The significance of space in Occupy Wall Street[1]

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Abstract

The relation to space is an important aspect of some social movements. Several dimensions of that relation were salient to Occupy Wall Street: it occupied a space that, by virtue of being at the heart of the US financial system, symbolized the corporate financial control that was the target of the movement's grievances; by occupying a space continuously, day and night, it made itself visible to all who wished to see it and offered a pole of attraction to those who identified with it; it provided a territory in which occupiers could attempt to construct a community based on principles of horizontality (complete openness of participation and no formal leadership) and prefiguration (attempting to forge in the present the non-alienated social relations to which they looked forward in a future, transformed society); and it engaged in confrontation over the occupation of space with the forces of order, both the police and the New York City administration.

All these were fundamental aspects of the movement and contributed to its visibility. When the occupation was evicted, though the movement continued to inspire a great deal of activity, it lost its momentum and the attention of the public. Occupy Wall Street has been criticized for emphasizing the possession of space over its programmatic goals; but if there had been no occupation, there would have been no movement.

On September 17, 2011, a few hundred demonstrators gathered in lower Manhattan and prepared to occupy Wall Street, the symbolic heart of the US financial system. Because they had made no secret of their intentions, it was heavily guarded, so they proceeded to a nearby privately owned public space called Zuccotti Park and set up camp. The occupation inspired a nationwide movement that spread with amazing speed to 1500 places around the US and elsewhere. The New York City occupation, the first and biggest occupation, remained the center, attracting people from all over. It challenged the US financial system which, according to OWS, exercises undue power not only in the economy but over national politics as well, making Wall Street the preferred target rather than the national capital.

These occupations were inspired by a massive wave of protest that was convulsing the world: first, Iran's abortive Green Movement protesting electoral fraud in 2009; then the Arab Spring that spread from Tunisia in 2010 to Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and elsewhere in 2011; the occupation of the state legislature in Wisconsin protesting the curtailment of public employee unions; the *indignados* in Spain and the Greek protests

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against austerity.

In all these protests, the tactic of occupation was deployed in a new way. Demonstrators occupied an outdoor public space (except in Wisconsin), proposing to remain indefinitely, day and night, in defiance of public authorities who declared their presence illegal, until some demands were met. The occupiers of Zuccotti Park had a similar agenda except that they deliberately refrained from making any demands even as their manifestoes denounced financial institutions' control of US politics and the escalating inequality of wealth and income. Though occupations have a storied history in factories, farmland, and protest encampments outside of city centers, the size, persistence, and central location of these occupations were something new and garnered them worldwide attention.

The occupations of 2011 did not all have the same objectives. Those of the Arab Spring sought to bring down authoritarian governments; those in Europe protested austerity; Occupy Wall Street (in New York and in its offshoots around the United States) was directed at the financial system and economic inequality. But there were important similarities beyond the similarity of tactic. In each country young people, facing grim or (at best) uncertain economic prospects, took prominent roles; electronic social networking media were used to recruit them; occupying a common space for several days or weeks, the occupations developed at least incipient organizational structures that were nonhierarchical and promoted an egalitarian, non-alienated form of interaction (I will later call these characteristics "horizontality" and "prefiguration"). Observers in each country were astonished by the size of these occupations, their staying power, and the eruption of demonstrations inspired by them across a wide area of their respective countries and beyond.

As an element of the repertoire of political protest, the occupation illustrates the importance of space in the analysis of social movements. The contemporary analysis of the social significance of space begins with Henri Lefebvre (1991), who argued that space must be understood as more than a neutral container of activity. Space is actively produced, not only in its physical disposition but its social meaning, by the activities that go on in it, or that go on in some spaces but not others.

Some have argued that Lefebvre overemphasized the production of space by capital as a means of social control: "Rather than locating struggle at the center of the analysis it is capital as producer of abstract space that is placed center-stage" (Herod, 1994: 686; cf. Stillerman, 2006). But his contrast between abstract and concrete or "lived" space brings contestation over space to the fore: as rulers attempt to turn space into abstract space, devoid of particular properties and amenable to social control, subordinates construct counter-spaces in which they strive to maintain their attachment to particular localities and assert their right to determine the activities that go on in particular spaces (Lefebvre, 1991: 33-40; Juris, 2012: 269).[2] A relation between

[2] Some scholars follow Lefebvre but deviate from his terminology, by restricting the term "space" to abstract space and contrasting it to "place," which corresponds to Lefebvre's concrete space (e.g. Dirlik, 1999; Escobar, 2001: 156; Merrifield, 1993). In this paper I have followed Lefebvre's usage of "space" to apply to both. The term is evidently a source of confusion; even Lefebvre's usages are multivalent.

territories subject to the control of different groups is "not just a matter of lines on a map; it is a cartography of power" (Massey, 2005: 85). Through a subordinate group's challenge to a ruling group's claim, space is socially produced: contestation in and over space changes the space itself (Lefebvre, 1991: 381-83; cf. Moore, 1997: 88).

It is in that context that the importance of space for social movements becomes visible. All social movements are organized in space, but some movements are *about* space: who possesses particular spaces, who is entitled to be present in, control, and perform what kinds of activities in those spaces (Tilly, 2000; Martin and Miller, 2003; Schwedler, 2012; Sitrin and Azzelini, 2012: 94-101). The occupation differs from most social movements by its concentration in a particular location. As Peter Marcuse explains, "When space is occupied by the movement, it gives it a physical presence, a locational identity, a place that can be identified with the movement that visitors can come to, and where adherents can meet" (2012: 16). According to David Graeber, an early organizer of OWS, "the great advantage of Zuccotti Park was that it was a place where anyone interested in what we were doing knew they could always come to find us, to learn about upcoming actions or just talk politics" (2013: xi). In Lefebvre's terms, the space is concrete, experienced by its inhabitants as lived and uniquely identified with the activities that occur in it.

An occupation, Marcuse continues, "also has a second function: it is an opportunity to try out different forms of self-governance, the management of a space and, particularly if the physical occupation is overnight and continuous, of living together" (2012: 16). Two more aspects of being in a specific location are worth noting. First, what Charles Tilly calls symbolic geography (2000: 137): the choice of location symbolizes something about the movement; it is not normally (and certainly not in the case of Occupy Wall Street) chosen at random. Locations carry meanings, and those meanings can telegraph the message that the movement wants to convey.

