

THE MULTI-MOVEMENT: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF OCCUPIERS AND OCCUPYING

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THE MULTI-MOVEMENT: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF OCCUPIERS AND OCCUPYING

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ABSTRACT

This report documents a series of projects inspired by group and individual research on the Occupy movement in Northern California. In January of 2012, Hannah Hart, Kristy Keller and Bethany Grove undertook an ethnographic project, studying three very different Occupy groups utilizing the methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing. The research group's goal was to produce an ethnographic pamphlet comparing the different Occupy groups and make it available online, so it could be utilized by Occupiers willing to learn from each other, as well as people interested in becoming involved in the movement. But this small group project quickly transformed into a variety of projects utilizing different methods, theories and forms to unravel and illuminate facets of the local Occupy movement. These projects include: (1) A content analysis of Occupy websites utilizing quantitative methods; (2) An analysis of the tensions and complexities that complicate radical direct action in an environment dominated by representative democracy; (3) The process of writing an ethnographic pamphlet with three group members; (4) A letter addressed to the ritual of the General Assembly; and (5) A three act play following a fluid group of Occupiers over three General Assemblies. This multifaceted project report is a metaphor for the Occupy movement itself, since city-specific Occupy groups are composed of diverse participants, influenced by a variety of theories and ideologies, practicing different forms of activism, and constantly negotiating with their changing environments. Occupy is truly a multi-movement, and this project report seeks to elucidate many aspects of this phenomenon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since this project report is organized chronologically, it seems appropriate to thank people in order of influence. Thus, I first need to acknowledge my parents, as they instilled within me the drive, passion and work ethic to pursue this graduate degree and complete this project. I also would like to thank my husband, for letting me be me and supporting all of my choices regardless of the impact they might have on my sanity and our marriage. In regards to this particular project, I would like to thank Dr. Roberto Gonzalez and Dr. Jan English-Lueck for inspiring me to pursue this project and for guiding me through all phases of the research process. I wholeheartedly thank my research partners Kristy Keller and Bethany Grove for their dedication to this research and writing the ethnographic pamphlet; this project would look completely different without your help. I would also like to thank Dr. Charlotte Sunseri, Dr. David Terry and Quincy McCrary for allowing and encouraging me to write about Occupy in their classes, and providing valuable constructive criticism on my work. Finally, and arguably most importantly, I would be remiss if I did not thank all of our willing and inspiring research participants, without whom this project would not have been possible.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

History of the Report

For this first-year graduate student entering the graduate program in Applied Anthropology at San Jose State University in the fall of 2011, Occupy Wall Street was like a gift. On September, 17th, 2011, I watched YouTube after YouTube video of thousands of people flocking to Zuccotti Park in New York to fight for social and economic justice. Even more exciting was watching the movement grow and change over the first few months, inspiring mini-Occupies in nearly every city around the country and adapting to the overt pressures of law enforcement and the criticisms of the mainstream media. I wanted to see if the Occupy uprising was a passing fad, or a social movement with a strategic approach, flexibility and creativity that would withstand resistance from dominant political, economic and social forces. Either way, I was attracted to this cultural process and wanted to be part of it.

I contacted members of my cohort and four expressed interest in working with me on a project to conduct participant observation and interviews with Occupy groups in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. While I originally envisioned my work with Occupy as a standard academic thesis, input from my research group and readings from my methods courses inspired me to utilize a variety of research methods (quantitative as well as qualitative) and pursue different forms of disseminating information, like writing an ethnographic pamphlet designed to be useful and publicly available for Occupiers, and also writing a play based on my field notes from General Assemblies. Given the diverse character of the Occupy movement, it seemed appropriate to disseminate information for different audiences: (1) An applied pamphlet for an audience of Occupiers (and anyone interested in becoming involved with the movement); (2) Articles for an audience of academics; and (3) A play for an audience of artists and theater-goers.

These categories are not mutually exclusive: For example, one of my research participants expressed an interest in reading the article that I was writing for the AAA conference. Since the Occupy movement is composed of a variety of stakeholders (hence the slogan “We are the 99%”), I felt a strong need to disseminate information in different ways in an effort to speak to diverse audiences. Over time, my problem statement and research approach changed.

Problem Statement and Research Approach

A critique of the Occupy movement is that it lacks a specific agenda (Garofoli 2012:A1; Rice 2011; Etzioni 2012; Sorkin 2012). My initial research question was whether this was Occupy’s biggest obstacle, or its greatest strength. The Occupy Movement is multi-sited, multi-generational and multi-ethnic, encompassing diverse experiences, viewpoints and projects. From participant observation, in-depth interviews and quantitative analysis, I argued that each Occupy group in every city has its own culture, and is composed of different stakeholders who are shaping the Occupy movement in unpredictable ways through dialogue and action. Since the Occupy movement is so diverse and multifaceted, it seemed appropriate to study the movement using both qualitative and quantitative methods, to use a combination of theories in the attempt to understand processes, and to disseminate information through a variety of mediums in an effort to speak to different audiences.

My original research approach was to start with a question and a desire to contribute to an overall understanding of the emerging Occupy “culture.” With time, however, I realized that it was more appropriate to study local Occupy groups in different ways and disseminate information creatively. Since applied anthropologists often use a variety of research methods to find possible solutions to practical problems, I approached this project with a concern for: (1) the general public’s lack of understanding and acceptance of the Occupy movement; and (2)

relatively little inter and intra-Occupy learning and collaboration. Over time, facilitating more inter and intra-Occupy learning and collaboration through writing became my primary focus, as I saw infighting gradually unravel Occupy the Bay.¹ The ethnographic pamphlet, which was a collaborative effort by Hannah Hart, Kristy Keller and Bethany Grove, uses the words of self-described Occupiers to illustrate the similarities and differences between the strategies, tactics, beliefs and values of participants in three different Occupy groups in Northern California. As the “applied” piece of this project puzzle, the final product is publicly available on San Jose State University’s anthropology department blog.^{2 3}

As a second project, I wrote a letter to my fellow Occupiers describing how and why the general assembly has become an unpopular organizational tool, in order to create a performance piece as a means of communicating this message. This piece uses speech act theory to show how the General Assembly (GA) has become an unsatisfying performance over time for many Occupiers, and argues that organizational processes must be adaptable to changing circumstances in order to remain useful and relevant. In this project report, I use this letter as an introduction to my script called “This is What Democracy Looks Like,” which shows the transformation of the general assembly from winter to summer 2012 over three acts. This play, which is based on transcripts of actual GAs, can both introduce the general public to the process of the general

¹ Occupy the Bay (OTB) is a pseudonym.

² We also became interested in writing more traditionally “academic” pieces about local Occupies and Occupiers, and each presented a paper at the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting last November. We each presented papers focusing on the Occupy group with which we were the most familiar; Hart focused on Occupy the Bay, Keller on Occupy Oakland, and Grove on Occupy the Coast. During the question-and-answer portion of the panel, it became clear that we had an audience that included Occupiers, and that they were looking for an activist’s voice, rather than a “researcher’s.” Thus, in addition to writing more academic pieces like the conference paper and reports using quantitative methods, I decided to write more experimental and creative pieces, which insert the researcher into the analysis.

³ I took a class in the communications department titled “performing presentational aesthetics.” A class in performance art was definitely outside of my comfort zone, but exposed me to new theories that helped me understand my experiences with the general assembly (GA) as a forum for dialogue and decision making.

assembly, and also shows when the GA can be a useful forum for dialogue and decision-making, and when something needs to change to keep participants active and engaged.

Therefore, this project report is simultaneously and explicitly applied, academic and creative, examining different facets of the Occupy movement. I examine conflict, content on websites, and the General Assembly. This multifaceted report can be seen as a metaphor for the movement itself, composed of a variety of stakeholders with different strategies, tactics, beliefs and values. It is my contention that Occupy is quite deliberately and unapologetically, a multi-movement.

Format of the Report

Eric Wolf said that “anthropology is the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities” (1964). In this introduction, I have described how my “scientific” academic thesis on the Occupy movement was transformed into a “humanistic” research project capturing many different facets of the Occupy movement in a variety of ways. To reflect this transformation, the report is organized from the most “scientific” pieces utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods to the most “humanistic,” culminating into a three-act play.

Chapter II reviews literature on the social and political organization of the Occupy movement, social movement precedents, anarchist ideology, global capitalism and the financial crisis of 2008. This chapter includes anthropological scholarship specifically addressing the Occupy movement, theoretical contributions like world systems theory and political ecology which help us understand the impetus for the movement, and social movements and political ideology that paved the way for Occupy. This chapter helps us understand that the Occupy movement did not appear “out of nowhere” (Sitrin 2011), but is a historically constituted and theoretically informed response to current social, political and economic conditions.

Chapter III reviews the variety of research methods used in this project, from participant observation, to open-ended interviews, to quantitative methods. Chapter IV offers a comparative perspective of the Occupy movement by analyzing intangible content on city-specific Occupy websites. Since applied anthropology is increasingly using a variety of methods in an attempt to understand cultural phenomena and offer solutions to problems, I wanted quantitative methods to have a place in this paper.

Chapter V is titled “‘We Don’t Have a Shared Vision’: Fractionalization among Occupiers in the San Francisco Bay Area,” and posits that there are two different definitions of Occupying which are currently in dialectical tension. While some see Occupying as “work,” as a job for social justice that one can commute to and from, others see Occupying as a “lifestyle” and “worldview,” and see the main project of the Occupy movement as community-building. This chapter shines a light on Occupy the Bay and uses Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Coast⁴ as points of comparison, showing that Occupy groups need a balance of workers and community builders in order to be sustainable.

Chapter V shows why inter- and intra-Occupy learning and collaboration is necessary, and was the impetus for creating an ethnographic pamphlet designed for the dual purpose of introducing interested parties to the nuances of the movement, and comparing three very different Occupy groups so Occupiers can learn from each other. In Chapter VI, I elucidate the process of creating an ethnographic pamphlet and point to Appendix B for a copy of the original document. Much of Chapter VI discusses the process of a research team writing collectively, in order to give back to our research participants who patiently and graciously gave us much of their time and energy.

⁴ Occupy the Coast (OTC) is a pseudonym.

Chapter VII brings in an interdisciplinary perspective, using theories of performativity to analyze the general assembly. This chapter shows that the discipline of communications can help anthropologists understand a particular ritual. Applied anthropology is increasingly becoming associated with interdisciplinarity, and I wanted an aspect of this project to reflect that. Occupy is quite a misunderstood movement, so applied anthropologists must use a variety of methods, theories and fields in order to provide a holistic view of social and cultural phenomena which reaches and appeals to many audiences.

Finally, Chapter VIII concludes this project by addressing how this process changed me, how I grew as a researcher, an activist and an artist by taking on this project. Being simultaneously academic, applied and creative does not weaken individuals and collectivities, but increases our skills and abilities to collaborate with diverse actors in any setting.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The organizing on Wall Street didn't appear out of nowhere. Before the occupation on September 17th, the New York General Assembly began to meet in the summer. Long before the occupation we debated the question of demands and agreed not to make them. Most of us believed that the most important thing was to open space for discussions and democracy—real, direct and participatory (Sitrin 2011:11).

Marina Sitrin illustrated how Occupy Wall Street (OWS) evolved out of discussion and project planning by diverse actors of different backgrounds and ideological orientations. It attempted to attract an even more diverse group of people frustrated by the current system for a variety of reasons, resulting in local Occupy collectives forming in cities across the United States and the world. This project is not about Occupy Wall Street: It is about how the Occupy message manifests itself in unique local contexts, with a spotlight on a small Occupy group in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Social and Political Organization: From Occupy Wall Street to Occupy the Local

The Occupy movement emerged in the summer of 2011 in opposition to the interrelated crises of global capitalism and representative democracy (Nugent 2012:280). The word “interrelated” identifies the primary issue which is the intimate connection between corporate capitalism and democratic republics, and an emerging understanding that capitalism and democracy are opposing concepts which have contributed to global inequality. The first documented call to action for OWS has been traced to an email from the online journal Adbusters sent mid-July 2011, which cited the recent resistance struggles in Tahrir Square and Spain as precedents and models for an egalitarian, horizontal, grassroots movement (Juris 2012:261). On September 17th, 2011, the efforts of the hacker collective Anonymous and local organizers on the ground came to fruition in the first occupation of Wall Street. This protest

initially attracted two thousand people, and grew to spread to cities throughout the nation and the world (Juris 2012:261).

For the first two or three months of the movement, “Occupying” largely meant establishing encampments in very public spaces, from big cities to small towns. Slogans such as “We are the 99%,” the concept of a leaderless movement, and a model for consensus decision-making through the General Assembly were disseminated to the masses largely through social media technologies like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube: Images and accounts of police brutality during Direct Actions were circulated by the mainstream media (Juris 2012:261). Frustrated by growing inequality and economic stagnation following the 2008 Wall Street bailout, the message of Occupy Wall Street resonated with many people, from college students to seasoned activists.

In “Reflections on Occupy Everywhere,” Jeffrey Juris explores the link between social media and public space in the Occupy movement. He argues that social media has contributed to an emerging “‘logic of aggregation,’ which involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces” (2012:260): The recent global justice movements generated a “logic of networking,” which focused on communication and coordination. Both of these logics are necessary to create, build and sustain a local, grassroots movement inclusive of the 99%.

In “The Occupy Movement in Zizek’s Hometown,” Maple Razsa and Andrej Kurnik focus on the trajectory of Occupy Slovenia as an example of how local Occupiers have modified the model for direct democracy as disseminated by OWS to suit their needs, as appropriate to the historical context of the city. Razsa and Kurnik (2012) make the distinction between minoritarian forms of decision making like the “democracy of direct action” and the General Assemblies

(GA), which practice consensus. Due to Slovenian activists' experiences fighting for migrant and minority rights in the past, Occupy Slovenia utilizes "decentralized, participant-organized workshop groups as the building blocks of alternative democratic practice and point to the potential tyranny of consensus decision making" (Nugent 2012:280). Thus, nonhierarchical leadership can be practiced outside of the confines of the GA, and local Occupies have the agency to modify the model promoted by OWS to suit the needs of their environment. This paper answers Razsa and Kurnik's call for ethnographic research on direct democratic practice over time and space, to emphasize a "politics of becoming" democratic, rather than prefigurative politics.

Social Movement Precedents and Anarchist Ideology

2011 turned out to be an extraordinary year. The clustering of insurgencies around time and geography gave a political ring to the seasons: commentators spoke of the Arab Spring, the European Summer and the US Fall. Yet many faulted these revolts for their lack of plans and proposals. I argue here that this criticism misses the point. Insurgencies are about saying "Enough!" and refusing to go on as before. They upturn the given and open up possibilities that will or will not prosper. They are political laboratories experimenting with passageways to something other to come and should not be confused with standard political practices or policy-making exercises (Arditi 2012:1).

In "Insurgencies don't have a plan—they *are* the plan. The politics of vanishing mediators of the *indignados* in 2011," Benjamin Ardit of National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) rejects the notion that global insurgencies will inevitably fail because they purposefully lack a plan of action. "In the past as well as in more recent insurgencies you see a shared belief that the powerful are unaccountable and social justice is a farce. People might have a desire for outlines of a different order but are more concerned in making a difference by merely existing than by organizing their future" (Arditi 2012:3). While there is a similarity of beliefs among these social

movements, making formal demands and sanctioning specific tactics is not the goal. The main purpose is to change public discourse and usher in a process of political transformation.

Arditi's argument is reinforced in anthropological literature, including Marc Edelman's "Social Movements: Changing Paradigms and Forms of Politics" from the 1960s to 2000. Edelman gives a comprehensive overview of how "Ethnographic research on social movements...tended to resist 'grand theoretical' generalizations because close-up views of collective action often looked messy, with activist groups and coalitions forming, dividing, and reassembling and with significant sectors of their target constituencies remaining on the sidelines" (Edelman 2001:286). Although Occupy has not been portrayed as an indigenous rights movement, it exhibits some of the same tactics, characteristics and struggles as indigenous rights movements (Hodgson 2002). In her analysis of the events and organizing that precipitated the Battle of Seattle, Marianne Maeckelbergh argues that "all struggles are linked and all oppression is rooted in the same structural problems" (2009:1), which is a theme that I explore in this report.

The Occupy movement has its roots in the global justice movement and anarchist ideology which emphasizes direct action, direct democracy and autonomy (Graeber 2009). While "Marxism has tended to be a theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy," anarchism can be seen as "an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice" (Graeber 2009:211). In *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, David Graeber argues that horizontalism can and does work, offering an alternative, sustainable model of non-authoritarian social change. He defines direct action as "acting as if one is already free" when "faced with structures of unjust authority" (Graeber 2009:203). Therefore, Graeber argues for prefigurative politics; to act as if the state does not exist. The goal of anarchism is to build a new society "in the shell of the old" (Graeber 2009:203), rather than reform the system in place. Graeber greatly influenced the initial

creation of Occupy Wall Street, instilling these anarchist principles in the early phases of organizing. This ideology helped shape OWS and influence the trajectory of local Occupies around the country and the world.

Global Capitalism and the 2008 Financial Crisis

We can see the effects that the global capitalist economy has on social systems through ethnographies analyzing the recent decisions made by governments and the finance industry which precipitated the global financial crisis of 2008. Gillian Tett's *Fool's Gold* (2009) reveals how Wall Street banks invented credit derivatives in the early 1990s, which played a significant role in creating a financial catastrophe. Karen Ho's *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street* (2009) illustrates how Wall Street culture, as a "volatile combination of unplanned risk-taking with the search for record profits, constant identification with the financial markets and short-term stock prices, and continual downsizing" (2009:6), permeates corporate America, and continues to wreak havoc right back on Wall Street, normalizing job insecurity. Ho argues that "the more the world bought into Wall Street (from American investors to entire governments), the more leverage it had to take the globe hostage" (2009:323). This global conflict has not only played out between nation-states, but within states as well, as people realize that the institutions that govern us are largely not working for the common good, but for the personal gain of an elite few.

