sustaining “microcommunities” that operate without a hierarchical government structure, can also be representative of an “ideal” form of society that protestors seek to replicate. Finally, the selection of Wall Street in particular as the location for protest demonstrations and occupation, is attributed in the source material to the collectively held symbolic meaning attached to the location. Occupy Wall Street is widely recognized as a hub of relentless materialism and extreme greed, known for being the primary location of the machinery used to power the economy, and fuel the gross social inequalities that are perpetuated by its very operation.

Evidence of the combination of traditional and online forms of media for communication and solicitation purposes, a phenomenon referred to as “transmedia mobilization” (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 378), is examined in the second half of this sub-study. Supporters of Occupy Wall Street employed as many tools as possible in order to mobilize support, garner further media attention, and transmit information between individuals and protest sites. In the early stages of Occupy, social media and internet blogs were used to amplify messages of intent and purpose. *Adbusters* magazine is credited in the source material as being the primary catalyst for Occupy demonstrations, having published and dispersed three Calls-to-Action, two on the magazine’s website, and one as an email forwarded to thousands of recipients. The internet hacktivist group Anonymous, having adopted the principles of Occupy Wall Street as offered by *Adbusters*, took it upon themselves to campaign on the Movement’s behalf, circulating messages and videos in high-traffic internet forums in order to help spread the word. The creation of the *Occupied Wall Street Journal*, a newsletter handed out to protestors directly in Zuccotti Park by independent publishers aligned with the Occupy initiative, provided another platform for circulating information offered on “official” protest websites like occupywallst.org. The choice of “newspaper” as a medium for distributing Occupy doctrine is a point of interest raised in the source material, with concerns regarding the newsletter’s popularity among the predominantly young and tech-savvy protestor demographic.

Occupy Wall Street, as well as the protests that preceded it, demonstrate the power of social media and the internet to transform virtual audiences into physical ones. The sheer quantity and variety of locations online where information on Occupy Wall Street could be found, undoubtedly added to the momentum the Movement experienced in its early stages. The events that unfolded in New York’s Financial District provide an example how a grassroots activism campaign, whose origins can be found on the internet, does not fall on deaf ears, and that commitment to a cause online can translate into individual and collective action.

PILLAR 2: SYSTEMIC ISSUES & RESPONSES

The point of reference of the movements is not the state or politics conventionally defined. There is no desire to take over the state or to create a new party. The Occupy Movements reject this form of representative politics, focusing instead on people taking control of their own lives and expanding the democratic spaces in which they live and work. The fact that the movements do not have the conquest of the state as their goal does not mean they do not want countless things changed. To the contrary, they want the power of corporations contained and even broken, access to housing and education expanded, and austerity programs and war ended. But democracy is the crux of Occupy politics, and democracy practiced in such a way so as to upend vertical political relationships and expand horizontal ones.

- Sitrin, 2012: 75

* * *

This chapter, the second of three sub-studies, will identify and elaborate on topics related to issues of social structure, in keeping with the second “pillar” of Mills’ (1959) and Young’s (2011) imaginative analytic process, outlined in Chapter 2. Drawing on the News and Academic data sets, this study examines the statement made by media pundits and academic experts for insight into the grievances and demands of protestors. Social and economic issues that are related to Occupy, drawn exclusively from the source material, can be separated into three larger topics. Economic inequality and political under-representation as driving forces behind the Occupy Movement, and the policy initiatives put forth by Occupy protestors to address these large systemic problems.

The first sections explores the subject of *economic inequality*, or the growing wealth disparity between the richest and poorest segments of American society. Analysis of the source material reveals a widely-held concern by the 99% protest group regarding the collusion of government and private interests that serve to redistribute wealth unfairly. The actions of the “corporatocracy,” a group consisting of wealthy business owners and the government officials that support them. This group, understood synonymously in the source material with the 1%, is blamed for creating the economic circumstances necessary for wealth disparity to occur, providing at least part of the impetus needed for a large public demonstration such as Occupy to occur. A second, and equally powerful motivator for Occupy protestors, the subject of the second section of this study, is a perceived lack of *representativeness* in political decision making, illustrated by the political favoritism the 1% receive in legislative decisions. The expression of this concern, as well as a proposal for correcting it, are embodied in the demonstration by protest organizers and

supporters of a viable alternative; an organizational structure that substitutes hierarchy for consensus-driven participation. The final section of this portion of the analysis discusses the importance and utility of protestor *demands*. Four lists of “unofficial” Occupy demands are reviewed and compared, with similarities between the lists identified and discussed in more detail. This section provides insight into the common types of policy changes and government initiatives would like to see in order to rectify the issues in the first two sections of this analysis.

Economic Inequality as a Driving Force Behind Occupy Wall Street

Core Grievance – Growing Wealth Disparity

Undoubtedly, the closest thing to a consensus that can be found in the source material is the idea that Occupy Wall Street can be reduced to single core issue or grievance, that being, the growing *economic inequality and wealth disparity* between the richest segment of society, those who make up the 1% of income earners in America, and the remaining 99% (Abzug & Greenberg, 2011; Brooks, 2011; Chopra, 2011; Cooper, 2011; Folbre, 2011; Grossman, 2011; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 6; Kristoff, 2011a; Krugman, 2011a; Moynihan, 2011a; Moynihan, 2011b; Ostroff, 2011; Owens, 2011; Porter, 2011; Ross, 2011; Strachan, 2011; Zelizer, 2011; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 484-485; Kazin, 2012: 67; Wagner-Pacifi, 2012: 194). Porter (2011), Zelizer (2011) and Wagner-Pacifi (2012: 194) admit that, despite their being concerns held by many regarding the vagueness of protestor demands, they have been blatantly clear about their central preoccupation with economic inequality. Deepak Chopra, a world renowned author, New Age guru and alternative medicine practitioner, wrote an essay entitled “What’s the best outcome for Occupy Wall Street?” published in the *Huffington Post* in early December, 2011. In it, Chopra (2011) identifies what he believes to be the fundamental injustices to which Occupy supporters and participants are responding:

There is injustice in the way corporate greed has been allowed to wreck the global economy at will, without fear of punishment. There is injustice in the way jobs have been undermined, a manufacturing base ruthlessly destroyed for the sake of corporate profits. This injustice doesn't affect simply the factory workers, farmers, and underclass who typically lead social revolutions. A small elite has stripped away bargaining rights, pensions, and job stability without a shred of conscience.

Cooper (2011), in an article published in the *Huffington Post* entitled “Occupy Conservatism,” offers what he believes to be a fair summary of the primary complaint, drawing many parallels with Chopra (2011):

The current economic structure of the country is out of balance and favors a very small proportion of the rich over the rest of the country. America needs to reduce the power of major banks and corporations and demand greater accountability and transparency. The government should not provide financial aid to corporations and should not provide tax breaks to the rich.

Both authors identify an imbalance in the current economic system, tilted in the 1%'s favour (Kristoff, 2011b), who exercise disproportionate control over the economic and political circumstances of the masses (Folbre, 2011). Americans are asking themselves whether the "game is rigged," and it is this sense of injustice, coupled with economic insecurity, that have contributed significantly to the anti-Wall Street sentiment that exists today (Owens, 2011). As Owens (2011) points out, Americans can't help but get upset when presented with substantial evidence of "systematic foul play."

Brooks (2011) separates the notions of inequality into two subtypes, "Blue" and "Red," noting that they are "related but different." Blue Inequality occurs in densely populated urban centers like New York City, Los Angeles, and Boston, and is characterized by a disproportionately high amount of wealth being funneled to the top 1% of earners (Brooks, 2011). By contrast, Red Inequality occurs in much smaller cities and towns, with an income gap quickly expanding, but not between the top 1% and the bottom 99%, but between those with a college degree and those without (Brooks, 2011). In hindsight, this form of inequality is not necessarily negative, some might even call it "fair." If anything, it illustrates the success of the "global capitalist promise" (to be discussed in Chapter 5), reinforcing the notion that the meritocracy in place functions as intended. Brooks (2011) points out that the Occupy protests focus specifically on the issue of Blue Inequality in America, with so many large banking interests and media conglomerates concentrated in major cities.

There is certainly a huge fascination in the source material with uncovering quantitative data to substantiate Occupy's claims regarding income inequality. Measures of the distance between the 1% and everyone else in terms of income is illustrated in several ways, with estimates varying wildly. As it turns out, "We Are the 99%" has a degree of mathematical accuracy, effectively publicizing a message consistent with research on the distribution of income and wealth (Folbre, 2011). As Lubin (2012) points out, higher than average rates of poverty and income inequality is a characteristic of cities that have succeeded in attracting global capital interests. According to U.S. Census Bureau report, from 2009 to 2010 the poverty rate in New York City grew faster than the nationwide average, with one in five residents living in poverty (Lubin, 2012: 188;

see Roberts, Povich & Mather, 2013. The Working Poor Families Project, Policy Brief, Winter, 2012-2013). Both Kohn (2011a) and Kristoff (2011b) make light of the fact that the 400 wealthiest Americans have a greater combined net worth than the bottom 150 million Americans. Others suggest that, as of today, top 1% of American earners receive about a fifth of the country's income (according to a study cited by Rampell, 2011, conducted by economists Piketty & Saez), while others claim an even larger gap, that the 1% possess more wealth than the entire bottom 90% (Kristoff, 2011b).

Evidence to support the claim that the top 1% earned a disproportionate amount of the country's wealth is also provided throughout the source material. According to an analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's Historical Income Tables performed by Hickel (2012), in the United States, the share of national income going to the top 1% more than doubled between 1980 and 2010, from 8% to 18%. Within the same timeframe, the top 5% of American households saw their incomes increase by 72.7%, while the bottom 20% saw their incomes fall by 7.4%. In the period between 2002 to 2007, 65% of total economic gains for the entire country went to the richest 1% (Kristoff, 2011b). Several authors opted to present figures that illustrate how much a member of the 1% makes in annual income, compared to the opposite extreme. The average net worth for a member of the 1% was estimated at \$19,167,600 as of 2007 (Rampell, 2011). The cut-off point to entry into the 1% in terms of annual income is approximately \$506,553 according to the U.S. Tax Policy Center (cited by Rampell, 2011). However, as Rampell (2011) contends, tremendous variation in annual income exists even within the top percentile, with an individual at 99.5th percentile making roughly \$815,868 a year, while someone in the 99.9th percentile makes more than double that, at around \$2,075,574 a year. Of the 100 highest-paid chief executives in the United States in 2010, 25 took home more pay than their company paid in federal corporate income taxes, according to the Institute for Policy Studies (cited by Kristoff, 2011a).

Among all the statistical sources cited by authors in the source material, a study conducted by the U.S. Congressional Budget Office is mentioned most often, lending weight to its credibility and accuracy (Folbre, 2011; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 13; Krugman, 2011a; Porter, 2011; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 484-485; Hatem, 2012: 413). The statistics offered by the CBO, which appeared around the same time as protests erupted, is a longitudinal study using various measures to examine national income distribution in the 40 year period between 1979 and 2007.³ Overall, the

³ See Congressional Budget Office, *Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007*, October 2011, p. ix., online at <http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=12485>

report documents a sharp decline in the share of total income going to lower- and middle-income Americans. Based on the results published in the report, during the timeframe mentioned, incomes of the top 1% grew by a staggering average of 275%, while comparatively, those of the next 60% grew by only 40%. In 2007, the richest 1% of the population owned 34.6% of the wealth, the next 9% owned 38.5%, and the bottom 90% owned 26.9%, meaning the top 10% owned nearly two-thirds of the nation's total wealth (Hatem, 2012: 413; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 13; Porter, 2011). Krugman (2011a) essentially proclaims that the elimination of the middle class is complete, with the most telling conclusion derived from the report illustrating that the bottom 80% of households now receive less than half of total income.

In keeping with the idea suggested earlier by Rampell (2011), that significant variation exist within the top one percentile, there is some agreement among authors in the source material that the real target of scrutiny by Occupy protestors should not be the top 1%, but in fact, the top 0.1% of income earners (Porter, 2011; Krugman, 2011b). The top 0.1% are mostly comprised of elite corporate executives, with approximately 60% of members in this group being employed either as an executive in nonfinancial company or make their money in finance (Krugman, 2011b). According to an earlier CBO study published in 2005, the richest thousandth of Americans saw their real incomes rise more than 400% over the period from 1979 to 2005 (Krugman, 2011b).

Maintenance of an Inequitable Economic System

Owens (2011), reflecting on the onset of dissent and protest in the U.S. in the past decade, asks "what took so long?" suggesting that the gap between the infamous 2008 U.S. bank bailouts and the beginning of Occupy Wall Street, demonstrates a cultural willingness to "tolerate a relatively large amount of income inequality" (when compared to European counterparts). Kristoff (2011b) is fascinated by the same observable phenomenon, what he identifies as an aura of complacency on the part of American citizens to the injustices being perpetrated around them. Two authors in the text offer theories to explain why the majority of Americans remain loyal to a system that doesn't support them. Mark Fisher (2009: 2), in his book entitled "Capitalist Realism," argues that this complacency can be attributed to the widespread sense that capitalism the only viable political and economic system, that to imagine a coherent alternative would be impossible (as discussed in Jaffe, 2012: 199). Fisher (2009: 5), in a fairly bleak tone, notes that the "realism" of capitalist realism is "analogous to the deflationary perspective of a depressive who believes that any positive state, any hope, is a dangerous illusion" (Jaffe, 2012: 201). Owens (2011), however,

argues that the phenomenon stems from a socially embedded loyalty to “meritocracy,” where the truly hard-working, intelligent and innovative people are rewarded financially, an idea that will be discussed in Chapter 5, and the final Discussion.

This complacency exhibited by many Americans, it is argued, can be explained in correlation to the diminished “purchasing power” of the majority of citizens (Tabb, 2012: 268), a function of how much disposable income individuals possess, combined with the value of the dollar (affected by inflation). People makes less money, they spend less money, and the money that is available to spend doesn’t afford all that much. Ultimately, this can lead to an epidemic of loan creation and borrowing, maxing out credit cards and spending home equity, to allow citizens to sustain an adequate standard of living (Tabb, 2012: 268). Building on this idea, Francis (2011) suggests that escalating debt and chronic employment have led to a “great markdown” in the accepted standard of living. Over time, as a majority of individuals become accustomed to earning a diminished income, whether it be as a result of downsizing, outsourcing, pay cuts, etc., people begin to accept the declining lifestyle and reduced standard of living that accompanies it. Being poor and “broke” - having only the income available to purchase necessities, enjoying few, if any, of the luxuries that top wage earners receive - becomes the accepted norm.

The wealthy, and the media pundits that support their interests, have ways of neutralizing the backlash directed at them, either by deflecting the blame towards another target, or attempting to repackage the issue as another issue entirely. According to Krugman (2011a), members of the media attempted to transform the conflict inherent in the Occupy protests, arguing that the dispute cannot be reduced to the “wealthy” versus the “poor”, but instead, the educated versus the uneducated, in a not-so-subtle implication that the 99% are somehow not worthy of wealth because they are not intelligent enough to secure wealth within the confines of the system. The most bewildering defense, as identified by Krugman (2011a), is that even though the erosion of the middle class is evident, America has transformed into an upper-middle-class society, with a broad class of highly educated workers who have the necessary skills to be financially prosperous in our modern, technologically-advanced society. This explanation can almost be viewed as comical, with the implication that economic conditions have actually improved for the vast majority of Americans.

In defense of another classic “textbook” economic tenet, some economists maintain that a degree of income inequality is necessary for the functioning of the capitalist system as a whole, creating the incentives needed to persuade people to sell their labour in order to pool together the

money and resources needed to survive (as discussed by Kristoff, 2011a; also see Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 13). But a balance needs to be achieved. Too much inequality, it is argued, can become a detriment to the system with “two perverse consequences”: first, the very wealthy are in an advantageous position to lobby for political favors, contracts and bailouts, that can ultimately distort markets both nationally and internationally; and second, growing inequality undermines the ability of the poorest segments of the population to invest in their own education (Kristoff, 2011a). In 2003, B.L. Chen posited an “inverted U-shaped” curve: income inequality produces gains in economic growth rates to a certain point, but when the degree of inequality passes that point, growth begins to slow.⁴ High income inequality and wealth disparity is the price we as a society pay for sustainable, robust growth. Robert H. Frank, an economics professor and author of the book “The Darwin Economy,” suggests the opposite: using a comparative study of 65 industrialized nations, inequality seriously damages economies by stagnating growth, with “individual countries growing more rapidly in periods when incomes are more equal, and slowing down when incomes are skewed” (as discussed in Kristoff, 2011a)

The Actions of the “Corporatocracy”

Having established that wealth disparity is the core issue fuelling the Movement, the question begs to be asked, who is to blame? What analysis of the data reveals is that the collusion of corporate interests and the U.S. government is responsible for creating and maintaining the economic conditions needed for a large income gap to exist. The Occupy Wall Street Movement raised important questions regarding capitalist institutions, particularly corporations, played in wreaking havoc on America's economy (Gutting, 2011; Pepitone, 2011).

The term “Wall Street” is used in the source material to mean many things; an umbrella term that covers a variety of organizations and institutions, all operating under the same unified goal of profit, a group that DeLuca, Lawson and Sun (2012: 488) and *Adbusters* (2011a) refer to as the “Corporatocracy.” *Adbusters* (2011a) called Wall Street the “greatest corrupter of our democracy...the financial Gomorrah of America.” There is agreement in the text that global capitalism in its current form is primarily shaped by the massive proliferation of powerful transnational corporations whose operations either directly or indirectly control global economics and national politics (Ellison, 2011; Gutting, 2011; Grossman, 2011; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011;

⁴ see Chen, B.L. (2003). An inverted-U relationship between inequality and long-run growth. *Economic Letters*, 78. 205-221; as discussed in Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 13.

Pepitone, 2011; Porter, 2011; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 488; Hatem, 2012: 402; Tabb, 2012). Several different criticisms regarding the conduct of multinational corporations can be found within the source material, with many contending that corrupt corporate practices provided the impetus needed for an uprising like Occupy Wall Street to occur (Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 4; Pepitone, 2011). Where difference of opinion exists is in regards to what behavior on the part of corporations is most deplorable. The choice between which of Wall Street's many crimes can be deemed most impactful, is ultimately a matter of personal preference.

A broad accusation often applied to financially-driven institutions like corporations and banks, is that they collude to siphon off resources and funds that could be better spent elsewhere to serve the greater good, instead of a small minority (Hatem, 2012: 402). In 2008, a "trickle-down" economic strategy was employed by the U.S. government in an attempt to stimulate economic growth. Under such a strategy, the government provides financial subsidies and tax breaks to American-based corporations in order to increase their cash flow (Ellison, 2011). The fundamental flaw in the strategy is the assumption that corporations will re-invest this money into production and labour, leading to job growth, lower unemployment and increased household spending. Unfortunately, the additional funds that were retained through these tax breaks afforded corporations the opportunity to recycle their earnings into "speculative investments" and "complex financial instruments," gambling on the success of other businesses and foreign currencies, which perform well in terms of generating a return, but serve no greater social benefit (Ellison, 2011; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 6). The issue being that the rich, through the corporations, banks and other financial institutions they own, have very little incentive to reinvest their gains in production, not only because the returns are lower in the short-term, but because the vast majority of citizens do not have the disposable income to purchase what is being produced (Hatem, 2012: 402; Tabb, 2012: 268). The argument is that corporations "swapping pieces of paper" in and amongst themselves is not only less useful, but morally inferior to the actual production of goods and services (Hatem, 2012: 402). Companies see no reason to increase production of goods by investing in additional raw material and labour, because the bulk of the consumer base is either drowning in debt or unemployed, either of which can cause a significant decline in household and personal income (Tabb, 2012: 269). These complex financial instruments and short-term speculative trading strategies have made a few individuals very wealthy, but have made the financial system as a whole, upon which all consumers and businesses depend, less stable (Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 6).

According to some in the source material, once it became clear that the risky, speculative investments made by corporations and banks were beginning to fail, the deficit was passed on to the American people in the form of a taxpayer funded government bailout (Grossman, 2011; Kohn, 2011; Kristoff, 2011b). And, as a further insult to the American taxpayer, after receiving the bailout money, many corporations issued exorbitant bonuses to their CEOs in the millions of dollars (Grossman, 2011). That exorbitant compensation of Wall Street traders, aside from further exacerbating income polarization, but encourages some members of the middle and lower class to perform excessive risk-taking behaviors with the small capital or equity they do possess, which is substantially riskier for the general population who are subject to higher unemployment and slower economic growth during and after recessions (Jickling & Hoskins, 2011: 6). Kristoff (2011b) contends that protestor rage directed at Wall Street is justified because banks and corporations have manipulated the economic system to enjoy profits in good years and bailouts in bad ones, or the "privatizing profits and socializing risks."

Some attention is paid in the source material to the very specific role the U.S. Federal Reserve played in causing the economic downturn. Censky (2011) of *CNN* wrote his synopsis of a press conference held in early November with Ben Bernanke, an economist who, at the time, was at the tail end of his second term as chairman of the Federal Reserve (or "Fed" for short). During the conference, Bernanke expressed sympathy for Occupy Wall Street protesters, admitting that the many of their frustrations with the sluggish economy were "understandable" (Censky, 2011). However, Bernanke was also very vocal about expressing his concerns about the backlash against the Fed, arguing that the anti-sentiment was being fueled heavily by "misconceptions." Censky (2011) admits that the Federal Reserve is perfectly situated as a scapegoat, or "whipping boy," for the Occupy demonstrations. The institution itself was created by and reports to Congress with its top leaders appointed directly by the president. Yet, the Federal Reserve is independently funded and operates similar to that of a bank, serving both private and foreign institutions as well as the U.S. government (Censky, 2011). What angers protestors in particular about this institution is its role in facilitating the government's 2008 Wall Street bailout, which was touted by Bernanke during the news conference as a way to stabilize the financial system (Censky, 2011). As well, the Fed is criticized for lowering interest rates, which, rather than serving its intended purpose of reducing consumer debt and increasing spending power, was used by Wall Street financiers to free up additional money to increase their holding of financial assets (Tabb, 2012: 269). The Fed's ability to print and create new monies (one of their inherent powers granted to them by the government)

allows banks, at least perceivably, to remain solvent since they can “borrow unlimited funds at little or no interest and then buy government bonds making a profit on the difference between the cost and the return” (Tabb, 2012: 269).

The decisions of corporations, financial institutions, and the individuals who own and control them can be easily explained, according to Gutting (2011), by accepting that they generally exhibit no dedication to fundamental human values, but rather, exist merely as instruments of profit for their shareholders (Gutting, 2011). The old adage is that “Profit is King” – the driving force behind all corporate decisions and actions, and absolutely essential for corporate survival, because those that do not make money inevitably disappear. Gutting (2011) clarifies that this does not necessarily imply that corporations are invariably “evil” or that they do not make any essential economic contributions to society. It does, however, suggest that corporations can be useful in improving the human condition, but is not actively or inherently invested in doing so. Ross (2011) makes an interesting point, noting that the relentless pursuit of profit is not exclusive to Wall Street interests, that politicians themselves are guilty of possessing the same motive. Greed explains why so many politicians are so easily subverted and corrupted by money and corporate influence.

The only economic and political loyalties transnational corporations have are to the corporate elites that manage them and their exceedingly wealthy owners, categorized by OWS as the 1%, acting only in the interest of ensuring that a “bottom line” profit is achieved for all shareholders (Hatem, 2012: 402). Corporations behave as if they believe they have more economic influence on the global financial system than most nation-states, and with the exception of a few nations, they are correct. Federal politicians who want to be labelled as “job creators” often have to bow to the bidding of major transnationals that make America their home, as an incentive to keep them in the country to spur economic growth. To this extent, nation-states actually seek to primarily serve the global interests of corporations instead of having any commitment to citizens they serve and the issues that affect them nationally (Hatem, 2012: 402).

Summary

The overwhelming consensus in the source material is that economic inequality is the most important issue concerning supporters of the Occupy Wall Street protests. This inequality is made visible to the public through the growing wealth disparity between the richest and poorest American citizens, a phenomenon that can be quantitatively measured and illustrated. The economic system in America is structured in a way that favours the exceedingly wealthy, members

of a group labelled the 1% that consists of corporate leaders and politicians alike, many of whom enjoy a cozy and mutually-beneficial relationship. Upon analysis of the source material, this relationship is fairly simple to deconstruct. The government passes new laws and amends existing laws to enable corporations to generate greater profit through the exploitation of tax, international trade, and many other financial and legal loopholes. Governments also intervene when speculative corporate investments fail, resulting in huge bailouts funded almost exclusively using taxpayer money. In turn, corporations and the wealthy supply "donations" in the millions of dollars to finance political campaigns.