Second, in some contexts the concept of "occupation" carries the connotation of opposition to a hostile force. Military occupations are meant to conquer a territory and subdue an insurgent or enemy population. Occupation by a social movement, on the contrary, aims to liberate space to allow a population to act in it in defiance of authorities' attempt to subdue and exclude them. So the connotation of confrontation remains but is inverted. But, to some degree contradictorily, the occupation is also likely to claim legitimacy on the basis of a concept of public space: occupiers are claiming their right to determine the use of a space formally designated as available to the public. Occupation is therefore an exercise of freedom of speech and public communication, a practice of democracy with the implicit or explicit claim that the public authorities are violating democratic principles by preventing occupiers from exercising their rights. Occupations therefore involve confrontation with the forces of order, especially the police forces charged with containing any threats to public order and licensed to use force to do so.

I discuss these aspects of the significance of space for this movement in successive sections of this paper. First I examine the symbolism of Wall Street; second, the importance, independent of the location's symbolism, of occupying a defined space, identified as a counter-space and a concrete space in opposition to the abstract space of authorities; third, the creation of a new community in that space; fourth, the

confrontation with the forces of order. In the conclusion I will discuss the loss of space with the eviction of the occupation and suggest some negative consequences of the practice of occupation and its identification with a particular location.

This study is based, first, on occasional participation in the occupation: I hung out in the park, engaged in conversation with occupiers, and participated in several General Assemblies, working group meetings, and marches organized by the occupiers. In addition, after the occupation I conducted extended qualitative interviews with thirty occupiers, one in 2011, twenty-two in 2012, and seven in 2013. These interviews were primarily about a topic not addressed in this paper, media production by movement activists; but in all of them I asked respondents about their general political orientations and their participation in the occupation. I have also participated in the Tweet Boat, the small group that maintains the Twitter account @OccupyWallStNYC. Finally, I have used documentary evidence, mostly on line, in text, images and videos, produced by activists, journalists, and other observers (though I have consulted only a fraction of the vast volume of content that OWS has generated).

Wall Street as symbolic geography

Symbolic geography for Tilly includes "use of emblematic monuments, locales, or buildings in dramatization of demands, [and a] struggle for control of crucial public spaces in validation of claims to political power" (2000: 137). Wall Street is freighted with symbolism as the site where the New York Stock Exchange was founded under a buttonwood tree in 1792 and where it is still housed in an imposing Greek revival building that opened in 1902 (NYSE Euronext, n.d.).

The initial call to occupy Wall Street appeared in the July, 2011 issue of the Canadian magazine *Adbusters*. Citing Tahrir Square in Cairo as its inspiration and filling a two-page spread, it read (in its entirety):

> #OCCUPYWALLSTREET
>
> Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?
>
> On Sept. 17, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents,
>
> kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street.

Groups of people started meeting in General Assemblies in New York through the summer to lay plans, communicate them through the media, and prepare logistical support for what was intended to be a long-term occupation. Then on September 17 they gathered in lower Manhattan, and finding Wall Street blocked, they proceeded to nearby Zuccotti Park, which they rebaptized Liberty Plaza, and set up camp.[3]

From the beginning the target was defined as Wall Street, not the government. As the

[3] General overviews of the events of the Wall Street occupation can be found in Gitlin, 2012; Schneider, 2013 (among many others). For the views of occupiers, see Bray, 2013; Graeber, 2013, and the collections edited by Taylor et al., 2011, and Khatib et al., 2012.

heart of the nation's financial system, it was held to symbolize the stranglehold of capitalist corporations, particularly financial corporations, on US politics and social life. Corporate power and corporate greed were a major force in the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a tiny fraction at the top of the pyramid whose share had drastically increased in the last three decades. By whatever measure, inequality has achieved record levels. A 2011 report by the US Congressional Budget Office shows that between 1979 and 2007, the real after-tax household income of the top one percent of the population grew by 275%, while that of the rest of the population grew much more modestly: for the top 20% (excluding the top 1%), the growth was 65%; for the bottom fifth of the population, it was 18%.[4]

Some of the increased riches of the top tier is due to market forces--technology and changing international trade, for example. Most of it, however, can be chalked up to the growing economic and political power of the corporations. On the economic side, there is a growing imbalance between corporate capital and individual people. Corporate profits soared while family incomes stagnated. In the third quarter of 2011, according to Commerce Department statistics, the share of corporate profits in GNP reached a record high, while that of wages and salaries fell to a record low (compared to all previous quarters since records began in 1929; Norris, 2011).

Thanks to the rising profitability of capitalist corporations, business executives, often paid in stocks or options as well as cash, captured the lion's share of this increased income at the highest levels (Krugman, 2012: 74-76). The average compensation of a corporate CEO in 2011 was 231 times that of the average worker, an astronomical increase from the 1965 figure of 20.1 (Mishel and Sabadish, 2012).

Corporations have been able to appropriate a growing share of the national wealth thanks to two factors: the financialization of the economy and corporate political clout. Financialization is a new model of accumulation in which financial markets, financial institutions, and financial elites have gained increasing influence over economic policy and economic outcomes. In the financialized economy, financial services and financial corporations increasingly dominate the economy, both in capitalization and in absorption of profits, and nonfinancial corporations also earn an increasing share of their profits from financial activities. Corporate managers seek short-term profits through financial transactions such as mergers, acquisitions, and securitization and through cost-cutting (especially downsizing and wage-cutting) to the detriment of the productive economy (Krippner, 2005; Palley, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey and Lin, 2011).

One important tool of financialization is union-busting, weakening the bargaining power of workers in order to cut costs and raise the value of a company's stock. Corporations, further, practice an extensive repertoire of "financial shenanigans" (cf. Schilit and Perler, 2010), including fraudulent bookkeeping, insider trading,

[4] Congressional Budget Office, 2011. Income concentration can be measured by comparing the top layer (which might be defined as the top 1%, the top 0.1%, or something else) to the rest of the population, by a more general measure of inequality like the Gini index, or by some other measure. Taking wealth instead of income, the concentration is even greater. But by whatever measure, the concentration has increased dramatically since approximately 1980, after having fallen during the postwar period.

fraudulent bank rate setting, Ponzi schemes, money laundering, unscrupulous lending practices leading to millions of mortgage foreclosures, and failure to disclose known risks in financial instruments. Some of these are blatantly illegal and others border on illegality. The willingness of the corporations to pay hundreds of millions of dollars--even billions--in fines when caught is surely indicative of the much larger sums by which they have profited.

Financial and nonfinancial corporations further widen the income divide with compensation schemes that often reward executives despite managerial failure. In what Nobel prizewinning economist Joseph Stiglitz called "an increasingly dysfunctional form of capitalism" (2012: 1), these very practices have not only amplified economic inequality but were responsible for the financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent recession. While most capitalists quickly recovered (largely thanks to the bailout their political power secured), millions of workers remain unemployed and millions of families have lost their homes to mortgage foreclosures (Johnson and Kwak, 2011; Stiglitz, 2010).