Eric Wolf's *Peasants* (1965) and *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (1969) can help us understand the Occupy movement as both rooted in the local and situated within the world system, because there are many commonalities between peasant revolutions around this globalized world. In the weeks and months following the start of OWS, modern-day peasants and people bordering on peasantry flocked to local general assemblies and actions sharing a thirst to

connect to people and a need to affect real, tangible change in their communities and beyond. While not exactly an armed uprising such as the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas (Maybury-Lewis 2001), the Occupy movement represents an effort to empower people to take control of their lives while working together for social and economic justice. We have models of indigenous uprisings that have been successful, such as the Kayapo's environmentalist movement against large-scale development projects in the Brazilian Amazon (Fisher 1994); we also have modern examples illustrating the incompatibility of anarchy and global capitalism, in the case of Somalia (Gettleman 2009; Mynott 2007). It is easy to say that we need to create autonomous spaces, but is it possible to create a new paradigm of social, political and economic organization when capitalism is so normalized and ubiquitous?

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research project focused on three local Occupies operating within three cities in Northern California, utilizing participant observation at meetings and actions, open-ended interviews with Occupy participants, and quantitative analysis of Occupiers' technology usage. We attended over one hundred General Assemblies, working group/committee meetings and actions, culminating in approximately 200 hours of participant observation. In addition to our direct involvement in Occupies we conducted a total of eleven in-depth interviews, ranging from 1.5 to 3.5 hours in length. The primary investigator also utilized quantitative research methods to analyze content on different Occupy websites. This quantitative analysis gives a broader view of the differences between different Occupy groups, in order to answer the question of whether Occupy lacks a specific agenda.

We decided to produce an ethnographic pamphlet describing the history of the local Occupies in depth, unearthing the meaning and complexities of Occupying through the voices of our interviewees, and looking toward the future of Occupy on its anniversary. We made the pamphlet available to the public on September 17th, 2012, in honor of the first anniversary of OWS, in order to encourage more inter-Occupy learning as well as dispel some common stereotypes that the general public has about Occupiers and Occupying. In producing this pamphlet we were committed to protecting the identities of our interviewees and adhering to their wishes in regards to confidentiality to the best of our ability, which is why we decided to use pseudonyms for two out of three of the Occupy groups (Occupy the Bay and Occupy the Coast). We came to the decision to protect the identities of two of our Occupy groups through dialogue with our research participants, some of whom suggested that their Occupy groups were so small that current and past participants might be able to identify interviewees based on their

opinions and process of elimination. We decided not to give Occupy Oakland a pseudonym because it is much larger than the other Occupies in this study, and more public in approach. While these concerns about confidentiality apply to most aspects of this project, Chapter IV's quantitative analysis of California Occupy websites does not present these ethical challenges.

IV. OCCUPY CALIFORNIA: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL OCCUPY WEBSITES

Here I will describe how I coded sections of websites created by city-specific Occupy groups throughout California, in order to answer a facet of my main research question; whether Occupy lacks a specific agenda. I coded mission/vision statements, committees/working groups listed on websites, the types of activities on calendars and ways that websites encouraged people to get involved with their local Occupy groups. All of the websites represented city-specific Occupy groups around California, to measure the variability of beliefs and behaviors around the region.

This project has utilized mostly qualitative research methods, including participant observation at local Occupies, interviews with Occupiers and secondary/existing data or records, in order to determine whether the fact that Occupy appears to “lack a specific agenda” (Garofoli 2012:A1) is an obstacle to achieving success, a strength, or neither. Since quantitative methods are more suited to identifying whether a problem exists, the extent of the problem, and the correlation between two variables, I decided to test the variability of the beliefs and behaviors within the Occupy movement by analyzing a random sample of Occupy websites as cultural texts. My hypothesis for this research project was that the Occupy movement lacks a specific agenda and the variety of perspectives become manifest in the multitude of activities that different Occupy groups choose to engage in and endorse.

Using quantitative research methods to study the Occupy movement poses significant challenges (such as developing a representative sample) due to that fact that Occupiers are a hidden, diverse and dynamic population. Despite these challenges, Hector Cordero-Guzman of the School of Public Affairs, Baruch College at the City University of New York attempted to

make a “Profile of Users of the Occupy Wall Street Website” by reviewing and analyzing data from a survey of approximately 5020 users who answered a questionnaire in the occupywallstreet.org web site through mid-November. Cordero-Guzman attempts to capture “Window[s] into the Demographics of an Evolving Movement” by reviewing and analyzing the data in “waves.” The first draft of the study was written on October 19th, and the second wave was completed November 18th. Cordero-Guzman acknowledges that his survey research is not reliable, as it comes from a convenience sample of people that chose to complete the survey posted on the Occupy website (2011:3). Despite the limitations of the study, Cordero-Guzman’s survey represents one of the only efforts to characterize the people and process of the Occupy movement over the seasons.

A far easier task than attempting to quantify and analyze the people of the Occupy movement is to conduct an analysis of social media activity/content and Google search histories. NM Incite’s “Occupy Wall Street: A Look at What People are saying on Twitter” (2011) which analyzes the #OWS hashtag to reveal the frequency of demands tweeted, and also maps the percentage of Occupy tweets by state. This analysis attempts to map the beliefs and behaviors of participants in the Occupy Movement through their own words and activities, which is a great supplement to Cordero-Guzman’s survey research. Although these attempts to understand the Occupy Movement through Twitter analysis are valuable, they are largely the product of the autumn of 2011, when the Occupy Movement was highly popular and visible. The result is a static representation of the Occupy Movement, rather than a process. Alternatively, my project analyzes Occupy websites as cultural texts in order to understand how the beliefs and behaviors are distributed and evolving as the Occupy movement progresses, producing reliable quantitative data.

METHODS

Using a spreadsheet generated on Scraperwiki.com of Occupy protest locations in California (https://scraperwiki.com/scrapers/occupy_protest_locations_california_3/), I created a random sample of 20 official Occupy websites out of the target population of 58 using the website random.org. The phrase “official Occupy websites” omits any wiki pages or social media pages like Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr, and is confined to the official website endorsed and operated by members of the Occupy branch. Hence, any Occupy protest locations that did not have a website were removed from the sample. After sampling the websites I began to code the individual web pages as cultural texts systematically:

Mission Statement/Declaration of Occupation

The first step in this process was identifying the website’s mission statement or declaration. The mission statement (or some variation of that name) will usually exist on the homepage of the website or under the “about” tab. The presence or absence of a mission statement was recorded. If a mission statement existed, it was coded for the following values: empowering the 99%, democratic/consensus, leaderless/no leaders, activism, peaceful/nonviolent, diversity, economic and social justice, solidarity, and grassroots/local.

Committees/Working Groups

After coding the mission statements, the second step in this process was identifying the local Occupy’s committees, alternatively named working groups. The presence or absence of listed committees/groups was recorded. If committees/groups existed, they were first counted and then coded for types: Education/Research, Tech/Web, Outreach, Direct Action, Safety, Legal, Finance, PR/Media, Facilitation, Events, Newspaper, Strategies/Logistics, Video/Live-streaming and miscellaneous groups.

Events/Activities

The third step in this process was identifying the local Occupy's events/activities over time. This information can often be found under the "schedule" or "calendar" tab, which should retain information about activities since the local Occupy's inception. If the website had a calendar function, the number of events from the last week in October 2011, the last week in January 2012 and the last week in April were quantified. The events/activities scheduled during those weeks were coded for types: General Assemblies, Committee meetings, workshops/trainings, actions/protests/marches, courses/classes, forums/teach-ins, open mikes/soapboxes and miscellaneous events that don't fit into other categories.

Get Involved/Take Action

Finally, the fourth step in this process was identifying the number of ways that Occupy sites encourage people to "get involved" in the Occupy movement. This information is usually found under a "take action" tab and was quantified. The ways to "get involved" were coded for types: Donate money, sign petitions, attend General Assemblies, contact public officials, contribute supplies/resources, move-your-money, join a committee/group, subscribe to newsletter, attend an event, participate online, and support local businesses. All of these variables were analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1:

Mission Statement Frequencies		
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Leaderless/No Leaders	4	20%
Diversity/Diverse	8	40%
Democratic/Consensus	10	50%
Grassroots/Local	11	55%
Peaceful/Nonviolent	12	60%
Empowering the 99%	15	75%
Activism/Active	15	75%
Solidarity	15	75%
Accessible/Public	17	85%
Econ. and Social Justice	17	85%

Table 1 shows the frequency that California Occupy websites describe a commitment to various principles within their “mission statements” or “declarations of occupation.” As we see above, 85% of the sampled websites claimed to be publicly accessible and committed to economic and social justice, while 75% of websites articulated a commitment to empowering the 99%, activism and solidarity with Occupy Wall Street and other Occupies. We can tentatively conclude that the majority of Occupy websites in California articulate a commitment to these values. Slightly less common were articulated commitments to nonviolence, grassroots organizing and direct democracy. Less than 50% of sampled websites claimed a commitment to diversity and leaderlessness. This is quite interesting because “diversity” and “nonviolence” have been controversial topics throughout the course of the movement, and it seems appropriate that the data reflect different values between Occupies throughout California.

Table 2:

"Get Involved" Frequencies		
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
G.I Sign Petition	2	10%
G.I. Contact Government	2	10%
G.I. Subscribe Newsletter	2	10%
G.I Support Local Business	2	10%
G.I. Move-Your-Money	4	20%
G.I. Donate Materials	8	40%
G.I. Donate Money	10	50%
G.I. with Committees	10	50%
G.I. General Assemblies	18	90%
G.I. Come to Events	19	95%
G.I. Online/Social Media	19	95%

Table 2 exhibits the frequency that California Occupy websites describe various ways to “get involved” in the Occupy movement. Over 90% of websites encourage people to come to general assemblies, attend actions and participate online. While the first two variables require a physical presence, participating online simply requires one to utilize social media, showing an equal commitment to physical and virtual action. By comparison, about 50% of websites ask people to donate money to their local Occupy, donate materials/resources, and join a committee or working group. This seems appropriate because only about 50% of Occupy websites have committees listed. Less than 20% of websites ask people to Move-their-Money into a credit union, sign a petition, contact local officials or support local businesses. This is interesting because the “Move-your-Money” campaign, becoming involved in the government and supporting capitalism in general have been a hotly contested issues in the Occupy movement, so it seems appropriate that the data reflect different views.

Chi-Square Test for Independence

Table 3:

Committees/Groups Cross-Tabs			
Relationship Between	X ²	p	phi
Educ/Reseach vs. Tech/Web	11.4	.001**	0.882
Outreach vs. Direct Action	8.99	.003**	0.78
Legal vs. Finance	7.2	.007**	0.733
Groups vs. Misc. Groups	7.08	.008**	0.698
Newspaper and Video/Live.	6.3	.01**	0.79
PR/Media vs. Events	3.6	.03*	0.57
PR/Media vs. Video/Live.	3.6	.03*	0.57
Safety/Health vs. Legal	3.75	.05*	0.577
Facilitation and Strategies	3.75	.05*	0.577

p values: *<.05; **<.01

The Chi-Square test for independence (with Yates Continuity correction and Fisher's Exact Test) indicated a significant association between several of the types of committees/working groups listed on many California Occupy websites. At the $p=.01$ significance level, there is a strong relationship between websites displaying Education/Research committees and Tech/Web committees, Outreach and Direct Action committees, Legal and Finance committees, and the presence of committees/working groups and miscellaneous committees/working groups. This means that if Occupies used committees/working groups as a organizational tool, they were likely to have a variety of committees that did not fit under any of the other categories. Only about 50% of websites exhibit committees/working groups, so it appears that if the particular Occupy site is going to have committees/working groups, it is going to have roughly the same types of groups (and most likely more). However, one cannot assuming that having committees/groups listed is normal.

Table 4:

Events Cross-Tabs			
Relationship Between	χ^2	p	phi
Apr. GA vs. Oct. GA	1.27	0.26	0.378
Apr. Meetings vs. Oct. Meetings	0.167	0.68	0.206
Apr. Events vs. Jan Events	0.008	0.93	0.216
Apr. Events vs. Oct. Events	0	1	0.081
Apr. Meetings vs. Jan. Meetings	0	1	0.043
Apr. GA vs. Jan. GA	3.75	.032*	0.577
Oct. Meetings vs. Jan. Meetings	4.38	.04*	0.579
Oct. Events vs. Jan. Events	6.4	.01**	0.728
Oct. GA vs. Jan. GA	7.87	.005**	0.76

P values: * $<.05$, ** $<.01$

Table 4 shows that if there are events listed in October/November on a particular website, it is likely that there will be events listed for January/February, and it is also likely that General assemblies and group meetings will be on the calendar. But beyond those activities, there is a high degree of variability among behaviors between different Occupy sites in California in the fall and the winter. What I find more interesting is the lack of relationship between the existence of events in April, and the existence of events in October and January for different Occupy websites in California. It appears that some Occupies stopped listing events on their calendars between February and April, while some Occupies that were relatively inactive in the fall and winter started becoming more active in the spring. The pattern replicates itself for the display of general assemblies in April and group meetings in April.

Correlations

Prior to performing correlation analysis using test statistics of Pearson's r and Spearman's ρ , scatter plots were generated to check for violation of the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity. Although the variables April Numbers and April Variety violated the

parametric assumptions (which is not a problem for rank-order correlations), I chose to run to tests as a point of comparison.

Table 5:

Pearson Correlation Coefficient			
Relationship Between	r	p	r ²
Get involved # vs. April Variety	0.028	0.906	0
October Variety vs. April Variety	0.023	0.923	0
January Variety vs. April Variety	0.003	0.99	0
Get involved # vs. October Variety	0.55	.012*	0.3
Get involved # vs. January Variety	0.47	.035*	0.22
October Variety vs. January Variety	0.69	.001**	0.476

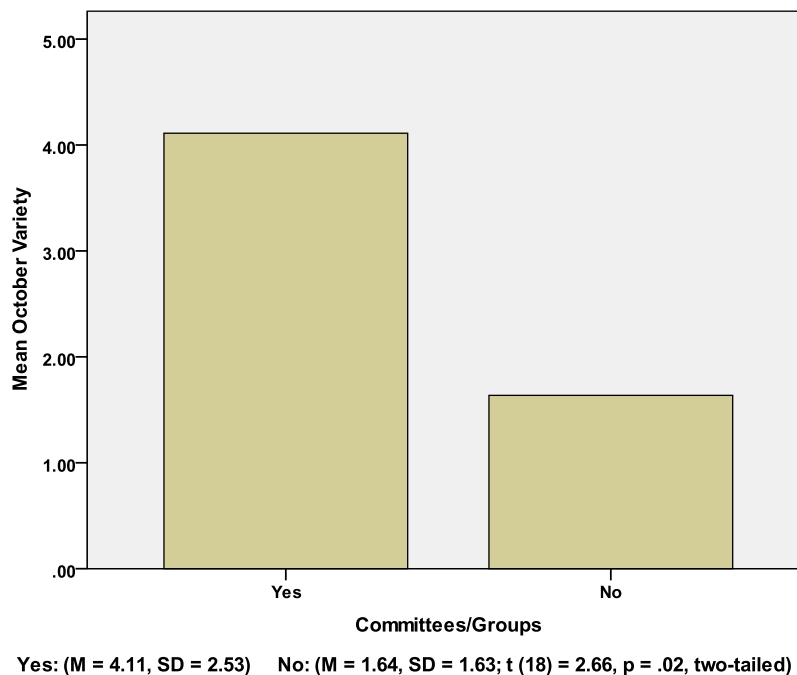
p values: *<.05, **<.01

I chose to compare the number of ways that California Occupy websites encourage people to “get involved” with the variety of events that occurred in October, January and April, to demonstrate the relationship between the number of stated beliefs and variety of displayed behaviors in the Occupy movement. There is a strong relationship between the quantity of beliefs and behaviors in October and January, but not in April. This is consistent with chi-square analyses for April events. There is also a very strong correlation at the $p=.01$ significance level for the variety of events in October and the variety of events in January, which disproves the assumption made by the mass media that the Occupy movement retreated after the encampments were cleared in the fall. There is no correlation between the variety of events in April and the variety of events in October and January. It appears what while California Occupies supported and organized similar events in the fall and winter, they started hosting very different kinds of events in the spring, which reflects Shepherd Bliss’ (2011) prediction, that “The American Autumn is now entering what may be a lower-key Winter Hibernation of reflection, behind-the-scenes work, and building relationships with a wide range of people. I expect a spring burst of

energy in unpredictable ways, as Occupy enters a new seasonal cycle.” It appears that he was right. These results also match the Spearman rank-order correlations for the number of events during the same times.

Independent Samples T-tests

Figure 1: Committees/Groups and October Variety T-test



An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the variety of events displayed in late October/early November for websites that displayed committees/groups and those that did not. There was a significant difference between the variety of events displayed for Occupy websites with committees/groups and without committees/groups. The magnitude between the differences in the means (mean difference = 2.47, CI: .52 to 4.43) was very large (eta squared = .28). This implies that having committees/working groups listed on a California Occupy website was indicative of having a large variety of activities listed on the calendar at the end of October. Thus, it appears that local Occupies did a lot of their organizing through committees and working

groups in the fall, and had an average of four events per week. This result matches the Mann-Whitney U test result for number of events during the same time period.