Several explanations are provided in the source material to account for (and justify) the longevity and maintenance of the current, unjust, economic system. It is believed that Americans, as a whole, have a high tolerance threshold for poverty, willing to accept a steadily declining standard of living. Citizens are forced to adjust to gradual increases to inflation and decreases in purchasing power, without receiving any proportionate increase in wages to compensate. "Capitalist realists" are not supporters of the current economic system, but are also incapable of selecting a viable alternative, and thus, are forced to accept things the way they are. Some citizens, however, still express faith in the current system, arguing that an economy and social structure that distributes financial rewards based on merit, remains the best system for allocating wealth. Textbook economic theories are also used to defend income inequality as both an inevitable and necessary by-product of the capitalist economic model. The idea that financial deprivation acts as an incentive for individuals to sell their labour, substantiates the need for equilibrium between poverty and wealth in society. Poverty is the fuel that powers the cogs and gears of the engine that is the capitalist economy, allowing it to run efficiently and without interruption.

The actions of the "Corporatocracy," a collective consisting of corporations, banks, and other financial institutions affiliated with the government (such as the Federal Reserve), are discussed synonymously in the source material with the actions of the 1%, making them an equal target of scrutiny by Occupy supporters. The role multinational corporations and banks played in the U.S. economic collapse of 2008, is a hotly debated topic in the source material, with a single, broad accusation emerging upon analysis of the text. Members of the corporatocracy operate under a unifying principle of maximizing profit regardless of the resulting economic and social implications. This pursuit of profit is believed to encourage fraudulent corporate practices, justified so long as value is added to the company for owners and stockholders. Corporations and banks are suspected of siphoning off wealth into risky investments, a consequence of the failure of "trickle-

down” strategies intended to stimulate economic growth in 2008. Corporations and banks invested additional capital into “complex financial instruments” and foreign currencies, instead of local production and job creation as the government had hoped. The organizations that comprise the corporatocracy ultimately end up “swapping piece of paper” among themselves, which serves to funnel wealth into the control of individuals who have the discretion and authority to invest it carelessly.

Government intervention in the form of taxpayer funded bailouts was necessary once these speculative investments began to fail. Tax, by sheer definition of the word, is public money that is under the discretionary control of the government, to be used in the funding of social welfare initiatives and programs. Public outrage is understandable considering the government’s fervour to allocate tax income to correct the financial missteps of a handful of wealthy people - money that could have been spent to improve the well-being of society as a whole.

Political Representativeness as a Driving Force Behind Occupy Wall Street

Core Grievance – Political Representativeness

The issue of *representativeness* is identified in relation to the power corporations and banks yield with regards to political influence, highlighting the fact that the concentration of wealth to a small minority threatens to make the U.S. a “democracy in name only” (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Krugman, 2011b; Ross, 2011; Zelizer, 2011; Hatem, 2012). Protestors want the world to know that bankers and finance industries in no way represent them in the democratic process, and that what is good for Wall Street is certainly not good for the country, or the world (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Zelizer, 2011). Ross’ (2011) perspective is even more cynical, arguing that bankers are probably welcoming of Occupy Wall Street because it has the cultural effect of reinforcing to the broader public, at least perceivably, that America is still a free and democratic society, helping to mask the underlying truth - that the plutocrats control the wealth, and thus control the government, which is gradually being replaced with a new aristocracy.

The mantra, “We are the 99%,” has a double meaning, a reference to both economic disparity and the struggle for political representativeness. The choice of slogan by protest organizers and supporters is believed to have important symbolic significance. Kazin (2012: 69) believes it conveys a deeply moral, democratic message, with Pickerill and Krinsky (2012: 281) elaborating on this idea, arguing it creates a sense of inclusion and majority among participants.

“Horizontalism”

The Occupy Movement brought national media attention to an issue Sitrin (2012: 74) considers a “growing crisis” regarding a fundamental “lack of democracy.” The social imbalance that the 99% are protesting against has more than just an economic dimension. Protestors feel a sense of betrayal on the part of the federal government; a government that is so easily corrupted by corporate interests and money, drafting legislation and enacting policies that overtly favor themselves and the wealthy (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2). It is suggested that those who align with Occupy Wall Street recognize, but have tremendous difficulty accepting, their lack of political representation in the government (Abzug & Greenberg, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Lubin, 2012: 185-187; Maharawal, 2012: 179; Sitrin, 2012: 74). To Abzug & Greenberg (2011), OWS can be understood as the struggle for “equalism,” or the right of any citizen, regardless of economic position, race, gender, orientation, identity, or belief, to participate in -- and be served equally -- by their government.

One of the broader topics discussed from various perspectives within the source material is the idea that, at its core, the Occupy Wall Street protests present an alternative to the prevailing democratic order (Moreno-Caballud, & Sitrin, 2011; Hickel, 2012). This alternative, according to Sitrin (2012: 74), is known as “horizontalism” - originating from the Spanish horizontalidad model, which was used in Spain and Argentina earlier in 2011 - a form of participatory democracy that promotes non-hierarchical social relationships. The term horizontalidad has become synonymous with the pattern of contemporary social movements seeking self-management, autonomy and direct democracy (Lubin, 2012: 187; Sitrin, 2012: 74), characterized by what Hardt and Negri (2011: 2) call a “multitude form,” involving frequent public assemblies and participatory decision-making structures. No leader, elected or otherwise, assumes a position of power and control over the rest (also see Syrek, 2012: 72-73). Protestors are actively avoiding the replication of the stratified social relations of mainstream society, which necessarily prevents protestors from appointing a leader (Syrek, 2012: 73).

Several terms, including “horizontalism,” “direct democracy” and “participatory democracy,” all appear frequently throughout the source material, and all allude to the same concept of “consensus- based decision making.” Syrek (2012: 74) provides a concise outline of how the consensus decision making model typically operates. Every individual, no matter how informed or educated, contributes to the completion of collective goals, which are presented as individual proposals by members of the group, and agreed upon unanimously through voting. Efficiency and

speed are not the primary objectives, instead, the satisfaction of all stakeholders through meaningful collaboration is considered most important. Majorities do not dictate terms to minorities, and actual voting is only resorted to in extreme cases (Syrek, 2012: 74). As Maharawal (2012: 179) points out, the consensus-based model is inherently “inclusive,” tied both to the participation of supporters, as well as the processes and practices through which decisions are made (with involvement in the decision-making process considered to be a “deeper” form of inclusion than simply being present) (also see Kastenbaum, 2011).

The consensus model is not perfect, however, with a few authors highlighting some of the more negative aspects of a decision-making system that treats everyone equally. There are several practical issues with having to obtain a unanimous consensus every time a proposal needs to be decided upon, issues that can potentially alienates segments of Occupy’s all-inclusive follower base. Decisions requiring consensus proceed until everyone agrees, or at least until no one disagrees enough to block a given proposition. This, according to Hickel (2012) has the consequence of alienating those who don’t have a tremendous amount of free time to dedicate these lengthy discussions. Linksy (2011) notes that, because everyone’s grievance is equal to everyone else’s grievance, the primary message gets muddled. Clarifying the message and focusing on specific targets become necessary next steps, according to Linksy (2011), which also has the consequence of alienating those whose issues are abandoned. In an interview with Martin Linsky, co-founder of Cambridge Leadership Associates, whose organization specializes in translating ideas and recommendations into actions (ideally with positive outcomes), Kastenbaum (2011) of *CNN*, suggests that adherence to a consensus-based model could spell the demise of the Movement, because the only initiatives that can actually achieve consensus are ones that are incredibly abstract. “I think that’s the danger of this kind of process,” Linsky said. “If we say we’re going to operate by consensus, which is everybody has to agree, well, the only way you can get everybody to agree when people have different agendas is to agree on something that is so ethereal as to be meaningless.” (Kastenbaum, 2011). Because everyone has a voice and an opportunity to voice their concerns, discussions also tend to focus on the “mundane logistics” of each individual’s experience, never graduating to the more important task of affecting broad systemic change (Hickel, 2012). The process of pursuing universal agreement also typically means that important propositions, like expanding Movement efforts nationally and internationally, get diluted to the point of inefficacy. In order for consensus to be an effective tool in achieving Occupy’s goals, both Kastenbaum (2011) and Linsky concur, someone will have to assume

leadership: "If someone were to actually try to shape and form that movement into something that actually might effect change, that person is going to annoy a lot of those people in Zuccotti Park."

The agreement in the source material, particularly among academics who discussed the topic, is that the utilization of a horizontalist organizational structure is a direct response to the failures of representative democracy (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Lubin, 2012: 187; Syrek, 2012: 73), a visible expression of outright rejection to the form representative politics that currently exists, coupled with the demonstration of a viable alternative. OWS seeks a total transformation of the hierarchical structure of human relations that perpetuates gross inequality and injustice (Syrek, 2012: 72; Rehmann, 2013: 4). The employment of an alternative form of organization by Occupiers, one that lacks leadership and encourages participatory democracy, is entirely deliberate, serving two distinct purposes, one political, and one pragmatic (Maharawal, 2012: 178). Pragmatically, consensus decision making serves to ensure participants feel invested and involved in the Movement, fueling their commitment and loyalty to the cause (Maharawal, 2012: 178). Politically, it functions as a way to visibly challenge and critique structures of liberal democracy; structures that those in the Movement often describe as illegitimate, disempowering, and politically compromised (Graeber, 2011; Hickel, 2012). The occupation of Zuccotti Park is understood by some authors to be an attempt by protestors to create an "equitable space," an area where everyone's voices could be heard, where mechanisms for group decision making and accountability could be formulated and implemented, and where self-responsibility and empowerment are seen as paramount (Sifry, 2011). The occupation of public space and the adoption of consensus-driven protocol are meant to demonstrate the organization and functionality of an ideal democracy, one that supports all members of society equally, providing everyone with an equal voice (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Syrek, 2012: 73). In this way, those participating in the movement are "prefiguring" the world they wish to live, a world in which people would have more power over the decisions that affect them (Maharawal, 2012: 178; Sitrin 2012). Protestors are effectively leading by example, "beta testing" the ideas and behaviors in the hopes that one day it will be adopted by greater society (Rushkoff, 2011; Maharawal, 2012: 179). The means and the ends have to be the same if substantial and meaningful social change is to occur (Graeber, 2011; Hickel, 2012).

The General Assembly

The function, purpose and effectiveness of the General Assembly, is another hotly debated and contested topic in the source material (Bennett, 2011; Caballud & Sitrin, 2011; McVeigh, 2011;

Davenport, 2011: 89; Kastenbaum, 2011; Kimmelman, 2011; Kleinfeld & Buckley, 2011; Rushkoff, 2011; Sitrin, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 25; Brucato, 2012: 81; Costanza-Chock, 2012: 383; Hickel, 2012; Mulqueen & Tataryn, 2012: 293; Syrek, 2012: 74). It is argued that the most important “force pushing Occupy toward openness” is the participatory nature of the General Assemblies, as well as the “Working Groups” that comprise it (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 383; also see Caballud & Sitrin, 2011; McVeigh, 2011; Mulqueen & Tataryn, 2012: 293). David Graeber, an American anthropologist and anarchist who is currently employed at the University of London, is credited with creating the New York City General Assembly, which he claims, was inspired by his ethnographic observations in non-state societies located in rural Madagascar (Hickel, 2012). One of the hallmark characteristics of the General Assembly, according to Graeber, is its anarchist structure of non-hierarchical, consensus-based participatory democracy (as discussed in Hickel, 2012). The idea of the general assembly was not widely known to those who were planning the Occupy Movement, up until Graeber was able to offer his knowledge of how to facilitate a general assembly to the group. It has since become a cornerstone for how decisions are made in many of the Occupy sites (Bennett, 2011; Davenport, 2011: 89; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 25).

The General Assembly is considered the primary decision-making body of the Movement, a forum for negotiating demands and goals, as well as the organization of Occupy-related events and demonstrations, and the distribution of donated resources (Mulqueen & Tataryn, 2012: 293). As Bennett (2011) explains, a General Assembly is, “a carefully facilitated group discussion through which decisions are made – not by a few leaders, or even majority rule, but by consensus. Unresolved questions are referred to working groups within the assembly, but eventually everyone has to agree, even in assemblies that swell into the thousands” (67). The General Assembly model encourages vigorous participatory debate, giving participants a direct stake in decisions (Hickel, 2012). Instead of relying on leadership and hierarchy, Assemblies operate on the basis of consensus-based decision-making (Syrek, 2012: 74). Arriving at a consensus on all final decisions and actions can be a taxing process because anytime a proposal is presented to the group, everyone present has the right, no matter how informed or educated that individual might be, to comment on it or offer amendments to it (Kastenbaum, 2011; Rushkoff, 2011; Syrek, 2012: 74). Unanimous support for a proposal is required in order for it to pass, a process that severely lacks in efficiency, but rates high in participant satisfaction because most feel that their concerns have been appreciated and their collaboration meaningful (Kastenbaum, 2011; Syrek, 2012: 74). Unlike parliamentary rules that promote debate, difference and decision, the General Assembly, as

described by Rushkoff (2011) creates consensus by "stacking" (or ranking) ideas and objections in terms of priority, with a bulk of the process being orchestrated through hand gestures (also see Brucato, 2012: 81; Maharawal, 2012: 178). Two General Assembly meetings are held each day for 2-5 hours in Zuccotti Park, where participants arrange in a half circle to discuss and vote on topics outlined in the evening's agenda (Kastenbaum, 2011; Kleinfeld & Buckley, 2011; Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 86). Topics can range anywhere from the practical (such as where to march and when) to the mundane (like concerns about trash collection) (Kastenbaum, 2011).

Kimmelman (2011), while observing one of the General Assemblies held in Zuccotti Park from a distance, claimed that the practice reminded him of Aristotle, who argued in *Politics* that the size of an ideal city "extended to the limits of a herald's cry," and that a healthy citizenry in a well-functioning city required face-to-face conversation. General Assemblies are emblematic of the commitment within the Movement to participatory democracy. With inclusion to the group not limited in any way (Maharawal, 2012: 178; Mulqueen & Tataryn, 2012: 293). According to Hardt and Negri (2011), the General Assembly exemplifies this principled alternative to the prevailing social order, expressing dissatisfaction with the existing structures of political representation while offering a viable alternative for what can be deemed "real democracy" (2). Sitrin (2012) agrees with this contention, suggesting that the General Assembly focuses on people taking control of their own lives and expanding the democratic spaces in which they live and work (75).

The first General Assembly convened on August 2, 2011, at the Charging Bull statue, a Wall Street icon located at the tip of Bowling Green Park. It was held more like a rally, because most people in attendance had little to no knowledge about what a General Assembly was, let alone how one functions and operates (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 11). Formally thereafter, the General Assembly served a simple and straightforward function: it was the decision-making body of the protest group and the forum through which organizers made sure that the needs of those participating were met (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 27). In order to accomplish this, committees were formed within the General Assembly with specific tasks delegated to each, including the Food Committee, the Student Committee, the Outreach Committee, the Internet Working Group, the Arts and Culture Working Group, and the Tactical Committee (Moynihan 2011b; Rushkoff, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 11). One of the primary responsibilities of Working Groups early in the Movement was to designate where differing logistical activities would occur within Zuccotti Park. For example, areas of the park were selected for a food station, sleeping area, information booth,

art and poster space, library, media spokes desk, internet and live streaming stations, and of course, an area to hold General Assemblies (Moynihan 2011b).

The Direct Action committee is also believed to be instrumental to the success of OWS. Numbering anywhere between 35 and 50 activists, the committee is "empowered by the general assembly" to plan action. The committee includes campaigners, community activists and those with relevant organizational skills, some of whom live in collectives and already base their lives around a communal system (McVeigh, 2011). The subjects under discussion among members of this group include security, march procedure, how to deal with "autonomous" actions and how to avoid conflict with police. The committee appoints several "pacekeepers" for every march, who make sure it doesn't go too fast or too slow, and it is they who decide on the direction. There are also informal "scouts", who keep an eye on progress, and "runners" who run back and forth between the various organizers telling them of any problems arising (McVeigh, 2011).

The discussion on Working Groups reminds us that we cannot overlook the fact that, in order for an event of this magnitude to occur, a small group of people had to establish themselves as leaders, in the sense of being co-organizers. Gitlin (2013: 3) refers to this small core group as the "inner movement," with the self-proclaimed "leaderless" structure of Occupy masking the fact that this group did a substantial amount of the work (Sifry, 2011; Jaffe, 2012: 201). Arthur Brisbane (2011), a New York Times Public Editor, who an essay published in a Sunday version of the Times entitled "Who is Occupy Wall Street?" He argues that the notion of a political Movement such as Occupy arising without a charismatic leader is "inconceivable." He states, "An investigation into [its] origins would lead to the identities of early leaders, at least, and the search for the broader leadership of the movement should continue from there."

Opposition to Public Assembly: State and Law Enforcement Intervention

The topic of "Law Enforcement Intervention" is another major topic that appears consistently throughout the source material (Grossman, 2011; Gologowski, 2011; Lennard, 2011; Miller, 2011; Moynihan, 2011a; Moynihan, 2011b; Pepitone, 2011; Lubin, 2012: 186; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013). Plenty of detail regarding instances of protestor arrest and excessive force used by officers is well documented in both the news media and scholarly literature, neither of which is surprising considering the popularity of such topics among the general public. The press provides mostly damning testimonials about gross misconduct, and are extremely critical of many of the circumstances under which protestors were arrested. Several

key instances of police intervention are cited within the source material as being particular milestones for the occupation of Zuccotti Park. Police intervention is actually crucial to the perceived legitimacy of the protest in the news media, with many news outlets deliberately ignoring the protest until arrests started to be made.

In the meetings leading up to September 17, according to those close to the group, it was the Tactical Committee that had the most integral role in the organization of the event. While the Outreach Committee worked to draw people to the Assemblies, the Tactical Committee, "determined the time and place for the first General Assembly to happen and everything that would need to be done in order for that to happen" (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 12). The most important task was choosing the final location for the occupation. According to the Writers of the 99% (2011), the Tactical committee had to consider several criteria when choosing a location, most important of which was the expectation that there would be a heavy police presence that could potentially shut down the demonstration altogether. Should police be particularly repressive on September 17, the strategy was to "attempt to have a General Assembly at one location", and then, "move to a new place and another place throughout the weekend" (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 12-13). The location had to be in Lower Manhattan, hold a minimum of 2,000 people, have multiple exit points, and be close enough in proximity to Wall Street "so that symbolism remained." As mentioned previously, the first choice was Chase Manhattan Plaza, but on September 17, it was completely barricaded by police, so they ended up settling for Plan B, Zuccotti Park (Writers of the 99%, 2011: 12-13).

Gillham, Edwards and Noakes (2013), in their research of the policing strategies employed during the first two months of Occupy Wall Street protests, examined the implementation of "strategic incapacitation" tactics by members of the NYPD. The study begins with a discussion of the evolution of police responses to protest in the U.S. in the past several decades. The first is referred to as "Escalated force," popularized in the 1970s against anti-Vietnam War sentiment, included a host of what could easily be considered unnecessarily harsh tactics, such as arrests, beatings, tear gas, firing of weapons. The purpose of this strategy, which operated under the premise that the state viewed protest as an illegitimate form of political expression, was to combat the formation of protests through fear, performing visible acts of pain and suffering (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 82). As reliance on this strategy faded, it was replaced by a tactic rooted in a different philosophy, one that recognized the legitimacy of protest as a form of expression, requiring officers to maintain order in a peaceful way, while ensuring protestors' First

Amendment Right to free speech remained protected (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 82). This strategy, referred to as "Negotiated Management," placed emphasis on collaboration between officers and protest organizers, the process of which relied heavily on the government's bureaucratic and administrative branches to issue permits for every planned activity, including rallies and any acts of non-violent civil disobedience." It is argued by the authors that this approach by police is the most ideal, with a significant reduction in the number of conflicts and arrests as a result of each party being able to predict how the other will behave (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 82). By the 1990's, use of negotiated management techniques began to erode, with a shift towards what scholars call "Strategic Incapacitation." The basis of strategic incapacitation is found in the "New Penology" (refer to Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 2001), with "risk management" techniques and incapacitation considered the best methods for crime prevention (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 83). Setting up barriers and barricades in order to contain protestors or funnel them in a certain direction, and the arrest of large numbers of protest participants during public demonstrations, are characteristic of a "risk management" approach to crowd control.

Gillham, Edwards and Noakes (2013) provide several examples of the applications of strategic incapacitation techniques during the first two months of protest, starting from day one. The erection of barricades in strategically placed areas is noted throughout the text. In an interview with Pepitone (2011) of CNN, NYPD Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne stated that officers were made aware of scheduled demonstrations ahead of time, which allowed them to "plan accordingly" (Moynihan, 2011a; Pepitone, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011: 15-16). On the morning of September 17, police erected barriers around the Charging Bull statue that had been selected as the initial rally point. By early afternoon, two dozen uniformed officers had surrounded the statue in an effort to disperse the crowd (Pepitone, 2011; Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2012: 82). Police officers clustered at the park's four corners, barricading the northern edge of the park in an attempt to protect One Liberty Plaza located across the street (Liberty Plaza is owned by Brookfield Properties, which also owns Zuccotti Park) (Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 86). A perimeter of metal barricades was erected by officers around Zuccotti Park in an additional effort to prevent Occupiers from spilling out into the streets, unless they were crossing at an intersection. The reason for this approach, according to Browne, was that "none associated with the demonstrations sought permits," with additional concerns related to the safety of pedestrians and impeded vehicular traffic (Moynihan, 2011a; Pepitone, 2011).

Later that evening, over 700 activists participated in a General Assembly, originally scheduled to be held at Chase Manhattan Plaza, but was prevented by another police enforced “hard-zone” of barricades surrounding the plaza (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 84). Along with this “hard-zone,” police also established a designated protest area or “free-speech zone” next to the New York Stock Exchange, however, activists refused to use it (Moynihan, 2011a). Once again, protestor organizers and supporters were forced to resort to Plan B, reaching a consensus on the selection of Zuccotti Park as their preferred “free speech zone” and encampment location (Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 86). In another statement by Browne, he maintained that, “A protest area was established on Broad Street at Exchange Street, next to the stock exchange, but protesters elected not to use it” (Moynihan, 2011). As a result of the NYPD’s efforts, only two individuals were taken into custody that first day, both of whom were wearing bandanna masks attempting to enter the Bank of America offices located at Broadway and Liberty Street (Moynihan, 2011a). These actions by the NYPD suggest an overall strategy employed that, on its exterior, can be perceived as a compromise, allowing for the assembly of large groups for the purposes of public demonstration, but restricting that assembly to pre-determined locations such as Zuccotti Park.

Gillham, Edwards and Noakes (2013: 86) provide a detailed description of the surveillance techniques employed by the NYPD. Surveillance tools that were visible to protestors included a 25-foot mobile “Watch Tower” with a two-person observation booth equipped with darkened windows, flood lights, video cameras, and a closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera positioned near the park, as well as an additional mobile surveillance vehicle with a camera affixed to a 20-foot boom. There was always a constant police presence at the park, including a Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU) responsible for gathering intelligence and documenting protester/police interactions, especially when confrontations are expected to occur (Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 86). The authors also speculate that it is quite possible that a uniformed police presence was supplemented with an undercover presence, attending Working Group meetings and General Assemblies openly held by activists. Grossman (2011) notes that surveillance of demonstrations were relatively straightforward to monitor, because they were, for the most part, located at a fixed site.

Several instances of police intervention are identified in the text as being questionable, with examples of the alleged use of deception on the part of police officers. The one week anniversary of the Movement was celebrated with a march north towards Union Square. The group was confronted along the way by a contingent of police officers, armed with orange netting and

pepper spray (Moynihan, 2011b; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 87). An estimated 80-85 people were arrested during this intervention by police, with another five protestors struck by pepper spray, and those who were fortunate enough to avoid detention made a brief appearance at Union Square before retreating back to Zuccotti Park (Moynihan, 2011b; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 87). When asked to provide reasons to justify arresting 80 protest supporters, In a public statement released by Deputy Commissioner Browne replied in a public statement that it was "mainly for disorderly conduct by individuals who blocked vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but also for resisting arrest, obstructing governmental administration and, in one instance, for assault on a police officer." (Golgowski, 2011; Moynihan, 2011b).