Corporations can wield their superior economic power to enhance their political power. They have won new government policies that favor them, including regressive taxation and deregulation of financial institutions. These in turn have enabled the top echelon to increase their wealth even more disproportionately. Three policies of the prior decade stand out: the George W. Bush administration's income tax cuts, especially for the highest-earning taxpayers; the government bailout of the major banks after the 2008 financial crisis, rewarding the very people responsible for the crisis and subjecting the banks to only minimal changes in regulation of the (often fraudulent) practices that produced it, while the victims were left without relief ("they got bailed out, we got sold out"); and the Supreme Court's ruling in the Citizens United case allowing unlimited corporate contributions in electoral campaigns. All these measures exacerbate both the unequal distribution of wealth and its growing power to influence political outcomes through campaign contributions in the millions of dollars and the more direct purchase of political influence through lobbying and manipulation of the regulatory regime.

Occupy Wall Street attacked corporations as economic actors, especially (but not only) financial corporations. While the Occupy protesters objected to the government policies favoring private capital, they mainly directed their attack at the private financial sector itself. The target, accordingly, was Wall Street rather than the national capital. On September 29 a General Assembly of the occupation adopted a declaration (which is the closest thing there is to an authoritative statement of the OWS platform) presenting a catalogue of grievances that echoed the Declaration of Independence; but they were addressed not to the King, or even to the president or some other branch of government, but to "corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, [and] run our governments" (Declaration, 2011).

While condemning concentrated wealth and government subservience to economic interests, the occupiers deliberately refrained from making any specific demands. They argued that it was not their role to offer concrete proposals; rather, they wanted to avoid entanglement with the political system and remain free to use direct action to call attention to these issues.

The quintessential slogan of Occupy Wall Street is "We are the 99%," dramatizing the gap between the wealthy and the great majority of the population. The slogan implicitly claims that 99% of the population are suffering, have common interests, and should make common cause against the wealthiest one percent. A blog, "We are the 99%," was created on www.tumblr.org even before the occupation, inviting people to post a photograph of themselves holding a handwritten poster telling a tale of economic woe. This blog spread the word--and the ideas--of the coming occupation. It now has thousands of messages; new ones are still being added.

Though the slogan was meant to appeal to a vast, undifferentiated 99%, most activists were socially homogeneous: they were young and well-educated. Many had educational credentials acquired at great cost and, often, a crushing personal debt load (Milkman, 2012; Milkman et al., 2013: 9-10), and they were entering the labor force at a time when economic crisis threatened their prospects. Many of them aspired to work in fields such as communications, information technology, and higher education, all areas where stable full-time jobs were increasingly rare. Young people have often been the main recruits to social movements in the past--their attachments to family and work are weak, and they are more receptive to calls for social change. But they are even more susceptible to joining protests today than in more ordinary times, because economic crisis has swelled their numbers and magnified their grievances.

Even though the protest did not enlist the whole 99%, the slogan "We are the 99%" entered common discourse as a way of denouncing inequality. (It was chosen as "quotation of the year" by Fred Shapiro, the Yale law librarian, who compiles a list of the ten best quotes of each year; Christofferson, 2011.) The rhetoric of opposition to economic inequality is strikingly different from the discourse that has prevailed in the US left in recent decades, which has emphasized issues of group identity over class issues. Progressive politics has worked to assert the claims of particular groups defined by race, gender, sexual orientation, or membership in other specific categories more than to combat economic injustice and class privilege. The Occupy movement has not generally used the language of class, but with "99%," it has found a new vocabulary to assert the centrality of economic issues, both inequality and the corporate structures that are held responsible for it.

Echoing a widespread discontent, the occupation struck a responsive chord. Even without formal leadership, occupations multiplied rapidly as tens of thousands joined in the protest against escalating inequality. The movement was decentralized and took pride in being leaderless (some occupiers preferred the term "leaderful," calling everyone a leader). Each occupation was independent of the others, but they were in constant contact using modern media of communication. Beyond the occupations, the movement occasioned heightened debate over the issues of income inequality and the power of financial institutions, topics that had long been ignored.

Interaction in a counter-space

Occupiers chose a specific location, Wall Street, for the occupation. But the importance of space went beyond the location's symbolism. Some of the effects of occupying a fixed location in physical space, with the intention to remain, day and

night, for an indefinite time, would have arisen even if it had been elsewhere. The tactic of indefinite occupation asserts the occupiers' presence against the power that claims to dominate the space, and produces a counter-space in which they can communicate freely on their own terms. Occupiers live there day and night, in public view; they organize the activities that sustain the occupation physically and intellectually; and they confront conflicts among themselves and with the surrounding neighborhood. The occupation of Zuccotti Park, like those in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, became an occasion for communication and organization considerably more intense than occurs in more ephemeral or sporadic protest movements. As a counter-space, it "insert[ed] itself into spatial reality . . . against power and the arrogance of power" (Lefebvre, 1991: 382). It went on, as we will see, to become a laboratory for the formation of a new sort of community.

Zuccotti Park is a rectangle of land about three quarters of an acre in size, surrounded by high-rise buildings, two blocks north of Wall Street (and just south of the World Trade Center site, ground zero in the attack of September 11, 2001), with stations of Manhattan's main subway lines nearby. It is mostly paved, with some greenery, granite benches and tables, and open space. Lights embedded in the pavement provide limited illumination at night. On this tiny sliver of lower Manhattan, occupiers organized a communal life. They were there at all hours, and visitors poured in. Many longtime activists for various causes such as labor, education, peace, and housing incorporated their causes into the occupation, seeing a welcome awakening of political awareness that they were eager to participate in and take advantage of. Others who came were curiosity-seekers.

Permanent physical presence brought to Occupy Wall Street something that most recent social movements have lacked. Constant conversation made the site an ideological hothouse. Young, articulate, and well-informed protesters spent a large part of their day in intense discussions of political issues, personal troubles, the structure of the economy and the polity, and the future. Full-time occupiers and others who just dropped in took part and found the experience of these conversations energizing and liberating. Anyone on the occupation site in New York, occupier or visitor, could feel the sense of pulsating, vibrant energy.

Groups formed and dissolved in the course of a day as people switched back and forth from concrete tasks to deliberation and discussion. People milled about, peddled their causes, talked and debated in informal groups and more formal working groups. They performed the tasks that kept the occupation going. The General Assembly, an open meeting in which all could participate, met every day to make collective decisions. They interacted in the public space where each person's actions are visible to everyone else. These interactions constituted the basis of democratic participation: they reinforced the sense of equality and joint ownership because everyone took part, everyone shared the experience. Occupation presents this opportunity because even when the population fluctuates, its physical space clearly marks the boundaries of participation. This hothouse of interaction was replicated from Zuccotti Park to cities and towns around the country (though they were generally not as intense because most of them were smaller). The replication of occupations in places small and large, with or without symbolic targets, shows the importance of having a permanent location in

an identifiable space, wherever that space might be.