Figure 2: Committees/Groups and January Variety T-test

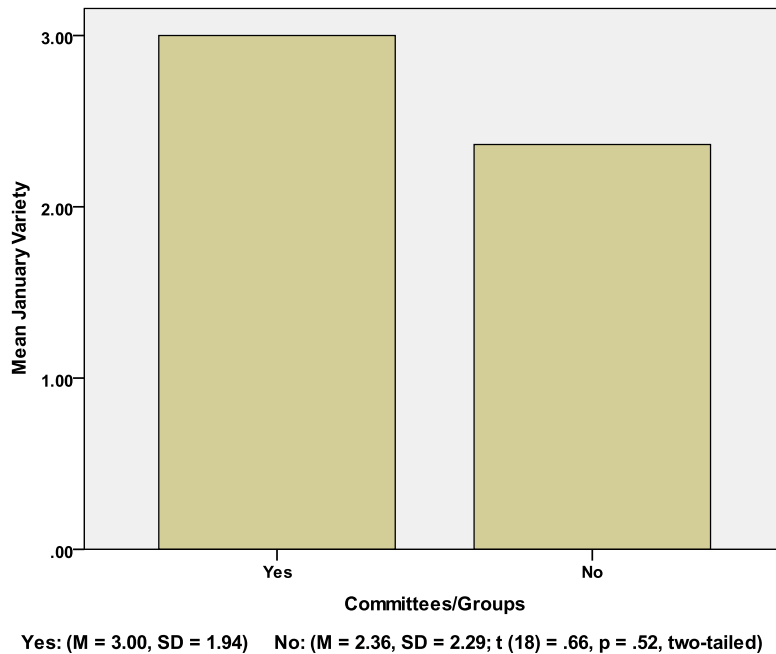
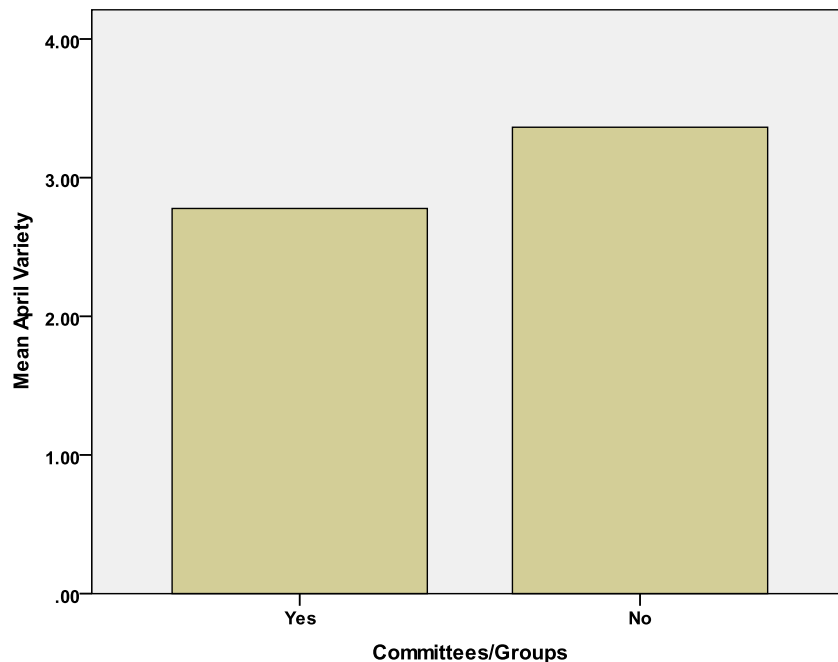


Figure 2 shows that an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the variety of events displayed in late January/early February for websites that displayed committees/groups and those that did not. There was no significant difference between the variety of events displayed for Occupy websites with committees/groups and without committees/groups. This result may be due to the small sample size ($n < 30$), or may be indicative of changing patterns of planning and organization in the California Occupy movement. The mean variety of events per week in January was slightly less for websites that had groups displayed (see Fig. 3), and groups that did not have committees/groups displayed were likely to have more events listed than in October. Perhaps without the encampments of the fall, committees and working groups were no longer viable methods for organization, so Occupiers had to experiment with new methods for orchestrating events and building public interest.

Figure 3: Committees/Groups and April Variety T-test



Yes: (M = 2.78, SD = 2.95) No: (M = 3.36, SD = 1.91; $t = (18) = -.54$, $p = .60$, two-tailed).

Figure 3 below mirrors the results found for “April Events” variables for the Chi-Square Test for Independence and Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient. Namely, there was no significant difference between the variety of events displayed for Occupy websites with committees/groups and without committees/groups.

This result may be due to the small sample size ($n < 30$), or may be indicative of radically changing patterns of planning and organization in the California Occupy movement. The interesting thing about these results is that websites without committees/working groups listed are more likely to have a higher variety of events listed than websites who do have committees displayed. This shows a near reversal of the results found in October, and suggests that committees and working groups largely lost their organizational power in the spring of 2012. Occupiers are finding new and interesting ways to organize and take action, often in solidarity

with different Occupies and like-minded groups in their respective cities. The rise of co-actions and networking in the spring has rendered groups obsolete.

The results of this analysis generally support my hypothesis that the Occupy movement lacks a specific agenda and the variety of perspectives become manifest in the multitude of activities that different Occupies choose to engage in and endorse. Although the mainstream media looks at this phenomenon with a critical eye, the variety of agendas within Occupy appears to grant a measure of adaptability, rather than a barrier to success. As the results show, the Occupy movement has changed drastically this past year, responding to public criticism, cleared encampments and improving weather by forming partnerships with different Occupies and like-minded groups, and organizing events like barbecues, documentary nights and Really Really Free Markets. These changes show that Occupy does not “lack a specific agenda” (Garofoli 2012:A1), but welcomes an “open agenda” characterized by adaptability and inclusiveness, and is focused less on organizing protests than movement building. In the next chapter of this project report I will examine points of tension and fractionalization among Bay Area Occupiers.

I came up with the idea for Chapter V while transcribing one of my interviews. Steven (one of my research participants) was talking about how he sees Occupying as his job, and it hit me that Occupy the Bay has participants that view Occupy as “work,” in the sense that they can commute to and from “Occupy.” I confess that I also include myself in the category of Occupy commuters, and had trouble understanding Occupiers that viewed Occupying as a lifestyle, as an intrinsic and unceasing part of their identities. After doing some analysis I decided to focus on this dialectical tension between two definitions of Occupying in my presentation at a panel called “Occupy Movement and Precedents” at the 2012 American Anthropological Association annual

meeting. This chapter illustrates the need for more inter- and intra-Occupy learning, and also shows how city-specific Occupy groups are influenced by their environments. The conflict illustrated in this paper was the impetus for creating a pamphlet.

V. “WE DON’T HAVE A SHARED VISION”: FRACTIONALIZATION AMONG OCCUPIERS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

We met down at [the] Park. And there were actually quite a few people that had met [up]. Some were activists previously, some had been with other movements, and it really encompassed a lot of ages. Some more active with Vietnam and, more local issues and—California having such a broad, diverse population, it was really neat to see such a diverse group come together. So we marched down to City Hall. And I guess that’s when we took a vote about whether we were going to choose to Occupy that day. And so it was passed that we were gonna set up an Occupation that day. So, we [my partner and I] left, and went home, not really knowing what was going to be there. And we had joined what was called the communications group. Communications had set up the Gmail account for [the] communications group, unknowing to us that...Other committees did not set up a way to communicate with each other. And so the next day, when I came downtown to lend my support, there were tents set up that were actually moved back to the...street side where the trees are...because I guess City Hall came and asked them to move back. And so that’s where the tents stayed. And it was a lot of people really, walking around, talking, discussing, bringing in maybe some paperwork, newspaper articles or Internet articles. There was food starting to show up from people passing by. We had a lot of foot traffic. I mean, there was excitement in the air; people that weren’t even there at the park the previous day, these were people driving by on the streets, and walking by asking. Some people knew [about Occupy] and some people didn’t. So, it was...really a different atmosphere, last year (Teresa⁵).

In this passage, Teresa describes the diversity of Occupy the Bay (OTB) at its inception on October 2, 2011. OTB attracted everyone from seasoned activists to college students, showing a variety of interests, ranging from international to local issues. The encampment was a key part of OTB’s early identity, and the visible presence of an Occupation was something very exciting to the public. Teresa also illustrates that people really didn’t know what Occupying was; that this effort was an experiment and people were learning as they worked. Teresa immediately volunteered to be a member of the communications committee, and she articulates how communication was a challenge for OTB from the outset. Throughout the year, communication,

⁵ The names of all research participants are pseudonyms, unless participants explicitly requested that we used their real names.

transparency and use of social media technologies have been constant and emotional issues for Occupiers in the South Bay, fueling much internal conflict, fractionalization, and overall disillusionment with OTB. While these issues are not unique to OTB, discussions involving patterns of communication, a general lack of transparency and Twitter access have dominated many General Assemblies (GAs), leaving little time to plan for direct actions and other events. Occupiers have also described OTB as an “Occupy of commuters,” involving people who attend a general assembly and perhaps an action and then go back to their daily lives, compartmentalizing their time as Occupiers within their busy schedules. This depiction of OTB connects to the larger context of the South Bay and Silicon Valley, where many people work or have worked in very specialized fields in the high-tech industry, the projects of innovation and development are normalized and privileged, and sprawling suburbs make it difficult to develop place-based community. Over time, I watched OTB gradually prioritize the project of fighting for justice over community building.

In this chapter, I argue that most of the conflict between Occupiers, particularly in OTB, is between people who think of Occupying as a job, something that you can commute to and from, and people who come to Occupy to feel safe and free, for the sense of community in the face of adversity. There are two very different definitions of “Occupying”--Occupying as an occupation and Occupying as a lifestyle--and these definitions are currently in conversation. In other words, there are two different projects in Occupy: the project of fighting for justice and the project of freedom, and sometimes these understandings of Occupy’s vision can come into conflict. In order for an Occupy group to be successful and sustainable, we need to establish a space where both projects can be accomplished: (1) A space where people can feel productive in fighting for social justice and where their efforts are appreciated and valued; and (2) Where

people feel safe, included and accepted, particularly to bring their families and friends. The projects of “working” and “community building” are not mutually exclusive, and both are necessary for local Occupies to thrive in the face of constant resistance and repression.

Throughout this chapter, I will utilize the approach of political ecology and expand upon the ethnographic material from Jeffrey Juris, Maple Razsa and Andrej Kurnik in my analysis of OTB. Specifically this paper answers Juris’s call to empirically assess specific strategic shifts and their effectiveness as well as the longer-term trajectory of Occupy through ongoing ethnographic research (2012:271). I illustrate the difficulty of undermining the hegemony of capitalism, especially within a hub of technological innovation like Silicon Valley. Finally, I argue that there is no overarching “Occupy culture,” because Occupy has manifested itself differently through time and space. This article illustrates the necessity for inter- and intra-Occupy communication and collaboration, and shows why the pamphlet felt necessary. In focusing on the trajectory of OTB in 2012 and its overall effectiveness, I will use portions of interviews with participants in OO and OTC as points of comparison.

Occupying as Community-Building

I heard it was going on down the street...so I walked toward the plaza, and found a really great scene. It was like a barbeque, a fish fry...people were out and I found some people making origami, and hung out with them, and enjoyed it through the evening, and returned the next day because it was simply a great gathering of people. It wasn’t so political. It was more community based. There wasn’t a bunch of rhetoric, which I have a disdain for. Didn’t see a lot of 99%...people weren’t even talking about that, they were just managing food and playing music. There were a lot of artists coming out; church groups; everyone showing up to do their community thing. And it was a very...that spirit only existed during the first encampment. There was no jaded mentality, there was no anger, there was not people screaming about the bourgeois or the 1%. It was yeah, it was a very good community event (Jesse).

Jesse first experienced Occupy Oakland as a site for community building, for occupying public space and reestablishing ties between different local actors. That is why he came back, not because of the political message of OWS, but because Occupy made him feel more connected to the Oakland community. For Jesse, occupying is a call for people to reconnect with each other, rather than vent their feelings about the 1% and the institutions that keep them in power:

It (Occupy Oakland) still eludes a definition as the Occupy movement as a whole does, because it's more a gathering of discontentment, and a social event. I think it's just as much a response to the apolitical elements of our culture that isolate us, such as technology and uh...just the lifestyle of work weeks, and this kind of thing. It's a response to that as much as it is to any political or economic issue. There's a cultural issue, and Occupy Oakland I would distinguish from the rest of the Occupy movements, as I understand them, as being more about social services and pragmatism, and less about ideology and theory.

Jesse characterizes Occupy Oakland as a response to social isolation, a bringing together of individuals who recognize that the dominant ideology of individualism is not serving us well. That we can only achieve autonomy and equality by taking our lives into our own hands as groups of locals, and changing our lifestyle from one of individual responsibility to collective cooperation. Jesse also makes the distinction between the culture of OO and other Occupies as being less theory driven. While the fight for social, financial and environmental justice is important and necessary, it is just as important as establishing local spaces for people to work cooperatively and horizontally in order to build autonomous communities. Marie from OTC felt this pull to collaborate with members of her community from the beginning of her involvement:

A friend...came over or called me one day and said "Hey, there's going to be this meeting. It's Occupy solidarity with Wall Street and Occupy the Coast and there's so and so...it's been going on." It was just a few weeks in because it was [late October]. So it was brand new. And I felt this literal compulsion from the center of me—there was no option. It wasn't an option not to go. There was no option as far as going went. It was really a heart thing—a gut, heart thing...So yeah, I went and listened and realized how long it had been since I had done it—you know, done anything, actually ever. I vote. I've always voted. And bitching [laughs]...I've always had of course opinions like everybody

does and was active politically that way but not in this form... And I was watching. I wanted to see who showed up—I was curious...So yeah, I started going. I went down to where the tents were...Like I said; it just became “I have to go. I have to go. I have to go.” Most people that I talked to--there was this surge of kinship.

Marie describes how joining Occupy the Coast was a calling for her, and once she decided to go with a friend she felt a “surge of kinship” with everyone around her; that they were all part of the same community. Voting was not enough anymore, as it is too much of an individual act.

Occupy has been her first experience with activism, and she originally gravitated toward it because of a drive to connect to the various communities within her city:

I still want to march in the neighborhoods. I’ve been asking that for MONTHS. “Can we please march in the neighborhoods?” Of course I haven’t brought it up recently and now since we don’t have a Saturday march that...because I wanted to march in the neighborhoods. I really felt that because everybody’s in their little nest here. Even this neighborhood.

Like Jesse, Marie wants to break down the barriers between local neighborhoods, and for people to understand that “our struggles are interconnected,” as Jamie from OTB says. Her idea is to bring Occupy to people’s doorsteps, in addition to Occupying city centers. OO has made an explicit effort to do this, by organizing community barbecues within local neighborhoods.

Francisco also joined OTB with the intention of doing outreach to particular communities:

I saw [OTB] there. It looked chaotic, a little scary, a little scruffy. I had heard about it and seen video...And I approached, timidly, wondering what I was doing in the middle of this place, with all sorts of people; some of them weren’t my usual crowd. And, it seemed interesting. And I saw that ethnically it was not diverse. And I have an interest in ethnic diversity; I have done Latino Outreach for other movements, to get Latinos involved, specifically for Obama for America. I traveled to other states and I formulated strategies and wrote materials to attract Latinos and there were none so I figured, “hmmmm, I’ll just ask around and see what’s going on.” And, a funny thing, I met the women who were at the table there, and they offered some snacks; so it was quite messy; trashcans overflowing. I offered to haul away the trash in my trunk, to make life easier for them. And then later in the week I attended some lunch where they came with these big

aluminum trays of food for the people attending, some organization. And practically half of the food was left. It was great. And I thought, hmmm, I know exactly who could enjoy this. And so I asked if they were about to throw it away after the meeting. So I took the other half of the food over there and they enjoyed it a lot.

Francisco illustrates how he immediately found ways to be useful to OTB; how he noticed a lack of ethnic diversity and envisioned a role for himself based on his prior experience doing outreach for the Obama campaign. Although OTB was outside of his comfort zone, he felt a drive to join forces and offer his expertise. He also noticed ways he could immediately be supportive, by helping to keep the encampment clean. Therefore, for Francisco, becoming an Occupier:

...was a combination of a primal scream, but also this is a very deliberate demand that I must find an *efficient* mission, an *effective* mission. Not *any* mission. This is not about my emotions; this is about changing something. I am 50 years old; I don't have time to go around screaming. I don't want to spend my time if it's not gonna change reality.

So, while he felt a similar compulsion like Jesse's and Marie's to get involved with Occupy, he immediately looked for ways to plug himself in and work for change. For Francisco, the community building project comes second to the project of working for social and economic justice. Teresa also talks about the role she played during the encampment phase of OTB:

Really what I saw was—food was starting to come in. Water was starting to come in. And that's kind of what I ended up taking over, 'cause people were showing up with food and saying, "what do you want us to do with this?" And it's like, "Well, I dunno." What should we do with it? Well, we gotta put it someplace... So that's why I kind of fell into managing the food and water type of thing. Yeah. Because the tents went up and people started bringing food by and word got out, and people wanted to support people who were actually Occupying, and for the activists. You know food, materials, supplies, printed materials, what have you. We needed general supply, general storage. And all of the stuff we just didn't have; we just weren't prepared! We didn't know what this was supposed to look like.