On Saturday October 1, two weeks after protests began, another large march was organized to cross the Brooklyn Bridge (Lennard, 2011; Miller, 2011; Lubin, 2012: 186; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 88). A group of approximately 2000 activists participated in the march, which started in Zuccotti Park at 3pm that afternoon. There is some speculation as to whether the tactics employed by police on October 1 was done to "trick" protestors into inadvertently doing something illegal in order to justify arrest. Several activists at the head of the march, confused by the placement of metal barricades, which prevented access to the bridge from the sidewalk, caused many activists into the roadway, with some chanting "off the sidewalks, into the streets" and "Whose bridge? Our bridge!" (Lennard, 2011; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 88). According to Lennard (2011), despite a dense police presence at the front of the march, it appeared as though protestors would not be impeded. However, once they reached the bridge's first Gothic-style archway, a wall of metal barricades and officers held firm (Lennard, 2011). Over the course of the next several hours, activists who had not deviated from the original march route watched on as police arrested more than 700 protesters (Lennard, 2011; Lubin, 2012). The allegations by some media pundits and internet bloggers suggested that officers confined - or "kettled" -protesters onto the road, leading them to believe crossing the bridge was an acceptable activity, only to arrest them once a clear attempt to cross the bridge had been made (Lennard, 2011; Miller, 2011). In an email sent to Miller (2011) of Fox News.com, Deputy Commissioner Browne, acting as the NYPD's official spokesman at this juncture, once again came to the defense of officer conduct, stating that the police responded as warranted by the circumstances, "The protesters at the Brooklyn Bridge had the option of legally taking the Brooklyn Bridge walkway, which thousands of New Yorkers and tourists do every day...They instead took the roadway and illegally blocked traffic for which they were issued summonses and desk appearance tickets." He argues adamantly that "Police officers

showed professionalism and restraint in response to protesters," many of whom, it was reported, resisted arrest and assaulted officers by throwing batteries and glass (Miller, 2011).

The most documented, and arguably the most important instance of both government and law enforcement intervention during the Occupy protests in New York City, happened on November 15, 2011, exactly two months after demonstrations began (Grossman, 2011; Krugman, 2011a; Miller, 2011; Ostroff, 2011; Riley, 2011; Taylor, 2011; Lubin, 2012: 190; Shallwani, 2012; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 90). That afternoon, a judge from the New York Supreme Court ruled against Occupy Wall Street protesters, supporting a combined effort by then Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Zuccotti Park landlord Brookfield Properties to remove tents and prohibit overnight camping (Grossman, 2011; Riley, 2011; Taylor, 2011). The order did not prevent protesters from gathering in the park, but argued that their First Amendment rights did not include remaining there "along with their tents, structures, generators, and other installations to the exclusion of the owner's reasonable rights and duties" (Riley, 2011). Shortly after midnight, approximately 1,000 NYPD officers, many of whom were wearing riot gear, surrounded Zuccotti Park, clearing it of all tents and camping equipment overnight (Ostroff, 2011; Gilliam, Edwards & Noakes, 2013: 90). In addition, an upwards of 200 occupiers were arrested, including a few journalists who complained of excessive police force and brutality, and were promptly released (Grossman, 2011; Miller, 2011; Shallwani, 2012). The following day, protest organizers filed an appeal, hoping to be granted a temporary restraining order against the police, an action that was ultimately for not, since police had wasted no time executing the eviction the previous evening (Grossman, 2011). After a hearing, another judge denied the request, agreeing with the city's contention that the act of overnight camping did not constitute an act of free speech protected by the First Amendment. The compromise was that protestors would be allowed to demonstrate in the park, but were no longer permitted to establish an encampment (Grossman, 2011). The eviction of Zuccotti Park, according to Ostroff (2011) of the Huffington Post, is landmark in the sense that it effectively marked the end of the Occupy protests in New York, with a only a handful of noteworthy demonstrations in the year to follow.

Mayor Bloomberg claimed sole responsibility for the eviction, stating in a press release that he had asked for the court's help in enforcing its rules against sleeping in the park, but that the final decision to act was his alone (Grossman, 2011; Lubin, 2012: 190). Bloomberg's successful court order with Brookfield Properties was, in actuality, the final effort in a series of attempts to have protestors removed from Zuccotti Park. His actions are perceived in the texts as predictable, with

some journalists taking into consideration the Mayor's own publicly expressed concerns regarding protest activities made in a statement on October 7. Bloomberg (a billionaire business magnate and philanthropist) mostly criticizes the protest group for the supposed damage they caused to the local New York economy and tourism industry, accusing protesters of "trying to take the jobs away from people working in this city" (Krugman, 2011b). He suggests that protestors are fundamentally misguided for two reasons: first, emphasizing that financial institutions employ large numbers of New Yorkers — many of them not wealthy executives, and second, that lending money to financial institutions is exactly what is needed to fix the economy (Taylor, 2011):

If the banks don't go out and make loans, we will not come out of our economic problems, we will not have jobs, and so anything we can do to responsibly help the banks do that, encourage them to do that is what we need.

Peterson (2011) argues that the Mayor is consistent about his assertion that protestors pose a threat to the rest of the city, stating that their removal was necessary for their challenging "the quality of life for residents and businesses in this now-thriving neighborhood." Expressing an additional concern for pedestrian safety, he's quoted later in his statement that, "People have a right to protest but we also have to make sure that people who don't want to protest can go down the streets unmolested" (Taylor, 2011).

Just a few days after issuing this statement, Bloomberg made a surprise visit to Zuccotti Park, addressing protestors personally to inform them they would have to relocate temporarily in order for regular maintenance and cleaning of the park to be conducted (Orden, 2011). Despite the efforts of Occupy's own Sanitation Committee, the unsanitary conditions of the park were enough to convince city officials that actions had to be taken. Richard Clark, Brookfield's chief executive, stated in the letter, "After weeks of occupation, conditions at the Park have deteriorated to unsanitary and unsafe levels," noting that Brookfield has "received hundreds of phone calls and emails from concerned citizens and office workers in the neighborhood" (see Orden, 2011). The Deputy Mayor of New York, Holloway, stated that protestors would be allowed to return to the area once cleaning was complete, provided they "abide by the rules that Brookfield has established for the park," which prohibited the use of tents or camping equipment (Orden, 2011).

Summary

Further analysis of the source material reveals that the gross social inequalities to which protestors are responding, possesses an economic and political dimension. The collusion between

government and wealthy corporate interests, a relationship that has contributed significantly to growing wealth disparity (as discussed in the first section of this sub-study), also threatens to make the U.S. a “democracy in name only.” Abzug & Greenberg (2011) put it best, suggesting that the Occupy Movement can be understood as the struggle for “equalism,” or the right of any citizen to be served equally by their elected representatives. Put simply, the 99% are upset that their best interests are not reflected in government initiatives and policy changes. Unfortunately, such an issue does not lend itself easily to a solution that can be executed through policy.

The occupation of Zuccotti Park is understood by some authors to be an attempt by protestors to create an “equitable space,” an area where everyone’s voices could be heard. Protestors adopted a “horizontalist” organizational structure to demonstrate what an alternative to representative democracy - a functioning participatory democracy - might resemble. Occupy Wall Street was motivated by the desire to substitute the existing hierarchical structure of government institutions with one that incorporates a consensus-based decision making model. Under such a model, all citizens have a share in the responsibility for proposing new policy initiatives, as well as the execution (or enforcement) of new legislation, with decisions requiring a unanimous vote to proceed. The primary manifestation of this consensus-based model within Occupy Wall Street was the General Assembly, a group responsible for the oversight and execution of Movement initiatives. Open invitations were extended to all protest supporters wishing to participate, encouraging anyone who had the time to attend meetings to voice concerns and vote on group decisions. Organizers of the assembly were divided into different sub-committees, or “Working Groups,” each responsible for different aspects of Occupy Wall Street’s operation.

A consensus model enables protest participants to feel more invested and involved in the decision-making apparatus of the Movement, while openly challenging democratic structures that are believed to be compromised. Protestors are effectively leading by example, “beta testing” a model that could one day be adopted on a national scale. However, many practical issues involving unanimity emerge in a consensus-based model, however, shortcomings that are noted in the source material. Unanimity can have the unintended consequence of alienating those who do not have a tremendous amount of free time, or obfuscation of important group issues because of the importance placed on treating individual problems with equal consideration.

General Assemblies were held intermittently throughout the two month occupation of Zuccotti Park; meetings that were met with heavy opposition by members of law enforcement and local government. Evidence of “strategic incapacitation” by police officials, a strategy that involves

erecting barricades, prohibiting access to public spaces, and mass arrests, is provided throughout the source material. Efforts to reduce the ability of Occupy supporters and organizers to convene in public through police intervention ultimately proved unsuccessful, prompting legal measures to evict occupiers from Zuccotti Park two months after protests began. Complaints brought to the municipal government's attention by Brookfield Properties regarding park cleanliness, along with concerns raised by Mayor Bloomberg with regards to public safety, created the justification needed to enact legislation to force protestors to disperse. This act is recognized in the source material for effectively ending the Movement, both literally and symbolically.

The Demands Debate

Several questions are raised throughout the source material with regards to demands made by members of the 99% protest group. Opinions on this topic are mixed, with some authors questioning the existence and utility of demands, while others argue that protestors have released dozens, if not hundreds of demands, and that the real challenge is sorting through the variety in order to reduce them into one or two concrete, "official" demands. There are authors who believe that the creation of an official set of protest demands is absolutely crucial if the protests are to be successful at enacting any positive change, while others argue that demands are not important, and that the act of publically demonstrating to raise awareness of certain social injustices is the true goal of the protest. This section of the second sub-study will elaborate on these debates, and will discuss some of the demands proposed by supporters of the protest. The word "official" is used in this section to describe any demand created by protestors and supporters, drafted while engaged in a consensus-based decision making exercise, and released to the media and public on behalf of all members of the 99%.

Are Protestor Demands Necessary?

The inability or refusal on the part of Occupy protestors and supporters, as a collective, to propose an official set of demands is an aspect of the Occupy protests identified by many in the source material (Ellison, 2011; Haberman, 2011; Ross, 2011; Suzuki, 2011; Weiner, 2011; Hickel, 2012). According to Rep. Ellison (2011), protestors were criticized almost immediately after protests erupted for not having drafted a list of demands, but argues that this lack of demands is of little practical significance to Occupy efforts. Rather, it is "the staying power and resonance of their anger," that has caused the protests to garner media attention, as well as sustain itself for weeks

and months. Ellison (2011) reminds us that official demands are not necessary for supporters of the Movement to “sympathize with the frustration and anger that Americans feel.” Gitlin (2013: 5) concurs that specific demands were not necessary in 2011 in order to draw attention to “vicious inequalities” and a “botched political system.” What matters is the act of protest itself, the grassroots activism that shed national attention on the issues, setting the precedent for future actions and demonstrations. Farrell (2011), on the other hand, contends that without a “clear rallying cry,” it is impossible to truly determine or measure whether any significant change has occurred, having no basis upon which to gauge that success. Lubin (2012: 187-188) suggests that the success of Occupy can be seen in the articulation its core message without having to issue demands. Ostroff (2011) remarks that despite not having a goal, Occupy achieved it. The question then becomes whether or not identifying or determining a single important demand, or an all-encompassing demand, is a worthwhile exercise (Suzuki, 2011).

Rushkoff (2011) makes an important argument, stating that the reason protest demands have been so difficult to identify is because Occupy is “anything but a protest movement,” but rather a prototype for a new way of living and interacting with others. Protestors may want some things to change and other things to stop, but the goal of the protest is not to make demands, but to publicly demonstrate a model for how society could be (Rushkoff, 2011; Schneider, 2011). By establishing a temporary tent community with kitchens, bathrooms, libraries, first-aid posts, information centres, sleeping areas and educational space, protestors created a “prefigurative alternative community” that circumvents traditional providers of social services, such as the government (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012: 283). This idea was mentioned in the previous chapter and will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter entitled “Horizontalism.”

The Diffusion of Demands

Weiner (2011), alternatively, argues that it is not a lack of demands, but a diffusion of demands among protestors that lead to the creation of a “prefigurative society” in Zuccotti Park; an attempt made to democratically consider and attend to everyone’s concerns. Celebrity ecologist David Suzuki (2011) stated that protestors’ aims were not always clear, some being “incoherent” and “absurd.” Haberman (2011) claims that the diffusion and variety of demands created an “inchoate cry”, what Weiner (2011) referred to as a “cacophony of noise, signs, and demands,” which has the unintended effect of irritating the media, resulting in protest initiatives being shed in a negative, damaging light. Also, the desire among protest participants to consider and attend to

everyone's demands equally, from Hickel's perspective (2012), is grounded in a philosophy of "liberal relativism" (with an emphasis on tolerance and an individual's natural right to pursue happiness as he or she understands it), that erodes the Movement's ability to "politicize." Not having a clear and concise set of demands strips the Movement of an element of definitude that helps to anchor the protest's grievances in popular discourse and political debate.

A few sources attempt to engage in the exercise of drafting a definitively-stated list of demands that simplify the "cacophony" of grievances expressed by Occupy supporters. This simplification process often amounts to the identification of commonly-held grievances, however, some authors take the extra step of transforming these grievances into tangible policy changes and coordinated government interventions. The performance of this exercise is not without its criticism in the source material. Klein (2011), re-quoting Cornel West, academic activist and advisor to President Obama's 2008 campaign, states, "It's impossible to translate the issue of the greed of Wall Street into one demand, or two demands. We're talking about a democratic awakening." Several parallels can be found between the lists, the similarities of which will be flushed out and discussed in more detail in this section.

The first list is inspired by a poll conducted by Hayat and Covert (2011) published in the *Huffington Post*; an informal survey they performed in an attempt to better understand Movement demands. A group of 233 respondents from three Occupy locations (New York, Washington D.C. Boston), during the week of October 23-30, were asked the following open-ended question: "If you could enact ONE policy to address America's problems today, what would it be?" (Hayat & Covert, 2011). From their analysis of the vocabulary used by protestors, they were able to articulate a list of the eight most frequently mentioned policy changes supporters of the Movement would want to enact (Hayat & Covert, 2011). In no particular order, the list included policies such as those intended to reduce or eliminate corporate influence in politics, to reform the tax structure, to create jobs, to improve the healthcare system, protection of the environment and the use of renewal, sustainable energies, anti-war policies, education reform, and the last category of policies they call "Miscellaneous Policies Related to Political Economy," which include ending capitalism, re-regulation of the financial sector, and putting an end to Keynesian spending habits by the Federal Government (Hayat & Covert, 2011). Unfortunately, as good as the analysis was at revealing some of the major themes connected to protestor demands, the only conclusion the authors draw is that "there is a need for more data-driven analysis and less speculation with regard to the demands of

this movement, especially as it continues to evolve,” acknowledging that the informality of the survey make any substantial conclusions difficult to draw (Hayat & Covert, 2011).

The second list was created by Michael Moore - a world renowned and award-winning documentary filmmaker with an anti-corporate message and agenda – and discussed in the source material by Deepak Chopra (2011). In an effort to assist the Occupy Movement, Moore published and circulated his own list of political action points, translating the more abstract Occupy demands into legislative initiatives (Chopra, 2011). According to Chopra’s (2011) synopsis, Moore calls for seven specific actions to immediately be taken by the Obama administration, which include, the eradication of the Bush-era tax cuts for the rich and the enforcement of a new taxes on the wealthiest Americans and on corporations; the implementation of a “penalty tax” on any corporation that moves American jobs to other countries when that company is already making profits using U.S. manufacturing and labour; the requirement that all Americans pay the same Social Security tax on all their earnings. Normally, the middle class pays about 6% of their income to Social Security; someone making \$1 million a year pays about 0.6% (or 90% less than the average person). The second is the reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act, placing serious regulations on business conduct, specifically banks and Wall Street firms. The remainder of the list includes conduction of a full investigation of the “the Crash of 2008,” holding those accountable to the law who are deemed responsible; re-prioritization of the national budget, with a significantly smaller allocation to war and national defense efforts; creation of a single-payer, free and universal health care system that covers all Americans, all of the time (Chopra, 2011).

The third list was published on September 29, 2011 on occupywallst.org, a site widely recognized as being an “official” forum for Occupy supporters establishing encampments across the U.S. (Preston, 2011). Zadek (2011), whose self-published article was shared by the *Huffington Post*, reflects on the list written by “GhandiKingMindset,” which offered a list of nine proposals to be presented to Congress during Occupy DC demonstrations (OccupyWallSt.org, 2011). The author of the list proclaimed it to be a “work-in-progress developed through the best ‘open innovation’ process money can’t buy,” admitting that they “make a lot of sense” (Zadek, 2011). The first demand on the list involves “prudent banking practices,” more specifically, the re-institution of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, effectively terminating the Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act of 1999 that dissolved the separation that existed between investment banking (which issues securities) and commercial banks (which accepts deposits) (OccupyWallSt.org, 2011; Zadek, 2011). Holding those in the investment community accountable for the criminal behavior that caused the “Crash of

2008” comes in second, recommending the creation of a congressional oversight committee to both investigate and prosecute offenders.

Four of the nine proposals (numbers 3, 6, 7 and 8) all refer to the topic of corporate influence, with the third demand seeking a reversal to the “Citizens United” U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing corporations to contribute an unlimited amount of funds to political campaigns, the sixth which limits the influence of corporate lobbyists on politicians, and the seventh which demands that Congress pass “Revolving Door Legislation,” limiting the ability of former government officials receiving high-ranking jobs in the private sector (and vice versa), and the eighth which seeks to abolish “Corporate Personhood” in the eyes of the law, repudiating a justice system that allows anonymous members of a corporate entity dodge personal liability in cases of fraud, environmental destruction and negligence, etc. (OccupyWallSt.org, 2011; Zadek, 2011). The fourth demand calls for the creation of a “Buffett Tax” (named after famed investment guru and multi-billionaire Warren Buffett), that ensures wealthy individuals and corporations pay an equal tax to that of the average citizen (Zadek, 2011). The fifth demand calls for the reform of the financial market’s regulator, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), to reduce bias, political interference, conflicts of interest.

Gitlin (2013), drafted his own list in an article published in *Dissent* entitled “A Charter for the 99%,” arguing that an articulated set of demands was necessary in order for Occupy to move on to its “next phase,” having accomplished the most it could hope to achieve given the Movement’s structure (5). In broad terms, Gitlin (2013) believes that the rebuilding of American society must “go deep,” seeking tangible political and economic reforms, while constantly reminding the public that a plutocracy threatens their personal livelihoods, shared economic growth, and the environmental sustainability of the planet. The goal should be the development and implementation of a “reform program” or strategy that is altogether ambitious, urgent, and achievable. (Gitlin, 2013: 5). Some of Gitlin’s (2013: 6) recommendations fall in line with those made by other authors mentioned previously, including the desire to eliminate the influence of money on politics by rescinding the Citizens United decision allowing unlimited campaign funds by private and corporate interests, a reform in tax policy to make it more “progressive,” such as taxing capital gains and dividends the same way as personal wages, and curbing military spending while simultaneously investing in job creation. Gitlin’s (2013) third recommendation is unique in that he advocates the implementation of a “Robin Hood Tax,” a small fee added to financial transactions that is paid for by banks, not private citizens. Kern and Nann (2013: 199), make a similar, specific recommendation, stating that

stricter regulation of the global financial system should include a "Tobin Tax," originally proposed by Nobel Laureate economist James Tobin in 1972, described as a tax on all foreign currency conversions made by banks and corporations.

A Single, Unifying Demand

The question, "What is our ONE demand?" was first posed by *Adbusters'* editor-in-chief Kalle Lasn, who contended that the magazine campaign that launched Occupy Wall Street demonstrations was simply "an invitation to act," as opposed to an attempt at receiving a direct answer. In an interview with Pepitone (2012) of CNN, Lasn admitted that if a consensus had to be reached on a single demand, it would likely focus on "taking to task the people who perpetrated the economic meltdown," which would involve "asking Obama to set up a committee to look into the fall of U.S. banking" (also see *Adbusters*, 2011a; Farrell, 2011). For three authors in particular, the primary message being conveyed by Occupy supporters is that Americans seek accountability from Wall Street for their role in triggering the financial crisis resulting in the growing economic inequality gap (Ellison, 2011; Kristoff, 2011b, Sorkin, 2011).

The only way to save the economy from "crony capitalists" is to install more reliable tools and measures for individual and corporate accountability (Kristoff, 2011b). To Farrell (2011), whose position is representative of the second category of responses, the "one simple demand" that Occupy, as well as all protests and revolutions that occurred that year worldwide, can be reduced to the idea that people "want their democracy back." Aligning himself with protestors, he argues that the tactics employed in Egypt were successful, and that similar results can be expected in the United States if a similar model is followed (Farrell, 2011). Ensuring democratic equality and fairness can be expressed with a catchy slogan, "One citizen, one dollar, one vote" (Farrell, 2011).

Making Sense of the Diffusion

The question of whether or not protestors have demands is not in dispute in the source material. Instead, the opposite is true. Many authors recognize that a multitude of demands exist, so many that it can be confusing to decipher exactly what the issues are and what it is protestors want to see changed. The question then becomes twofold: whether the success of Occupy Wall Street is dependent on the existence of "official" demands, and whether the creation of a simplified set of definitive demands, representing the demands of all protestors, is even possible.

Discussing the necessity of demands alludes to a much broader issue about the ways in which the success of Occupy is measured. One school of thought, to which some authors are aligned, suggests that the 99%'s public display of activism is impressive in and of itself. Getting wrapped up in the identification of demands detracts from the actions of the protestors themselves, which have far more meaning. The act of occupation and General Assembly are meant to exemplify how a more equitable society could function; a model that expresses the desire for structural and political change without ever having to put it in words. In this regard, the demonstration tactics used by Occupy protestors are themselves, demands. Under this school of thought, the standard for success is fairly low, with the widespread notoriety and support Occupy received being viewed as an acceptable benchmark. The second school of thought is that protest efforts are meaningless unless tangible changes and outcomes can be documented. Meeting this requirement for tangible results has a lower possibility of success, but can be satisfied with deliberate, organized government responses, such as the creation of a new policy or the formation of a committee intended to investigate alternative solutions to the issue at hand.

Four proposed lists of demands are discussed in this analysis, covering a spectrum of requests that range from sweeping systemic overhauls to the current political and economic structures of society, to specific amendments to policies related to taxes and corporate oversight. The first, developed by Hayat and Covert (2011), offers eight of the most commonly suggested policy changes derived from the survey responses of protest demonstrators. This particular list provides extremely broad objectives such as "ending capitalism" and reforming both the healthcare and education systems. The value of this list is questionable, considering the abstract nature of the requests. The feasibility of a request as broad as "end capitalism" is next to impossible, and could take years, if not decades, to fully realize. In defense of the authors, their survey and conclusions were intended to be more exploratory than definitive. The second list, created by filmmaker Michael Moore and discussed by spiritual guru Deepak Chopra (2011), offers seven policy initiatives to be considered, and enacted, by the Obama Administration. Many of his demands center around reformation of the federal tax system, suggesting amendments to the existing tax code that ensure taxes is both collected and allocated in a more effective and equitable fashion. Moore's demands reinforce the idea that legal loopholes exploited by wealthy Americans and corporations are to blame for the economic inequality addressed by protestors, loopholes that allow the 1% to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. The third list, published by an individual under the pseudonym "GandhiKingMindset" on occupywallst.org, consisted of nine policy requests to be given directly to

members of Congress. Particular attention is paid to policy amendments that would inhibit the self-serving relationship enjoyed between the government and corporations, setting limits on the amount of money corporations can supply to political campaigns, as well as the ability for government officials to assume high-paying corporate positions upon completion of their political terms. The final list of recommendations drafted by Gitlin (2013) in the *Charter of the 99%*, does not offer any unique requests to those made by other authors, but does provide a few “progressive” tax solutions, such as the taxing of capital gains.

Tax reform is a demand of specific importance, mentioned in all of the previously discussed lists. Many of the demands related to reformation of the tax code seek to ensure that wealthy individuals and corporations pay a proportionate amount of taxes based on income, relative to the rest of the population, what Zadek (2011) refers to as a “Buffet Tax,” and Gitlin (2013), a “Robin Hood Tax.” The re-regulation of the financial market is also mentioned frequently, with the lists examined by Chopra (2011) and Zadek each mention the re-institution of the Glass-Steagall Act (1933) specifically, which would re-establish a clear division between investment and commercial banking, a division with many exploitable loopholes. Many in the source material hold Wall Street financiers and corporations responsible for the great economic “Crash of 2008,” justifying the need for a congressional oversight committee to investigate the cause of the crash, and hold those accountable to the highest extent of the law. Reducing or eliminating the influence of money in politics is another demand that spans multiple lists, the clearest example of which is the proposed repeal of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, which granted corporations the freedom to donate unlimited funds to the political campaigns of their choosing.