It became the site of ongoing interaction among activists. This intense interaction restored face-to-face communication, in real time and real space, to political life. For the last decade or more, many people's "activism" has been limited to reading e-mails and Facebook pages and signing online petitions. Mediation by video screens makes communication abstract and removes it from the substance of interpersonal relations. Reliance on the internet has been criticized as "slacktivism" (Morozov, 2011: 189-191). Click a mouse, sign a petition; you have done your duty.

In striking contrast, the Occupy movement recognized that electronic communication is no substitute for direct participation. The movement depended heavily on the internet for initial and ongoing organizing, to be sure, especially the new electronic social networking media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Livestream. But occupiers recognized the internet's limitations. So the electronic media were not used in isolation, but to promote nonhierarchical, egalitarian, but above all active participation in the movement's activities, bringing people's physical bodies to the occupation site or the street. The social media draw protesters into the heart of these contemporary protest movements, in public spaces where people interact in multitudes. They contributed to the protests of 2011 only because they fed into live action.

Before the occupation Zuccotti Park was a typically impersonal urban space, a corridor people passed through on the way to jobs in the financial district. As Lefebvre argues, urban space--especially the space dominated by finance capital--is depersonalized and abstract. But face-to-face interaction changed Zuccotti Park. The occupation stripped off the bond trader's uniform of suit and tie and replaced it with the T-shirt, hand-silkscreened on the site, of the political activist. Counter-spaces, Lefebvre implies, are necessarily spaces of concrete personal relations, because they are in part a protest against the abstraction imposed by authorities as part of their arsenal of social control.

The space's concreteness played out, to a large degree, in talk--in small group conversations and in larger meetings. The General Assembly was intended as the occupation's vehicle of direct democracy. Anyone could have a voice and vote in its collective decisions. It was run according to consensus principles. Meeting facilitators trained the public in procedures designed to reach consensus, though when there was no consensus votes were taken. The principle of "step up--step back" was meant to equalize participation: the more reticent were urged to speak out, the more vocal to restrain themselves. Openness often created difficulties in the General Assembly. Openness and consensus formation were generally more effective in working groups and other smaller groups, as discussed below.

In large assemblies, people communicated via the "people's microphone." Bullhorns are prohibited in New York City without a police permit. Because occupiers declined to apply to the police for permits, they had to circumvent the ban. Someone addressing a mass meeting pauses after each phrase and the people nearby repeat it in unison to the crowd; if the crowd is big, a second circle of shouters repeats it. If it is even bigger than that, people on the periphery listen on their phones and shout it to nearby listeners. The people's mic does not lend itself to long or complicated presentations, a limitation which brings both advantages and disadvantages. A speaker must talk in short

Twitter-like sound bites. Nevertheless it produces a sense of power: having spoken in a general assembly, I can personally attest that if you say something and dozens of people repeat it, you have the feeling of really being listened to. And for those playing the role of the mic amplifying a speaker's voice, the call and response is physically energizing and provides a strong sense of participation. If the people's mic was initially adopted as a form of resistance against regulations that occupiers regarded as denying them their right to speak, it can become a source of joy: people take so much pleasure in using it that sometimes a small group that can hear perfectly well nevertheless goes through the ritual of repeating each speaker's words (cf. Kim, 2011; Reguillo, 2012).

The occupation was not all talk. Organizing several hundred people on a site required work. Occupiers divided themselves up to perform a variety of tasks. Some managed logistics: keeping the place clean, receiving and distributing donations of food and supplies, providing medical care. Many who were homeless or poor showed up asking for help, and they were provided for. (They were also incorporated into the occupation's activities. Some caused problems; others made important contributions.) Others prepared the seemingly daily demonstrations or chatted up the local merchants who allowed the people camping out to use their facilities. Since full-time political discussion did not appeal to everyone, many immersed themselves in these tasks to express their membership in and commitment to the occupation. Participation in the occupation entitled each group to speak up in the sometimes heated debates in General Assembly meetings to make claims on a share of the money donated to the occupation.

Groups formed to address the outside world in political mobilization and in media of communication. Using their postindustrial skills in writing, the arts, the media, and information technology, they spread the occupation's message in word and image, on paper and electronically. A spectacular outpouring of creative talent emerged to illustrate the plight that they were protesting and the transformations they were seeking.

Occupations in other cities developed at their own speed, independent of the occupation of Wall Street. The New York City General Assembly sent out emissaries to offer advice to occupations being formed in other cities. Many people came from around the country to join the New York occupation, and after a while some of them returned to form or participate in occupations in their home cities. And all of them stayed in contact through live streams, conference calls, and electronic social networks. New York undoubtedly set the pattern, organizationally and ideologically. But it did not dictate, and there was no authority structure linking the various occupations. Each occupation had its own decision-making general assembly.

A space for experimentation

The protest was not just about the corporations or economic inequality. Beyond the political issues, occupiers shared a general rejection of the materialism and alienation they found in contemporary culture and strove to overcome them within their movement itself. An occupation encourages a unique internal process permitting experimentation. In the case of OWS, it deepened into the aspiration to create a living

community. While many movements have had the same aspiration, an occupation site provides especially fruitful ground because it has a location that becomes the home of the occupiers twenty-four hours a day for an indefinite time (Dahliwal, 2012). Though the boundary is permeable, they can act as if they are sealed off from the rest of the world and can create their own structures and norms. As protesters remain on a site around the clock for days or weeks, the occupation becomes more than a protest site; it becomes a space for living. In it occupiers created a living community; and attempted to establish a society of equality in which everyone had an equal share and voice in decision-making.

When the constituency of a social movement also constitutes a living community, community ties strengthen the movement. The community created in an occupation can be compared to what have been called "free spaces," "small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, and generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization" (Polletta and Kretschmer, 2113; cf. Boyte and Evans, 1992; Polletta, 1999). The occupation of Wall Street was different, however, in two important respects: the free spaces described are long-lasting, and they offer a site of calm and refuge. The occupations of 2011, on the other hand, were short-lived; and, while they were somewhat free of outside interference at least for a time, they were also sites where confrontations were planned and organized more or less continuously while they lasted.

They resembled free spaces, however, by giving people the freedom and warrant to enact relationships that differ from those characterizing mainstream society, testing and demonstrating alternative possibilities. The ideal of community that the occupations across the US in 2011 strove to realize is based on the principles of horizontality and prefiguration. A horizontal movement is one with no permanent leadership; everyone has equal standing. A prefigurative movement tries to create, within the movement itself, social relations without alienation or exploitation, anticipating (or "prefiguring") the social relations of the new society that the movement hopes to create.