While the encampment was operating, Teresa found a niche for herself, coordinating food and water for the full-time Occupiers. Like Francisco, she noticed that there was a need and decided to support them in the ways that she could. She identifies a difference between her work as a

commuter Occupier and the role of activists camping out on public property. This distinction between “real” and “commuter” Occupiers continued after the encampment was dismantled:

When we lost camp, I kinda lost my meaning in life there; with the loss of the need to have food and water coordination. And I was only there a couple hours a day; it was all I could spare. Trying to set up a system and a flow, and lend a hand that way. So with the loss of camp I had to really find my role. And I came out and started holding a sign on the corner, a couple hours a day; talking to people, handing out literature... And it's really always about support; being supportive of the people that are still together, that are actually doing the work of being out there; going to Sacramento, a going on marches and rallies, and trying to do the background work and trying to get the word out to them, and to other people, where I can. And kind of keep the good, the good stuff kind of buoyant, buoyed along until things really start to knit back together. Because after we lost the tents, and everybody kind of dispersed, I mean, people were coming by City Hall saying, “God, I’m so glad that you guys are still here.” And it was... smatterings of people kind of taking shifts, holding signs out there, trying to say “We’re still here; we’re not going away” (Teresa).

Teresa identifies herself as a supporter of the “real” Occupiers, rather than an Occupier herself, because she could not commit to the movement full-time. Holding signs a couple of hours a day was her way of trying to sustain momentum and conduct outreach with the general public.

Occupying as an Occupation

In the last section, Teresa illustrates the difficulty of maintaining a public presence and building community post-encampment. Now, we will switch gears and talk about the “work” of Occupy.

Strategy. Well, we’re much more militant...is one word I’ve heard used to describe it. My word that I use to describe it is, we have a more professional relationship amongst each other, and we’re...our conversations are more productive. So, we actually do have strategy, and whether or not our actions are that effective...at least it’s an exercise among a bunch of people in action. Even if the marches are incoherent, they still happen. And, yeah, even if, you know, the building seizure didn’t actually occur on [January] 28, it was still...I mean, that’s a very impressive gesture...to attempt what was a fool’s errand. (laughing) But it still occurred and with much support and a lot of amazing footage (Jesse).

So, what kinds of action are you interested in? (Interviewer).

Uh...feeding people. Having a safe place that's a congregation of people to bring down the crime rate...to give young people an alternative. Just having music brings down the crime rate, but also marches. Even just when everyone comes out and it's a great exercise and people feel something together, and they feel empowered and they remember what it is...that we actually live here, and that we can walk in the streets if we're together because that's social. That's not a traffic problem, that's people living in their city. And, Port shutdowns...totally against, but it's a lot of fun, and I go there, and, you know, it's a human event (Jesse).

Jesse describes Occupy Oakland's strategy as "militant," and that the goal is to organize large actions that gain the attention of the public, rather than be "effective" in the capitalist sense of the word. While Occupiers in Oakland do not expect immediate and measureable results, this effort is productive in a different way; a way that galvanizes people and undermines authority.

This pain is productive. It becomes an expression, and it motivates people. People feel indignant...When we got shot and tear-gassed on October 25th, that was the first time I've ever seen the appropriate response from people. There were two hundred people, and then there were thousands the next day. And then the encampment got reinstalled. They didn't give up. That's the persistence. And then that brought out more...Actually, it's my firm belief that nationally, and even internationally, Occupy would be an obscure reference...if not for Oakland's police on that night...It looked like another country. And, I suppose, maybe because I live down here and it's my block, I, you know, didn't see it that way, but it really looked like another country. And that's what got people marching in Cairo...That made it international, and the entire Occupy movement is thanks to the Oakland Police at this point (Jesse).

Large direct actions get people out into the streets, because some realize that the systems that are supposed to support us and protect us are corrupted, and feel the urge to do something about it.

Jesse is arguing that the Oakland Police's brutality ultimately helped the Occupy movement because it made people angry enough to get out into the streets. While as a society we have become accustomed to immediate results, Jesse understands that a revolution will not happen overnight, and Occupiers need to focus on organizing "human events" that empower people to take control of their lives and subvert the system in creative ways.

I can feel that power— I've walked down [laughs] the middle of Farmer's Market by myself with a sign. And one time a REALLY big sign because I was late...and I wasn't going to pull the sign down and I thought "You know, I'm going to march, I'm going to

march. I'm going to march while I'm finding everybody else" right? I felt no embarrassment...because there's a bigger objective, you know? (Marie)

Although Marie lives in a city with a very different history from Oakland, she has felt the rush of empowerment that results from standing up for what one believes in and reaching out to people in her local community. Outreach and direct action has sustained Marie's interest in participating with OTC, as she has learned more about the inequalities and injustices in her city:

The more you're in it the worse you know it is. And the more you know about it the worse you know it is...Walking away becomes something that you can't do for your own moral fortitude anymore. And you know, when I asked [the homeless couple]—when I said they could stay here, basically until they got a place, it's because I couldn't take it. I personally see very little point of marching and talking and discussing and having a raffle benefit...if there isn't going to be some kind of physical, hands-on action.

For Marie, Occupy has broadened her understanding of what it is like to be homeless in her city.

It became important for her to be an advocate for homeless Occupiers, to the point of inviting people to stay with her. This intense connection and involvement with the homeless community made Marie very invested in OTC, to the point where it became an intrinsic part of her identity.

Her experience as an Occupier has also made her committed to direct action, rather than simply marching at Farmers' Markets and doing fundraising. Steven elaborates on this theme:

I wanna see people [in the South Bay and Peninsula] protest the way they do in San Francisco and Oakland...I wanna bring that culture down here. 'Cause a lot of the activism that happens on the [South Bay and Peninsula] is about forming groups with committees and going to city council meetings and filling out petitions and holding signs on a street corner, and I think that's all great, but I also wanna bring in that other element of, Direct Action, Mic Checks and-- I wouldn't say confrontational but more aggressive and direct. Not throwing bricks through windows but just some things that are going to make people take notice that are a little more disruptive, and that you tend to see more in the bigger cities, not really in suburban areas...Wells Fargo knows that there are going to be bank protesters in San Francisco, LA, New York, but what if they knew that they needed to look out for that in Redwood City, San Carlos, Sunnyvale, you know, all these other cities. You know, then they will be like, "Whoa, what's going on?" So, that's one of the things that's on my personal agenda.

Steven occupies both in the South Bay and along the Peninsula, and describes the challenge of bringing radical organizing to suburban areas that are more historically progressive. Like Marie, Steven is very interested in being involved in direct, physical action, in addition to the more conventional and predictable tactics that focus on reforming rather than subverting the system. Steven's involvement in his local Occupy has dropped in the past few months due to his fellow Occupier's general lack of appreciation for the work that he does:

My activity in [Peninsula's] Occupy has kind of dropped in the last couple months. And it has been because—lately I haven't felt like I have the support for a lot of the more Direct Action stuff that we do. And I felt like maybe when we first started in October or November it was all kind of new and fresh and people were more excited about it, but now more and more people are like, "well, I don't want to Mic Check a corporation"...So there has kind of been this drop in appetite for that kind of protest. So I kind of felt a little bummed out by that...But lately a lot of proposals have just been dying in GA; people are like, "eh, I don't really know," or at best you get people supporting it but they'll be like "I'm gonna vote for it because I don't wanna vote it down but I'm not gonna go because it's not really my thing." And for me the whole point of Occupy is to solve the issues that we kind of have worked together on, it is not necessarily my personal passion either, but I went, because my whole thing is we have to support each other on all our issues, that's how we are gonna be successful.

Steven is describing a phenomenon that has occurred across Occupies, in which the GA has become less of a hub for planning and more of a place of governance. What Razsa and Kurnik termed a "tyranny of consensus" has developed this past year in the South Bay and Peninsula, where people come to GA less to support each other in organizing and attending local actions, and more to experiment and engage in the process of direct democracy. His solution is simple:

There's been this debate about tactics and stuff, and how maybe the solution is to create a whole other group that's not Occupy...because one of the debates that's kind of stymied a lot of local groups is "you should be inclusive of all people, even if they are disruptive," so we have been thinking of starting a group that's just focused on Direct Action...We wanna include the principles of Occupy but we wanna say at the beginning, this is not a group where you can come in and be disruptive. We're inclusive to sexual orientation, race, gender, minorities; these are our principles. We are fighting against—make it very specific—banks, these are the groups we are protesting against. As opposed to Occupy where it's kind of freeform, have it more laid out up front...it's not city specific so

anyone on the Peninsula can come and be a part of it...I mean I hate to see things split off but... I think it is kind of already happening kind of organically anyway. People are working to do their own actions and their own events and so...maybe that's what I see for the future; other groups coming out of this and other avenues of action.

Steven's solution is to use what he has learned as a participant in the Occupy movement to create a new group of activists focused on direct action toward a specific issue, like financial justice. I have seen this trend manifest itself throughout the past year, as people develop affinity groups and join forces within their networks through their involvement in local Occupies. But is this fractionalization a negative consequence of inclusivity and ambiguity? The next section attempts to answer this question, as we focus on OTB's struggle with internal feuding between Occupiers.

Occupying Conflict: Spotlight on the South Bay

In the past section, Steven describes how internal conflict can lead to fractionalization of local Occupies. Here, he draws comparisons between two Occupies with which he is involved:

Well, the big difference is I think, where everyone's coming from. I mean, [the Peninsula] is more suburban, we do have less people of color...we don't have anyone regularly who has been part of the homeless population or who has had problems with addiction or anything like that, so for us, yes we've had drama but it hasn't been to the level of OTB and I think it's because we have had—we've been, I don't know, lucky? We have had people who are just, you know, very run of the mill, middle-class people. And so, with [the South Bay] Occupation, you have that broader diversity and that causes a lot more problems...The whole issue of somebody making homophobic comments—that wouldn't have even happened in the Peninsula, because we don't have that diversity in that aspect. So I think the main difference is that the South Bay is dealing with a lot more different personalities and it's harder to coordinate and be effective when you have a lot of people...who are that way.

For example, like, for the Peninsula we have has some issues with our twitter as well, like getting the password and stuff, but we don't turn that into: "Oh, this is a power play," and "oh, this is a conspiracy, people are trying to have control." I think we have a lot more trust and I think part of that comes from the fact that a lot of people in our group at least come from backgrounds of de-escalation...We have a lot of people who have been in groups before where they deal with—like [one woman], her degree was in Conflict Resolution, and like, we have a lot of people with those types of backgrounds where, they are used to sitting in circles and working things out. And maybe that is why we are kind of bogged down in discussing our process now because that is kind of where people come from in our group...and I think because we do have that kind of coordination with OTB,

we see what you guys are up to and we know what's going on with you guys...we are able to identify those conflicts...because there are people in our group who have that kind of training, background...We have been able to kind of head all that off in the past before it becomes a problem. But again, we do still have...that luck of not having to deal with people who do have problems mentally or with drugs or income or whatever.

Steven's first observation is the difference between an Occupy that is located in a suburban area, and is composed of predominantly white, middle class people, and an Occupy that is located in the middle of the South Bay, bringing together people from a variety of backgrounds and political ideologies. The many participants of OTB have come to GA with different visions of what Occupy should be, based on their prior experiences with homelessness, their jobs or activism. While no Occupy group is perfect, Steven sees OTB's diversity has a cause of conflict rather than an opportunity for community building, because Occupiers of different social and economic backgrounds are skeptical and suspicious of each other. Some have defined Occupy as a lifestyle, while some have conceptualized it as a job. Francisco discusses how his background as an immigrant from a country under dictatorial rule has impacted his political ideology.

[We are the 99%;] the theoretical definition would be that, yeah, Tea Partiers, Libertarians, the extreme right...from left to right, all the way. But, in practice, we haven't seen that. And in practice, the entire Occupy movement has really been a left-wing movement, while attracting quite a few Libertarians. And I've seen quite a few anarchists, who feel strongly about, "government's evil, we should not discuss things with them. They should not exist." I don't feel that way; I don't like using the word, "government." I prefer the word, "administration." 'Cause to me, a government is—I was governed by generals with tanks and rifles, and all sorts of heavy weapons, and they—we were GOVERNED. We were ruled over...And I think in the U.S. people talk about government and it stirs up the rebellious teenager; "no, you are not going to straighten anything in my room, don't even touch anything in there!"...So, the anarchists...And also activists for other causes. Mostly Progressive, Green and that whole lot. Indigenous Rights; that was a very big, a very vigorous group within Occupy.

In this passage Francisco is commenting on the chant "We are the 99%," and how in theory, participants in Occupy should cross the spectrum of political ideology. In practice, OTB initially attracted a lot of progressives and anarchists, and over time has skewed more "traditionally"

liberal. Francisco identifies as a progressive, and has difficulty understanding some of the radical views towards government because he grew up under an overtly oppressive regime. His professional experience also alienates him from more radical Occupiers. He has a background in software engineering, which affects the way he conceptualizes the Occupy movement:

And I saw the danger of mission creep...feature creep is a term that exists in software engineering. When you are writing software, your product manager says, "Build this thing with these features." And while you are busy doing that, within the release date, he or somebody else has the bright idea to go, "Oh, could you also make it do this?" And features are creeping in. And the thing gets more complicated; you get more bugs; and then suddenly, ooo you're in trouble...And gradually, you started out with something very crisp, very clean, and you end up with Frankenstein. You started with a Ginsu knife, that was one knife, nice and sharp, and now it's a Swiss army knife; it's got corkscrews and screwdrivers and bottle openers as well. And that's a problem and it doesn't do what the original design was supposed to do very well. I saw that happening at Occupy, because not everyone had an appreciation for focus. And to me, that's what attracted me here. We are not democrats, we are not republicans. We are upset about financial justice, Wall Street Boom, one thing--Occupy Wall Street. And it's such a central problem in our society. If we can fix this—so to me it's like, I can come here, this is the biggest problem of our time right now, in this decade. If we can fix this we can probably also create momentum to deal with other really important things.

Francisco sees the need for Occupy to have a singular focus, in order to increase effectiveness with maximum efficiency. He sees the Occupy movement's lack of commitment to a specific agenda as a problem. Relatively new to activism, he is applying the skills he learned in the high-tech industry to the Occupy movement. Danny, a former programmer, also does this:

While I don't wanna be a facilitator long term I do feel that part of leadership is walking the walk that you want other people to walk. And that doesn't mean I gotta keep doing it forever, but as a manager at Apple I had to program to get the respect of the programmers, and I was a programmer so that was easy enough for me. Facilitation is really hard for me but, somebody needed to just dive in and say..."THIS HAS TO HAPPEN." Because, as long as good stuff isn't happening, people end up taking out their frustration on each other. So, a lot of negativity has gone by in OTB, which I think if lots of good stuff was happening, if there was still an active occupation...people wouldn't have stopped being involved; they wouldn't have walked away. But when it seems like almost all the stuff that has been going on is bad shit, people bail and they get pissed at each other and they blame, so yeah, it's trying to start setting up tents out there today, trying to make stuff happen in the tech committee, and get the people working on

finance, you know. That's what I did. I feel useful.... I am trying to be useful and then move on, because the most valuable thing...If you wanted somebody who can somehow get other people doing it—and not by telling them to—it's not like management by authority. Just trying to be enthusiastic and upbeat, but not avoid the problems. You have to be pragmatic and be able to relate to the people who are cynical. I think relating to different people here, the really different minds and mindsets, is probably the key value that I am bringing in.

Danny saw a need for good facilitation within OTB, and decided that his role in the group was to take the initiative and spearhead a lot of systems that he felt would improve organization amongst all of these diverse actors. He proposed reinstating the facilitation and finance committees, joined the tech committee and organized a mediation working group. He sought to be a motivator rather than a manager, because he didn't envision himself as a long-term Occupier. Unfortunately, OTB currently lacks the numbers to sustain active committees, without overworking its main participants, who largely operate as commuter Occupiers. Francisco illustrates why OTB needs a balance of people who view Occupying as a job, and people who view Occupying as a lifestyle; and not only a balance of people, but a mutual acceptance of different roles within a movement.

We had this coming to grips moment at the [Values] group. Where we were...talking about slogans and provocative things that would make people angry, or give you a cause for anger; and the realization that if you look at Tahrir Square and the video, and who do you have there...you have the entire spectrum of the population...And getting the attention of power because they are bringing society to a halt, and they realize, there is anger in the air and this is not some cerebral discussion you can have around the negotiating table, when someone's yelling at you. And there is value in anger. That sometimes you wanna be unreasonable as a group. And then the moment where we all had a nervous laugh was, "okay, so let's look around here, and, oh crap, we are a bunch of very cerebral intellectuals planning the dynamics and the balance of power. And could anybody in this room imagine a Tahrir Square riot made up of people like us?" And if we can't connect with everybody, and actually inspire emotional reactions, if we can't think hard enough to come up with stuff that will do that, and not make it overcomplicated, where people roll their eyes and say, "eh, then that's not gonna happen," then we are wasting our time. Because we aren't trying to win a high school debate club event; that's not gonna change the government or the way society functions. Where is the end result?

Here Francisco talks about a realization that some Occupiers from the South Bay had during a discussion of values and strategy; that a movement requires people from all walks of life to identify with each other's struggles and participate in whatever way they feel equipped to participate, and people must feel welcome to do that. This seems contradictory given his previous assertion that his way is the right way, and that Occupy must commit to a singular focus in order to be successful. Of course, when you have a diverse group of people coming together, there will be conflict, but ultimately the conflict is worth the effort:

You have to have an amount of conflict. It's the inherent nature of people to have a disagreement over an idea. It's really not the conflict that's the problem; it's what you do with the disagreement. It's how you resolve. It's how you arrive at a solution, or a compromise; which is a language that seriously lacks. We are such a culture of war. You know, we've got the biggest fucking military on the planet... Occupy was supposed to be about, peaceful—how do you have a peaceful revolution? It's about dialogue, it's about language, it's about sitting down; it's about compromise; democracy is about compromise. We are not a culture of compromise. You know, it was the ideology of coming to a compromise; of exchange of ideas. It may be too idealistic; too esoteric for people. And of course you always get the subverts mixed in; that really want to frustrate conversation. And they did a good job. They strung things out so long they wore people down. And a lot of issues went unresolved (Teresa).