Overall Summary

Taken together as a whole, the three sections of this sub-study, which explores the pillar of “social structure,” reveals several important revelations pertaining to the impetus and motivations behind protestor action in the Occupy Wall Street Movement. Economic inequality and political representation are identified as core grievances in the source material (excluding statements published in Tumblr, which is discussed in the next chapter), with the final discussion related to protestor demands addressing both of these grievances with specific policy initiatives. Analysis of the source material illustrates how these core grievances are intimately intertwined. The wealth disparity between the richest and poorest segments of American society is attributed in the data to corrupt corporate practices that serve to funnel wealth upward to a small elite; practices that are

allowed to continue as a result of a lack of political oversight and corporate accountability. According to the commentary provided by media pundits and academics that is examined in this sub-study, protest supporters recognize an imbalance that exists in the current hierarchical political system; a system that overtly and frequently demonstrates favoritism towards the wealthy, further exacerbating the income gap between the rich and the poor. The creation of the General Assembly, the primary organizing body of the Occupy Wall Street Movement, was done deliberately to demonstrate a functional alternative to the existing political system, one that operates under a horizontalist, consensus-based philosophy. Analysis of the text also reveals resistance on the part of the established political order to this proposed alternative, through the deployment of law enforcement and legal sanctions. The demands articulated by supporters of the Movement offer various solutions for redistributing wealth, while suggesting that government coalitions and policies be created that investigate and punish the corporatocracy for the depriving greater society of the financial resources needed to live a fair and comfortable lifestyle.

PILLAR 3: WHO ARE THE 99%?

I am paying back \$30,000 in student loans. He is still paying his student loans as well. I get \$147 in food stamps a month, and between that and my paycheck, we do ok, but have no savings. However, we are 1 broken down car, 1 serious health issue or 1 missed paycheck from being totally fucked.

- Tumblr Blog, "We Are The 99 Percent" (2011, October 31)

* * *

The purpose of this chapter, the third sub-study, will explore the personal biographies of Occupy Wall Street supporters, by examining a sample of personal testimonials taken from the Tumblr thread, "We Are The 99 Percent." The thread, which gained nationwide popularity during the first few months of the Occupy protests, is a wealth of information about the personal experiences of those who associate with the 99% protest group. Each contribution is an account of personal and familial hardship, detailing the many obstacles and problems the average American inevitably encounters in pursuit of the "American Dream." These posts, offered voluntarily by supporters, provide a window into the individual circumstances of those who feel they have been cheated by the current social and economic system, one that masquerades as equitable and fair on its exterior, but is really only caters to a small minority. The testimonials are stories of individual trials and tribulations brought on by severe financial limitations and heavy debt burdens. The outlook overall is extremely pessimistic; contributors express fear about what they perceive to be an unpredictable future; they know their current economic circumstances lack stability and security, and they fear that the future holds more of the same.

The performance of multiple close readings of the sample, combined with the collection of age and keyword data, allowed for the development of several "protestor profiles" that emerged from the text, discussed in the remainder of this third sub-study. Each profile is a portrait illustrating the common characteristics belonging to some of the more prominent subgroups of protestors evident in the sample. Exploring the personal biographies of protest supporters and participants satisfies the third pillar of the "fundamental triangle" linking individual troubles with the larger historical context and social issues addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. This chapter addresses two fundamental questions: who are the 99 Percent, and why do they support the Occupy Movement?

The Tumblr Sample

Posts began to appear in the Tumblr feed as early as August 23, 2011, weeks prior to the onset of protests in Lower Manhattan, and continued up until October, 2013. The first post is both a call to action, as well as a set of instructions for participation in the Tumblr thread, encouraging supporters of the Occupy Wall Street initiative to join the "99 Percent Project." The post asks those who are "drowning in debt that never goes away," those facing the possibility of eviction and homelessness, to "Make a sign. Write your circumstance at the top, no longer than a single sentence," with a footer that reads, "I am the 99 Percent" and "Occupy Together." Several examples of ideal circumstances are also provided, including, "I am a student with \$25,000 in debt," and "I need surgery and I'm more worried about the expense than my health." The final instruction asks participants to take a picture of themselves holding the sign and submit it to the Tumblr feed. The post concludes with a definitive statement of purpose, outlining why demonstrating solidarity is important:

The 99 percent have been set against each other, fighting over the crumbs the 1 percent leaves behind. But we're all struggling. We're all fighting. It's time we recognize our common struggles, our common cause. Be part of the 99 percent and let the 1 percent know you're out.

Thankfully, many contributors went well beyond what the opening instructions called for, offering up detailed accounts several paragraphs in length. Also, many chose to waive a certain degree of anonymity by clearly including their face in the images of the handwritten signs.

The Tumblr feed contains a total of 231 individual webpages, each containing either 14 or 15 posts, dependent on individual post and image size. The selection of posts for examination was performed using both a coin and a random number generator,⁵ with a parameter set to select a single digit between 1 and 15. I decided I would scroll through each of the 231 pages, selecting either one or two posts from each page based on the results of a coin flip. For each page, the coin was flipped once; "heads" for one post, "tails" for two. Once it was determined how many posts would be selected per page, the random number generator was used to determine exactly which posts would be extracted for the purposes of examination. Starting from the top of the webpage and descending, each post was assigned a number between 1 and 15. In the event the generator randomly selected post 15, and that post did not exist for that page, another number was

⁵ The random number generator application was accessed at <http://www.random.org>

generated. In the event two posts were to be selected on a single page, and the number generator randomly drew the same number twice, a new number was also generated. This process was repeated until a sample of 314 posts were selected. Upon initial review of the sample, three of the posts turned out to be duplicates and were eliminated, bringing the final sample total to 311. The very first post, dated August 23, was eliminated from possible selection in the sample. Posts selected for examination begin on September 25, 2011, and end on June 14, 2013.

All posts are anonymous, in that no one reveals their full identity or any contact information. Only a handful of contributors offered their first name, however, a significant proportion of contributors were forthcoming about their age. I thought it wise to tally the information in a frequency chart, believing that it would be an important dimension for analysis later. Below is a table of the final tallies. Of the 311 posts randomly sampled, 37% (115 contributors) provided age explicitly. Many others alluded to their age with references to major life events like participation in college, marriage and having children, but only contributors who provided an exact age were included in this tally.

Age Range	Age	Frequency
	12	1
	15	1
	17	4
	18	2
	19	8
10-19		16
	20	7
	21	6
	22	8
	23	6
	24	7
	25	7
	26	13
	27	6
	28	6
	29	4
20-29		70
	30	1
	31	2
	32	4
	34	3
	35	3
	36	1
	37	1
	39	1
30-39		16
40-49		8
50-59		4
60+		1

Of the contributors that provided their age, over 60% were between the ages of 20 to 29, lending weight to the idea that Occupy was primarily a “youth oriented movement” (Gainer, 2011; Grossman, 2011; Klein, 2011; Mirkinson, 2011; Rutkoff, 2011; Hatem, 2012; Gitlin, 2013). Posts written by protest supporters in their 20s accounts for 22.5% of the entire sample extracted from the Tumblr thread. If we extend the definition of “youth” to include anyone under the age of 30, from my sample alone, youth account for 75% of contributors who provided their age, and 28% of all posts collected in the sample.

Without having measured the frequency of testimonials posted on any given day during the analysis of the sample, perceivably, the heaviest concentration of activity the Tumblr feed received was within the first two months of protest, with a noticeable decline in posts thereafter. Posts begin to trickle in even before protests officially began on September 17, with a definitive spike in activity beginning in late September (28-30), gaining momentum in October. Posting occurs often and consistently throughout October, with large spikes mid-month, October 16-17, and near the end of the month, around October 28. We begin to notice a decline in posting in November, with fewer posts per day, but still evenly distributed throughout the month. There is some mid-month spiking in November as well, around the 11th-14th. By December, activity on the feed declines dramatically, with periods sometimes lasting a few days before a new post is uploaded. By September 2012, a full year after protests began, participation on the feed is almost non-existent, with contributors adding to the feed once every few weeks.

Systematic analysis of the Tumblr blogs revealed more than just an age concentration among youth contributors, it also revealed the habitual usage of several keywords and phrases. Once it became evident that certain terms would appear frequently throughout the sample, I began formulating a list, which, by the end of the second close reading, contained 75 words and phrases. Using Microsoft Word 365’s built-in word search functionality, I was able to construct a frequency table to illustrate the number of times each word or phrase appeared in the sample, as well as the number of individual posts in which the term was used. Below is a list of the top 25 most frequently used words in the Tumblr sample, with the aforementioned frequency table found in Appendix 1.7. Column (a) titled “Mentions” indicates the number of times a word appeared in the entire 311 post sample, column (b) indicates how many individual posts in which the term appeared (accounting for multiple usage of the term in a single post, as well as to get a sense of how many individual contributors used the term). Column (c) translates the figures in column (b) into a percentage; a

calculation of how many posts out of the 311 the term appeared. Referring to the term “Employment,” for example, the table indicates that the word itself was used 57 times in 47 individual posts, which represents about 15% of the posts selected for the sample. We need to discount the importance of some of the more obvious frequently appearing terms for the purposes of this analysis, such as “99%” (a term participants were instructed to include in order to contribute to the Tumblr feed), and “Occupy,” the event being supported.

Top 25 Most Frequent Keywords in the Tumblr Sample:		
1. "Work-" = 714	9. "Health-" = 217	17. "Parent-" = 152
2. "Job-" = 583	10. "Loan-" = 208	18. "Child" = 150
3. "99%" = 293	11. "Student-" = 187	19. "Degree-" = 144
4. "Afford-" = 257	12. "Occupy" = 181	20. "Lucky" = 134
5. "School-" = 252	13. "Money" = 181	21. "Food" = 132
6. "College" = 239	14. "-Employ-" = 176	22. "America-" = 127
7. "Debt-" = 230	15. "Family" = 162	23. "House-" = 125
8. "Insurance" = 218	16. "Bill-" = 153	24. "Education" = 104
		25. "Graduate-" = 100

The best way to fulfill Mills (1959) and Young’s (2011) requirement that an imaginative exploration of an event be performed with specific attention to the personal biographies of those involved or affected, is thorough examination of this randomly selected sample of posts from the “We are the 99 Percent” Tumblr feed. The performance of multiple close readings of the sample, combined with the collection of age and keyword data, allowed for the development of several “protestor profiles” that emerged from the text, discussed in the remainder of this third sub-study. Each profile is a portrait illustrating the common characteristics belonging to some of the more prominent subgroups of protestors evident in the sample. Exploring the personal biographies of protest supporters and participants satisfies the third pillar of the “fundamental triangle” linking individual troubles with the larger historical context and social issues addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. This chapter addresses two fundamental questions: who are the 99 Percent, and why do they support the Occupy Movement?

The “American Dream” & “Broken Promises”

The term “American Dream” is used often in the source material (40 mentions according to my analysis). Unfortunately, the idea is only ever referred to in the abstract. None of the contributors make an effort to describe in detail what they mean when referring to the construct.

The closest thing to a “definition” that can be found within the sample is provided by a contributor on October 11: “The American Dream is not to become rich. It is to see the fruit of your labors, whatever they may be. It is to EARN your rewards.” The statement speaks to a sentiment that runs consistently throughout the sample regarding the desire to be given a fair opportunity to earn wealth and success, as opposed to being given government “handouts” in the form of social security and food stamps. Based solely on the types of grievances aired within the Tumblr thread, we can safely assume that the American Dream implies the availability of opportunities for wealth and success within the established social and economic system, regardless of race, gender, class, or any other label that serves to divide and stratify society. The notion of “availability of opportunity” is reinforced in a post uploaded on November 6:

I grew up believing what I was told, the American Dream was available to everyone. I was fairly uninterested in politics and the working of our system until High School. Once you see the first lie, the others uncover themselves. I have never known a time in this country that was truly free and just. All I want is my American Dream, and for everyone else to achieve theirs.

Despite a lack of definition, there is overwhelming consensus within the testimonial sample that the American Dream is a failure, or that it no longer exists, or, that the dream has actually become a “nightmare.” Part of a statement posted on October 26, 2011, aptly illustrates the typical usage of the term:

I owe over \$40k in student loans and I cannot find a job. My son is now in college, racking up his own debt, and I am delivering pizzas in an attempt to keep him there. The prospect of someday owning a house is a pipe dream for me. Our parents always told us that if we worked hard and stayed responsible, everything would work out. Well it hasn't. This is not the future I was promised. I did everything I was supposed to do and much more, and I have received NONE of the payoffs. This is not the American Dream. It's a nightmare.

One over-arching theme that connects a vast majority of the testimonials, illustrated in the post above, is the idea of “broken promises.” Each testimonial is partially a declaration of anger and frustration from individuals who attempted to obtain wealth and success the prescribed “conventional way” - by going to school, getting a degree, entering the job market and competing for positions at large companies - only to find out upon completion of this process that their chances of securing a job are no better than those who decided to enter the workforce immediately after high school. A contributor who posted on October 14 discusses this idea in some detail:

My husband is also a music teacher. He doesn't know whether he'll have a job next year. His district is fighting to discontinue

compensation for higher education...meaning that Master's Degree he's working for? Yeah, it will be worth nothing. \$20,000 down the toilet. What's the point of higher education if you can't improve yourself AND your quality of life with it? And he had to take a pay cut to boot. The governor of my state makes \$100,000+ with NO DEGREE. Yet people with an education are getting shafted for wages and benefits so wealthy people and corporations can have tax breaks.

Many express concern over the lack of available jobs for college graduates, a concern that alludes to a much larger issue pertaining to the American unemployment rate and overall health of the economy. A statement posted on October 2 is a prime example of this concern:

I am about to receive my Ph.D. in a technical science from an Ivy League school. I earned scholarships and worked two full-time jobs in college to get here. I have worked on research and taught classes for six years on a stipend that would qualify me for welfare. There are NO jobs waiting for me when I get my doctoral degree. Despite working for the past six years, my university files graduate labor under a tax code that prevents me from applying for unemployment and that saves the university unreported in tax breaks. Because the school is a private institution, we graduate students are unable to unionize, despite the fact that we provide a significant amount of the teaching and research labor that makes this school \$\$\$. EDUCATION IS NOT A PRIVILEGE but in this country it is held captive as such.

The harsh reality to which many contributors offer insight is that candidacy for a "good" job does not hinder on one's academic training and credentials, but rather, the practical, on-site experience that can only be achieved having worked the job (or something similar) previously. There is no guarantee that your post-secondary or graduate education will be recognized as "valuable" in the private sector.

The true "value" of education is an issue fundamentally in dispute within the sample.

Contributors wonder why they have to pay such a high premium for post-secondary and graduate education when very few actually see any practical benefit after graduation. Contributors are not questioning their decision to attend school, but instead, are upset at how much it cost them to get their degree, which they believe, gives them no advantages in the competing job market. Posts published on October 11 and 19 respectively, illustrate this anger and frustration:

I just graduated college in May. I earned a 4.0 GPA, went to an ABA-Approved paralegal program, and did a semester-long internship with the county. However, now I cannot find a job. "Entry-level" jobs are going to people with 5+ years of experience. (WHAT??) I have even applied to be a file clerk at multiple firms. They told me that they have ATTORNEYS applying for the same positions. How can I compete with that? I am now considering going back to retail - back to minimum wage. It is better than NO wage. I would go back to school, but I have drained

my savings in order to get THIS degree.

I have sent out hundreds of resumes without responses. I have long "lowered my standards" and applied to any job. However, even janitor positions require at least a year of previous janitorial experience. The few job interviews I had in my field were nerve-racking group job interviews where I was staring my competition of seven or eight people, young and old, in the face competing for one job position. In other professional job interviews, I was told that I was competing against people who "worked in the industry" who had decades of experience. I have a better chance of winning the lottery than getting a job

Most graduates in the sample are finding it difficult to secure meaningful, stable employment, while others are disappointed at the wages and salaries they earn at the jobs they were fortunate enough to secure, notwithstanding their academic qualifications. A contributor who posted on October 13, 2011, speaks to this problem:

I am a 24 years old. I graduated from a state university in December of 2010 with a degree in sociology. I currently work 2 part time jobs at a local community college, one of which I will lose January 1st because of crippling state budget cuts. I've been looking for full time employment since I finished school...haven't even landed an interview. I owe over \$34K in student loans, but will ultimately pay back over \$60K with interest.

Many participants to Tumblr share stories of how they have tried to balance their lives within the current system, finding difficulty allocating the time necessary to be an effective, successful student, and make enough money at their job to both pay living expenses and outstanding tuition debt. The problem is that individuals make such low wages that they have to work extra time at their jobs, or take on second jobs, in order to afford the education they are pursuing. As a result, many aspects of their life begin to suffer, including the education they are so vehemently working towards. Graduates, and current students for that matter, consistently complain about their overwhelming student loan debt, which they fear will cripple them financially for the better part of their lives, possibly preventing them from purchasing a home or having children. Post-secondary education is thus perceived as an extremely expensive and risky gamble, one that many were told was a "sure thing." The gamble transcends that of just monetary investment, with the opportunity cost of having missed out on obtaining work experience, potentially outweighing the value of the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. Understood from a strictly accounting / mathematical standpoint, college education in America has shown itself to have a horrible Return on Investment.

There is a definite sense of regret throughout the sample among those commenting on their college or university education. College is viewed by many as a crucial turning point in life; when the injustices and inequities inherent in the current social and economic order present themselves in the most pronounced ways. The decision to attend college or university is one that many contributors, a group of protest supporters I like to refer to as the “disgruntled students,” would easily take back, having only realized the error in their decision-making after graduation. Participants are disappointed with the education system as a whole, convinced that educational institutions are as corrupt as corporations and the governments that fund them. Post-secondary institutions are also driven by profit; the system happily churns out individuals who are unemployed and in substantial debt, as long as tuition has been paid.

This “promise” that was engrained in people as children, through traditional channels of socialization such as parents and teachers, resembles more of a method or formula for obtaining wealth, success, and ultimately a sense of happiness and fulfillment, within the established social and economic system. The method that is taught to young generations establishes an irrefutable link between higher education, availability of worthwhile employment opportunities, and financial security. Active participation within the system, following the prescribed formula which determines certain decisions and events throughout one’s life course, is necessary if one is to have an opportunity at becoming “upper class.” From this perspective, the world is viewed as a type of game, where adherence to the rules, and following the laid out path provided, is the best way to ensure you finish the game a winner. Contributors are expressing a very deep sense of betrayal, believing they were fed lies about the functioning and operation of the established order, and that none of the outcomes they were promised have materialized.

Employment & Debt

Among all the keywords examined during analysis of the sample, none can match the frequency and density of those related to the topic of “employment.” The words “work” and “job” are far and away the most reoccurring words in the sample, suggesting definitively that the foremost concern among contributors to the thread centers around employment; either finding employment in a market that lacks available options, or ensuring that compensation received at “low-skilled” positions is commensurate with the amount of knowledge and labour needed to perform responsibilities. Of those who commented on their employment circumstances in the sample, a distinction can be drawn between those who are “unemployed” and those who are

“underemployed” (who can also be referred to as the “working poor”). The inability to find any form of employment is an issue that affects more than just recent college graduates. Contributors from all walks of life, at differing stages throughout the life course, express the same difficulty finding employment. Posts offered on October 6 and 29 illustrate this point:

My younger sister has a Ph.D. and I have a master's degree. We were both laid off in our 50s after long successful careers and have been unemployed for years now. For the first time in my adult life, I had become unemployed and without health insurance. She finally got a job in Canada recently, but I never recovered from the psychological and financial destruction.

My new husband of three weeks is an unemployed skilled laborer. He applies for jobs but does not hear anything. It is a struggle to pay all the bills. Food comes from the food bank. Medical bills are only partially paid. We have regular expenses for medications. Car insurance is almost unaffordable, but cars are necessary to get to any jobs in our community.

A good example of the issue of “underemployment” is provided in a statement uploaded on December, 10, 2011:

My job that only pays me \$30,000/year REQUIRES a college degree per the state. I am a QDDP and work at a company that provides care for individuals with developmental disabilities. We are responsible for every aspect of many of these people's lives, from their finances to feeding, dressing, and bathing some. I am glad my job helps people but no one in my field is paid for the actual amount of work they do. Many of our caregivers work multiple jobs because a direct service worker is lucky if they can earn \$10/hour.

The issue with diminished employment prospects can be reduced to an imbalance between supply and demand. The fear being described by both unemployed and underemployed contributors alike is the idea of a perceived job shortage in America. There are many who are forced to settle for low-paying jobs because salary positions do not exist. But for others, conversely, the belief in job scarcity is so powerful, that many who can be considered “dramatically over-qualified” are seeking out low-skilled positions to supplement their income in the event of a complete economic collapse, creating even fiercer competition for jobs at the bottom of the economic spectrum. In addition, close analysis of the sample reveals an alternative hypothesis to account for the perceived job shortage: the growing trend towards procuring multiple minimum wage jobs in order to “scrape by,” which also has the consequence of shrinking the available job pool for those who have yet to secure a single job. The polarization among Tumblr contributors is fascinating, with a significant segment of posters complaining about being incapable of securing any job, while others are

exhausted and frustrated over how little they make at the many part-time, minimum wage jobs they possess. A post published on October 24, 2011, is an example of the latter:

I'm 19 years old. I make less than 8k a year. I work two minimum wage jobs from 11 am to 1 am with only 30 minutes between jobs. I have no time and no money to go to college. I don't qualify for financial aid because my mom, who I see twice a year, makes 35k a year. She can't even afford to support me, how is she supposed to pay for college? I'm already \$1300 in debt for leaving an abusive relationship and in return abandoning a lease. I REFUSE to go 120k more in debt for student loans when there may not be a job for me when I graduate.

A popular phrase that is used by contributors in relation to this issue is "paycheck to paycheck" (which appeared 15 times in the sample). The phrase is used as a short-hand for describing the inability to save money as a result of extremely low wages, with every last dollar of income being spent towards bills. There is an undertone of uncertainty associated with the term, alluding to the idea that most people enjoy little, if any, financial security, never knowing whether the next paycheck will be enough to "break even." A contribution from October 29 illustrates this sentiment:

I did everything I was supposed to do. I went to school and got a good education. I got my degree and moved to an area where jobs are supposed to be easier to find. The only credit card I have is for my medical expenses. I live within my means; I'm not a big spender. Yet I'm still living paycheck to paycheck, and I have no idea how I'm going to continue to pay my living expenses, medical bills, and somehow find a way to pay for grad school in order to get the further skills necessary to get a "real job," because apparently a bachelor's degree doesn't cut it anymore. I have sent out 120+ job

Contributors work multiple jobs, not be able to send their children to an expensive private school or buy a luxury foreign car, but to make enough money to pay for bare essentials and necessities. People do not WANT to work two or more jobs, they HAVE to. The "opportunity" that Occupy supporters are demanding equitable access to, is not parody with the "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," but the ability to acquire just enough wealth to live a happy, comfortable existence. People work so much that other aspects of their life inevitably suffer: an inability to raise children, having to rely on friends and family for childcare; an inability to pursue an education because tuition is too expensive; and, in instances where an effort is made to go to school, people suffer health issues and sleep disorders resulting from exhaustion having to work multiple minimum wage jobs and attend school full-time.

Households that are fortunate enough to have multiple income streams, are not limited to those situations where a sole parent carries the entire family's financial burden. The issues being

identified by members of the 99% on Tumblr suggest that they affect the family unit as much, if not more than any one individual. Evidence of this can be found in the sheer number of contributors speaking on behalf of their families, detailing the obstacles and hardships they have encountered as a unit, resulting from the inequitable and corrupt social and economic order. Of those who contributed, a significant segment could be described as the “breadwinner of the family,” either the matriarch or patriarch of the household, commenting on the issues they, their spouses and children, have endured with regards to money, employment and individual health. A vast majority of participants identify themselves as parents with young children; many are young parents themselves, trying to balance school, work and parenthood simultaneously.