These principles emerged in part organically in the occupations, from practice, but they were not new. The occupations of 2011 drew on prior models developed by movements that rejected the top-down leadership of traditional left movements. The aspiration to prefiguration was first expressed by late nineteenth-century anarchists (Franks, 2008; Romanos, 2013). It was revived by some US leftists in the 1970s and embraced by (at least parts of) the US women's movement, the antinuclear movements in the US and Europe in the 1970s, movements in solidarity with the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, and the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century From these movements it spread to the occupations of 2011 (Boggs, 1977; Epstein, 1991 and 2001; Flesher Fominaya, 2007; Hammond, 2012: 224-29; Maeckelbergh, 2012; Sitrin, 2006: 3-5; Polletta, 2002; Sitrin, 2006).

This aspiration found direct expression in an occupation's organization, from the processes for reaching consensus in meetings to the provision of food, medical care, and security. The General Assembly often proved unwieldy but smaller spaces such as working groups were better able to maintain fidelity to the principles of horizontality

and prefiguration. Those principles inspired many specific practices. Two examples: first, occupiers practiced a pedagogy of participation, based on the conviction that everyone should take an active part and develop new capacities in the process. In performing tasks, whether the mundane or those requiring skills, the more reticent or less experienced were encouraged to take leading roles, and those who were accustomed to leadership to relinquish it. As already discussed, many occupiers had highly developed communication and media skills. They shared their skills with novices. They regarded themselves as "citizen journalists" and believed that everyone was entitled to a voice regardless of prior training or experience. For such tasks as consensus facilitation and media production, beginners were systematically incorporated and trained, immediately put their new skills into practice, and assumed responsibilities.

The second example is handwritten signs carried in demonstrations. The point may seem trivial, but their use expresses the principle of horizontality and offers an opportunity for creativity. In the demonstrations of recent years it has been more common to see demonstrators carrying printed signs supplied by formal organizations (such as unions and political groups) that decide on the permitted slogans and distribute the signs to members to carry. Occupiers, in contrast, created their own slogans and painted them on cardboard. Many of these signs showed a touch of humor.[5] They created an atmosphere very different from one dominated by uniform printed signs. By exercising individual creativity, protesters rejected subservience to a hierarchical organization.

The anti-hierarchical and prefigurative ideals are just that--ideals. In practice, of course, they do not work perfectly. The fact that participation was open to all comers brought many who wanted to take advantage of the donated goods and free services. Some were suspected of being infiltrators.

Further, even in the small space of Zuccotti Park, there was a physically demarcated stratification. The park slopes gently downward from east to west; the top (eastern) end was the site of the general assemblies and the permanent organizational apparatus (though part of it was also off site); in the middle, practical activities: tents for sleeping; a medical post; the "kitchen" which collected and distributed donated food (cooking was forbidden because it was deemed a fire hazard). The bottom (west) was occupied by a drumming circle, at first going day and night but later restricted in hours to accommodate the complaints of neighbors. Some who regarded themselves as serious political militants viewed this gradient as a gradient of political commitment as well.[6]

It is difficult to practice equality, and taking part in community governance took a toll.

The consensus process can be very cumbersome. It requires that everyone be

[5] A sampling can be seen at <http://www.damncoolpictures.com/2011/10/best-signs-from-occupy-wall-street.html>.

[6] This division within a movement claiming to be egalitarian was presented with great irony on the Daily Show of November 16, 2011 <http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-november-16-2011/occupy-wall-street-divided>.

committed to participate and to restrain any impulses to exert control. All must be willing to subordinate their particular goals at times to the larger goal of maintaining harmony. It is very difficult to run something as big and complex as an occupation with a horizontal structure. Though measures were taken to overcome some people's temptation to dominate, the lack of formal leadership can leave space for dominant personalities to impose themselves. The demand for intense interaction and the anxiety that the occupation would be evicted led to burnout (Freeman, 1972-73; Holmes, 2012; Leach, 2013).

Some argue, moreover, that there is a tension between the prefigurative ideal and intervention on national political issues. At a minimum, attention to interaction processes with a view to the distant future may distract attention from immediate goals (Cornell, 2009; Gitlin, 2012; Juris, 2012: 270). More broadly, the two sets of activities may be best served by entirely different models of organization; pushing for political change in the larger society may require a more bureaucratic, top-down form of organization.[7] Occupy Wall Street broadcast a consistent political message of opposition to the power of financial capital and the resulting economic inequality, but by refusing to make concrete demands and attempting to create a fully democratic internal process, it emphasized prefiguring a future society over the immediate achievement of more partial political reform.

Communities committed to political values suffer a problem that may run even deeper. Everyone is committed to the same values, but people interpret them differently and propose different ways of implementing them. Because participation and community are based on values rather than any material or traditional incentives, each person may be determined to persuade others of the rightness of his or her interpretation. This makes them reluctant to compromise despite their commitment to consensus. After the eviction, major conflicts, including disputes over the disposition of donated money, caused rifts in the General Assembly and led eventually to its abandonment.

But participants were deeply committed to creating a new form of social interaction, with a view toward a new society. Many of them found that the experience was truly liberating despite conflict and frustration, and offered a model on which they could build in future experiments.

A space of confrontation

As I mentioned, "occupation" also conveys a connotation of opposed forces engaged in a contest for the control of space. A military occupation attempts to subdue a rebellious or conquered population. A protest occupation is meant to resist authority, regarded as unjust, and promote a cause. As an act of resistance, this kind of occupation also has implications for claims on public space. Other protest movements engage in

[7] This claim, however, is highly controversial in the literature on social movements. Francesca Polletta (2002) argues to the contrary that bureaucratic organization is more likely to deflect attention from pursuing the goals, and that participatory, horizontal movement organizations are best designed to retain the mobilized commitment of their adherents. See also Hammond, 2012.

confrontation with authorities too, but their activity is occasional and sporadic. So is their encounter with authorities, because they do not seek to control any space continuously.

Zuccotti Park became a space of confrontation, where the occupiers' right to remain was challenged by authorities. Parks are nominally public but activity in them is hemmed in by rules restricting the permitted activities and permitted times for those activities. It is reasonable that authorities should regulate the time and manner of use of public spaces, but not if the rules preclude the use of public spaces for purposes that challenge authorities or if they are applied arbitrarily to groups mounting challenges but not to other groups.