Teresa expresses regret that the dominant culture of militarism has stymied OTBs efforts at dialogue and compromise. Building trust between people from diverse backgrounds requires time, purposeful action and strong facilitation, so people can truly learn that “our struggles are interconnected” (Jamie). Work and community building must go hand-in-hand.

Discussion

In the last section, Teresa illustrates how conflict is intrinsic to a social movement, and the challenge for us is to learn how to work through the conflict to come up with new and creative solutions in the face of overwhelming adversity. While the internal conflicts described in this paper are not unique to OTB, these excerpts from interviews with Occupiers in the South Bay demonstrate how the culture of Silicon Valley has affected the trajectory of their Occupy

group, since many of remaining active participants have experience in high specialized fields or are experienced activists of a more progressive persuasion. The result is discussion and preoccupation with consensus decision-making, rather than organizing local direct actions. So how do we reconcile the definitions of Occupying as an occupation, and Occupying as a lifestyle? Is it possible to not just accept, but celebrate both conceptualizations of Occupy?

I have seen what negative energy can do, and the supreme importance of positive energy; and the importance of celebrating. So you remember [at a previous GA]—I was just, in an almost childlike way, looking for any excuse to go, “YAY, celebrate, let’s clap (clapping), proposal passed, newcomer, this guy says his name is Mike and he bothered to come close to us and YAY, celebrate anything, celebrate celebrate CELEBRATE.” And to change a society you need to bring together a group of activists, the few that have enough energy and are crazy enough to think they can change the world. But how social an experience it is, that you need to be teammates, you need bonding, and you need to keep that positive energy, because what keeps you coming back—and I am not a religious person, I don’t belong to any church—but psychologically I get it that people go to churches and...that is the social experience. That is the center of bonding and everything. And for us, this is our church. It’s the group of people; it’s the common belief. And we are trying to drive towards the common end...And if it is a place that is uplifting for you, and you go home feeling like you’re a better person—or into your dome tent depending on what’s going on...you keep coming back and you also let other people know how great you feel when they see it, and it becomes the center of gravity. And the opposite happens when there’s infighting (Francisco).

Francisco discusses how his experience with OTB has impressed upon him the importance of “vibe.” People don’t want to come to Occupy for a loosely organized “business” meeting full of people who enjoy hearing themselves talk; they want to come for an uplifting experience that inspires them to volunteer their time for this movement. While some conflict is productive, too much conflict can both impede action and alienate the group from the various communities that Occupy is trying to galvanize. Local Occupies need to provide a space where people feel comfortable bringing their families and friends, as well as feel appreciated for their work:

[A former Occupier] talked about this; he talked about families. He says, “I’m encouraging people to bring their families and we can’t have people posting this kind of shit online!”...They’ll leave. It’ll turn them off. They’ll leave.” And I’m going--I am looking down the line of things were ominous with the government clamping down on us. Do you want them putting their children at risk? Seizing their children because they’re activists; they’re involved in activism or something like that...But I agree, ‘cause it is young people. And I talk to my daughter and her friends who are very interested in Occupy, you know, about activism and what’s happening. Yeah, it is—it’s gonna be the young people. In fact, my daughter had to do a speech and she did hers on NDAA. And I was glad that that’s the subject that she chose. But yeah, it’s gonna be the young people (Teresa).

Teresa sees great potential for involving children in Occupy, and educating the next generation about the current systems in place, rather than shielding children from the realities of the world we live in. This dialogue between generations is not merely beneficial, it is essential to survive:

And the more that we interface; the more that we are able to say, “hey, you’re from a different country and you don’t eat small children; Gee, the newspapers were wrong; Gee, you mean you care about your kids too, you want an education; you want good food and clean water; you don’t sound any different from me!” And once we get locked in and isolated...And Occupy really you know, brought a lot of people out, to meet people again, and talk to people, and interface with people again. I meet a lot of people who say, “Gosh, I’m not really good at talking with people.” And...I’m really not either. And the younger generation; I hear that a lot. Especially with the kids; my daughter’s friends you know, “I’m just really not good with people.” They are not from a culture that really had like a community center, where they had like a neighborhood, or a place where you got out with kids, except for maybe school or something. They never really interfaced. And Occupy really brought people out, to learn how to talk with people; strangers, complete strangers, all over again, to say, “Gee, you’re human? Gee, we have something in common.” And to get people really connected back in to humanity (Teresa).

Ultimately, Teresa is making the same argument that Jesse did in the beginning, that the ideology of rugged individualism and increasing isolation does not serve society in a positive way, but will ultimately be our undoing. Social movements do not happen overnight, but prove to be sustainable if they compel the next generations to take action. The work of community building and realizing that we are all connected is essential for the Occupy movement to sustain itself.

That's the thing, when I talk about people changing, the individuals who do this, they're very brave, and they're putting themselves at risk, and they believe that it's what they need to do to be a good person, and to make the world a better place. That's what they believe. Whether they're right or wrong is irrelevant because it's whether they rise to that challenge, or if they're cowardly and they just cheer for it. But there are people who actually do it, and they're becoming...they're actualizing...it's a very changing thing. I've seen people change from it...just from being amongst it and supporting it. It enlivens them; it's the most exciting thing they've ever seen. And it's the most alive they've ever felt...I think that's a very important thing, and these kids, when they get to be about 25, they might see it differently, but that they've done it, will make them better at whatever they do next (Jesse).

Jesse is describing a phenomenon that crosses Occupies, in which Occupy participants change as a result of their involvement, and they change for the better. Not only do people become more aware and connected to the various communities within and around their cities, but they also develop skills that they can use throughout their lives. Local Occupies are dynamic, loosely connected entities that do not embody an overarching "Occupy culture," but are malleable and necessarily affected by the larger contexts in which they operate. While Occupy Oakland's trajectory has been shaped by its history of oppression and radical activism, Occupy the Coast operates in a relatively small town, and was able to sustain an encampment longer than most Occupies. Participants in Occupy the Coast have also chosen to target specific local issues, including homelessness. Finally, Occupy the Bay fits somewhere in between, not quite urban but not quite suburban, and characterized as an "Occupy of commuters." While these three Occupy groups have experienced degrees of internal conflict, the nuances of these conflicts are intrinsically connected to their larger environments, and should be understood as such. If we understand internal conflict within local Occupies as conflicts not between individuals, but between collectives and their environments, perhaps the Occupy movement can be sustainable, and create a new paradigm of social, cultural, political and economic organization.

V. CREATING AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PAMPHLET

While the last chapter shows how different definitions of Occupying and inadequate communication can create group infighting, this chapter shows how three graduate students in applied anthropology at San Jose State University developed a document designed to facilitate communication both within and between Occupy groups. In other words, while the last chapter poses a problem, this chapter represents a concrete solution.

“So, what are we gonna do with this?” At the first meeting of our Occupy research group, Megan Aufdermaur asked what the product of our research was going to be. I sat back in my chair and realized that I hadn’t thought about the outcome of our research at all, since I was still in the phase of forming a research question and design. She suggested that we do a pamphlet designed to be a toolkit for Occupiers, which would make the project more applied in its approach. We decided that a collectively-written ethnographic pamphlet was feasible since all members were planning on pursuing independent master’s projects. Originally envisioned as a rapid assessment of different Occupy groups, we began data collection in February with the intension of finishing all research phases by August 2012. When I spoke to research participants about what I was planning to do with my findings, they supported my creative take on research dissemination and looked forward to seeing the results of our labor.

The three remaining members of the Occupy research group finished most of our data collection by August 2012, and we decided to produce the ethnographic pamphlet by September 17, the anniversary of Occupy Wall Street (See Appendix B). Inspired by Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish’s ethnographic pamphlet *The Races of Mankind* (1946), I created the following outline:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Occupy Oakland

Chapter 3: Occupy the Bay

Chapter 4: Occupy the Coast

Chapter 5: Who are the Occupiers?

Chapter 6: Networking

Chapter 7: The Future of Occupy

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In keeping with our comparative approach, we wanted to elucidate the beliefs and behaviors of the three different Occupy groups separately before examining the commonalities in Chapters 5-7. Within the snapshots of the city-specific Occupies, we discussed the actions and strategies utilized by Occupiers, ideological orientations and why individuals participate in Occupy. While the process required some writing, most of our work entailed compiling and organizing sections of interviews that we felt best illustrated our themes. We wanted the pamphlet to be composed primarily of our interviewee's voices, rather than ours. Once we decided on an outline, we divided the work relatively equally: Keller wrote about Occupy Oakland and Chapters 6 and 7, Hart wrote about Occupy the Bay and Chapters 5 and 8, and Grove wrote about Occupy the Coast and chapter 1, in addition to providing the illustrations. We provided feedback on each of our sections and made necessary modifications, such as making "Networking" its own chapter preceding "The Future of Occupy." We also shared sections of the pamphlet with members of the studied Occupy groups to get their feedback, and received positive reinforcement. I delivered the final version of the pamphlet to members of Occupy the Bay through their Google Group, where it was well-received. In regards to constructive criticism, one Occupier whose words were used in the pamphlet said that while he enjoyed seeing his opinions in print, he would have liked to read more of our (the researchers') analysis. I assured him that the absence of extensive analysis was intentional in this particular piece, but that I was in the process of writing academic

articles as part of my master's project (like the previous chapter), which would exercise my analytical muscles. I look forward to presenting the culmination of this project to our research participants in May 2013.

The next chapter includes the last two components of this project, 1) "Letter to the People's Mic;" and 2) "This is What Democracy Looks Like!: A Play in Three Acts." The "Letter" sets the reader up for the ritual of the General Assembly, articulating the process and showing the types of conflicts that become manifest in this performative space. It is my hope that this "Letter" prepares the reader for the play, which demonstrates these performatives and tensions over three acts.

VII. SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED: THE PERFORMATIVITY OF OCCUPY

In the midst of conducting fieldwork in the spring of 2012, and scribbling notes furiously during countless GAs, I realized that many of my fieldnotes could easily be transformed into a script. In the middle of one of my methods classes, while we were talking about artistic representations of data, I decided that I would write a play about the General Assembly. This was very exciting because writing a play would require me to delve into other disciplines, and interdisciplinarity is becoming characteristic of much applied anthropology today. I enrolled in a fall 2012 class entitled Performing Presentational Aesthetics. I had no idea what that meant at the time, but the class description said that it would help students “acquire the skills of writing, adapting, directing, and presenting performances of literary texts, ethnographic interviews, and social activism,” so it seemed like a perfect fit. While I didn’t write the script for this class, I found performance studies theory to be tremendously helpful in understanding my experiences with the GA, and wrote the following “Letter to the People’s Mic⁶” as a warm-up for the scriptwriting task. This letter from an Occupier-researcher to fellow Occupiers wrestles with the balance between work and play throughout the consensus decision-making process.

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<sup>6</sup> The People’s Microphone is a tool for amplifying one’s voice by first saying a statement, and then having a group of people repeat the statement in unison. This act allows one to speak to an audience without the aid of amplification equipment, and gives the illusion of people speaking in “one voice.” The People’s microphone is often utilized during protest actions and is signaled by the phrase, “Mic Check!”

## Component 1: Letter to the People's Mic

From: Hannah Hart

Department of Anthropology

San Jose State University

December 9, 2012

To: Occupy the Bay

Public Space

San Francisco Bay Area

Website, Facebook and Twitter

Dear Fellow Occupiers,

Mic Check!

MIC CHECK!

The people's microphone has become an important symbol for participants in the Occupy movement. There is something incredibly beautiful and powerful about a group of people broadcasting a message and speaking as one, without the aid of amplification equipment. This symbol is central to the mantra of the Occupy movement "We are the 99%," showing that regardless of all of our differences, "our struggles are interconnected" (Jamie). But what does the Mic Check! *do*? Over this past year, we have used these words to call the General Assembly (GA) to order, to gain attention at actions, to begin speeches, to interrupt arguments, to drown out disruptive voices, and to make unwanted people go away. Therefore, Mic Check! is the quintessential "speech *act*" (or performative) in the way that J.L. Austin defines it in his second lecture on *How to Do Things with Words* (1962); as "an utterance that that does not make a

statement – i.e. that does not express truly or falsely an already existing condition – but in fact performs an action” (Bial 2004:145). The Mic Check! is not just *saying* something, it is *doing* something, and this act of performing in front of an audience can be extremely satisfying.

So, what makes an utterance performative? Is it merely the presence of a stage, a script, and actors? Is all theatre performative? While Austin would say that theatre is too artificial to call itself performative, Andrew Parker and Eve Sedgwick (1993) argue that “in order for Austin’s performative to be effective, it must have certain performance-like qualities: namely, there must be an audience (listener), and the speech act must conform to a pre-established pattern” (Bial 2004:145). Therefore, we cannot easily distinguish performativity from theatricality. The Mic Check! both requires an audience and conforms to a pattern of say-and-repeat as a unit, in order to be felicitous for all participants. So what happens when participants in a ritual become unwilling to act as “one voice,” and play by the rules? Through the course of my fieldwork with OTB, I became increasingly fascinated by the ritual of the General Assembly (GA), and what it takes for a GA to be, in Austin’s words, felicitous. In this letter, I want to make two arguments: 1) that the GA is a performance composed of performative acts, and 2) that OTB’s GA developed into an infelicitous speech act over time as it became progressively more theatrical.

Austin provides a method for *How to Do Things with Words* by outlining “some at least of the things which are necessary for the smooth or ‘happy’ functioning of a performative and then give examples of infelicities and their effects” (1962:148). I would like to apply these attributes of a “happy” performance to the General Assembly (GA) using my research on OTB, in order to show why the GA is at present an “unhappy” performance, and why people have gradually become disillusioned by the GA from October 2011-October 2012.

**“A.1: There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect; that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances” (Austin 1962:148).**

What is the accepted conventional procedure for the GA? The answer is that it changes from context to context. While OWS had the opportunity to set the precedent for the GA procedure, my experiences with three very different Occupies in Northern California has convinced me that the GA in the South Bay is very different from the GA in Oakland, and that the GA procedures and guidelines vary over time, depending on who shows up to the meeting. What we have observed, however, is that while the conventions vary from Occupy to Occupy, the conventions *do* exist, and are important to the participants involved. Within OTB, for example, we utilize hand signals during the GA to communicate with different actors in the group, showing thumbs-up to signal agreement, thumbs-down to signal opposition, two arms in a “X” across out chest to signal that we “block” the proposal or action item, the letter “C” with our hand to signal that we want to ask a clarifying question, two hands in a triangle to signal a point-of-process, and our fingers twirling in a circle to signal the speaker to please wrap-up. Often, if there are new participants present, the signals will be explained by the facilitator; if everyone has been to GA before, then the facilitator (if there is one) will start the meeting.

GA at OTB usually involves people fulfilling certain roles during the meeting. We already mentioned the “facilitator,” whose role is more to keep the meeting on a general agenda than to control the subject-matter of the meeting. Thus, the facilitator is not meant to be the undisputed “leader” of the GA, but a device to keep the meeting running smoothly. Sometimes the facilitator will also serve as a “stack-taker,” not only keeping the GA on course but also

determining the order in which people speak when discussing topics and proposals. The stack-taker may choose to take “progressive stack,” meaning that minorities and people who have not spoken are bumped to the top of the list, rather than the order in which people raise their hands to signal to the stack-taker that they want to speak. The third role that is sometimes utilized at OTB’s GA is “timekeeper,” in which someone (usually not the facilitator or stack-taker) volunteers to concentrate on the timing of the GA, making sure that proposals aren’t discussed for too long, and that the GA doesn’t last for 4 hours. There are also roles for note-takers, live-streamers and vibe-watchers/democratic reminders, but those are utilized less often than the first three at OTB. Finally, these roles are fluid and are generally adopted by different people during different GAs.

The symbols and roles would not be necessary without an agenda, which can change from meeting to meeting but usually includes 3-6 different categories: announcements, report-backs (committee/working group or general), proposals, old business, new business and open mic. The agenda at OTB’s GA is usually established at the beginning of the meeting by the facilitator and its purpose is to organize the discussion; to make the GA easy to follow for both veteran Occupiers and new participants. During proposals, the convention is to practice modified consensus, in which 90% of the participants present must be able to live with the proposal for the decision to “pass.” If the group does not come to agreement, the proposal must be “tabled” for the next GA. The relatively new convention for OTB is to also have a quorum of 10 people in order to pass proposals, so any proposal that passes with a GA composed of fewer than 10 participants must be passed at another GA. These conventions are not meant to “control” nor “limit” the proceedings, but to provide a framework for action. If all of these conventions are utilized appropriately, then the GA should be a felicitous performance.

**“A.2: The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked” (Austin 1962:148).**

Okay, picture the top half of a daisy. And the petals are different constituencies. And the yellow center is the overlap. So if that's the 99%, you're trying to bring together people from very different persuasions, very different priorities. Literally, if you are not just kidding about being the 99%, that means you are going to have right wingers because otherwise you're not the 99%; you're the 50%. And so people at the tips of the petals is where they stand alone, where they are at the extremes on some very specific pet peeve they have, or cause, and that's their thing, but not the same thing as the other petal. But, in the middle, if you draw it as a bunch of ellipses, you can see a bunch of ellipses, all the petals overlap, where the yellow center is. And that's the very very VERY few things that a crowd that diverse can agree on (Francisco).