I am lucky to have a job. However my entire department was laid off with the exception of four of us and we are now doing the work of twenty people. My best friend at the job who had been with the company since for over ten years was laid off for being too expensive to retain. I work at least 60 hours a week and do not claim overtime because I am afraid of being punished for it. I often take work home with me on weekends too. And yet with all this hard work and a family with two bread-winners we are still far from rich, and after seeing what happened to my friend, don't think I will ever find a company that will reward my loyalty. My father who used to own his own business lost his business to competition from a big conglomerate on corporate welfare. When did this become acceptable? Why has it taken us so long to fight back?

- October 16, 2011

The sentiment among this group is that of genuine concern and fear over the well-being of their immediate family and close loved ones, with some feeling like inadequate providers for their children.

Commentary on the struggles encountered by the American family is not limited to the insight provided by the primary breadwinner, with many sons and daughters offering their own accounts of the hardships experienced by their parents. An excellent example of this is provided by a poster on October 3, 2011:

My father is 64. He was a public school teacher for 20 years before being let go. He was unemployed for 2 years off and on between night jobs and private school gigs. He is currently a security guard at a cigar factory. At 62 he had to borrow early from his retirement pension and may not have enough for 5 years from now. He makes \$8/hr with a degree. My mother is 60. She has worked in the insurance industry since she graduated high school. She lost her job in February and has applied for 700 jobs and has started losing hope at ever finding one at her age. The first line of unemployment ran out and she is uninsured. She has type 2 diabetes and hypertension. She recently was hospitalized because she

bought food instead of medication.

Another example of a child speaking on behalf of their parents, posted on November 24, is exemplary for two reasons. First, it suggests that poverty can become entrenched throughout a family's lineage, getting "passed on" from generation to generation like hand-me-down clothing. Second, it provides yet another example of how one parents' financial problems can translate into dire consequences for the family as a whole, emphasizing the idea that, for some families, maintaining adequate living conditions and avoiding homelessness often hinges on the employment successes or failures of one member:

I am 20 yrs old. I come from 3 generations of poverty. My family is made of teachers and farmers. MY grandparents hometown is a ghost town now. My mother has moved into a 27 ft trailer with no heat or running water. She is a single mother, with multiple untreated health problems, much like the rest of my friends and family. She is missing 1/2 of her teeth. She worked in the adult industry to put me through school. Eventually, with yrs of hard work, she took over a vintage clothing store - in 2007. When the economy crashed, she was forced to pay rent @ the store instead of our mortgage. We lost the house & the store.

The ultimate consequence that all contributors share despite their varying individual circumstances, is that they simply do not have enough money to comfortably survive day-to-day, falling deeper into an escalating debt that is compounded with interest. Contributors make it abundantly clear that they are subject to ever mounting debt, acknowledging several sources, including automobile insurance and repairs, rent and mortgage payments, medical expenses, student loan debt, credit card debt, personal and small business loans, back taxes, and others. Statements uploaded to Tumblr on October 3 and November 30 offer a glimpse at the variety of debt sources contributors are subject to:

I am 28 years old and one of the lucky ones. I own 2 small businesses and work over 100 hours a week in order to cover: my rent (\$1300/month for a small one bedroom), debt from college (>\$10k left to go), credit card debt (>\$6,000 and staying close to the same even though I am paying more than the minimum every month), car payment (on a loan with a 15% interest rate, which no bank will re-finance even though my credit has improved greatly and my income has raised since I purchased the car), I have no health insurance because I was denied due to a pre-existing condition and my status as self-employed doesn't qualify me for a group plans. I pay for healthcare out of pocket and get no preventative care at all. I live in fear of being injured or requiring hospitalization. I have enough money for food and my other bills each month, but that's about it. I have no savings. I am lucky, but I am the 99%.

I was almost debt-free when I was struck by a major medical crisis at the age of 37. After a long recovery, I am back to work. My

paycheck now supports seven people - none of whom are my partner, spouse, or children. My once modest debt has grown exponentially. I fear for my health and have no idea how I will pay debt, save, and retire. I am the 99%.

However, despite all the issues identified by contributors with regards to access to opportunity, education, employment, wages and debt, and, despite the overall sense of anger and frustration undeniable throughout the sample, contributors still express a sense of “good fortune”, albeit, both genuine and sarcastic. The word “lucky” appears in the sample over 130 times, with the mantra, “we are the lucky ones,” appearing at least 30 times. Many contributors to the thread consider themselves fortunate for the low-paying jobs and small luxuries they are able to afford. Those that have completed their education with little or no debt, managed to secure a stable job with health benefits, own property and have families, are all among those who consider themselves “lucky.”

Statements made on October 12 and 19 offers what appears to be genuine sense of gratefulness:

And we're the lucky ones? We are. WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES. We have so much, relatively speaking. We are fed, housed, we have a little money for extras like cat food and vet bills. We are hanging on, hard. We are lucky and we know how fickle luck can be. We are the 99%.

I have never had a full time job. They have all been “part time” jobs where I work 40+ hours a week, but they don't want to give me the higher level of benefits. I hate my job, but I stay and work hard because I know I am lucky to have it. I am one of the privileged few to still have good benefits.

The sarcasm apparent in some of the statements reveals an underlying subtext of resentment towards those who have power and control over the operation of the social and economic system. It is a form of subtle objection to the idea that “people should be thankful for what little they have,” when clearly, there is a small minority of citizens who have everything they can possibly want.

I'm one of the lucky ones to be allowed to live off of credit and \$10/hr administration jobs for 6 years. It was just enough money to pay my tuition and survive. I'm one of the lucky ones to have a scholarship for 3 years enlistment in the Federal Government. I promise when I get there, I will fight for what I didn't have: a childhood. I am the 99 percent and I am occupying Wall Street.

October 29, 2011

Inherent in these expressions of gratitude is a disheartening recognition on the part of Occupy supporters that being in possession of things such as a job, health insurance, a vehicle, and a home, are all essentially privileges that only some are privy to, instead of “rights” (by which I mean, equally distributed opportunities) that all citizens can enjoy.

Summary

The “American Dream” is identified in the Tumblr thread, “We Are The 99 Percent,” as a common goal among Occupy supporters. The exact details of this dream are vaguely defined in the post sample, but a conventional understanding of the term suggests a desire to achieve a lifestyle that encompasses all of the luxuries and conveniences afforded to those with high incomes. A feature of this dream is an understanding of the U.S. as a “land of opportunity,” a place where anyone, regardless of background or social standing, has a chance of becoming wealthy and successful, provided they exhibit a propensity to work, a commitment to their trade, and investment in their own skills development. The “capitalist promise” refers to the ability of the economic system to distribute rewards fairly, providing assurance that wealth allocation is determined on the basis of merit. Contributors to the thread recognize that achieving a financially lucrative lifestyle requires hard work and commitment, particularly in the form of acquiring marketable skills through years of post-secondary education and workplace training. If the American Dream is the goal, or the ideal outcome individuals hope to accomplish through participation in the American capitalist system, then the capitalist promise is the perception that the system will deliver opportunities for this outcome through adherence to a “prescribed formula.” This “prescribed formula” is less of a pathway to prosperity as it is a widely accepted list of activities that have social and economic merit, participation in which, significantly increases one’s chances of being monetarily successful.

The assumption implied in the American Dream and the capitalist promise is that the availability of opportunity applies to everyone, and that the only thing separating the impoverished from the wealthy are poor life choices and a lack of motivation. However, the reality experienced by many Occupy supporters who contributed to Tumblr suggests the opposite. The primary concern among all contributors, which serves as the foundation for many of the specific grievances identified by Occupy supporters, is that the prescribed formula for success, requiring faith in the capitalist system to deliver the rewards embodied in the American Dream, is fundamentally a lie. Contributors express a deep sense of betrayal, believing they were denied a fair opportunity to earn wealth, despite having participated in activities that are commonly believed to hold “value” and warrant financial rewards.

The most frequently mentioned of these activities in the source material is participation in post-secondary education. *Students* and *Graduates* of American colleges and universities make up

a significant portion of contributors to the Tumblr thread, many of whom question the fundamental value of their education in their post entries. Attending college requires a large financial investment, one that forces a vast majority of students to assume debt in order to afford tuition. Because of the magnitude of this investment, students, understandably, want assurance that their education will translate into employment opportunities after graduation. This assurance is provided through a socially reinforced misconception built on assumptions that are in keeping with a merit-based model. It is many of these assumptions that are disputed by contributors in the source material. A “high-paying job,” one that enables the individual to afford more than bare essentials for living, requires a post-secondary education or better to secure. Anything less than a post-secondary education puts the individual at a significant disadvantage in the competitive job market, because they perceivably lack skills and knowledge necessary to be eligible for higher-paying positions. Conversely, college graduates are perceived as more desirable job applicants by employers because of the specialized skills they possess, making them more qualified for coveted positions that include higher salaries. Unfortunately, contributors to Tumblr outline a harsh reality that renders these assumptions moot. First, many graduates argue that their academic credentials mean less to potential employers than previous job experience. And second, many contend that available job positions that utilize their education, simply do not exist.

The availability, or lack of available employment prospects, is a concern that extends beyond students and graduates in the sample. Contributors of all ages identifying themselves as *unemployed* or *underemployed*, both single and with families to support, express concern about the overall health of the U.S. job market. Outrage and frustration among contributors to the sample stems from an inability to find employment, or the realization that job responsibilities, and compensation, are not commensurate with the credentials acquired in school. Of the jobs that are available, many claim the majority are low-skilled and pay minimum wage. Unemployment and underemployment account for several individual consequences discussed among contributors, the most important of which is the accumulation of debt. Debt of all forms, from student loans, home mortgages, car payments, credit cards, healthcare expenses, and others, combined with minimum wage job prospects, creates a perpetual cycle of poverty that is impossible to escape. Individuals in the sample with escalating debt, families to support, or both, describe living “paycheck to paycheck,” barely breaking even, making just enough or less than needed to afford food, clothing and shelter. The truly disheartening fact is that many contributors, despite these circumstances, consider themselves “lucky” to be able to afford the bare minimum needed to live.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

On September 17, 2011, a few thousand protestors arrived at Zuccotti Park to participate in the Occupy Wall Street Movement. Inspired by the popular assemblies of Egypt, Spain and other regions, the activists set out to challenge the system of corporate dominance that defines government in modern day America. The initial Call to Action by *Adbusters* tapped into widely held perceptions about a political system controlled by corporate greed: Private money in politics has undermined democracy, subsequently causing the transfer of wealth away from 99% of American citizens, and into the hands of a small elite. Occupy Wall Street, in creating a micro-community during the occupation of Zuccotti Park that operated under a consensus-based decision-making model, sought to demonstrate a visible alternative to the hierarchical structure of human relations that perpetuates the gross inequality and injustice that exist today (Syrek, 2012: 72; Rehmann, 2013: 4). Participants in the movement are “prefiguring” the world they wish to live, and attempting to lead by example. Protestors took up residence in the park for two months, until eviction measures executed by the NYPD (in accordance with a legal measures instituted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Brookfield Properties), forced occupants to disband.

Occupy Wall Street is, at its core, a public critique of the economy, and of the fraudulent relationship between the government and corporate America. The dispute between the 99% and 1% is multi-faceted, containing plenty of nuance. The goal of the analysis performed for this thesis was to make sense of these nuances, and to develop theories regarding the motivations for protest action that take into account the social and historical circumstances surrounding those motivations.

The first section of this discussion provides an overview of the analytical approach employed for this thesis, summarizing the methodological procedure and theoretical framework provided in Chapters 1 and 2. The second section provides an overview of all the major topics identified during the coding of source material. These topics are examined in relation to each other in order to reveal major themes in the literature; themes that connect topics within and between sub-studies. The discussion of themes, and the insight they provide into the relationship between individual troubles and public issues, makes up the third section of this discussion. The final section will situate these public-private relationships within the historical context discussed in sub-study 1, satisfying the three “pillars” of individual, social, and historical that comprise the Sociological and

Criminological Imaginations. The insight drawn from these final two sections will be used to develop theories regarding the motivation behind Occupy Wall Street protests.

A Summary of the Research Purpose and Analytic Approach

Using Blaikie (2007), Charmaz (2006) and Creswell (2013), an analytical approach was developed for this thesis that encompasses five essential elements: a “research paradigm” containing assumptions about reality and how it is to be studied, a “research problem” to be investigated, the “research question” or questions that require a resolution, the “posture” to be adopted by the researcher towards the researched, and a “research strategy” to be employed to answer the questions (Blaikie, 2007: 5).

I orient myself within an “Interpretivist” ontological and “constructionist” epistemological paradigm, recognizing that Occupy supporters, participants and commentators will have varying opinions and interpretations of the event based on their own personal experiences, and the meanings they attach to them. This meaning creation-association process is dictated by individual perception and social context, taking intrinsic characteristics of the protest into account. Part of my mandate as a social researcher under these paradigms is to recognize that multiple interpretations of Occupy exist, and that identifying and comparing these interpretations is a necessary feature of the research process.

The problem I seek to address with this research study is the confusion that arises when one attempts to make sense of the overwhelming quantity and variety of conflicting information found in the various interpretations surrounding the Occupy Wall Street protests. The initial goal of this research project was to construct a “big picture” of the Occupy Movement in order to rectify this problem, performing a grounded analysis of a corpus of source material to answer broad questions about the protests related to who was involved, what transpired, and why. The questions would be modified later in the research process to become narrow in scope, in keeping with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. The primary focus of the research pivoted to that of the dissenting group in the Occupy dispute, the “99%,” seeking explanations as why protestors convened at Zuccotti Park to demonstrate against the behaviors and practices of corporations, the government, and the wealthy individuals that comprise those groups, collectively labelled the “1%.” The posture I adopt as a researcher combines elements of an “outside expert” with an “inside learner.” This thesis, being a review of documentary accounts of the protests that were written during and after the occupation took place, makes the researcher an outside observer by definition.

Having some familiarity with the core issues surrounding Occupy Wall Street prior to the initiation of the research process, allowed for the inclusion of relevant academic articles in my data sets in order to enhance my knowledge of the issues as they emerge from the analysis.

Elements of both an Inductive and Abductive research strategy were employed for my examination of Occupy. Recognizing that different opinions and perspectives (meanings) surrounding the Occupy protests were bound to exist, I collected a substantial number of texts to ensure that a variety of perspectives would be represented. The goal of inductive analysis is the identification of generalizations, or patterns of ideas that can be found consistently throughout the source material. The underlying "logic" surrounding this research strategy is that the frequency of identifiable topics in the text is related to the importance and relevance those topics have among those who commented on the Movement within the source material. Abductive analysis acknowledges that the meanings individuals attach to the event are embedded in the language usage and vocabulary. The "reality" of what happened is constructed by those who experienced it, and is a function of how the event was interpreted, and how those interpretations were communicated and distributed to others.

My thesis draws upon three collections of extant texts found on three online platforms: Google Search, the University of Ottawa Online Library, and Tumblr. These data sets can be seen as three "voices," with each speaking about the Movement from a unique perspective. Media pundits offer facts and provide commentary on what they see unfolding before them. Their opinions are derived from personal experience in connection with documentary observation of the protests. Authors published in scholarly journals tend to abstain from providing personal opinions that cannot be substantiated with evidence. Protests are examined critically and objectively, with many parallels and comparisons drawn between Occupy and other major social demonstrations in recent history. The incorporation of scholarly literature is in keeping with the research practices of Mills (1959: 122), who noted the importance of considering the work of other scholars in helping establish a foundation from which to build your own research. Testimonials posted to the "We Are The 99 Percent" Tumblr thread provide insight into the personal biographies of those who support Occupy Wall Street. They are understood as journal entries written by individuals who align with the 99% occupying Zuccotti Park. Each post is intended to provide evidence of the consequences of wealth disparity and inequitable access to opportunities for the average American citizen, and that the claims being made by the 99% are true. Every testimonial is taken at face value, ignoring the possibility of falsehoods and exaggerations.

Charmaz (2006), offers a general outline for performing grounded theory, which includes the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, the creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data and not by pre-existing conceptualisations ("theoretical sensitivity"), theoretical sampling to refine categories, and the integration of categories into a theoretical framework. Mills (1959) provides insight into the creation of analytic codes, arguing that the identification of common ideas into "types," and cross-classifying them in order to uncover the "conditions and consequences" of each type, is the best way to draw relevant conclusions from the source material. Mills (1959) differentiates between the terms "topic" and "theme," words that are often used synonymously with "type." A topic is defined as a broad concept requiring a section or chapter to discuss, for example, the topic of "Economic Inequality in America." Themes are trends and "master conceptions" that are revealed by comparing topics and examining the logic in which topics unfold in the analysis, for example, "Social Stratification" or "Crony Capitalism." Themes that were identified during my cross-classification of topics is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

In the analysis performed for this thesis, the categories that emerge from the source material are referred to throughout the study as "topics" and sub-topics. These topics were identified by performing multiple close readings of the source material, "coding" the concepts found within the content in a process involving three steps, borrowed from the coding procedures provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998). First, initial concepts were identified during the first round of close readings ("open coding"), followed by the grouping of important topics together into larger subjects or "conceptual families" ("axial coding") during the second round of close readings. For example, the initial topics of "social media utilization," "Adbusters Magazine," and the "occupation of Zuccotti Park," were eventually grouped together in order to discuss the "subject of place" in relation to Occupy Wall Street. The final stage of coding, involving the refinement of categories (topics) into a theoretical framework ("selective coding"), was accomplished by incorporating the Sociological and Criminological Imagination.

Mills (1959) and Young (2011) contribute to the analysis in the form of a theoretical framework, translated into both a methodological model for grouping and comparing topics found in the source material, as well as a process for the development of theory. Mills (1959) and Young (2011), in their critiques of "Grand Theory" and "Abstracted Empiricism," argue that research intended to construct a unified theory, or that is motivated entirely by quantitative, empirical studies in the natural sciences, ultimately produce no revelations of value. Grand theories draw

conclusions that are broad with little practical application to everyday problems, while Abstracted Empiricism, suffers from issues of specificity, adding limitations to research stemming from the application of the Scientific Method. Mills (1959) argues that classical research “lies between abstracted empiricism and grand theory,” requiring a level of abstraction both broad enough to facilitate the observation of everyday milieux, while having a targeted focus on social and historical structures (124).

Both authors conclude that this balance can be achieved by conducting “imaginative” social research. The primary tenet of the *Sociological Imagination* (Mills, 1959) is the importance of understanding the relationship between biography, history and social structure, defined as the capacity to link biography, or the personal experiences of an individual life, with the impersonal workings of a historical era and social or institutional structure in which that life is located (Mills, 1959: 5). The “fundamental triangle” that Young (2011: 2) identifies, the inner life of human actors, and the social and historical setting in which they live, involves placing an individual within a social structure at a particular place and time.

Applying the three elements of the “fundamental triangle” to my investigation of Occupy Wall Street resulted in the creation of three sub-studies, each intended to explore one aspect of the event, a structure that is in keeping with Mills’ (1959: 126) best practices. The first and second sub-studies (Chapters 3 and 4), draw insight from the “news” and “academic” data sets only, with the former discussing topics related to the immediate historical context of the protests, and the spaces in which mobilization and action took place, while the latter identifying public issues at the core of protestor grievances, responses to the protests by politicians and law enforcement officials, and the utilization of horizontal decision-making strategies by protests organizers as a model for a reformed democracy. The third sub-study draws from its own source pool, the Tumblr blog “We Are The 99 Percent,” to gain a better understanding into the individual circumstances of those who supported the Movement. Patterns in the vocabulary and phrasing used within a sample of testimonials were used to construct a series of protestor character profiles, including students, the unemployed, and the underemployed.

A Review of Topics Identified in the Sub-Studies

Key topics and sub-topics that emerged from each sub-study are listed in tables located in Appendix 1.4-1.6. The first sub-study (Chapter 3) examined topics related to the historical context of the New York City protests in mid-September, 2011, satisfying the first “pillar” of an imaginative

analytical framework. For the purposes of this study, the concept of “historical context” was divided into the two broader subjects of Time and Place. Hardt and Negri (2013) make an extremely important argument, one that supports the incorporation of an imaginative model to an examination of Occupy Wall Street, stating that an understanding the protests necessarily requires one to “situate it alongside the other “encampments of the past year,” and once the protests are examined in connection to one another, an “emerging cycle of struggles” can be identified (1). Andersen (2011) states that, “do-it-yourself democratic politics became globalized” in 2011, suggesting, along with several other writers, that the “Arab Spring” protests set off a domino effect of worldwide dissent, with each successive protest borrowing inspiration from the previous (Barnard, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011: 1; Pepitone, 2011; Bennett, 2012: 37; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Hatem, 2012: 401; Hickel, 2012; Kern & Nam, 2013: 199; Milkman, Lewis & Luce, 2012; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Wagner-Pacifici, 2012).

Situating the protests alongside one another revealed four major parallels between the instances of public protest that preceded Occupy Wall Street in 2011, including Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Wisconsin and “Bloombergville.” The first parallel identified was the *neoliberalization of public policy*, or government support for the privatization of public services, free trade, market deregulation and reduced public spending. State legislative decisions that handed control of essential services to private corporations, and provided tax breaks to corporations in the hopes that the additional capital would “trickle down” to stimulate spending and job growth among the general public, were perceived by dissenting parties as further collusion on the part of corporate and government interests to redistribute wealth and power. State governments in each instance were held accountable for creating and facilitating the economic and social inequality experienced by protest supporters, and as a result, government leaders either resigned or negotiated with protestor demands in order to reach a fair resolution. The *occupation of public space* was a popular tactic used by protestors worldwide in 2011; a tactic shown to have a high probability of success at forcing government bodies to consider and implement protest demands. Large public spectacles have a high probability of gaining media attention, and ultimately widespread public attention, forcing governments to act or risk losing public support altogether. Protestor populations were also shown to have a high concentration of youth participants, a parallel understood to be a consequence of unemployment, low wages, heavy tax burdens, and overwhelming debt, affecting a larger proportion of youth in each instance of public protest. The last parallel identified was the utilization of social media platforms for garnering support and organizing demonstrations. Such a

feature illustrates both the popularity of social media among the young, tech-savvy supporters of each protest movement, both also the capacity such technology has to translate personal commitment to online social welfare initiatives into collective, real-world action.

In regards to the subject of Place, analysis of source material revealed that the “occupation” of Wall Street has both a physical and virtual dimension, relying on online channels such as social media networks and blogs to circulate messages related to Occupy’s intent and purpose, in order to generate interest among would-be supporters and Zuccotti Park occupants. The mobilization of support on heavily trafficked internet forums and public streets, as previously mentioned, was a defining characteristic of the protests that erupted in the Arab Spring and Spain and U.S., reinforcing the influence these events had on the execution of the Occupy Movement. A two-tiered strategy for occupation is discussed in the second half the first sub-study, examining the convergence of supporters taking place in Zuccotti Park, as well as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tumblr.

Traditional and online forms of media were utilized for solicitation and communication purposes, a phenomenon referred to as “transmedia mobilization” (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 378). The articles and blogs published in the summer of 2011 by *Adbusters* magazine, are recognized in the source material for being instrumental in catalyzing Occupy initiatives, providing the Movement with a preliminary set of directives, and more importantly, name-brand recognition. The internet hacktivist group *Anonymous*, as well as the publishers of the *Occupied Wall Street Journal*, are each discussed in this study in regards to the performance of a similar function, with each group attempting to disseminate Occupy’s core philosophies to an expanded audience, albeit, using different forms of media. Anonymous demonstrated a desire to help spread the word about Occupy Wall Street by creating viral movie campaigns published on YouTube, while *Journal* creators distributed newsletters to protest supporters in and around the Zuccotti Park for the same purpose. The physical occupation of Zuccotti Park was a tactic employed for both its practical and symbolic value. New York’s Financial District is widely recognized as the primary “source” of American economic inequality, making the selection of Zuccotti Park as a central hub of protest demonstrations appropriate considering its proximity to many Wall Street financial institutions. Also, the act of ‘re-appropriating the commons’ and erecting ‘sustainable protest villages’ is viewed by some as a way of creating ‘equitable space,’ embodying the principles of participatory democracy and consensus-based decision making in order to demonstrate what an ideal democracy should resemble.