Occupy Wall Street sought to expand the meaning of "public" in public space, and the New York City administration responded by imposing restrictions and disrupting Occupy gatherings that posed no greater public inconvenience than other, permitted gatherings. These restrictions in turn provoked the occupiers and their supporters to defend their de facto possession of the space. In Occupy Wall Street, confrontations with the police came to be a defining characteristic of the movement and determined the reaction of the public to a significant degree.

Some joined the occupation already convinced that the state is repressive and that asserting their rights means acting audaciously, even provocatively--by taking over a public space and remaining there, for example. Many other occupiers did not have such clear views, but the very act of participating in the occupation changed their consciousness. Collective participation in acts of transgression gives participants a sense of power. Gathering with large numbers in a public space to express a demand can be a heady, mind-altering experience. Participation in actions that are costly in time and effort ratifies one's commitment to the cause and creates confidence in the outcome. This is even more likely when actions are disruptive and risk sanctions. Participants in gatherings that are forbidden or subject to repression realize that they *can* transgress normal rules to act on their beliefs. The act of transgression, especially when it is repressed, ratifies the belief in their rights, the conviction that those rights are being trampled on, and the determination to assert them. Even in the event of failure, this heady experience recasts their understanding of the rest of the world in light of their belief in the cause, draws boundaries between those who are for and against, and clearly identifies comrades and enemies (Page, 2008: 87).

The New York Police Department's (NYPD) mode of responding to political protest is designed as if on purpose to goad protesters into challenging the police's authority and engaging in defiant action. It defines protest as a policing problem and sees its job as preventing disorder. In the process, it creates a self-fulfilling prophecy, producing the very disorder it fears. The police were the occupiers' main counterparts in confrontation, but they also faced off against the mayor's office and city administration. Confrontations took place on and off the site. They drew the attention of the media, and media accounts of police abuses created public sympathy for the protesters. The image of the repressive police force became a central part of OWS's overall critique of capitalist society and, by contrast, of its sense of itself.

The NYPD had a well-established strategy for dealing with protest that Alex S. Vitale

calls "command and control." The overall objective is to impede protesters from assembling and moving freely, and responding with violence when they do. The specific measures include unresponsive handling of applications for permits for public protests, hostile negotiations or refusal to negotiate over the exact terms of a permit, strictly enforcing the rule that marches without permit must stay on the sidewalk, orchestrating the flow of a protest by placing metal barriers to control access, charging protesters with disorderly conduct and arresting them for minor offenses such as using a prohibited megaphone, writing on the sidewalk with chalk, or spilling over into the streets, and the use of force, including pepper spray, against protesters who refuse to comply with police orders even when they present no threat of violence (Vitale, 2005: 283).

The NYPD adopted a pattern of policing in the 1990s, based on the punishment of "quality-of-life" violations and the "broken windows" theory. Quality-of-life policing penalizes homelessness, graffiti, prostitution, squeegee men, and other visible acts seen as diminishing the quality of life of people who do not engage in any of these behaviors; the "broken-windows" theory assumes that by controlling low-level disorder, including quality-of-life crimes and offenses such as turnstile jumping, public intoxication, and panhandling, the police can prevent a neighborhood from sliding into more serious crime. Such offenses are treated as disorderly conduct. Punishing them became standard police practice in New York City, especially in poor neighborhoods (Vitale, 2005).

The NYPD has applied broken-windows policing to handling demonstrations. The definition of disorderly conduct under the New York State penal code includes obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic, and congregating with other persons in a public place and refusing to comply with a lawful police order to disperse. Police may exercise discretion: those behaviors do not necessarily require the police to issue a summons. But as demonstrations became increasingly frequent from the late 1990s on, they were routinely treated punitively, notably the major protest against the looming Iraq war on February 15, 2003, which drew 100,000 protesters, and the demonstrations at the Republican National Convention in 2004, in which nearly 1200 people were arrested. The NYPD adopted this punitive approach even as many other police departments were embracing a more cooperative strategy of "negotiated management" (Knuckey et al., 2012; Vitale, 2005 and 2011).

The occupiers organized marches from Zuccotti Park almost daily, generally without permits. The police came down hard on them. On September 24, a week after the occupation began, police intervened in a march, arresting about 80 people, and an officer pepper-sprayed a woman demonstrator who was sitting down. Protesters were again pepper-sprayed in a demonstration on October 5. On October 1 the police "kettled" a crowd marching across the Brooklyn Bridge, driving it into a confined space and then arresting 700; marchers claimed that the police had told them they had permission to enter into the roadway.

Police similarly cracked down on several occupations across the country in November. Incidents of police abuse were captured on video and posted to the internet, showing clearly that they were not only excessively violent but unprovoked. The videos all went viral. Some showed quite vividly the victims' agonized reaction to pepper spray. They

produced a tremendous outpouring of sympathy for the protest and repudiation of police brutality.

Conflict between occupiers and the police took a different form on the occupation site than in marches in the streets. Both were expressions of the fundamental issue of the right to occupy space, but the peculiar legal status of Zuccotti Park meant that the response of the police on the occupation site was more restrained and less consistent. It is a particular kind of social space, a "privately owned public space." Though there are several hundred privately owned public spaces in New York City, few people, even those who frequented them (and even the occupiers of Zuccotti Park when they arrived) knew just what a privately owned public space is. Real estate developers can get exemptions from zoning requirements, allowing them, for example, to build taller buildings than zoning regulations would otherwise allow, in exchange for providing some sort of public amenity like an outdoor or indoor space that would be open to the public. Such was the case with the OWS occupation site. Builders of a nearby building agreed to create the park for a zoning concession. The building and the plaza were later acquired by Brookfield Properties, the real estate company led by former deputy mayor John Zuccotti. The city administration renamed it Zuccotti Park (Foderaro, 2011; Kayden, 2011).

Because of its legal status, the rules that governed the park's use were different from those that apply to city parks. Most important, it did not close at midnight but was accessible around the clock. Moreover, the police could not act directly against the occupation without the authorization of Brookfield Properties. From the beginning, police monitored the park constantly, including video surveillance from an imposing mobile observation tower,[8] and occasionally mistreated or arrested individual protesters (Knuckey et al., 2012: 94). But for weeks the city made no move to dislodge them. The internal organization of the movement and the creation of a community on the site that promised (or threatened) to hold on for a long time were gaining increasing attention.

But as days of occupation turned into weeks and public support for the occupiers appeared to be growing, the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg was increasingly wary of the occupation's apparent staying power. The mayor's office, Brookfield Properties, and the occupiers engaged in a complicated tug of war over whether the occupiers had the right to camp out and whether it was up to the city or the company to order them out (Barbaro and Taylor, 2011; Buckley and Moynihan, 2011).