As Francisco illustrates, “We are the 99%” theoretically means that everyone across the spectrum of political ideology (besides the 1%) is welcome to participate in Occupy. There is no litmus test to become an Occupier; being an Occupier means willing to participate actively in one's local Occupy group in some capacity. In practice, inclusivity has become an issue with OTB, as well as other Occupies which we have studied:

A lot of the original conflict in OTB was that people were getting kicked out of the encampment for being threatening or for actively pursuing their addictions in the encampment.... And so a lot of the conflict has come from “well, we should be inclusive for everyone anyway, so why don't you let those people in?” But...I think Occupy's not going to be successful unless you draw those lines because...If you are dealing with people who are addicted in your own Occupation, you don't have time to focus on you know, “what events should we do?” You are worrying about like, “is this guy like, shooting up or smoking while we are at city hall?” Or “do I have to worry about this person becoming angry or violent or disruptive at a GA?” You can't function. And it sucks because then people think like, “Oh, clearly you don't believe in inclusiveness if you will not allow for these things.”...And this is the only thing that I think Occupy should take from other traditional activist groups, is that other groups, when they have those problems, those people are cut out (Steven).

As James describes, the issue of inclusivity can become complicated when people disrupt the procedure (usually due to mental health issues), disagree with the procedure or particular people

and try to sabotage the GA, and when people discover infiltrators in their midst who are trying to undermine the movement. While OTB has experienced the first two conundrums, infiltration has been less of an issue throughout my participation. Some larger Occupies like Occupy Oakland have experienced more problems with infiltration. These issues of inclusivity affect the degree of trust Occupiers have in other participants, particularly newcomers who have not proven their commitment to the movement. Issues of inclusivity are political and can result in fractionalization of Occupy groups, which we have seen happen over time with OTB. While in theory everyone who shows up at GA should be welcomed with open arms, in reality veteran Occupiers are more likely to trust each other because they “know the history” of decisions made by that particular Occupy, and personal vendettas between individuals and cliques are not easily forgotten, even months later. There is also the painful reality that no matter how difficult a personality is, the GA has no authority to permanently ban any individual from a GA, unless they just Mic Check! the person over and over if s/he attends. The offending person can also simply go to another local Occupy and resume participation, or start an autonomous group with the name “Occupy” in it, removing any control the other Occupy has on their participation. Aside from trashing someone’s character through social media (which members of OTB have done in the past when property was stolen) Occupiers have no control over who shows up at any given GA, making the felicity of the performance variable.

**“B.1: The procedure must be executed by the participants both correctly**

**B.2: and completely” (Austin 1962:148).**

“So, who wants to facilitate?”

OTB's GA almost always starts with some variant of this sentence, usually about 10-20 minutes after GA is supposed to begin. Since many of the regular participants in OTB have been involved since the encampment phase last fall, people hang out for a little bit and arrive a little late, so the GA is generally a casual affair. The first GA that I attended was led by an experienced and confident facilitator, who participated very little in the discussion but organized the proceedings very well. This GA in late January was also one of the larger OTB GAs that I attended, composed of about 25 people, which required the facilitator to firmly organize the meeting. The majority of GAs in which I participated, however, were led by inexperienced or compromised facilitators who came to GA with their own agendas, or got too involved in discussions. The following dialogue is from the second GA I attended:

Participant 1: We should work together, not ban people from GA.

Participant 2: The focus needs to be on whether policies have been violated.

Participant 3: She had her hand up first! (pointing)

Participant 1: Who is taking stack?

Participant 2: Anything that is going to be posted as OTB should only be posted if we all discuss and agree.

Participant 1: How am I supposed to repudiate these charges?

Participant 3: Is this a good way to use GA?

Participant 1: These are misrepresentations of GA

Participant 2: [The weekly bank action] can't be represented as an OTB event!

Participant 3: It is in the minutes.

Participant 4: Something like this should be brought up outside of GA.

Participant 2: Last night there was a twitter war on [the weekly bank action]

Participant 4: So many Occupies are preoccupied with official media accounts. This is supposed to be behind the scenes; supposed to be a resource, not the main event.

Participant 3: We are supposed to be talking about how to bring down the banks!

Participant 4: We don't think like a family! We to spend some time addressing issues and talking things out. If I was a new person, I would leave!

Participant 3: Table this for Saturday

Participant 4: GA is not an appropriate time



This transcript from a GA is probably difficult for you to follow, because the facilitator failed to keep the discussion on task and allowed an argument about a claim that was made over Twitter to take over the GA. While this is an example of weak facilitation, the effect is not as dire as compromised facilitation, in which the facilitator uses the GA to confront people rather than communicate with them and forge consensus. This following example comes from a notorious OTB GA in which the facilitator used his role to advertise a particular community organization and lecture OTB on the issue of indigenous rights:

Unfortunately, Derek was running...most of the general assemblies at the time, and he meant well in letting them run that GA, but in my opinion he was very naïve because he didn't see through this... at the time our routine was the GA is from 12-2:00...and at 2:00, we go on a march...And there were supporters that were not part of the camp, but they would carve out the 2 hours in their weekend, to come out and be part of Occupy from 12 to 2, for that purpose. They had an expectation. And this time they arrived, and there's someone with these huge native drums, and there are a bunch of guys around him that are body builders in tee shirts, looking very military...They had a scowl on their face and their arms were crossed and they looked very threatening...And there were some others and there was some really old guy with long gray hair that everybody paid respect to in the group. But they were very separate and it was very threatening. And then this drumming is going on and these guys are doing some sort of introduction. But it's not a warm smiling introduction; it's the finger wagging kind of introduction "this land belonged to the blahblahblah and he took it over and we are standing on sacred ground and you don't even know it; and this is for all of us to pay respect..." Nobody comes to a movement to be told how defective..."You focus your anger and your finger wagging on Wall Street and the 1%, and your enemy..."

Francisco is describing the infamous "drumming GA," in which activists for indigenous rights facilitated a GA and altered the performance without the consent of the other participants. Because regular participants felt blindsided by the change in structure and accusatory tone of the facilitator, tension escalated to potentially dangerous levels:

...And people started to get more and more stirred up, like, "What the hell is going on? The plan is to do this, and suddenly you're taking control over it." It was terribly done. I

had volunteered to be a simultaneous interpreter...either into English, or...into Spanish, and then people who needed to hear it in Spanish would be in one place...That's the reason I was standing by them. But this was quickly getting out of control and we had 250 people or 300 in front of us and the crowd was getting very upset. And a few people were getting quite vocal, and starting to yell things like "enough of this" and "stop that" and "get that guy...out of there and let's have the real GA that we came for." And the paramilitary huge guys are there in the meantime and it's just a terrible, terrible mix. And I actually tried to diffuse the situation...I saw that [the facilitator] was on his way to getting lynched or something. So I actually took the blame that: "I am terribly sorry; this is a failure of coordination and we should have announced it..." Because people like me well enough and I could afford to do that; they're not gonna lynch me...But if they are aiming it at [him], we are about to have a police episode here. It imploded; [someone] actually yelled "if that's how you feel, all you unhappy Mexicans get out of here!"...That was the match in the tinderbox or the haystack or whatever. The whole thing erupted. The event was over. There was shoving, there was screaming, there was a reporter from the [News] present...Terrible, terrible PR for us.

Francisco shows how perceived efforts to control proceedings are interpreted as attacks by Occupiers, and particularly in a GA of 200-300 people, this mounting tension can become dangerous. A racist comment by one participant unraveled the GA quickly, affecting both internal participation with OTB as well as public opinion, since the episode was documented in the local newspaper. Francisco goes on to illustrate what could have been done differently:

...To give you an idea of how well this could have gone, if it had been done maturely—these really tough scary looking guys are a [local community] organization...What they do is they adopt a neighborhood and they go in and they essentially push out the gangs. Now if you are going to go push out gangs you should be built like that and look like that...And then once they create that void they fill it with constructive activities for the young people that might have gotten involved in gangs...you read the mission on paper, it sounds great! And it just killed me because I'm thinking, "this could have so easily been presented as just that, written up days in advance. I would...have explained this to our GA...they would have seen, "Oh, it's good," and then we would have had, "if you come a half hour early at 11:30 we will be treated to a gift of Native culture with ceremonial drumming"...such a wonderful mission. And they help the community; increase our diversity. It could have been awesome, and instead, it was a shameful violent episode.

Francisco does a great job of describing how errors in facilitation, communication and planning can cause a GA to implode. A couple of members of a local community organization came to a GA with a specific agenda, and changed the routine of the meeting, while also intimidating and insulting many of the people present. As Francisco illustrates, what could have been a unique and teachable moment for OTB became a PR disaster and an entirely infelicitous performance for everyone present. For the veteran Occupiers who were accustomed to a certain routine, the “drumming” GA was not executed correctly or completely, and the members of the community organization never showed up again, probably because they did not feel welcomed by the Occupiers.

**“T.1: Where the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, then a person participating in a procedure must have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must actually conduct themselves subsequently” (Austin 1962:148).**

The GA is designed for people frustrated by the current system who want to do something about it in a horizontal and collaborative way. In other words, people who show up to GA should come willing to play. But people who show up to GA don't always have those thoughts and feelings. Some people are frustrated, and just want to yell about it, rather than contribute to positive action. Some people just see a big group and want to join it. Some people want to be leaders and some balk at the word "leadership." Francisco talks about a time when his proposal involving an agreement with city government about camping out was blocked due to an ideological deal-breaker:

We got to the assembly, and the anarchists in the group argued their position. Their position was that they were disgusted with the three of us...“You’re talking to government; government is not legitimate! Our city government is not legitimate; you’re legitimizing them!” Their point of view didn’t stick beyond their circle, but they were more than 10% of the people present. And therefore they filibustered; they blocked. We were not authorized to go and present a very simple proposal that would have given us a perimeter, that entire rectangle at the corner with some of that orange plastic fencing...And because of respect for the process handed down to us by New York—these guys were not operating in good faith! They knew they were filibustering by blocking and we let it happen. So, I was displeased with the dynamic; I thought Occupy in general was being a bit naïve. Because, it’s not like we hasn’t had the U.S. Senate to look at all this time...Because that kind of consensus means back to the daisy, literally it will be almost impossible to pass anything that isn’t right there in the middle. The problem we had, with this particular group, in my opinion, is that they were not willing to play well in the sandbox. And they were not willing to go to the yellow center of the daisy. They wanted to be at the edge of their petal and they were going to lasso the rest of us and drag us to the tip of their petal, one way or the other.

Francisco utilizes his “daisy” metaphor once again to illustrate how difficult consensus can be; we have to be willing to do a lot of work preparing a proposal and hashing out an idea with others, with the understanding that we may receive very little recognition or thanks for our pains and that consensus requires a lot time-consuming discussion. Francisco’s main complaint is that a small group controlled the GA, as during the “drumming GA” example. If consensus is done correctly, there should be very few “blocked” proposals, but people often forget to leave their agendas and egos at the door, which can result at best in hurt feeling and at worst in fights.

Occasionally at OTB GAs the facilitator will begin the meeting by communicating the ground rules, which were established the first day of the Occupation. The rules are:

1. Remain Peaceful
2. Respect each other
3. No alcohol, no drugs
4. No smoking

The assumption here is that everyone who attends a GA agrees to abide by the guidelines, and that everyone has similar definitions of what “remain peaceful” and “respect each other” mean. I

have seen many people do drugs and smoke at GA, in violation of these established guidelines. While for some, even the presence of “rules” like this can be infelicitous, others adhere to and enforce some rules more than others, causing tension within the group. Over the past year, while I have seen some GAs that were productive and ultimately uplifting, most left me frustrated and wondering what we had accomplished together. While I was initially attracted to the GA as a performance, the intensifying theatricality of the ritual became more infelicitous to Occupiers over time, as well as the general public.

### **From Performance to Theatricality**

I want to step back a second and emphasize that I am not talking about the Occupy movement in general; I am talking about the General Assembly as a ritual for consensus decision-making and action-planning. Therefore, I am not arguing that “Occupy” is infelicitous, but that the GA over time has become an infelicitous performance because people come to GA with different agendas and different ideas of what the GA should be and accomplish. Steven is one Occupier who has become disillusioned by GA theatrics and came to a drastic conclusion:

Maybe the solution is to create a whole other group that’s not Occupy...because one of the debates that’s kind of stymied a lot of local groups is “you should be inclusive of all people, even if they are disruptive,” so we have been thinking of starting a group that’s just focused on Direct Action. Like the stuff maybe [on the Peninsula] that we would not get consensus for...we wanna include the principles of Occupy but we wanna say at the beginning, this is not a group where you can come in and be disruptive. We’re inclusive to sexual orientation, race, gender, minorities; these are our principles. We are fighting against—make it very specific—banks, these are the groups we are protesting against. As opposed to Occupy where it’s kind of freeform, have it more laid out upfront...So, I think that might be a part of the future as well. I mean I hate to see things split off but... I think it is kind of already happening kind of organically anyway. People are working to do their own actions and their own events and so...maybe that’s what I see for the future; other groups coming out of this and other avenues of action.

Steven’s solution is to form a whole new group that eliminates the GA as a decision-making mechanism entirely, and just focuses on organizing local, direct actions that target powerful

corporations, entities and individuals known for acting unjustly. As Steven says, what he is proposing is already happening, as people form groups of like-minded individuals committed to organizing and attending local direct actions, rather than simply “playing” at consensus.

“What structure are you talking about? *People* are the structure, and there are no people here!” This statement made by a participant in OTB at a GA was made to an audience of fewer than 10 individuals, during a discussion of the “structure” at OTB made through previous decisions that had passed at GAs. What is the “structure” of an organization if nobody shows up to support the structure? My time in Occupy has impressed upon me 1) the need for strong facilitation, and 2) the importance of maintaining a dynamic and diverse community of people receptive to change and responsive to calls-to-action. By strong facilitation, I mean a community of leaders who are able and willing to organize a meeting in order to accomplish something positive and productive. Everyone has different skills, and they should be utilized rather than discouraged. To the second point, Occupy should be understood as a process rather than a specific group. Occupy is constantly changing and both the participants and the general public must be cognizant and accepting of that fact. Because Occupy groups and their environments are dynamic, the decision-making mechanisms must be dynamic as well, so the GA, as a performance should be “a tool for innovative exploration, flexing under many circumstances, transforming when necessary, and apt to flow from one instantiation to another” (Davis 2008:2). When the GA ceases to be an effective and malleable tool for exploration, and becomes rooted in static and empty rituals that are not expected to affect positive and productive change, it becomes infelicitous and people stop participating in the performance.

Some people have laughed when I’ve mentioned that sometimes I see it as a work of art, where, you are trying to be a sculptor, but instead of clay, you are making your sculpture out of C-4. A C-4 is a plastic explosive; it’s much more powerful than say, dynamite.

Basically, you put a clump of it, it looks like clay, and set a fuse to it, and that's what they use to demolish a building; to wreck the foundation and cause it to collapse. So, picture being a sculptor but instead of clay, that's C-4 you're trying to make a work of art with. Terribly delicate mission; powerful. So, I had not thought these things through to that extent before coming. I had never even been in a movement where I was trying to join forces, with such a diverse group, which at least in theory would include people whom normally I would not stand ideologically, just for one very specific cause (Francisco).

By comparing Occupy to a dangerous explosive, Francisco is arguing that Occupy, as a collection of small movements working together for justice and freedom, can be a very powerful work of art that affects real change in the world. Diversity is essential to maintaining the movement, and requires participants to be constantly learning from each other. But diversity also complicates interactions and can present challenges for communication and organization. Francisco argues that ultimately, the challenges are worth the effort, as he reminisces about looking around a room and saying "oh crap, we are a bunch of very cerebral intellectuals planning the dynamics and the balance of power. And could anybody in this room imagine a Tahrir Square riot made up of people like us?" A little infelicity is necessary to make the performance function; a little violence is necessary for the performance "to both express and acquire knowledge" (Davis 2008:3), and to avoid becoming theatre. While some conventions are necessary for the GA to function, too much structure inhibits actions and unravels the collective. There is too much at stake to allow that to happen.

Yours Sincerely,

/s/

Hannah Hart

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Component 2: This is What Democracy Looks Like!: A Play in Three Acts

I decided to make this piece a three act play, following a fluid group of characters through three GAs; one in the winter, one in the spring, and one in the summer of 2012. The theme of this play is “our struggles are interconnected,” showing how over time, a number of Occupy participants wrestle with their differences in an attempt to forge consensus on issues that matter to them. I was inspired to construct this play through participant observation with Occupy the Bay over many general assemblies. The first act is set in February 2012, and the proceedings are a bit disorganized, since there isn’t an experienced facilitator. Much of the first act serves as an introduction to the consensus process, experiencing people who are learning consensus decision-making as they go, while also nursing wounds from the recently dismantled camp. People are struggling with redefining Occupy without a physical space, and tensions boil over after someone makes a proposal to set up camp next to a homeless encampment.

The second act takes place in April 2012, when the weather is starting to get better and people is anxious to have a spring resurgence of Occupy on May 1. This GA has a strong facilitator who doesn’t allow any one individual to monopolize the conversation. There is also some frustration because the “veteran” Occupiers are trying to get some newcomers to get more involved, and they are not very responsive. The tone is simultaneously anxious and optimistic.

The third act is set in June 2012, and opens with an explosive confrontation between the “veteran” Occupiers and a “New Guy,” who is not so new but hasn’t participated much thus far. The New Guy accuses the veterans of being controlling, and they in turn accuse him of not channeling his energies in a constructive direction, and trying to monopolize the GA. Issues of prejudice and discrimination are also discussed. While the GA is not a positive experience at this time, the conclusion is open-ended. You leave with the impression that the Occupiers are not

going to stop being activists any time soon, and are going to continue to fight for what they believe in. The play is not over; it is just starting.