The second sub-study (Chapter 4) explored topics related to issues of social structure, satisfying the second “pillar” of imaginative social research outlined by Mills (1959) and Young (2011). Issues raised by protest supporters and commentators regarding the functioning and operation of the American economic and political system, were identified and discussed in detail. Two primary issues, believed to have contributed to the growing dissent among American citizens, were isolated among the variety of grievances and demands expressed by protest supporters. The first issue has to do with the distribution of wealth, with a growing realization among American citizens that a small group of individuals – the 1%, or ‘corporatocracy’ - control a significant proportion of the wealth, which translates into greater political power and influence. Corporations, operating under the principle of profit maximization regardless of the broader social consequences, have been accused in the source material of re-investing capital in speculative investments, instead of allowing it to ‘trickle-down’ into the possession of employees through increased labour or better wages. The second issue has to do with political representation, a critique of hierarchical government structures and the collusion of corporate and political interests in legislative decision-making. Protest supporters argue that their best interests and needs are not reflected in policy changes or initiatives. Protestors adopted a “horizontalist” organizational structure in response to this concern, effectively leading by example through the demonstration of a functioning participatory democracy, as illustrated by the General Assemblies. Any effort by protestors to convene in large numbers, including General Assemblies and the occupation of Zuccotti Park, was met with resistance by government and law enforcement officials. Police officers engaged in the ‘strategic incapacitation’ of protestors by erecting barricades, prohibiting access to public spaces, and performing mass arrests, in an effort to restrict the mobility of participants and dissuade protestors from assembling and causing public disruptions in the future. After repeated police interventions failed to quell protest efforts, legal intervention was taken in the form of a municipally-enforced eviction from Zuccotti Park.

The debate surrounding the existence and importance of demands issued by the 99%, is discussed in the final section of the second sub-study. The consensus in the source material is that an “official” list of demands from protestors – a list drafted through the process of consensus-based decision making during a General Assembly – does not exist. However, four “unofficial” lists – written by individual protest supporters on behalf of the 99% as a whole – are discussed and compared in my analysis. Lists developed by Hayat and Covert (2011), Michael Moore (as discussed in Chopra, 2011), ‘GandhiKingMindset’ (occupywallst.org), and Gitlin (2013) in the ‘Charter of the

99%,’ offer insight into the wide range of broad and specific requests made by members of the 99%. Some recurring trends among the demands include reforms to the tax code to ensure that corporations and the wealthy individuals who own them pay a proportionate amount of taxes based on income, regulation of the financial market to prevent careless, risky and often illegal ventures by major financial institutions, reducing the ability of corporations to supply funding to political campaigns, and the appointment of an oversight committee to investigate the economic recession of 2008, holding those responsible for the crash accountable for their actions. The debate regarding the importance of demands alludes to a broader concern regarding the benchmarks by which to measure the “success” of protest efforts. Some in the source material maintain a relatively low standard, arguing that the 99%’s capacity to mobilize and demonstrate in public makes protest efforts meaningful and worthwhile. However, others argue that concrete changes in the form of policy initiatives, which address specific demands held by protestors as a collective, are needed in order to gauge whether Occupy initiatives had any demonstrable value.

The final sub-study (Chapter 5) explores the individual biographies of protest supporters, satisfying the third “pillar,” completing the ‘fundamental triangle’ of imaginative social science research. This study identified consistencies among a sample of personal testimonials offered by Occupy supporters on the Tumblr thread “We Are The 99 Percent.” Analysis of the data set revealed several shared life experiences among contributors, each providing insight into the common and differentiating characteristics of protest supporters. A majority of contributors express distrust in the ability of the capitalist economic system to distribute opportunities for wealth on the basis of merit. Of all the life experiences discussed by contributors to the thread, participation and completion of a college or university program is mentioned most frequently. Students who come from working class households often have to assume large student loans in order to attend a post-secondary institution. The underlying faith being placed in the educational system is that earning a degree translates into meaningful employment prospects, however, many in the source material argue that this is not the reality they experienced. The value of academic credentials in the eyes of potential employers is viewed with skepticism among contributors. In addition, many express concerns about the scarcity of available job positions, especially jobs that pay more than minimum wage. Unemployment and underemployment force individuals and households to plunge deeper into debt, making only enough money to afford the bare essentials for survival.

Private Troubles & Public Issues

The relationship between “the personal troubles of milieu” and “the public issues of social structure” (Mills, 1959: 14), is an integral dimension of the Sociological and Criminological Imagination, providing insight into the motivations and impetus behind Occupy Wall Street. Imaginative research is a process of revealing how individual problems have roots in systemic and structural problems; a movement from micro concerns to macro issues. An examination of themes that connect major topics, is necessary for the identification of private/public relationships, and ultimately the development of theory. This section of the discussion will elaborate on themes identified in the source material through comparative analysis of the major topics revealed in sub-studies 1 through 3, reviewed in the section above. These themes will form the basis of discussion into the relationship between personal troubles and social issues provided in this section. The final section of this chapter will examine those relationships within a historical context provided in sub-study 1. This process satisfies the “fundamental triangle” inherent in the Sociological and Criminological Imaginations, and will provide us with the insight needed to infer about motivations behind Occupy Wall Street.

THEME: Social Distance – The Gap Between the Rich & Poor

One of the fundamental aspects of the Occupy Wall Street Movement is the conflict between two parties divided on socio-economic lines. Owens (2011), commenting on the impetus behind Occupy Wall Street, notes that Americans cannot help but get upset when presented with substantial evidence of “systematic foul play,” and that protests were a way to express dissatisfaction with the corrupt capitalist practices and political favoritism that have contributed to the polarization of society into two segments: “poor and powerless” and “disproportionately wealthy and powerful.” The prevailing perception in the source material, an important social issue raised by Occupy supporters, is that the distance between the poor and wealthy continues to grow, eliminating the middle class who enjoy moderate incomes. The reality that Occupy supporters no longer accept is that there are few individuals who collect annual salaries in the hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of families suffer starvation and homelessness. From this perspective, Occupy protests can be understood as an uprising of a new “class” calling themselves the 99%, comprised of members of the lower and working classes, rallying against the tyranny of the economic elite: a modern example of “*class warfare*.”

Conversely, there is a sense that some individuals have accepted this social and economic arrangement, evidence of the “great markdown” Francis (2011) discussed, describing their financial circumstances on Tumblr as being “lucky,” despite living “paycheck to paycheck,” making just enough money to afford necessities and “break even.” Over time, individuals accept the declining lifestyle and reduced standard of living that is a consequence of escalating debt and chronic unemployment.

THEME: Scarcity – Wages, Unemployment & Debt

A theme of *scarcity* is evident in the source material, mentioned in relation to two resources necessary for survival in a capitalist economy: employment and money. Well-paying jobs are in short supply, if jobs exist at all. *Difficulty securing lucrative employment* is responsible for several individual problems identified in sub-study 3, such as an inability to accumulate savings, having only enough money to afford necessities, and escalating personal and household debt. The tensions that arise as a result of real or perceived financial scarcity, a social phenomenon commonly referred to as “*economic insecurity*,” can be credited as a motivation for Occupy Wall Street. This perception of scarcity also accounts for the decision to choose Wall Street as the central hub for protest demonstrations, being a symbolic representation of excess and abundance.

Money is truly the root of all problems, with those who associate with the 99% suggesting that they are caught in a *vicious cycle of debt*, resulting from low wages, escalating living expenses, and existing debt associated with education, home ownership, health care, child care, auto insurance, and many others. This vicious cycle is illustrated below.

Existing Debt (Student Loans, Home Ownership, etc.)	+	Low Wage Employment OR Unemployment	+	Increased Cost Of Living	=	Deeper Debt
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The rate at which individuals plunge deeper into debt only accelerates when the “Low Wage Employment” variable is replaced with “No Employment.” Satisfying debt obligations requires such a large proportion of individual income, that many experience difficulty being able to afford necessities for survival, such as housing accommodations, health care and food.

THEME: Impediments to Upward Mobility

The most prevalent individual problem expressed by protest supporters in the source material is *difficulty achieving upward mobility* within the established social and economic order, a

concern that relates to the “broken promises” sentiment discussed in sub-study 3. The system is fundamentally unfair, structured in a way that impedes membership into the upper class for the vast majority of Americans, and the operation of the education system is a prime example of this unfairness. A widely understood principle among Tumblr contributors is that investment in the “knowledge economy” is essential for individual success in the free-market economy. To put it bluntly, individuals are told to go to school and earn a degree if they want an opportunity at their “dream job.” The frustration and anger expressed by Occupy supporters, stems from the realization that the educational system ultimately serves the opposite purpose it is intended to perform: Instead of helping people achieve upward mobility, it plunges people deeper in debt, cementing their membership in the lower class.

The debate surrounding the value and utility of education is revealed in sub-studies 2 and 3. Opinions differ between those that view education as a key ingredient to achieving financial success, and those who view it as a substantially expensive and risky investment that yields little, if any advantage within the existing social and economic system. Contributors to the Tumblr thread question whether their expensive degrees provide any observable advantage in the competing job market. Many believe that candidacy for a “good job” does not improve the higher up the educational ladder one ascends. The prevailing sentiment is that higher education is not necessarily viewed by industry leaders as having direct applicability to roles and positions that need filling. Most jobs available to job seekers entering the market are low-skilled, repetitive tasks and customer service positions that will no doubt become automated tasks in the not-so-distant future. These jobs do not require a theoretical knowledge base or critical thinking skills in order to perform adequately. Alternatively, Krugman (2011), suggests that members of the media, representing the interests of the corporate elite who own the news organization, attempt to alter the framing of the dispute between the 99% and the 1% from “poor v. wealthy” to “uneducated v. educated,” an idea that falls in line with Brooks (2011) notion of “Red Inequality.” The implication being that protestors who express concern about reduced or non-existent employment prospects and dismal salaries lack the education and skills required to secure a better paying, and ultimately more fulfilling career.

THEME: Systemic Corruption – The Collusion of Government and Corporate Interests

The association between wealth concentration and political influence can be found throughout the source material, but particularly in sub-studies 1 and 2. From a protestor’s

perspective, the capitalist and democratic systems in the U.S. have been co-opted by the financial elite. Analysis of the source material reveals that financial status and political favoritism are intimately intertwined, attributed to the resources corporations possess to persuade government officials to enact policies that allow them to generate even greater profit. Corporations wield political influence in a variety of ways. Corporations can fund lobbyists that campaign government officials to pass or vote against certain policies. The Citizens United decision, discussed in sub-study 2, gave corporations the ability to donate unlimited funds to political campaigns. Ross (2011) notes that the pursuit of profit is not exclusive to Wall Street financiers, with politicians also being easily subverted by greed, making them susceptible to the lobbying efforts of large banks and corporations. Evidence of the sentiment that “politicians don’t care about the poor” can be found, for example, with the repeated references to the 2008 decision by Congress to spend public funds in the billions of dollars to bailout Wall Street banking interests once the speculative investment market began to implode.

The *funneling of wealth upward to a small economic elite* is another core social issue surrounding the Occupy Movement. The consensus in the source material is that American capitalism has been shaped by the proliferation of powerful transnational corporations whose operations influence global economics and national politics (Ellison, 2011; Gutting, 2011; Grossman, 2011; Jickling & Hoskins, 2011; Pepitone, 2011; Porter, 2011; DeLuca, Lawson & Sun, 2012: 488; Hatem, 2012: 402; Tabb, 2012). *Corporate greed* is believed by many to dictate the actions of the 1%. Corporations honor a “bottom line” that focuses exclusively on turning a profit for shareholders, regardless of the social and economic circumstances that result. As discussed in sub-study 2, and substantiated by the accounts of personal financial hardship provided in sub-study 3, evidence to support the effectiveness of “trickle-down economics” (a strategy in-keeping with a neoliberal economic philosophy), whereby corporations reinvest profits into increased production, an expanded labour force and higher wages, does not exist. Companies see no reason to increase production of goods by investing in additional raw material and labour, because the bulk of the consumer base is either drowning in debt or unemployed, either of which causes a significant decline in household and personal income (Tabb, 2012: 269). The profit motive takes precedent over hiring more employees and increasing wages, a motivation that often results in the elimination, outsourcing or automation of jobs.

The end result is a funneling of capital to a small group of corporate investors, who subsequently gamble that money in stock markets, speculative financial instruments and foreign

currencies. Kristoff (2011) said it best, suggesting that banks and corporations are “privatizing profits and socializing risks,” a feat that can only be accomplished with collusion between the federal government and private corporations. “Crony Capitalism,” the practices that allow corporations and wealthy individuals to invest in speculation and have all their errors corrected with taxpayers money, is fundamentally challenged in this protest, with the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York’s Financial District viewed as a symbolic manifestation of this challenge (Kohn, 2011a; Censky, 2011).

THEME: The Struggle for “Equalism”

A relationship exists in the source material between the operation of the current system of representative democracy, and the individual struggle for “*equalism*” (Abzug & Greenberg, 2011) or the right of any citizen to be served equally by government bodies. The operation of the capitalist system allows for a concentration of wealth to a small minority that threatens to make the U.S. a “democracy in name only” (Hardt & Negri, 2011: 2; Krugman, 2011a; Ross, 2011; Zelizer, 2011; Hatem, 2012). To Occupy supporters, money has replaced the voice of the people in the democratic process. Rushkoff (2011) argues that tactics used at Occupy demonstrations reveal a prototype for a new model of democracy where everyone can participate in the decision-making process. Two manifestations of this idea are identified in the source material. The first is the creation of what Pickerill and Krinsky (2012: 283) refer to as a “prefigurative alternative community” within Zuccotti Park; a self-sufficient micro-community with the capacity to provide basic social services to residents, all while circumventing traditional service providers like the government. The second is the practice of holding General Assemblies, involving frequent public assemblies and consensus-based voting protocols that required no elected officials or appointed leaders to function, viewed as a “horizontalist” variant to the existing democratic decision-making process (Moreno-Caballud, & Sitrin, 2011; Hickel, 2012; Lubin, 2012: 187; Sitrin, 2012; Syrek, 2012: 73). In such a system, everyone present can contribute by offering proposals to the rest of the group to be debated and voted on, with those that achieve a majority vote receiving additional attention in order to develop plans of action (Syrek, 2012: 74). According to Hardt and Negri (2011), the General Assembly provides an example of “real democracy” in action (2).

THEME: Resistance by the Elite

An important theme that appears in all three sub-studies is that of *resistance to change* on the part of the government and economic elite. The actions of repressive government regimes in the Arab Spring and Spain prior to Occupy Wall Street, and the intervention of the New York Police Department, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Brookfield Properties during the occupation of Zuccotti Park, are all indicative of a fearful elite attempting to protect the established social and economic order, as well as their own standing within the social hierarchy. Government opposition to Occupy demonstrations, particularly at the municipal level, is well documented in the source material. The office of Mayor Bloomberg, in cooperation with Commissioner Paul Browne of the New York City Police Department, executed several targeted police interventions for the purposes of preventing the Movement from picking up further momentum. Erecting barriers in order to contain protestors or funnel them in a certain direction, and the arrest of large numbers of protest participants during public demonstrations, are characteristic of a "risk management" approach to crowd control, what Gillham, Edwards and Noakes (2013) refer to as "strategic incapacitation." Several examples of police intervention that illustrate the utilization of this policing strategy are discussed in sub-study 2. While arresting mass numbers of protestors and setting up barricades around landmarks designated for Occupy gatherings suppressed some instances of public demonstration, as a whole their actions served to give the Movement greater legitimacy in the eyes of the public and media, garnering widespread news coverage that amplified the messages of Occupy to a national audience. After two months of occupation, once it became readily apparent that efforts to contain the occupation had failed, a series of events unfolded that would ultimately result in the eviction of protestors from Zuccotti Park. Brookfield Properties presented a legal challenge to Mayor Bloomberg, arguing that the protestor's First Amendment rights did not supersede the property owner's legal obligation to ensure the park is clean and safe. Bloomberg supported the challenge in court, adding that the occupation threatened the quality of life for residents and small business owners in Manhattan. Bloomberg's endorsement undoubtedly help authorize the legally sanctioned eviction proceedings. Protestors were offered a compromise, however, maintaining the right to protest in Zuccotti Park, while losing the right to camp there.

The Fundamental Triangle: Applying the Sociological and Criminological Imagination to Occupy Wall Street

Placing the Occupy Wall Street Movement within an historical context, in-keeping with an imaginative research model presented by Mills (1959) and Young (2011), must identify and

elaborate on social circumstances particular to that time period that may have affected the social phenomenon or event under examination. The entirety of this study focuses on events that transpired during the 2011 calendar year, examining articles published on various internet platforms including online magazines, academic journals, and blogging forums, that commented on events while they happened and afterward. The 11-month timeframe beginning in January and ending late November, 2011, serves an important methodological purpose, establishing the contextual boundaries under which to examine the Occupy Movement. These boundaries were not selected prior to analysis of the source material, but emerged as a result of the analysis, with several authors commenting on the significance of events that transpired prior to, and after demonstrations began in mid-September. The contextual timeline for this thesis begins death of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia, and ends with the eviction of protestors from Zuccotti Park.

Two important insights can be drawn from the source material in regards to the historical context surrounding the Occupy Wall Street protests. First, the Occupy Movement *was neither an isolated nor spontaneous incident of social dissent*, with evidence of both national and international influences present within the source material. Analysis of the source revealed that Occupy borrowed features and characteristics of other protests that took place that year, with four commonalities identified in particular: the implementation of neoliberalist economic policies by national governments, the use of "occupation" as a protest strategy, the participation of youth, and the utilization of internet and social media tools. As well, references are made to specific policy changes enacted by the U.S. government that contributed to the country's economic recession, an important grievance identified by Occupy supporters. Second, the selection of Zuccotti Park in the Wall Street Financial District as the location for protest demonstrations, as well as the act of occupying that space, hold symbolic meaning that is fundamental to the protest's purpose and goals.

The year 2011 is viewed in the source material as an exceptional period historically, with authors commenting on the concentration and "viral" spread of protests, highlighting the unique similarities between them. Andersen (2011) states that, "do-it-yourself democratic politics became globalized," suggesting, along with several other writers, that the "Arab Spring" protests set off a domino effect of worldwide dissent, with each successive protest borrowing inspiration from the previous (Barnard, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011: 1; Pepitone, 2011; Bennett, 2012: 37; Gaby & Caren, 2012: 368; Hatem, 2012: 401; Hickel, 2012; Kern & Nam, 2013: 199; Milkman, Lewis & Luce, 2012; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012; Wagner-Pacifi, 2012). Hardt and Negri (2013) make an extremely

important argument, one that supports the incorporation of an imaginative model to an examination of Occupy Wall Street, stating that an understanding of the protests necessarily requires one to “situate it alongside the other ‘encampments’ of the past year,” and once the protests are examined in connection to one another, an “emerging cycle of struggles” can be identified (1).

The implementation of neoliberalist economic policies by a national government, and opposition to these policies by members of the general public, is a characteristic fundamental to every example of social uprising in 2011, including Occupy Wall Street. In Tunisia, Egypt and Spain, social services intended to benefit the poor either had their budgets cut dramatically, or were privatized. In all three states, escalating unemployment ensued, generating the fervour needed for mass public uprising. The public demonstrations that took place in the U.S. prior to Occupy, in Wisconsin and New York City, were not in opposition to national policies, but rather, were responses to local budget proposals (by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg) that also sought to cut funding to essential public services. Supporters of Occupy Wall Street express specific concern about policies and a lack of government oversight that contributed to the economic crash of 2008. The U.S. government is accused of drafting a tax code that allows large corporations to shield their earnings from federal tax obligations. Corporations are accused of using that capital to invest in speculative financial instruments that serve to funnel money upward to a small, economic elite. Once these speculative investments began to fail, threatening to bankrupt businesses that employ tens of thousands of Americans, the government proceeded to use taxpayer money to bail them out. A tactic that, under the principles of trickle-down economics, would be beneficial to society as a whole. However, because corporations have the discretion to use bailout money however they see fit, the odds of it trickling down to employees is slim, especially when one considers the overwhelming power of the profit motive.

The discussion of protestor demands found in the third section of sub-study 2, identifies two federal policy amendments that some Occupy supporters believe contributed significantly to America’s economic recession. The proposed lists of demands offered by Michael Moore and “GhandiKingMindset” posted on occupywallst.org, both mention the reinstitution of the Glass-Steagall Act, which was eliminated as part of provisions to the Banking Act of 1933 under the Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act of 1999. These provisions terminated the separation between commercial and investment banks, effectively allowing any American bank to engage in

speculative investments, further exacerbating the concentration of wealth. The Citizens United Supreme Court decision also appears on two lists, including Gitlin's (2013), which some Occupy supporters believe is the primary cause of under-representation and corrupt government-corporate collusion. The decision removed restrictions on how much corporations are allowed to contribute financially to political campaigns, giving corporations considerable influence regarding who gets elected, and the kinds of policies they enact.

Even though demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt took the form of mass gatherings in public squares, the 15M protests in Spain are credited with being the first protest of 2011 to utilize an occupation strategy, whereby protestors set up camp in a public square for extended periods of time until demands are met. The actions of protestors in the Arab Spring and Spain had a significant impact on the organization and impact on all three instances of American public protest that took place that year. Reminiscent of what transpired in Egypt and Tunisia, protestors in Wisconsin gathered in the thousands around both the State Capitol building and the governor's mansion. The group, New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts, were the first to propose setting up sleeping bags and camping out in front of major landmarks in New York's financial district for the "Bloombergville" protests. The combination of mass public gatherings, and the long-term occupation of symbolically significant public spaces, were both identified in the source material as being instrumental to the execution of Occupy Wall Street.

The selection of Wall Street as a centre for Occupy protest demonstrations was done deliberately, recognized in the source material as a hub of materialism and greed, and the location of many of the home offices belonging to the corporations and financial institutions deemed responsible for the economic downturn. It sends an overt message of collective condemnation on the part of protestors, for the activities perpetrated by these institutions; activities that serve to funnel money upward, creating an ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor. The occupation of Wall Street demonstrates a recognition on the part of protest supporters that the causes of wealth disparity in America are not intangible; that individuals and corporations can be held accountable for the role they played in creating the dire economic circumstances that exist today. If the selection of Wall Street signifies distrust in private organizations to distribute wealth equitably and fairly, than the act of occupying Zuccotti Park, and establishing a participatory, consensus-based organizational structure, signifies a distrust in the government officials that assist the actions of private organizations and wealthy individuals. The sense of betrayal expressed by protest supporters in sub-study is understandable, and justified, with ample evidence provided in

the source material to suggest that the wealthy enjoy political favoritism in the form of policies and policy amendments that allow them to dodge tax obligations. With the ability to supply political candidates with unlimited campaign financing, the corporate elite can ensure that only representatives who condone their fraudulent behavior get elected. The collusion of government and private interests threatens the democratic principle of political representativeness by giving the wealthy more political influence than a single vote should afford them. The use of General Assemblies to organize and vote on Occupy initiatives, is intended to act as visible rejection of the current, and corrupt, political hierarchy, while demonstrating an “ideal” alternative of what direct, participatory democracy should look like.

The term “Indignados,” applied to protest supporters during the 15M Movement in Spain, literally translates into “contemporary youth in search of social injustice,” and could easily be applied to supporters of Occupy Wall Street. The participation of youth in the Arab Spring, Spain and Occupy, can be understood as a consequence of mass unemployment primarily affecting recent college graduates. The implication made in the source material is that being young, educated and unemployed, is a combination of personal characteristics that necessarily leads to participation in activities related to widespread social injustice. Youthfulness implies greater energy and enthusiasm towards participation in social causes. Being educated implies a level of understanding and awareness of the social injustices that exist in society. While being unemployed implies that individuals have the additional time needed to commit to social causes and see them through to the end.

In Tunisia and Egypt, smartphones equipped with photo and video capture technology, and the utilization of social networks like Facebook and Twitter, helped spread graphic images of death and police brutality in order to generate public dissent. In Tunisia, images of Mohammed Bouazizi’s death, as well as copycat acts of martyrdom, were spread across various social networks in order to amplify a message of mass opposition to the policies of President Ben Ali – policies that were believed to be responsible for creating the economic and social conditions that prompted Bouazizi to commit suicide. In Egypt, video of Khaled Said’s murder by police officers went viral on Facebook, which prompted Wael Ghonim to construct a Facebook page in commemoration of Said’s death. The demonstration that Ghonim would later call for in protest against Said’s death, would ultimately serve as the foundation for nationwide protests that sought the resignation of President Mubarek. Ghonim’s role in creating and disseminating the initial Call-to-Action, is not unlike the actions of *Adbusters Magazine*, calling for support and participation in a “US Day of

Rage” in protest against the corruption inherent in the American political and economic system. In Wisconsin, protest organizers created several channels for communication intended to facilitate the spread of protest information, as well as the mobilization of support. A website and several social media profiles were created under the banner “DefendWisconsin,” similar to the websites and social media profiles later set up by Occupy supporters and organizers under the banner “#OccupyWallStreet” or “#OccupyTogether.”