Shortly after the occupation, Brookfield Properties posted new "rules" prohibiting camping, lying down, and erecting tents, among other activities; but these rules remained largely unenforced. In October, however, Bloomberg decided to end the occupation and announced that the police would clear the park on October 14 so it could be cleaned. In response, thousands of OWS supporters showed up at six o'clock

[8] This surveillance apparently violated the Handschu decree, a 1985 court order (modified after September 11, 2001) in settlement of an earlier lawsuit against the city and the police for unconstitutional monitoring of political activities, in which the city and the police agreed to restrict monitoring (Knuckey et al., 2012: 94).

in the morning to defend the park. In the face of the large crowd, the police decided to call off the eviction.

On November 15, a month later, however, the police returned, this time unannounced, invaded the park in the middle of the night, and evicted the protesters. A large contingent of police officers secured the area around the park, keeping out reporters and legal observers. They arrested some two hundred people in the park and the surrounding streets, including City Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez. They gathered up individual and communal property, including several thousand books from the People's Library, and carried it to a Department of Sanitation garage. Much of this property, including many books, computers, and other equipment, was destroyed. In the early morning hours the protestors obtained a temporary restraining order from a judge in state court, ordering the City and Brookfield Properties to allow the protesters to re-enter the park, but the police blocked them (Knuckey et al., 2012: 98-104)

This was not the only possible response, however. Other cities took a more cooperative attitude toward occupiers. In Albany, when protesters planned to occupy a park part of which was state property in October, the police chief announced that he would not prevent the occupation and the district attorney announced that he would not prosecute occupiers, despite pressure from Governor Andrew Cuomo. The Newark police chief said she would waive the permit ordinarily required for assembling in Military Park (Marcuse, 2011a; Powell, 2011). As Peter Marcuse has suggested, New York City officials could have recognized the occupation as a legitimate exercise of freedom of speech and civic responsibility (Marcuse, 2011a). Or they could have treated it as a festive contribution to the quality of urban life (which it was for many people), like a Thanksgiving parade or a victory parade for the World Series or Super Bowl. The city might then have supported the occupation with sanitary facilities, sound systems, and electric power lines (all of which are provided in some parks), and consulted on health and safety measures.

In New York City, however, the police response was fierce and clearly disproportionate to any threat. An exhaustive study by a Fordham-NYU Law Schools team, described below, documented 130 incidents of "aggressive and excessive police use of force" including bodily force, weapons, and restraint of detained persons (Knuckey et al., 2012: 72). And, as I have suggested, the result was self-fulfilling, emboldening the protesters to raise the level of provocation. The overwhelming majority of the protesters was committed to nonviolence as a principle and put it into practice. They acted peacefully, if provocatively. They knew that police abuse made them look good to the public, and the experience fostered a culture which essentially glorified arrest. The police, however, responded as if violence or the realistic threat of violence by the protesters were the norm.

The loss of space

This paper argues that control over space, and struggles for the possession of space, are an important factor in the course of social movements. It follows, then, that the loss of control over space must weaken a movement. Events since November 15, 2011, confirm the importance of physical space to the Occupy movement. As I have argued,

its concentration in a single location was a source of its strength. While it did not die, the fact that it was no longer centered on a specific site left it becalmed and it lost the attention of most of the public.

In fact activity continued. Some protesters, acting in the name of Occupy Wall Street as a whole, promoted several actions that attempted to continue the occupation in one form or another. Prevented from sleeping in Zuccotti Park, they found another potential occupation site on Canal Street, a vacant, fenced-in lot owned by the real estate arm of Trinity Church. On December 17 a large group gathered there. A handful of them scaled the fence and were arrested. For a time occupiers congregated at Union Square and maintained an information table there, but the midnight closing rule was strictly enforced by the police (contrary to traditional practice). They marched on May Day, 2012, together with several big municipal unions. Among many smaller actions, several who determined that it is not illegal to sleep on the sidewalk camped out on Wall Street itself for several days, sometimes unmolested and sometimes arrested.

Zuccotti Park itself was open to occupiers but access was intermittently restricted. For two months after the eviction the police surrounded it with barricades and allowed entry at only a few points. At unpredictable intervals they searched backpacks or denied entry to anyone carrying food or musical instruments. Occupiers could not lie down or erect tents in the park, so activities there were intermittent. On March 17, six months after the first occupation, the police entered the park--for no apparent reason--drove the occupiers out and arrested 70 people (Knuckey et al., 2012: 116-117).

Longtime activists who had incorporated their causes into the occupation returned to their separate pursuits. They were often strengthened by the addition of others who had been recruited to these activities through their participation in the occupation. An indoor privately owned public space, the atrium on the first floor of the Deutsche Bank building at 60 Wall Street, was used for meetings of small groups and committees before and after the eviction, and there were several groups meeting there on most evenings during the winter of 2012.

Hurricane Sandy, which hit New York on October 29, 2012, showed that OWS could still mobilize large numbers. Within a day, a group of former occupiers used the framework of OWS to create "Occupy Sandy" to organize relief aid, before FEMA and the Red Cross arrived. Occupy Sandy put out a call for volunteers and donations, and channeled tens of thousands of volunteers to staff emergency relief centers. The numbers rapidly dwindled, but some continued and are still working as of this writing (September, 2013).

Even if groups promoting particular causes were strengthened by having joined the occupation, however, they lost the visibility and energy that the occupation had provided. Despite all their activities, the movement clearly lost momentum with the loss of its central focus, the occupation of Zuccotti Park.

Legal proceedings against those who had been arrested earlier proceeded slowly. Their defense was mostly coordinated by the National Lawyers Guild, which had provided legal observers at demonstrations and other public events. Most protesters had charges dismissed or received adjournments in contemplation of dismissal; some received jail sentences (Knuckey et al., 2012: 121, 129). While protesters were in jail

and on their release, those on the outside organized jail support. A team of researchers from Fordham and New York University Law Schools conducted a major study of the police response to OWS, *Suppressing Protest: Human Rights Violations in the US Response to Occupy Wall Street*, released in July 2012 (Knuckey et al., 2012), the first of several studies now under way in cities around the country. Occupiers won major lawsuits including a $350,000 settlement from New York City for destruction of property by police clearing the park (Seifman, 2013).

For all the attention it garnered, the impact of the movement was limited by several structural factors. The first was the exclusivity of occupation. Occupying requires people to offer a twenty-four hour presence for an unpredictable length of time. Most people cannot occupy. They have jobs, families, and other obligations. Even those who do not may not choose to express their commitment by camping out. Though occupiers claim to represent the great majority of the population, as I have indicated, they mainly come from particular demographic groups, chiefly the young and well educated.