Since Occupiers have used a variety of tactics to gain public attention, including street theatre, disseminating the results of my research through a script seemed quite appropriate. The purpose of this play is to educate non-Occupy participants about the process of consensus decision-making. I envision the audience inside the circle of “actors,” since non-participants often only see GA from the outside, and don’t understand what is going on. While the circle is meant to be welcoming, I felt very shy and intimidated by the GA circle when I first started participating. It is my hope that by having the audience inside the circle, more people can feel like they are part of the 99% and can identify with this cast of characters.

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### **Cast of Characters**

Carl: Rides a bike and comes to every GA. He doesn’t say much, but when he does, you listen.

Justin: Young and very defensive. He camped out during the encampment.

Lawrence: Very intellectual and animated. He is physically disabled.

Lisa: The “mom” of the group. She always brings food and takes care of everyone.

Leslie: A very passionate activist who tends to make enemies.

Jonathan: A very experienced facilitator who is quite articulate.

Tina: The relatively neutral participant; doesn’t side with anyone.

Colin: Likes to facilitate but isn’t very good at it. Is kind of the comic of the group.

Tommy: Participates with a lot of different activist groups.

Tony: Very intellectual and verbose; is given to monologue.

New Guy 1: Recently moved to the area and brings his Occupy experience with him.

New Guy 2: Relatively quiet until the last Act, when he explodes. He is homeless.

Bob: Doesn't come to GA very often but asks good questions.

Jose: Only shows up the first GA to get advice from the participants

Tim: Wants OTB to go in a different direction/be more radical.

Kassandra: Stands up for what she thinks is right, even if people disagree.

Chris: Homeless man who cruises through GAs, offering his opinion occasionally.

Jane : Student at the local university.

Jesus: Guy who stands by his principles, but doesn't volunteer his time.

Nicholas: Older gentleman who likes to be involved in committees.

Zoe: the note-taker

### **Act 1: This GA is set in February, 2012**

*The space is bare. Carl rides up on his bike and chains it to the bike rack. He pulls some papers out of his backpack and starts rolling a joint. Justin walks up and perches himself on the bench, and starts sharing the joint with Carl. Lawrence comes up, greets everyone exuberantly, and starts setting up a tent; Carl helps him set up the other tent. Lisa walks up with a bunch of signs and sets them up by the tents. Leslie walks up with Colin and Tommy, and they greet Lisa, Lawrence and Tina. Last comes Zoe with a notebook and pen, talking and not talking to everyone as they mill about and look at their watches.*

Justin: So, who wants to facilitate?

Colin: I could if you want me to.

Leslie: I second that

Lawrence: I was not prepared to facilitate.

Lisa: I don't know how to.

Colin: We have a general agenda. Let's do general introductions; we don't know each other well. (*Go around the circle and introduce ourselves*). It is February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and we are starting with old business. (*Justin raises his hand and Colin calls on Justin to start*)

Justin: I went to Berkeley to help them Occupy Cal. They are looking for foreclosed properties. We [Carl and I] want to move in to one of these foreclosed buildings, so we talked to someone about how to facilitate the occupation of a building. (*Leslie raises her hand*)

Leslie: Here are the details on where to meet on Saturday on the Coast (*passes out fliers*). This is the first time someone's tried this; were occupying a bank inside a grocery store. We're going for precedent here. We want it to be like a flash mob. (*Bob walks up*)

Lawrence: Where is it?

Leslie: It is the Wells Fargo inside the Safeway. We are meeting at the train station and bringing labor activists as well.

Justin: Why?

Leslie: Why what?

Justin: Why are we protesting?

Leslie: We are protesting the fact that they're building Big Boxes on the Coast without union labor. We will end with a march to city hall-good traffic area. We are going to make sure that we have *all* of the Coast and Bay people, make sure we have all the bodies together. We will have people go through the aisles with a plethora of lit. We want maximum exposure; we have some reporters that we trust.

Lawrence: Do you have a microphone? Blowhorn?

Tommy: We are using a people's mic. We have fliers for Wells Fargo.

Leslie: We have a speech specifically for Wells Fargo. We are also targeting Wells Fargo for investing heavily in Latino soccer teams while also funding detention centers (*Colin calls on Bob*)

Bob: What might we do in connection to the March 1<sup>st</sup> day of action for education? (*Two new guys walk up*)

Lisa: What's that?

Bob: It's a late afternoon march in San Francisco.

Lawrence: It might be on the calendar (whips out Smartphone)...March 1<sup>st</sup> is a Thursday.

Bob: If it hasn't already been done, I would like to make a proposal to support the SF event.

Lisa: (*Looking at Colin*) Is this time to do a proposal? (*Nobody seems to care*).

Bob: I propose that Occupy the Bay join with other Occupies in endorsing Thursday's 4:00 demonstration in SF.

Leslie: Did we endorse anything for the March 1<sup>st</sup> education cuts?

Lawrence: No

Colin: Are we endorsing? (*People put up their hands in support*) Any blocks? (*People shake their heads and put their hands down*). No blocks; then it is passed.

New Guy 1: We're here you from Occupy SoCal. I gotta couple of questions. Number one: Do you guys want a bunch of these fliers? (*passes around a few fliers from the nurse's union. People grab the fliers like candy and nod excitedly*). Yeah? Next week we'll bring a box.

Justin: Where did the fliers come from?

New Guy 1: The nurse's organization is very supportive of Occupy in general. Even before Occupy, they were against the banks. Number two: As an affinity group, we plan on taking

autonomous action. How do you guys do things? With affinity groups? Do we not put “Occupy” on it?

Leslie: We have to vote on it

New Guy 1: What do you caution us not to do?

Leslie: It depends on who, what, if it is labeled OTB...

New Guy 1: So, we will not label it as OTB

Leslie: Preferably, don't rob a bank (*everyone laughs*)

New Guy 1: Number three; does anyone have some floor space where we can sleep? (*Leslie interrupts*)

Leslie: We have a guerilla marketing group that is always interested in creative ideas for action. (*Leslie is following his second question*).

Lisa: (*following his third question*) If you talk to the Pastor, he has connections for where to stay.

New Guy 1: I came up here for a job.

Leslie: Great! We need occupiers who have jobs.

Colin: Some people have 3 jobs.

Leslie: I'm like, "I work and I still Occupy- Screw you!" (*to Occupy skeptics*)

Colin: Okay, New Business?

Leslie: Tomorrow Obama's in SF. Anyone else want to go? People with big mouths?

Carl: Why?

Leslie: You need \$100 (to get inside); this is his cheapest appearance. Some were \$5,000.

Tommy: We may be taking the train- leaving at 2.

Leslie: He is using a lot of Occupy verbage.

Lawrence: We have changed the discourse on the Left!

New Guy 1: Are you guys Occupying Corporations on the 12<sup>th</sup>?

Lawrence: We have nothing planned; may be good for an affinity group to organize.

Leslie: We like doing things. Some people don't like coming to the meetings but like doing stuff.

Justin: Some people want to learn how to chain themselves to buildings.

Colin: I don't know about bondage (*everyone laughs*)

New Guy 1: February 20<sup>th</sup>; Occupy prisons?

Colin: Dude, that's just a matter of getting arrested (*Everyone laughs*). (*Colin calls on Tommy*)

Tommy: So some news from the Coast is that we went to a city council meeting. There is an old bowling alley that is being developed into [expensive] housing. There is no affordable housing. They are looking at development with an eye towards the suburbs. The city council said "We would do affordable housing, but we have no law." We're asking, "Why don't you have a rent mobilization board?" Maybe we will picket outside the developer's office. Some people are afraid of picketing the developer, though.

New Guy 2: Are you working with government and corporations?

Tommy: We want to bring something to the city council, put pressure on them for legislation.

New Guy 1: It is interesting that Occupies in the Bay Area are turning towards affecting policy; for example, Occupy Oakland. (*Colin calls on Leslie*)

Leslie: So, ABAG, the Association of Bay Area governments. They support SB 375, the Bill for Smart Growth. But it's not so smart. Groups like ABAG are using money for projects that are not green. (*Jose walks up*)

Tommy: The coast is a priority development area, but there is no public transit, no jobs on the Coast.

Lawrence: When is it?

Leslie: It is on March 15<sup>th</sup>; the Occupy ABAG meeting in Oakland at 7pm. We are forming a coalition with environmental activists and Tea Party activists.

Justin: Why?

Leslie: There is no public oversight; no accountability. We are becoming the 1<sup>st</sup> Occupy to build a Coalition with the Tea Party!

Jose: I need feedback on a legal issue. I'm an Occupier who got a ticket for loitering in October-unwarranted. I had a date in court today; and had support from the NLG [national lawyers' guild]. The city offered me a deal: I can do the deal, plead guilty, or fight it.

Lawrence: It is a misdemeanor.

Colin: If he does the deal, it might be relevant for the naturalization process.

Justin: Some of the tickets for Occupiers have disappeared.

Jose: As a person, I would like to fight it; it is just a financial bitch. (*The GA agrees*)

Colin: Speak to an immigration attorney just in case.

Leslie: A piece of advice; check on the status of cases, because they can recall the case at any time, even though they told you it's lost. For example, some occupiers are homeless and don't know that there's a case against them.

Lawrence: It would be great to win and get the ordinance overturned.

Carl: You totally should fight it because you're our best shot! Some people get busted multiple times and only get recognized for a few- very few have court dates.

Lisa: One of the cops was really friendly to us!

Leslie: When they give you a ticket, it's YOUR responsibility to follow up, or it turns into a warrant. We have a bunch of lawyers... (*Tommy raises his hand and Colin calls on him*).

Tommy: Grandma's foreclosure date got movEd to March. She might join us on our Coast bank march on Saturday. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, she wants to go back to her Chase bank, so we might have another Chase bank action.

Leslie: The date got pushed back because of us!

Tommy: We want the most exposure possible and pressure. They want to placate us.

New guy 1: Do you camp out at their homes? (*Shaking heads*)

Tommy: There were 30 or 40 of us occupying the bank, and we told the cops what we wanted, and they left. (*Colin calls on Leslie*).

Leslie: We agreed to do joint co-occupation of the police chief's house. He is getting two pensions; double dipping.

Justin: What day?

Leslie: The date is Dr. Seuss' birthday! Only in the world of Dr. Seuss would this make sense.

(Everyone laughs). We wanna have a big container of ice cream saying "We're double dipping! He is pulling in 300,000 a year.

Bob: Would that play into local politicians targeting public employees' pensions?

Leslie: No, some of these deals are unsustainable.

Lisa: I have no problem going after public officials' double dipping!

Lawrence: We need to cause scrutiny on pensions.

New Guy 1: We fought double dipping in another Occupy. We filed suit, and flushed big dollars of Republican money down the drain. We can drive up their costs. If we get them to stick their neck out, we can chop it off!

Bob: It is important not to play into the right-wing rhetoric. We need to make the distinction in a press release.

Tommy: We can get Coast people as well.

Justin: What is the demand?



Leslie: To highlight the issue; highlighting the hypocrisy of public officials. Policemen and firefighters are being laid off while some people are getting paid twice. We need to save their jobs. This is money we could be saving, jobs of civil servants that we could be saving. One person should not be getting both of these jobs. Hopefully we can influence local governments to write legislation.

Bob: Is there anyone to do research on what the pensions actually entail? Details on double dipping? (*Kassandra walks up*)

Leslie: The information is pretty basic.

Colin: This is not a proposal.

Leslie: The proposal is whether we will do it on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Tommy: There is Occupy Night Out that day too. March 2<sup>nd</sup> is a Friday.

Lisa: What is the time?

Tommy: The Coast GA starts at 6:00. It would have to be after work.

Colin: Bring the time to the next GA. Any more new business?

Leslie: We need a margarita machine (*people laugh*). A young man who walked up about halfway through and has been very quiet speaks up.

Tim: We are talking more about day-to-day stuff. When did it stop being about a revolution? I thought we were here to change the world? I thought we were about opportunities for everyone, not just taxes. When we look back on this, can we say that we took every opportunity to change the world? Are we going above and beyond, or just marching across the street?

Lawrence: You are kind of insulting a lot of people.

Tim: I am working with a lot of homeless people. I am wondering, what is the simplest thing we can do that will have the biggest impact? We should be helping people help each other, build

communities that are safe, with clean water; live a well-sustained life. In the Bay Area, there is no clean water...

Leslie: (shaking her head) We will not do anything until they come to us.

Lawrence: If you have a clear action, we will consider it.

Leslie: This has been brought up before, and it gets turned down every time.

Tim: We can set up a camp, with wifi, multimedia, YouTube. We can set up an encampment next to theirs!

Colin: If we do that, we will draw heat onto them. They will get cleared. They will kick the homeless out because of Occupy. It will not be stable.

Leslie: This has been brought up 5-6 times. The group has to approach us. That is not because we are up on this hilltop. We're not going to set up tents; the city will throw us out. There is a precedent for this. Last time, \$1000 of gear was taken away. As a media person, I'm not gonna set us up. We are not a bunch of homeless people on a creek. We keep going over the same issue.

Kassandra: Why don't we form a committee and go in there—

Leslie: No.

Kassandra: We have never brought up making a committee.

Tim: There is no rule that you can't bring up issues more than once.

Linda: As a mental health person [person with mental health issues], we are not trained to deal with the homeless, people with financial problems, people with mental health problems. We don't have the capabilities.

Leslie: Encampments suck so much energy from the group.

Lawrence: There is a bigger picture that we need to keep track of.

Tommy: There are resources out here for the homeless; food, shelters, mental health facilities.

Kassandra: I wouldn't agree with that.

Linda: We are being used as emotional blackmail!

Leslie: We are so small. It was so frustrating. We are not social services. I had to deal with all of this crap. You come out here with all this idealism. But when you are out here all the time, you are just social services. It was hell, and we're not doing it again.

Colin: We want to evaluate them outside of their communities. There was a lot of crap...

Kassandra: Actually, we should reach out to people. They are at the bottom of the 99%. Yes, there are a lot of issues. But, if there is something we can do to help, that's what we should do.

Tim: (To Leslie) You are not listening to her or to me; you are only listening to one person (yourself).

Chris: We have nothing against homelessness. You can only do so much for them. If we interfere, they will start attacking us. You don't know them that well. If you go over their boundaries, they will get you.

Lawrence: I love the homeless, but it's not that easy.

Kassandra: I've been around the homeless community; I know people on the streets. If there are positive things...I'm talking about *talking* to people!

Tim: She (Kassandra) talked; nobody listened.

New Guy 1: I am very disturbed by this conversation. We could insert "black," "women," "gays" into this conversation. I had homeless people living in my house, and they never took anything.

Judgment should be reserved for the top, not the bottom. There is a lot of judgment here.

Lawrence: It is unethical for us to go in when we are not qualified to deal with these issues. You mentioned inserting “gay” into this conversation. As a gay person, I will not go to someone’s house for help; I will call the LGBT hotline. We are not qualified to deal with this issue.

Leslie: The original proposal was to set up encampments. We’re not going to be babysitting. It is not a good use of our resources.

Chris: I got involved with Occupy to focus on the banks and Wall Street; to stand at banks with signs; that’s why I got involved.

Kassandra: I have a suggestion; to form a committee and go talk to people. No, people are not well provided for. They are screwed over left and right. The system is failing; that’s why we’re here.

Chris: My church goes down there to provide for them. Other churches provide them with a lot.

Kassandra: Some refuse.

Leslie: The Bay Area is not San Diego. People are rowdier than ever before. Let me finish-don’t be rude. This is Occupy community, not homeless community.

Passerby: Is Occupy about feeding the homeless?

Chris: No, it is about the banks.

Lawrence: We don’t have to get so involved.

Kassandra: The system has failed them like it has failed the rest of us.

New Guy 1: People don’t interrupt! RESPECT!

Kassandra: Ok, three people are part of the committee (*Kassandra, Tim and Carl*)

Leslie: Just now? Without voting or anything?

Kassandra: Who would like to join?

Leslie: Do we vote to approve committees?

Justin: Technically it's a working group.

Kassandra: We can go as private citizens. It is good to go in and come back with an actionable proposal.

New Guy 1: Homelessness is one little part. There are so many facets. Social justice is an overarching theme. All of those things fit into OTB, not just economics.

Kassandra: There are very few if anybody that wants OTB to be providing social services. I just want to form a committee to see if there is anything we can do. Don't interrupt me—(Leslie)

Lawrence: Repetition doesn't help the process.

Leslie: You talk about putting up tents; setting up an occupation. It puts us in the same potential situation as before. We had a large contingent of homeless people.

New Guy 1: This is just a merry-go-round.

Tim: Nobody else wants to set up tents! (*silence*) I'm out of Occupy until we go in an actual direction--not just starting another government! (*He stomps off*).

Leslie: Didn't finish talking. People are fixated on making a camp. It keeps being brought up like it never happened.

Kassandra: There is nothing wrong with us going to talk with them if they can't come to us. We can go as private citizens.

Linda: I'm not here to deal with my mental issues; I am here to focus on bigger issues. This is not my priority.

Lawrence: Ok, everyone hold a badge while you're talking (to avoid interrupting).

Justin: I don't think we know what OTB is about. What made OTB work was to allow people to do what they wanted to do; making a working group or committee. We want to shut people out and argue about it? We don't have to sit around and argue about everything.

Kassandra: The committee was a suggestion, not a proposal.

New Guy 1: If we don't have clear definitions, we have to allow things to happen. We have a lot of fighting here that isn't necessary.

Tommy: We don't keep bringing back old issues on the Coast, because we are smaller. There is a lot of frustration when people bring proposals back to the group multiple times.