Evidence of “transmedia mobilization” (Costanza-Chock, 2012: 378) for the purposes of mobilizing support and organizing protest demonstrations, is provided in sub-study 1. The online magazine *Adbusters* introduced the idea of Occupy Wall Street to the general public, providing the purpose and logistics for the initial “Day of Rage” that ultimately became the launch date for the Occupy Movement. *Adbusters* is responsible for giving the Movement name brand recognition, allowing the Occupy literature to spread across multiple media channels very quickly. Social networks like Facebook and Twitter, along with internet blogs including occupywallst.org and Tumblr, provided “virtual forums” for Occupy supporters to share images and videos of demonstrations, discuss protest demands and goals, organize General Assembly meetings, and communicate between other encampments being erected across the country. Social media is described within the source material as an extremely vital tool necessary for the sharing of Occupy narratives and the execution of protest initiatives. The spread of Occupy literature also took place outside of virtual networks, with the publication of the *Occupied Wall Street Journal*, handed out directly to protestors occupying Zuccotti Park.

The Motivation Behind Occupy Wall Street

Drawing connections between the individual problems expressed by Occupy supporters related to financial hardship and a lack of political representation, with social issues related to the collusion of government and private interests that serve to funnel money and power into the hands of a wealthy elite, reveals six important themes including social imbalance, scarcity, systemic corruption, upward mobility, “equalism,” and resistance. By placing these themes, and the public-private relationships they address, within the historical context discussed above, two broad conclusions can be drawn about the motivations behind Occupy Wall Street. Based on my analysis, the actions of the 99% can be understood as a response to systemic issues related to *access* and *fairness*. In regards to *access*, protestors demand to live in a society that determines membership into the upper class based on merit. The operation of the current capitalist system is not conducive

to the equitable distribution of opportunities to achieve wealth, creating a fissure between the “promise” and “reality” of what American capitalism is intended to deliver. In terms of *fairness*, protestors wish to live in an economic and political system that recognizes and responds to their needs, seeking systemic reform that eliminates the political favoritism that the wealthy enjoy.

The issue of *access* relates to the notion of “equal opportunity” expressed by protest supporters in sub-study 3. The overall perception demonstrated in the source material is that the “ideal” way to distribute wealth in society is to reward those who work for it. The “capitalist promise” discussed in sub-studies 2 and 3, can be understood as a series of decisions people are advised to make throughout their life to ensure a greater chance of attaining wealth. The chain of events unfolds as follows: Enroll in a reputable college or university and earn a degree in a field of interest; Upon graduation, enter the employment market and search for positions that match your newly acquired knowledge and skill set, competing with others who have lesser or similar credentials; Secure a position within a large multinational corporation by distancing yourself from others in the applicant pool; And finally, commit to employment with that organization until you have attained the status and wealth you desire. The belief that all American citizens have an equal opportunity to achieve wealth through participation in this established order, is best understood as the “American Dream.” The continued operation of the flawed political and economic systems can be attributed to a socially engrained commitment to the meritocracy that both the “capitalist promise” and “American Dream” imply: that truly hard-working, intelligent and loyal individuals are rewarded financially for their efforts. Convincing the masses that the American Dream is still possible has been the establishment’s greatest accomplishment.

The conventional path to wealth is paved with hard work and active participation in social institutions, such as education. Occupy supporters describe being lead to believe that commitment to the acquisition of knowledge and skills through successful completion of post-secondary programs, will translate into higher-paying career opportunities after graduation. Unfortunately, this outcome is elusive to many, despite their best efforts. The sentiment that the “American Dream is a lie” is a poignant way of stating that the prescribed method of obtaining wealth within the American capitalist system is in no way a guarantee: The “promise” and “reality” are vastly disconnected. The “Robin Hood” analogy does not apply to the demands of Occupy supporters, as revealed in the source material. Protestors do not want to ‘steal from the rich and give it directly to the poor,’ but instead, want a fair chance at earning wealth for themselves. The issue is access to opportunities for wealth, not direct access to wealth itself.

The issue of *fairness* is related to the widespread concern among the 99% regarding a lack of political representation within the hierarchical government system that exists today. The problems and obstacles encountered by the poor and working classes are perceived to be ignored by elected government officials. The mutual government and corporate interest in accumulating wealth (the "profit motive"), takes precedent over issues affecting society as a whole. Concentrations of wealth and power are fundamentally anti-democratic, creating what some would consider a "republic," where a small group of people wield political power and control in order to further their own interests. The 1%, and the institutions they control, demonstrate a strong tendency in the source material towards self-preservation, deploying legal sanctions and law enforcement officials in order ensure the maintenance of the existing corrupt social order. Horizontal, participatory democracy is considered by Occupy supporters to be a "true" form of democracy, because it reinforces the legitimacy of power based on people, and not on money. The 99% demonstrated an alternative to the operation of the existing democratic system; a system that the wealthy and powerful work diligently to protect.

The 1% act with impunity, believing they can do whatever they desire with the corporate gains they accumulate. This brash behavior is a function of a lack of government oversight, and lenient tax policies that allow corporations to shield earnings from tax obligations, depriving the American public of money that could fund job growth, educational bursaries and scholarships, and a variety of social welfare programs and essential public services. The legal loopholes exploited by corporations result in a disproportionate amount of federal income tax being collected from the working class, as well as escalating unemployment, further exacerbating the concentration of wealth to a small, powerful elite. In addition, government bailouts allowed many corporations and banks to remain solvent during the economic recession, which also came at the expense of taxpayer funding. In short, the corporatocracy is accused of committing financial fraud, while the government is accused of allowing it to happen.

Free market capitalism, in its current form, is unsustainable. Kohn (2011b) and Censky (2011) argue that protestors are not seeking the complete elimination of free market capitalism, but rather, demand economic institutions and processes undergo a thorough audit in order to identify and eliminate "criminal workings" (Tabb, 2012: 272) and "violent antagonisms" (Kristoff, 2011b) embedded within the system. Analysis of the source material reveals that protestors demand targeted interventions to ensure that two goals are achieved. First, that the individuals and corporations responsible for the economic recession are held accountable for their actions to

the fullest extent of the law. And second, that the tax code undergo a huge reformation in order to ensure that corporations assume their fair of the nation's tax burden. If neoliberal economic policies that reduce government intervention in the market are the problem, than Keynesian economic policies requiring greater government intervention, is the solution. An economic system that exploits for profit and lacks any legitimate checks and balances to prevent corporations from committing acts of financial fraud, will continue to exploit until it collapses.

Limitations and Shortcomings

This thesis, as thorough and as detailed as it may be, is not without its shortcomings. Upon formal review and examination of the research, several recommendations were made by professors in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa, in order to help improve the accuracy and quality of my analysis. This section addresses these limitations by providing additional insight and information into the aspects and elements of my research that are confusing, vague, or discussed inadequately.

Questions were raised by examiners regarding positionality, or the relation between the researcher and the data being analyzed. To address this concern, it is necessary to return to my discussion of ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as the researcher's posture. Drawing inspiration from Creswell (2013), the ontological and epistemological orientation of my thesis recognizes, in a very broad sense, that individuals come to understand the world around them by attaching subjective meaning to life experiences, and that our interaction with objects and other individuals plays a significant role in this meaning-creation process. Creswell's (2013) conclusion that a social researcher must recognize the abundance and variability of subjective meanings for each individual, is a guiding principle of my examination of Occupy Wall Street, but unfortunately, that point was not made clear in the Introduction. The application of this principle to my research becomes more apparent if we substitute every instance where I use the words "perspectives" and "opinions" in reference to my data sources, with the term "subjective meanings."

Having discovered in my initial online research that an abundance of opinions and perspectives existed surrounding the Movement, I made it my goal as a researcher to identify and compare the various interpretations of the event in order to reveal larger themes, believing (on an intuitive level) that this method would be the best way to perform the sense-making activity I had

originally intended. As stated on page 3, my analysis recognizes that the “meanings” attached to Occupy Wall Street are the result of individuals, who experienced and participated in the event as it happened, commenting on and disseminating the details of the event with others. Identification of “meanings” that appear consistently throughout the source material, serve as the foundation for the topics and themes that are used to reveal the motivations behind Occupy Wall Street, a discussion that is found in the latter half of this chapter.

A key feature of positionality is the relationship between the researcher and the data being examined, an idea that is discussed briefly in the introductory subsection entitled “Researcher’s Posture.” Blaikie’s (2007: 11) text is used to highlight two important choices that must be made in regards to determining a researcher’s role, or “stance”, when conducting social research: first, whether to distance yourself from those being studied, or to immerse yourself deeply in their culture and environment (an “outsider” versus an “insider”), and second, whether to approach the research having already possessed knowledge on the topic, as opposed to being a “clean slate,” possessing no preconceptions of the object under investigation (an “expert” versus a “learner”). The role I identify with, as discussed on page 4, is that of an outside learner. To better understand how I came to choose this stance for my research, a more in-depth discussion of two important methodological characteristics of my research is needed, a discussion I neglected to provide in my Introduction.

The first discussion is the recognition that, in an ideal situation, the data I would use to answer the question regarding motivations behind the 99%’s decision to protest, would be first-hand accounts provided by protestors themselves. Having begun my graduate studies just a few weeks prior to the start of protest demonstrations, travelling to New York to conduct interviews was simply not an option. This forced me to consider alternative data sources, the most readily available of which were online publications by individuals who witnessed and participated in the protests as they happened, which places me in the “outsider” category by Blaikie’s (2007) definition. In lieu of interview data, I decided instead to use source material provided by news organizations, academics, and protest supporters active on social media, a discussion of which is provided at length in chapters 1 and 2. The second important discussion involves making a connection between the method chosen, and the position the researcher must assume as a result. Taking into consideration that grounded theory is being utilized as my primary research strategy, insights revealed in the analysis are ‘grounded’ in the interpretations themselves, significantly

reducing the number preconceived notions of what might be uncovered, which places me in the “learner” category.

Admittedly, the insinuation made on page 4 that no preconceived notions are introduced when engaging in grounded research, is false. The political and corporate entities that comprise the 1%, which are discussed throughout this thesis (particularly in Chapter 4), are not discussed in a favorable light, causing some professors to question the neutrality or objectivity of my research and analysis. At first read, it is understandable to suggest that I reinforce a negative bias towards the 1%. The word “antagonist” is used in the Preface (iv) in reference to the role the 1% played in the Occupy conflict. In my discussion of broader themes in this chapter, I argue that the 1% “act with impunity,” acting however they desire with the corporate gains they earn, with virtually no government oversight. But this bias is, in actuality, drawn from the data itself, and is the result of my interpretation of the topics and themes revealed within the source material. The discussion of “economic disparity” in Chapter 4, beginning on page 65, is used to illustrate how authors of the source material attribute the growing dissent among American citizens pertaining to how corporate interests and the U.S. government collude to create and maintain the economic conditions needed for a large income gap to exist.

There was, in conjunction with the issue of positionality, some confusion among thesis examiners regarding the distinction between ideas and opinions in the analysis that are my own, and those that are provided by authors in the source material, what can be understood as issues related to “attribution,” or the researcher’s “voice” in relation to the analysis. As a researcher, finding your position in the analysis involves making a determine as to whether to accept, question, or reject the claims that sources make. Demonstrating that position in my thesis could have been performed more effectively by making more of an effort to verbalize which ideas were my own, and which were borrowed. A fair amount of quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing of data sources occurs throughout the analysis. A greater effort should have been made to use more phrases like “according to,” and “attributive verbs” such as say, show, and suggest, in order to better indicate which claims are coming from the source material.

Two examiners raised questions with regards to the selection of Tumblr as a data source, pertaining to issues related to representation. There is concern that the data set, the personal testimonials drawn from the Tumblr blog thread “We Are The 99 Percent,” are not truly representative of the 99% protest group as a whole. These concerns are entirely valid, for reasons I neglected to discuss in Chapter 5. (Pillar 3). In keeping with the concepts of the Sociological and

Criminological Imagination presented by Mills (1959) and Young (2011), a data set was needed that focused on the personal biographies of those involved in the Movement. Because of the availability and wealth of information on Tumblr directly related to the individual life circumstances of those who support the 99%, it served to adequately fulfill Mills and Young's requirement, at least partially. My discussion of personal biographies does not include an analysis of the individual circumstances of the 1%, drawn from a data set of personal testimonials published voluntarily online. Such a resource, unfortunately, does not exist. The selection of posts from the thread at random, does potentially eliminate the inclusion of certain articles that might have pertinent information relevant to my research. A more purposive sampling method may have been more appropriate. In addition, because Tumblr is an online social media and blogging platform, contributors to the thread are limited to those who are technically savvy, and have access to a computer and an internet connection, representing only a small cohort of those who align with the 99%. Many assumptions about the Tumblr posts have to be made in order for them to be considered biographical. The truthfulness of the information being shared by contributors is taken as a given in my thesis, taking any exaggerations regarding an individual's personal circumstances at face value. It is also assumed that contributors to the thread are writing the posts themselves, not dictated or posted on behalf of others.

The importance of my thesis as a sense-making activity cannot be understated. The abductive, grounded research strategy utilized for my thesis, is ideal for such an endeavor, allowing themes to be revealed through careful analysis of the data. It was Blaikie (2007: 10), who stated that abductive research aims to reveal how social actors construct their social reality by examining the meaning individuals apply to their social world. He goes on to suggest that the best way to uncover these meanings is by examining interpretations and productions created by social actors involved or affected by the event being investigated (a discussion that can be found on page 5). An important argument forwarded by Blaikie (2007: 10), one that deserved additional emphasis and explanation in my thesis, is that the meaning people attach to reality is embedded in language usage towards a particular topic, and it is through examination of language that one can uncover "motives behind actions." In this respect, my research into Occupy Wall Street resembles that of a content analysis, isolating important word and phrase choices selected among authors in the source material. The language choices are understood to provide insight into the personal opinions of those who commented on the Movement.

Concluding Remarks

Occupy Wall Street is one of the most discussed and debated examples of mass public dissent in U.S. history. Occupy demonstrations were a public challenge to the democratic government structures that are believed to be compromised the profit motive. The desire to substitute the existing hierarchical structure of government institutions with one that incorporates a consensus-based decision making model, was expressed through the occupation of Zuccotti Park, and the creation of the General Assembly, a group consisting of concerned citizens and small "Working Groups" responsible for the oversight and execution of Movement initiatives. The creation of the General Assembly was necessary in order for Occupy protests to operate outside of the perceivably flawed and inherently corrupt political system; a system bought by wealthy corporate interests. Activists sought to create a Movement that was a reflection of system of democracy they wished to see incorporated into society; one based on consensus, participation and direct action. Such a system facilitates self-empowerment.

Occupy protestors were successful, if nothing else, at demonstrating solidarity; a rebirth in an American sense of community. Despite being unsuccessful at initiating broad systemic changes in policy form, Occupy created a dialogue among many different people across the U.S. regarding systemic inequality. In this respect, a visible presence in the form of occupation of public space, is not necessary in order to ensure the struggle for fairness and access embodied in the Occupy dispute, continues for years to come. The Movement created a space within the American consciousness, to believe in a different type of political power. One, not controlled by politicians or by corporate money, but by people, taking direct action in order to enact change for the betterment of all society.

APPENDIX 1

1.1) Precursors to Occupy Wall Street, 2011

	Date	Name	Location	Catalyst	Nature of Protest	Outcome
a	01-20-2011	Arab Spring	Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia	The suicide of Mohammed Bouazizi: a demonstration that involved Bouazizi's self-immolation in front of the provincial government headquarters located in Sidi Bouzid. Response to years of victimization by corrupt law enforcement officials, bureaucrats, and politicians.	Three days of protest that began with public demonstrations in Sidi Bouzid, eventually gaining critical mass and engulfing the entire country in three short days.	January 14, President Ben Ali stepped down as dictator, ending his 23-year reign.
	Abouzeid, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Fahim, 2011; Ross, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011; Hatem, 2012; Kerton, 2012; Walt, 2012					
b	01-25-2011	Arab Spring	Cairo, Egypt	June 2010, 28-year-old Khalid Said was dragged out of an Internet café in the city of Alexandria by two policemen, who proceeded to beat him because of his involvement in publicizing police corruption. Videos of his went viral on the Internet, prompting the creation of a Facebook Page, "We Are All Khalid Said," that led to a series of protests against police, picking up momentum in January, 2011.	Six days after demonstrations broke out in Cairo, approximately 250,000 people had begun to occupy Cairo's Tahrir Square.	Mubarek resigned his presidency on February 11, 2011, 18 days after mass protests began.
	Ahmed et al., 2011; Andersen, 2011; Goldstein, 2011; Joya, 2011; Nanabhaya & Farmanfarmaian, 2011; Preston, 2011; Writers of the 99%, 2011; Hatem, 2012; Lubin, 2012					
c	05-15-2011	15M; "The Indignados"	Madrid & Barcelona, Spain	A response by discontented college-educated youth, unable to find meaningful employment lucrative enough to cover rent and basic expenses. Protests were deliberately scheduled a week prior to national elections, a message coming from the electorate about their displeasure with both political parties.	Approximately 60 cities participated in demonstrations, with 6-8 million protestors setting up encampments (Las Acampadas) in public squares.	Protests and demonstrations continue to this day.
	Andersen, 2011; Beas, 2011; Francis, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2011; Moreno-Caballud & Sitrin, 2011; Tharoor, 2011; Castaneda, 2012					
d	02-14-2011	n/a	Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.	A response to the sudden changes implemented by newly elected Governor Scott Walker, who introduced a "Budget Repair Bill" that threatened to prohibit public sector unions,	Protests initiated the weekend after the bill was proposed, and lasted six days, Thousands of public sector employees, including university faculty and graduate	By day six, after some negotiation, union leaders representing the protest group conceded to losses in pay and pension, but stood firm on

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				most notably teachers, from collective bargaining.	teaching assistants, gathered around the State Capitol building and outside the Governor's home. Approximately 20,000 protestors had banded together by day three.	maintaining their collective bargaining rights, which Walker agreed to.
	Curry, 2011; Writer's of the 99%, 2011; Collins, 2012; Lewis & Luce, 2012; Squirea & Gaydos, 2013					
e	06-16-2011	Bloombergville	New York City, New York, U.S.	A response by concerned citizens to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's new budget proposal, which called for the layoff of 4,000 city school teachers, and the closing of 20 firehouses.	The group calling themselves the New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts (NYABC) staged a small occupation at the corner of Broadway and Park Ave., just outside of City Hall in New York's Hall Park. Protests, and the resulting encampment of the sidewalks in front of City Hall, lasted 13 days.	On June 29, despite an action by 13 NYABC protestors that resulted in 13 arrests, the modified budget was drafted and passed by city council.
	Writers of the 99%, 2011; Lewis & Luce, 2012; Sledge, 2012					
f	09-17-2011	Occupy Wall Street	New York City, New York, U.S.	On July 13, the magazine Adbusters published <i>A Call to Action</i> on their website, asking Americans if they were ready for a "Tahrir moment," urging them to take to the streets and set up camps similar to those erected in Spain. The New York city General Assembly (NYCGA) began holding open public meetings on August 2, 2011, in order to discuss the logistics behind organizing a large scale protest.	On September 17, 2011, several hundred activists marched on Wall Street, near the New York Stock Exchange. Citizens took to Liberty Square (Zuccotti Park) setting up tents.. Protests eventually spread to dozens of cities across the country.	Once many of the encampments across the country were shut down due to forced evictions by the municipalities, efforts have been directed at targeted campaigns, like saving low-income families from bank foreclosures on their homes. Various small demonstrations still continue to this day.

1.2) Source Collection - News

Media				
Title	Date	Author	Publisher	Category
Huffington Post				
Occupy Wall Street: NYPD Arrests 700 Protesters On Brooklyn Bridge	2011-09-30	Maxwell Strachan	Huffington Post	News Report
Occupy Conservatism	2011-11-09	Douglas Anthony Cooper	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupy Wall Street: What Happened?	2012-09-10	Saki Knafo	Huffington Post	News Report
Occupy Research: Methods and Tools for a Decentralized Future	2011-11-25	Amelia Marzec	Huffington Post	The Blog
The Leaderless Revolution, Part 2: The Action of One	2011-12-19	Carne Ross	Huffington Post	The Blog
What's the Best Outcome for Occupy Wall Street?	2011-12-05	Deepak Chopra	Huffington Post	The Blog
What Mayor Bloomberg, Economists Can Learn From Occupy Wall Street	2011-11-29	Eric Peterson	Huffington Post	The Blog
Happy Birthday, Occupy Wall Street -- Now, Who's Invited and Where's the Party Gonna Be?	2012-09-14	Jerry Ashton	Huffington Post	The Blog
What Happened to Occupy Wall Street?	2012-05-30	Larissa Heron	Huffington Post	
The Mainstream Spin on OWS: Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics	2011-12-15	Nicholas Carroll	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupy Our Homes: The Next Stage of the Occupy Movement	2011-12-06	Peter Dreier	Huffington Post	The Blog
Revolution is a Process	2012-02-06	Sam Slovick	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupied Wall Street Journal: The Newspaper Of Occupy Wall Street	2011-10-05	Jack Mirkinson	Huffington Post	n/a
Occupy Wall Street Put These 7 Issues In The Spotlight	2012-09-17	Harry Bradford	Huffington Post	n/a
Here's What The Rich Don't Seem to Get	2012-01-15	Jordan Whelan	Huffington Post	The Blog
A Year of Failed Protests	2011-12-18	Yoni Goldstein	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupy, in the End, Was a Reactionary Movement	2011-11-25	Daniel Alexandre Portoraro	Huffington Post	The Blog
Farewell to the Occupation: How OWS Achieved its Goal Despite Not Having One	2011-11-15	Joshua Ostroff	Huffington Post	The Blog
'Super-Entity' Of 147 Companies At Center Of World's Economy, Study Claims	2011-10-24	Daniel Tencer	Huffington Post	Mind the Gap: Chronicling Canada's Rich-Poor Divide
Occupy Wall Street's Hope for Change	2011-10-14	David Suzuki	Huffington Post	The Blog
America's Indignados Should Occupy Wall Street	2011-10-13	Diane Francis	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupy Wall Street: Why They're Not Listening to You	2011-10-12	Daniel Alexandre Portoraro	Huffington Post	The Blog
#OccupyWallStreet Proposals Add Up	2011-10-06	Simon Zadek	Huffington Post	The Blog
80 arrested as 'Occupy Wall Street' protest of bank bailouts, mortgage crisis marches in NYC	2011-09-25	The Canadian Press	Huffington Post	Business
Capturing Occupy Wall Street Demands	2011-11-11	Ali Hayat, Darcy Covert	Huffington Post	The Blog

Occupy Movement Needs Equalism Not Marginalization	2011-12-05	Liz Abzug, Jonathan Greenberg	Huffington Post	The Blog
The Camp Is the World: Connecting the Occupy Movements and the Spanish May 15th Movement	2011-11-30	Luis Moreno-Caballud, Marina Sitrin	Huffington Post	The Blog
9 Moments in the Occupy Movement History	2012-04-30	Janet Byrne	Huffington Post	The Blog
"Where's the Pony?" Occupy Wall Street Demands	2011-10-27	George Weiner	Huffington Post	The Blog
Occupy Wall Street's Real Demands	2011-10-13	Rep. Keith Ellison	Huffington Post	The Blog
CNN				
Dozens arrested in 8th day of 'Occupy Wall Street' Protests	2011-09-25	Nina Golgowski	CNN Online	CNN International
Occupy Wall Street is going nowhere without leadership	2011-10-28	Marty Linsky	CNN Online	CNN International
How technology is reorganizing political protest movements	2011-11-15	Micah Sifry	CNN Online	CNN International
Occupy Wall Street's next move	2011-11-15	Sally Kohn	CNN Online	CNN International
Will Occupy follow tea party's path?	2011-11-22	Julian Zelizer	CNN Online	CNN International
Ex-Occupier now holds Wall Street job	2011-12-08	Chris Knowles and Raelyn Johnson	CNN Online	CNN International
Now it's 'Occupy foreclosed homes'	2011-12-10	Sally Kohn	CNN Online	CNN International
Cop watchers: Anonymous vs. police	2012-01-13	Steve Turnham, Amber Lyon	CNN Online	CNN International
Thousands of protesters to 'Occupy Wall Street' on Saturday	2012-04-30	Julianne Pepitone	CNN Online	CNN Money
How Occupy Wall Street has evolved	2011-10-06	Julianne Pepitone	CNN Online	CNN Money
The 53%: We are NOT Occupy Wall Street	2011-10-30	Tami Luhby	CNN Online	CNN Money
Bernanke chides Occupy Wall Street 'misconceptions'	2011-11-03	Annalyn Censky	CNN Online	CNN Money
Occupy Wall Street - without the camping	2011-11-15	Charles Riley	CNN Online	CNN Money
Occupy Wall Street beta tests a new way of living	2011-10-25	Douglas Rushkoff	CNN Online	CNN Opinion
Occupy Wall Street: An experiment in consensus-building	2011-10-18	Steve Kastenbaum	CNN Online	CNN U.S.
Occupy Wall Street should be a moral, not political, movement	2011-10-14	Roland Martin	CNN Online	CNN Opinion
Tumblr becomes platform for Occupy Wall Street debate	2011-10-12	John D. Sutter	CNN Online	CNN Technology
40-year low in America's view of Wall Street	2011-10-07	Lindsay A. Owens	CNN Online	CNN Opinion
Think Occupy Wall St. is a phase? You don't get it	2011-10-05	Douglas Rushkoff	CNN Online	CNN Opinion
Fox News				
Occupy Wall Street' -- It's Not What They're for, But What They're Against	2011-10-14	Sally Kohn	Fox News	Fox Opinion
'Red Army' Behind Occupy Wall Street?	2011-10-25	Aaron Klein	Fox News	Fox Opinion