The second structural limit has to do with confrontation with authorities. Seemingly inevitable, it is also inevitably unequal. In a relation in which occupiers are committed to nonviolence and the police are in effect committed to violence, the police are going to win the immediate battle. They will almost certainly also win if protesters engage them violently (which has not happened so far). In either case the police will be able to mount superior forces and succeed in dislodging an occupation.

For this and other reasons, the occupation is impermanent--the third structural limit. Whether because of exhaustion, police repression, or other factors, an occupation will end. If a movement depends on or is identified with its possession of a fixed space, the loss of that space will necessarily weaken it (a point to which I return below).

Other issues arise from the possibility that occupiers become attached to the tactic at the expense of the goal that motivates them. I identify three fetishes that an occupation can encourage. (I call them fetishes following Marcuse, who baptized the first as the fetishization of space.) Calling them fetishes criticizes them for focusing on secondary aspects of the protest and obscuring the primary concern with economic inequality and social injustice. (Those who reject this criticism might counter that these aspects are not secondary but essentially related to those goals).

Marcuse contends that space is fetishized when occupiers elevate the site of occupation to a central concern. He finds this counterproductive. Much of the political work of the occupation, he argues, does not require the use of the occupied space. "The defense of the permanent and round-the-clock occupancy of a specific space can lead to a fetishization of space that make[s] the defense of that space the overwhelming goal of the movement, at the expense of actions furthering the broader goals that that space is occupied to advance" (Marcuse, 2011b; cf. Smucker, 2012: 9). Its defense can come at the expense of the goals of social justice.

Marcuse also criticizes the closely related fetishization of the prefigurative process (though he does not use the term):

> Demonstrating alternative ways of acting politically is important for each of the other values the Occupy Wall Street movement espouses. Yet it can also interfere with their pursuit under some circumstances, and can distort priorities if not carefully considered (Marcuse, 2011b).

Marcuse is correct that pursuing political goals in society at large at the same time as forging the relations of a new social order poses a dilemma. Some argue that the process of building community, far from distracting from larger goals, actually promotes them (cf. footnote 6). Even if prefiguring these alternative social arrangements comes to some degree at the expense of working for more immediate political change, that prefiguration became an integral part of the concept of occupying space and the essence of the movement. Prefiguration has political value in itself, which must be weighed against other values.

The third fetishization is the fetishization of confrontation. The occupation of public space will almost inevitably create conflicts with authorities. Given the mode of operation of the NYPD, any such confrontation is likely to result in punishment, both violent and judicial. For many occupiers, it appears that confrontation with the police, including arrest, became a goal in itself. Protesters, acting nonviolently for the most part, are eager to expose the corruption and repressiveness of the police and court system, and (perhaps not incidentally) demonstrate their heroic will to resist. As I have mentioned, many occupiers have forged a culture which takes pride in being arrested.[9] Arrest and the subsequent proceedings confirmed for them the repressive nature of the society that they were protesting. They were taken to task for this by City Councilmember Jumaane Williams, generally a strong supporter, who nevertheless chastised the movement in an open letter published after the demonstrations commemorating the first anniversary of the occupation: "OWS actions appear to be becoming a display of defiance for defiance's sake. ... [Y]ou have engaged in some actions rooted in a cat-and-mouse game with the NYPD, seemingly for the sole purposes of antagonization just to prove you can" (Williams, 2012).

OWS benefited enormously in public perception from the police repression. Police attacks strengthened the bonds of solidarity within the movement, drew the attention of the media, and aroused the sympathy of many members of the public.[10] A *New York Times* reporter ironically commented that the NYPD appeared to be "operat[ing] as a public relations arm for Occupy Wall Street" (Bellafante, 2011). The evident overkill brought many people out to demonstrate and won the sympathy of even more to the movement, including a blog on the website of Forbes Magazine, which has called itself a "capitalist tool." The blogger complained that police behavior showed a level of "violence that we normally expect to see only in authoritarian societies" (McQuaid,

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[9] See, for example, the tweet sent out on August 1, 2012 on the Twitter account @OccupyWallStNYC: "We are collecting arrest + perp-walk photos 4 a compilation slideshow! If you've been #occupy-arrested, tweet us your proud shot. #OWS" <https://twitter.com/OccupyWallStNYC/status/230799397489889280>.

[10] And, I would add, of the media. In research not reported here, I have found that the incidents of police brutality in early demonstrations marked a turning point when the mainstream press began to take the movement seriously on its own terms rather than treating it as a curiosity.

2011).

On the other hand, relying on confrontation with authorities to generate sympathy can be problematic. Like the first two fetishizations, it can distract attention from the larger goals of social justice. Moreover, it may mean constructing protesters as victims and asking the public to support them out of pity or resentment of the police. In any case, it means making police brutality *directed at occupiers* the issue rather than the structural abuses, including police abuse, engendered by the unjust capitalist system and inflicted on the broad population that the occupiers claim to represent.[11] Fetishizing these aspects of an occupation means focusing on the occupation as an event in itself rather than the injustices it opposes and on the occupiers as the people deserving attention rather than the nominal constituency.

These fetishisms drew attention away from the movement's critique of Wall Street and inequality. Perhaps they could have been mitigated had occupiers been more alert to their effects. But they were closely tied to the fact of occupation; they probably could not have been avoided altogether. And without the occupation there would have been no movement. Nor would public attention have been drawn to the issues the movement raised. In the summer of 2011, public discourse was about austerity and deficit reduction. After the occupation, that discourse was displaced by the themes of OWS: Wall Street, "99 percent," and criticism of financial institutions became part of everyday political and journalistic currency. Many liberal political advocacy groups, such as MoveOn.org, adopted the language and positions of Occupy (as did President Obama in his 2012 State of the Union Address). The number of news stories about equality and social justice spiked in the media, giving them probably more attention than they had received during the entire preceding three decades when they were being whittled away so insistently.

This increased attention can be unambiguously attributed to Occupy Wall Street (Kornacki, 2011; Malone, 2011; Seitz-Wald, 2011). It is always difficult to establish the cause of shifts in culture or media attention. In this case, however, the unjust distribution of income and the power of the corporations had long been facts of life but all too easily ignored. The occupation of Wall Street succeeded in bringing attention to them as never before. In that success the spatial dimension of the occupation played a crucial role. It got the attention of the public and policy advocates because it was an innovative action, visible in space, and replicable across the country. In its physical presence, the contest for space symbolized and served the goals that the movement promoted.

[11] In the case of Occupy Wall Street, however, the occupiers successfully linked their own complaints to complaints about the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy, which produced hundreds of thousands of abusive stops, mainly directed at young minority males. Occupiers joined in wider protests against stop-and-frisk which succeeded in persuading the City Council to pass the Community Safety Act outlawing such stops over Mayor Bloomberg's veto in 2013.

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