Unions Behind 'Occupy Wall Street'? Not So Simple	2011-10-26	Sally Kohn	Fox News	Fox Opinion
NYPD Pushes Back Against Calls for Probe Into Police Conduct at Occupy Wall Street	2011-12-07	Joshua Rhett Miller	Fox News	Fox Politics
AOL News Boss Takes Sides in Wall Street Protest	2011-10-07	Jana Winter	Fox News	U.S.
Owners of Zuccotti Park Say Conditions Unsanitary From Wall Street Protests	2011-10-07	Perry Chiaramonte	Fox News	Fox U.S.
EXCLUSIVE: ACORN Playing Behind Scenes Role in 'Occupy' Movement	2011-10-26	Jana Winter	Fox News	Fox U.S.
Occupy Protests Plagued by Reports of Sex Attacks, Violent Crime	2011-11-09	Perry Chiaramonte	Fox News	Fox U.S.
Small Business Owners Fight Back Against Occupy Wall Street	2011-11-11	Jana Winter	Fox News	Fox U.S.
Weapons Cache Found During Zuccotti Park Cleanup, Sources Say	2011-11-23	Jana Winter, Perry Chiaramonte	Fox News	Fox U.S.
House Oversight Chairman Calls for Probe into ACORN Role in Occupy Wall Street	2011-11-07	Jana Winter	Fox News	Fox Politics
Occupy Wall Street -- More Than Just Another Loony Protest Movement From the Left	2011-10-03	Dan Gainor	Fox News	Fox Opinion
Occupy Wall Street' Blasts Banking Industry -- but Apologizes to Its Own Banker	2011-10-07	Jana Winter	Fox News	Fox U.S.
Is Soros Behind 'Occupy Wall Street?'	2011-10-13	Mark Egan, Michelle Nichols	Fox News	Fox Nation: Politics
The Wall Street Journal				
Polling the Occupy Wall Street Crowd	2011-10-18	Douglas Schoen	The Wall Street Journal	Opinion
Wall Street Protest Digs In, Spreads	2011-10-03	Andrew Grossman, John Nicas	The Wall Street Journal	New York
New 'Occupy' Tension	2012-03-19	Jessica Firger, Pervaiz Shallwani	The Wall Street Journal	New York
'Occupy' Inconveniences	2012-09-17	Susannah Moran, Pervaiz Shallwani, Alison Fox	The Wall Street Journal	New York
Judge Rules Against 'Occupy' Protesters	2011-11-16	Chad Bray, Jessica Firger, Andrew Grossman, Pervaiz Shallwani	The Wall Street Journal	
The 1% Captures Most Growth From Recovery	2012-03-06	Robert Frank	The Wall Street Journal	U.S.
Protests Present Dilemma for Democrats	2011-10-25	Douglas Belkin, Tamara Audi, Danny Yadrin	The Wall Street Journal	U.S.
Wall Street Protesters Evicted From Camp	2011-11-16	Andrew Grossman, Alison Fox, Sean Gardiner	The Wall Street Journal	New York
Protest Sapped of Cash	2012-01-17	Jessica Firger	The Wall Street Journal	New York
Why Bankers Should Be Grateful for Occupy Wall Street	2011-11-26	Jason Zweig	The Wall Street Journal	Markets

Occupy Wall Street, but First Call Your Mother	2011-10-06	David Weidner	The Wall Street Journal	Markets
Protesters' Dilemma: Less Space to Occupy	2011-11-08	Andrew Grossman, Pervaiz Shallwani	The Wall Street Journal	New York
Occupy Wall Street Has a Famous Problem	2011-10-13	David Weidner	The Wall Street Journal	Markets
Capitalists of the World Unite!	2011-10-15	Brett Arends	The Wall Street Journal	Life & Culture
Protest Park Cleanup	2011-10-13	Erica Orden	The Wall Street Journal	New York
The Occupy Economy	2011-10-15	Anne Kadet	The Wall Street Journal	New York
Who Occupies? A Pollster Surveys the Protesters	2011-10-19	Aaron Rutkoff	The Wall Street Journal	Metropolis
Are Companies Responsible for Creating Jobs?	2011-10-28	John Bussey	The Wall Street Journal	Business
A Syllabus for the 'Occupy' Movement	2011-02-17	Glenn Harlon Reynolds	The Wall Street Journal	Opinion
The New York Times				
80 Arrested as Financial District Protest Moves North	2011-09-24	Colin Moynihan	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
99 Percenters and 53 Percenters Face Off	2011-10-11	Shaila Dewan	The New York Times	Business Day: Economix
A New Generation of Dissenters	2011-10-10	Clyde Haberman	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
A Protest's Ink-Stained Fingers	2011-10-09	David Carr	The New York Times	Media & Advertising
About That 99 Percent...	2011-10-10	Catherine Rampell	The New York Times	Business Day: Economix
America's 'Primal Scream'	2011-10-15	Nicholas D. Kristof	The New York Times	Sunday Review: The Opinion Pages
Bloomberg Hints That Wall St. Protesters Could Overstay Welcome	2011-09-30	Kate Taylor	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
Corporations, People and Truth	2011-10-12	Gary Gutting	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages: Opinionator
Covering the March, on Foot and in Handcuffs	2011-10-02	Natasha Lennard	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
Crony Capitalism Comes Home	2011-10-26	Nicholas D. Kristof	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
For Some, Wall Street Is Main Street	2011-10-07	Cara Buckley	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region
Hippies and Hipsters Exhale	2011-09-30	Charles M. Blow	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
In Protest, the Power of Place	2011-10-15	Michael Kimmelman	The New York Times	Sunday Review: The Opinion Pages
Occupy Wall Street Meets Tahrir Square	2011-10-25	Anne Barnard	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room

Occupying, and Now Publishing, Too	2011-10-01	Colin Moynihan	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
Oligarchy, American Style	2011-11-03	Paul Krugman	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
On Wall Street, a Protest Matures	2011-10-03	Andrew Ross Sorkin	The New York Times	Dealbook
Panic of the Plutocrats	2011-10-09	Paul Krugman	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
Privately Owned Park, Open to the Public, May Make Its Own Rules	2011-10-13	Lisa W. Foderaro	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region
Protest Spurs Online Dialogue on Inequity	2011-10-08	Jennifer Preston	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region
Solidarity: 99 Percent Elusive	2011-10-19	Clyde Haberman	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
Something's Happening Here	2011-10-11	Thomas L. Friedman	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
Storming the Capitalist Castle	2011-10-17	Nancy Folbre	The New York Times	Business Day: Economix
The Left Declares Its Independence	2011-10-08	Todd Gitlin	The New York Times	Sunday Review: The Opinion Pages
The Milquetoast Radicals	2011-10-10	David Brooks	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
The Top 1%: Executives, Doctors and Bankers	2011-10-17	Catherine Rampell	The New York Times	Business Day: Economix
The Wrong Inequality	2011-10-31	David Brooks	The New York Times	The Opinion Pages
Wall Street Occupiers, Protesting Till Whenever	2011-09-30	N.R. Kleinfield, Cara Buckley	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region
Who is Occupy Wall Street?		Arthur S. Brisbane	The New York Times	Sunday Report
Wall Street Protesters Hit the Bull's-Eye	2011-10-29	Eduardo Porter	The New York Times	Sunday Review: The Opinion Pages
Wall Street Protest Begins, With Demonstrators Blocked	2011-09-17	Colin Moynihan	The New York Times	N.Y. / Region: City Room
Time Magazine				
Bouazizi: The man who set himself and Tunisia on fire	2011-01-21	Abouzeid, R.	Time Magazine	
From Europe with love: U.S. 'Indignados' Occupy Wall Street	2011-10-05	Tharoor, I.	Time Magazine	
Tunisia: Two years after a martyr's death, his struggle remains unfinished	2012-12-17	Walt, V.	Time Magazine	
Person of the Year 2011: The Protester	2011-12-14	Andersen, K.	Time Magazine	
The Guardian UK				
Occupy movement: from local action to a global howl of protest	2011-10-18	Addley, E.	The Guardian UK	
How Spain's 15-M movement is redefining politics	2011-10-15	Beas, D.	The Guardian UK	
Mohammed Bouazizi: the dutiful son whose death changed Tunisia's fate	2011-01-20	Beaumont, P.	The Guardian UK	

MSNBC				
Walker shows no sign of conceding in Wisconsin battle.	2011-02-27	Tom Curry	MSNBC	Meet the Press
Adbusters Magazine				
#OCCUPYWALLSTREET	2011-07-13		Adbusters Magazine	
Is America ripe for a Tahrir moment?	2011-07-26		Adbusters Magazine	

1.3) Source Collection – Scholarly Journals

Scholarly Articles		
Title	Author	Publisher
The Crisis and a Way Forward: What We Can Learn from Occupy Wall Street (2012)	Ben Brucato	Humanity & Society, 36
Labor and Occupy Wall Street: An Appraisal of the First Six Months (2012)	Penny Lewis, Stephanie Luce	New Labor Forum, 21(2)
The 'Occupy' Movement: Emerging Protest Forms and Contested Urban Spaces (2012)	Judy Lubin	Berkeley Planning Journal, 25(1)
Don't Occupy This Movement: Thinking Law in Social Movements (2012)	Tara Mulqueen, Anastasia Tataryn	Law Critique, 23
Why am I talking?' Reflecting on Language and Privilege at Occupy Wall Street (2012)	Steven Syrek	Critical Quarterly, 54(2)
Extending Occupy Wall Street's Message and Critique (2012)	William K. Tabb	International Critical Thought, 2(3)
Occupy Wall Street: The Return of the Repressed (2012)	Robin Wagner-Pacifi	Law, Culture and the Humanities, 8(2)
Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement (2012)	Kevin DeLuca, Sean Lawson, Ye Sun	Communication, Culture & Critique, 5(4)
Strategic incapacitation and the Policing of Occupy Wall Street Protests in New York City, 2011 (2013)	Patrick F. Gillham, Bob Edwards, John A. Noakes	Policing and Society, 23(1)
Why Does Occupy Matter? (2012)	Jenny Pickerill, John Krinsky	Social Movement Studies, 11(3-4)
On the First Anniversary of Occupy Wall Street Movement: Gains, Losses and Perspectives (2013)	Zhang Xinning	International Critical Thought, 3(1)
Occupy Wall Street and the Question of Hegemony: A Gramscian Analysis (2013)	Jan Rehmann	Socialism and Democracy, 27(1)
Horizontalism and the Occupy Movements (2012)	Marina Sitrin	Dissent, 59(2)
The Fall and Rise of the U.S. Populist Left (2012)	Michael Kazin	Dissent, 59(2)
A Charter for the 99 Percent	Todd Gitlin	Dissent, 60(1)
The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation (2012)	W. Lance Bennett	ANNALS, AAPSS, 644
Mic Check! Media Cultures and the Occupy Movement (2012)	Sasha Costanza-Chock	Social Movement Studies, 11(3-4)
Occupy's predicament: the moment and the prospects for the movement (2013)	Todd Gitlin	The British Journal of Sociology, 64(1)
The arc of civil liberation: Obama–Tahrir–Occupy (2012)	Jeffrey C. Alexander	Philosophy and Social Criticism, 39(4-5)
The Arab Spring Meets the Occupy Wall Street Movement: Examples of Changing Definitions of Citizenship in a Global World (2012)	Mervat F. Hatem	Journal of Civil Society, 8(4)
From 'Corruption' to 'Democracy': Cultural Values, Mobilization, and the Collective Identity of the Occupy Movement (2013)	Thomas Kern, Sang-Hui Nam	Journal of Civil Society, 9(2)
Occupy Wall Street and the Radical Politics of Inclusion (2012)	Maharawal, M. M.	Sociological Quarterly, 54-

Postoccupied (2012)	Todd Gitlin	Sociological Quarterly, 54.
The genie's out of the bottle: Insiders' perspectives on Occupy Wall Street (2012)	Milkman, R., Lewis, P. & Luce, S.	Sociological Quarterly, 54.
Occupy Wall Street was a Humbling Experience for Everyone (2012)	Jaffe, S.	Sociological Quarterly, 54.
Liberalism and the politics of Occupy Wall Street (2012)	Hickel, J.	Anthropology of this century (4)
Finance and the economy: Occupy Wall Street in historical perspective (2011)	Jickling, M. & Hoskins, S. M.	Congressional Research Service
Occupy online: How cute old men and Malcolm X recruited (2012)	Gaby, S., & Caren, N.	Social Movement Studies, 11(3-4)
Tahrir, here? The influence of the Arab uprisings on the emergence of Occupy (2012)	Kerton, S.	Social Movement Studies, 11(3-4)
A revolution for dignity and freedom: preliminary observations on the social and cultural background to the Tunisian revolution (2011)	Mabrouk, M.	The Journal of North African Studies, 16(4)
January 25: The day of Egypt's revolutionary historical makeover (2011)	Aysha, E.	Studies in Political Economy, 87
The Egyptian revolution: crisis of neoliberalism and the potential for democratic politics (2011)	Joya, A.	Review of African Political Economy, 38(129)
From spectacle to spectacular: How physical space, social media and mainstream broadcast amplified the public sphere in Egypt's 'Revolution' (2011)	Nanabhaya, M. & Farmanfarmaian, R.	The Journal of North African Studies, 16(4)
The Indignados of Spain: A precedent to Occupy Wall Street (2012)	Castaneda, E.	Social Movement Studies, 11(3-4)
The Spanish indignados: A movement with two souls (2012)	Taibo, C.	European Urban and Regional Studies, 20(1)
Theorizing Wisconsin's 2011 protests: Community-based unionism confronts accumulation by dispossession (2012)	Collins, J.	American Ethnologist, 39(1)
From Egypt to Wisconsin: tactical innovation with digital media (2013)	Squirea, K. & Gaydos, M.	Critical Studies in Education, 54(1)
Privatized resistance: AdBusters and the culture of neoliberalism (2007)	Haiven, M.	Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 29(1)
400,000 US users to OWS on Facebook	Hardt, M. & Negri, A.	Foreign Affairs (11)

1.4) Topics & Sub-Topics– Historical Context

Sub-Study I: Historical Context		
Topic		Sub-Topic
Subject of "Time" – When OWS Took Place		
"Arab Spring"	Tunisia	- Sidi Bouzid - Mohammed Bouazizi
	Egypt	- Tahrir Square - Hosni Mubarek
Spain		- "15M" - "Los Indignados"
Wisconsin		Scott Walker Teacher's Union
"Bloombergville"		- "New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts" (NYABC)
Subject of "Space" – Where OWS Took Place		
Adbusters		- Kalle Lasn - July 15 - "U.S. Day of Rage" - Anonymous ("hacktivist" group)
Zuccotti Park		- Liberty Plaza - "Occupation" - "Re-appropriation of private property" - "Privately-owned public space" - Brookfield Properties - "Microcommunity" - Working groups
Traditional Media Outlets		- Print / Television / Radio - "Media blackout" - "Media framing" - The Occupied Wall Street Journal
New Media Outlets		- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter - Blogs: Tumblr - "Media framing"

1.5) Topics & Sub-Topics – Systemic Issues

Sub-Study II: Structural and Systemic Issues	
Topics	Sub-Topics
Economic Inequality	- "Great Disruption" / "Big Shift" - Wealth disparity / Income gap - "Crony Capitalism" - "Corporatocracy" - "Trickle-down economics" - Redistribution of wealth - Profit motive - Representativeness - The Federal Reserve - Congressional Budget Office Report
Demands	- Absence of "official" demands - Diffusion / variety of demands - Proposed lists of demands - The Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 - "Crash of 2008" - Citizens United Supreme Court decision - Taxes / Tax reform - Wall Street Accountability - Representativeness
Political Support & Opposition	- Democrats - Republicans - Comparisons to the Tea Party
State Intervention	- Police Intervention - "Strategic Incapacitation" - Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne - Excessive force - Arrest - Legal intervention / Courts - Mayor Michael Bloomberg
"Horizontalism"	- Political representation - Equalism / Egalitarianism - Consensus-based decision making - Direct / Participatory democracy - General Assembly (GA) - Working Groups

1.6) Categories & Subcategories – Personal Biographies

Sub-Study III: Personal Biographies	
Topics	Sub-Topics
"American Dream"	- Opportunities for wealth and success - "Broken Promises"
Education	- College / University - Tuition - Degree
Employment	- Work / Job - Money - Unemployed - Underemployed - "Working Poor" - Minimum-wage - Job Shortage - "Paycheck to paycheck"
Debt	- Loans - Insurance - Mortgage / Housing - Tuition / Student Loans - Healthcare - Childcare - Food and other living expenses

1.7) Important Keywords and Phrases from the “We Are the 99 Percent” Tumblr ample

Theme	Keywords / Phrases	Variants	(a) Mentions	(b) Posts	(c) %
Education	Education		104	75	24.1
	School		252	139	44.6
		College	239	164	52.7
		University	30	23	7.3
	Graduate		100	79	25.4
	Degree		144	102	32.7
	Student		187	142	45.6
Employment	Job		583	231	74.2
	Work		714	257	82.6
	Employ		176	107	24.4
		Employment	57	47	15.1
		Unemployment	42	35	11.2
	Paycheck		63	32	10.2
	“Paycheck to Paycheck”		15	14	4.5
	Salary		19	16	5.1
Family	Family		162	117	37.6
	Parent		152	107	34.4
	Child		150	93	29.9
		Children	93	66	21.2
		Son	47	35	11.2
		Daughter	33	18	5.7
	Married		22	20	6.4
		Husband	78	45	14.4
		Wife	34	20	6.4
	Boyfriend		27	19	6.1
	Girlfriend		5	5	1.6
	Sister		31	24	7.7
	Brother		35	24	7.7
Finance & Economy	Money		181	123	39.6
		Wealth	19	14	4.5
		Dollar	53	32	10.2
		Income	66	51	16.9
	Debt		250	164	52.7
		Loan	208	152	48.8
		Mortgage	34	24	7.7
		Insurance	213	141	45.3
		House	123	92	29.5
		Bankrupt	22	20	6.4
		Foreclosure	22	18	5.7
	Bill		153	119	38.2
	Tax		85	58	18.6
		Taxes	51	41	13.1
	Afford		257	145	46.6
	Economy		35	32	10.2
	Market		23	19	6.1
		Minimum Wage	25	19	6.1
		Food Stamp	32	27	8.7
Social Stratification	Class		68	49	15.7
		Middle class	18	14	4.5
		Working class	9	7	2.2
		Lower class	1	1	0.3
	1%		49	37	11.8
		Rich	38	30	9.6

		Elite	4	4	1.2
		Corporate	28	18	5.7
		Corporation	41	30	9.6
		Government	66	50	16.0
		Wealthy	9	8	2.5
	99%		293	255	81.9
		Poor	21	18	5.7
		Homeless	36	31	9.9
Occupy Wall Street	Occupy		181	138	44.3
	"Wall Street"		40	35	11.2
	Protest		14	13	4.1
	America		127	81	26.0
		American	85	63	20.2
		"American Dream"	40	36	11.5
	Struggle		36	28	9.0
	Lucky		134	105	33.7
		"Lucky one"	33	30	9.6
Health	Health		217	140	45.0
	Food		132	99	31.8
	Medical		94	69	22.1
	Hospital		35	23	7.3
	Doctor		44	37	11.8
	Medicaid		19	16	6.1

APPENDIX 2

2.1) The Declaration of the Occupation of New York City

Source: <http://www.nycga.net/resources/documents/declaration/>

DECLARATION OF THE OCCUPATION OF NEW YORK CITY

This document was accepted by the NYC General Assembly on September 29, 2011

As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.

As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

- They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage.
- They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.
- They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization.
- They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless animals, and actively hide these practices.
- They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.
- They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.
- They have consistently outsourced labor and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay.
- They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility.
- They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams that look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance.
- They have sold our privacy as a commodity.
- They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press.
- They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products endangering lives in pursuit of profit.

- They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.
- They have donated large sums of money to politicians, who are responsible for regulating them.
- They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.
- They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could save people's lives or provide relief in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit.
- They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit.
- They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media.
- They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners even when presented with serious doubts about their guilt.
- They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad.
- They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas.
- They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts.*

To the people of the world,

We, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square, urge you to assert your power.

Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone.

To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal.

Join us and make your voices heard!

*These grievances are not all-inclusive.

We also have a visual representation of this document from the Arts and Culture Group and the Call to Action Working Group. To download your own copy of this image as a jpeg (12.7 MB), [click here](#), or for image inquiries e-mail flowchartart@gmail.com.

2.2) Ballerina Atop a Bull Poster - #OCCUPYWALLSTREET

Source: Adbusters Magazine



2.3) Proposed List of 8 Demands

Source: <http://occupywallst.org/forum/proposed-list-of-demands-for-occupy-wall-st-moveme/>

Forum Post: Proposed List Of Demands For Occupy Wall St Movement!

Posted 2 years ago on Sept. 25, 2011, 3:46 p.m. EST by anonymous ()

This content is user submitted and not an official statement

Demand one: Restoration of the living wage. This demand can only be met by ending "Freetrade" by re-imposing trade tariffs on all imported goods entering the American market to level the playing field for domestic family farming and domestic manufacturing as most nations that are dumping cheap products onto the American market have radical wage and environmental regulation advantages. Another policy that must be instituted is raise the minimum wage to twenty dollars an hr.

Demand two: Institute a universal single payer healthcare system. To do this all private insurers must be banned from the healthcare market as their only effect on the health of patients is to take money away from doctors, nurses and hospitals preventing them from doing their jobs and hand that money to wall st. investors.

Demand three: Guaranteed living wage income regardless of employment.

Demand four: Free college education.

Demand five: Begin a fast track process to bring the fossil fuel economy to an end while at the same bringing the alternative energy economy up to energy demand.

Demand six: One trillion dollars in infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Rail, Roads and Bridges and Electrical Grid) spending now.

Demand seven: One trillion dollars in ecological restoration planting forests, reestablishing wetlands and the natural flow of river systems and decommissioning of all of America's nuclear power plants.

Demand eight: Racial and gender equal rights amendment.

Demand nine: Open borders migration. anyone can travel anywhere to work and live.

Demand ten: Bring American elections up to international standards of a paper ballot precinct counted and recounted in front of an independent and party observers system.

Demand eleven: Immediate across the board debt forgiveness for all. Debt forgiveness of sovereign debt, commercial loans, home mortgages, home equity loans, credit card debt, student loans and personal loans now! All debt must be stricken from the "Books." World Bank Loans to all Nations, Bank to Bank Debt and all Bonds and Margin Call Debt in the stock market including all Derivatives

or Credit Default Swaps, all 65 trillion dollars of them must also be stricken from the "Books." And I don't mean debt that is in default, I mean all debt on the entire planet period.

Demand twelve: Outlaw all credit reporting agencies.

Demand thirteen: Allow all workers to sign a ballot at any time during a union organizing campaign or at any time that represents their yeah or nay to having a union represent them in collective bargaining or to form a union.

These demands will create so many jobs it will be completely impossible to fill them without an open borders policy.

Lloyd J Hart 508-687-9153

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