Lawrence: I have a suggestion; to move facilitators (Colin did very little to stop the argument about setting up a homeless encampment).

Tommy: Should we end the GA at 8:45?

Leslie: On Saturday at 2:00 there is a mediation meeting at Jonathan's house.

## **Act 2: This GA is set in April, 2012**

*It is 12:18 on a Sunday in April. It is a nice day outside.*

Tina: So, start at 12:30? It looks like people are still putting stuff together.

*People are setting up tents. There are four tents set up. There are some Occupy signs. Some new people are walking up with signs and masks and water bottles. There is also a white board up with the "agenda" saying:*

*Welcome to Occupy the Bay GA 4/22/2012*

*Facilitator: Jonathan*

*Lawrence: stack*

*Tina: timekeeper*

*Report-backs: Working groups and Committees-10 min.*

*Announcements-10 min*

*No proposals*

*Questions/Ideas-10 min*

*May 1<sup>st</sup> actions*

Lawrence: Mic Check!

Everyone: MIC CHECK!

*A bunch of new people in Guy Fawkes masks are sharing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.*

Jonathan: Can everybody hear me?

Carl: It's Earth Day!

Jonathan: I see we've got a lot of new faces. We're gonna start with a declaration and the hand signals. You oldies, you introduce yourselves to the new faces. Mingle, exchange names.

*(One new guy is holding a camera)*

Anon: That's my camera man right here.

*(People go around, introducing each other and shaking hands)*

Jonathan: I'll be the one yelling at you guys. Here are the basic rules:

- 1) No smoking.
- 2) Be respectful. Early on we had a problem with personal attacks. Try to stay focused on the issue, not the person.
- 3) No violence. Basically, this is a nice zone. We are trying to change our society, make it nicer.

We do consensus here. We try to come to an agreement on decisions. You don't necessarily have to like everything what the group decides, but you can live with it. Now, I'm going to explain the hand signals. Oh!

Why are we here? I am here because I want to change the world and make it better. Everybody's got a passion. We need to group up with other people, other groups in the Bay Area. There is power in numbers. We have to get off the couch.

Hand signals: (*demonstrating*) Some people do thumbs up, we do fingers up. This is block, which means you don't accept. For clarification, put your hand up with a C. Point of process means we're way off course and we need to bring us back.

Stack is the way we try to keep order. When subjects come up, we have a stacker. Look at this guy (Lawrence) and make eye contact with him and he will put you on stack. Here, we do a progressive stack, so we try to get people who haven't talked a lot to talk. The object is to get as many people involved in the process as possible.

Agenda: We will start out with report backs from working groups and committees. Here at OTB, we have groups that work together for specific things. Now, let's discuss what is going on with each committee. (*Lawrence taking stack*)

Tina: I'm with Finance. We have passed a proposal to use the Peace and Justice center for our finances. Right now, we have \$900 in our account.

Jonathan: Time limits! I forgot to mention that we will be limiting report backs to a minute and a half.

Carl: Afternoon. I am not part of any group. My main objective is to be active. I went down to Sacramento—I was a lobbyist against the banking cartel—trying to stop nasty banking practices.

May 1<sup>st</sup> is coming up; May 1<sup>st</sup> action.

Jonathan: (To Leslie) Could you announce which committee you're with?

Leslie: I'm the Guerilla Marketing Group. We do street theater; direct action. If you are a hell raiser, come with us. We stopped all sales of foreclosed homes in the Coastal County. There



were 60 homes up for sale. We are going to do it again May 9<sup>th</sup>, because Grandma's house is up for sale again.

Tony: Values Committee: We went to the library from 6-10, and we finished. We got our 6 principles ready to propose, after almost a month of meetings. It was a lot of work. We do have a tech committee. We meet Wednesday after GA. There are plenty of things to do. We need more people.

Lawrence: Ethics: We meet at 5:30 on Wednesdays. We are trying to figure out guidelines for GA and online. It is not about making rules, just guidelines.

Jane: Outreach: We have been focusing on a project at the university, with an activist group on campus. There was an action on Friday. We are tabling this week, and working on lit. We had been meeting on Friday nights, but lately we have been coordinating over email. We were meeting at 7:30. That is subject to change.

Leslie: I'm also media so if anyone has media experience; real media experience, doing press releases. We have been doing outreach with labor groups.

Jonathan: Good with Report Backs; Now with announcements. Not proposals, just announcements.

*(People start going in the center of the circle to do their announcements. The facilitator stands in the middle most of the time and moves when someone else wants to speak in the center).*

Lisa: MTA invited us to the University for tabling. They want to amend the constitution; 28<sup>th</sup> amendment. It is at noon at the engineering hall.

Leslie: SEIU town hall is on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:00. Also, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at noon is the kick-off for a big project. We are documenting all blighted houses. We are hoping for lots of media. We will be cleaning up these blighted homes and taking the trash to the bank.

*(the whiteboard falls down and Lisa picks it up.)*

Lawrence: Friday is “shut down the banks” day. We walk around and make the banks nervous. It is every Friday at 4:00. You are all welcome to join me.

Leslie: This is not an official OTB event.

Jonathan: Remember the rules/regulations; Respect. No proposals today. So, now let’s talk about questions and ideas. Something is wrong with America and what’s going on. Wall Street was the tipping point. People are tired of what’s happening. That’s why we’re here. Let’s talk about actions and events that we wanna see take place. May 1<sup>st</sup> is a big day for all Occupies across the country. We don’t want people leaving here confused. Any questions?

Tony: What you are stating is that your problem is my problem.

Jonathan: Yes, your problem is my problem.

Leslie: We forgot to say that on the 24<sup>th</sup> the Wells Fargo Shareholders meeting--

Jonathan: We’re only doing questions now.

Jesus: I’m very confused. Take a look at this sign. *(It says: “Move you money in to a credit union.”)* We have advocated for moving money from banks to credit unions. Now, I’ve asked the Finance committee what it would take for us to have 501(c)(3) status. It will cost probably \$500-\$600. What’s happened is, people have run off into different organizations. People went into a third party. That has to do with principles and ethics. If we’re not an organization, then let’s not go against the banks. I can’t deal with us having our money in a bank; it’s hypocritical.

Tony: We’re all OTB, and that means that we are not customers of OTB—We are IT. We should not ask or demand, but volunteer. You should shepherd it all to the end.

Jesus: I understand that, but there has been a Finance committee that has been tasked to that.

Tony: They are open to visitors and facilitators *(the finance committee)*.

Jesus: Are you the facilitator?

Jonathan: I will be addressing issues, not personal problems.

Tina: I am on the finance committee, and my understanding was small community banks and credit unions are okay. We can get the Peace and Justice center to move their money or try to make steps towards 501(c)(3) status.

Chris: I have been involved with the credit unions. Please get involved!

Jonathan: This is an internal issue. We already passed a proposal to move to a credit union.

Constructive dialogue is the way to go.

Colin: I think it's great to have a micro system effort to move you money, but we should also get public entities to move their money; the macro level also.

Chris: I have two nonprofit organizations. I show people how to set up nonprofits. I am will to help set up one, or you can work through an existing nonprofit. It is called a grant-through. Bank, credit union, whatever you want. I will volunteer; I have the knowledge and willingness to help.

Jonathan: Okay, we will move on to May 1<sup>st</sup> actions. Ideas? We may even break into small groups.

Carl: I got a thing on the internet about shutting down the golden gate bridge. Maybe we could carpool? *(Tina writing on the white board)*

Tony: There's a big immigrant rights march. A lot of Latino groups are involved. It is nice and visible.

Anon Guy: It is very important to do local actions. Traveling is good for solidarity, but we can do things here, and let local organizations see...

Jesus: I know that there is an immigrant rights March and rally on May 1<sup>st</sup>, for 5-6 years. The problem is when you're marching, people and local businesses don't really know what's going on. I think it would be more effective to do a March downtown. *(Leslie is shaking her head).*

Leslie: I'll be honest, I'm a bit confused. Everything that I am reading (on the board) we have already passed. There is a split at 3:00; some people at the immigrant rights march, some on the Coast. At noon, there is a mic check/Occupy a Corporation. They have fired workers that have tried to unionize. That might garner us more media attention than joining something else. There are 2-3 high schools that are doing a May Day walkout. We are bringing food and having an educational picnic. At 4:00 is the Coastal Workers rights march. This workers rights group came to Occupy the Coast. The split is at 3:00. These are actions that OTB has already agreed to support. We are not limited...

Kassandra: How about something local, at home. Some of us can't go out there (to the Coast), since we don't have cars.

Anon Guy: General awareness of Occupy's presence in the Bay is really needed. Awareness of Occupy the Bay should be brought to the public. *(Ambulance going by)*

Jonathan: Can you repeat that?

Anon Guy: The awareness of OTB's presence is nonexistent. Everyone has issues, but they are not putting critical thinking into those issues. We need to welcome more people to the fold.

Leslie: Response to that: We have a large bilingual outreach event on May 18<sup>th</sup>. It is a large specific outreach event.

Tony: I would like to echo comments about local events. To share leadership in organization. We could use a committee to organize local events. If someone-like Anon-would form a committee to focus on the Bay—I don't know if that's a temperature check. *(11 people put their hands up in*

*agreement, but Anon Guy doesn't look to happy at being volunteered to head a committee).* We have an outreach group that we need people to participate in. We need to get information out to the larger public. We are concerned citizens, and the public needs to be made aware. Please join with the Outreach group or start your own working group. See if there is something in line with your own interests. We need people involved in all areas in OTB. This is not a hierarchy thing. We want to encourage you.

Kassandra: May actions, do we wanna get a plan? We can have some outside of the Bay. Maybe we can have some events later in the day here? Some people can't leave the Bay. I wanna get a timeline.

Jonathan: Who has questions/concerns in response? (*Pointing to Lawrence*)

Lawrence: I completely endorse that. One of the great things we can do, for those who are not up to marching, are to have OTB people at city hall. We can have some signs, provide a warm welcome when the March arrives. Gathering for the march starts as early at 2:00. The marchers would get here around 5:00.

Leslie: We already agreed to do that. We need someone to talk about logistics. I don't wanna put out a press release if only two people are standing here--

(*Justin starts drumming on a bucket a few yards away from GA; this irritates Leslie*).

Leslie: I need a commitment from people. People need to commit, x many people. We need someone doing media for each thing. I have been hesitant putting out press releases because I don't want us to look silly.

Jonathan: So, Checking on the timeline. (*looking at the white board*)

12:00- Mic check a corporation

1:30- High school walk-out

3:00- Bay Immigrant Rights march

4:00-Coast worker rights march

7:00-Coast city hall

Nicholas: At the University, there are thousands of students. Come summer, we will lose that potential for a mass amount of students. I propose that we have a presence in front of the library. We can hang out all day. We need a presence about May 1<sup>st</sup>. “Before you leave for the summer, get involved in the Occupy movement”.

Jonathan: Before we go on—Mic Check! We all recognize the fact that we need to be reaching out. The problem is that we need people who are willing to DO it. We are not going to get anywhere if we are a movement of suggesters. We need to be moving—we need to go. If you are going to make a suggestion, be willing to DO it. We all recognize the problem, the solution is us. I probably won’t be facilitating anymore. *(everyone laughs)*

Jane: We are actually reaching out to students. We will be tabling with student activists on Tuesday and Thursday from 10-1, passing out our literature pertaining to student debt. We are raising awareness about the strike vote for the faculty and doing a strike teach-in on Thursday, from 3-5 on campus. OTB has already decided to endorse this.

Jonathan: And do you need help?

Jane: Sure. The tabling is happening from 10-1 Tuesday and Thursday, at the main entrance.

Jonathan: If you need help, ask for help.

*(People start coming up to Jane to give phone numbers and email addresses to help with tabling)*

Lisa: I’ll be here May Day. From 11:00-3:00, I will be here. If you wanna do something, let’s talk.

Tony: For the Immigrant rights march: at 2pm will be music. 3pm will be a rally with speakers.

At 4:40 the march gets underway toward city hall. Between 5:30-6:00, people will gradually arrive. This is a chance to be seen with OTB signs. I will be marching.

Jonathan: If we had 200 people out here...

Leslie: May 9<sup>th</sup>, the proposal is another Guerilla action. We want to go down to the Coast to stop foreclosures. The time is pretty much all day.

Kassandra: Don't we have one in the Bay?

Leslie: This is a joint action on the Coast; Grandma's house is up again.

Lawrence: We had a bunch of people interested (in this action) on Facebook. We hope this time it will be bigger. (I've driven by), there will be about 150 people outside the courthouse on Market Street.

Carl: I'll go if I get a ride.

Jonathan: Any other questions regarding the proposal?

Carl: Where is it?

Leslie: The County Courthouse is 2 blocks from the train.

*(No hands down. All sparkly fingers-Consensus).*

Leslie: It's fun—

Jonathan: Shhhhhh!

Nicholas: I wanna thank all the young people here. That's what we need here. *(clapping)*.

Jonathan: One last section, the Open Mic Section. There is no time limit. Open Mic is now.

Leslie: The 19<sup>th</sup> is the Outreach Potluck. We are inviting MTA. We are talking to likeminded groups like ACCE. Everyone has to bring a table, bilingual lit, and food.

Jonathan: There is one person that wants to talk.

Jesus: I want to make a proposal that three of us wanna explore the avenues of forming our own nonprofit. The Nonprofit working group.

Chris: I don't wanna make this too complicated. I wanna make the effort. There are funds available for what we're doing. I can get free printing done.

Leslie: I would like to see our wiki tightened up a little. Somebody keeps reposting incorrect information. It is an ongoing issue. There should only be OTB sanctioned events posted.

Jonathan: We are starting to bring up stuff that should be brought up internally.

Tony: I wanna know what you guys want to do May 1<sup>st</sup>. (*Pointing to the group of "new" people. They have been relatively quiet*).

Anon: I need to see if I can get off work.

Camera Guy: When is it?

Tony: On Tuesday.

Carl: I would like the bring the financial concern to everyone. This is Occupy Wall Street. There is a part about housing and food and money and politics and immigration—our livelihood is being taken away from us by corporate donors. We need to get our foot in the door and make it stop. I want to see this group grow. In 2008, the stock market crashed, why? Because of derivatives-financials. I want this to end, personally. I know there are people here who are not here for that. People are here because of their house. It is not good knowing that you can be thrown in jail without cause...

Leslie: For the newbies—We are the only Occupy to endorse AB1148, the California Disclose Act, which applies to every piece of advertising. It would take away the Astroturf of organizations.



Nicholas: Question: Do we have anyone here who is in charge of getting information to new people, and collecting information from new people? Is there anyone who can handle that? We need to catch the fish.

Tina: I can do.

Leslie: Can I just acknowledge how much she does? Tina's amazing. She supplies us with things...

Jonathan: Should we close the meeting with a chant?

Lawrence: Clarification: The wiki is not managed by anyone. It is free for all things. Anybody can read and write on that thing.

Tony: (*going up to the white board*) Here is a drawing. Think of that as a bunch of groups—the 99%. We have diverse beliefs, different interests—but there are some core of things that are messed up. We all stand together in the middle. The tips are where we stand apart. That's okay too. This is where our power is. This is how coalitions are formed. Something magical happens when we stand together, shoulder to shoulder. I came here with a more narrow focus. Being here, I hear about different issues. Things rub off on me. My area of interest has widened.

I think that the things we want to do are a string. You put it out there, like a fishing line. That's a great way to decide what to do. Let your issues gain traction organically. It beats the hell out of telling people what to do and what not to do. People are voting with our feet. There are no egos involved. It inspires us to do things in a way...

Jonathan: I am facilitating, but facilitation is supposed to rotate. Want to get as many people involved as possible.

Lawrence: Show me what democracy looks like!

Everyone: This is what democracy looks like!

Lawrence: Banks got bailed out!

Everyone: We got sold out!

**Act 3: This GA is set in June**

*It is a Sunday in July. Everyone is sitting in the shade because it is too hot. There aren't very many people at this GA. There is Nicholas armed with literature, Leslie, Tina, Carl, New Guy 2, Toby, Lawrence and Zoe. Some people are sitting and some are standing. The participants seem tense.*

Nicholas: Occusoup got cancelled? I was excited about feeding the homeless.

Leslie: We will do a better job of planning next time.

Tina: Do we wanna wait until 12:30?

Leslie: (frustrated) GA has gotten later and later and later.

Tina: Let's start. *(She is facilitating)*

Lawrence: I think everyone doesn't want to change the time.

Leslie: We did fine during football season, in terms of time. There are only 2 people who come to church, so come late...

Tina: I say we go.

New Guy 2: I moderated last time.

Leslie: You have to be trained to facilitate.

New Guy 2: But you are only facilitating the way you want. What was wrong with my facilitation last time?

Tina: I have read a lot about it—the facilitator doesn't have an opinion. The facilitator's job is to keep the course of the GA.

Leslie: The facilitator doesn't vote. The moderator is not allowed to express his opinion on the point.

New Guy 2: But he or she has the right to speak their mind!

Leslie: Not while they are facilitating.

Tina: The facilitator can always be excused. You actually can have co-facilitators. So if you don't feel you can be neutral on an issue, you can step aside.

Lawrence: I don't like to facilitate because I struggle with maintaining neutrality.

New Guy 2: Why is this GA so complicated? These are not the rules!

Tina: Have you gone on the wiki?

Leslie: I don't know who's punching that stuff in.

Nicholas: You can't change wiki unless you have access.

Leslie: There has been a consensus—these rules have been proposed and voted on. These are Occupy's rules.

Nicholas: Everybody has access to wiki if they email tech. Tech has given everybody access to post.

Leslie: The minutes are put there by Zoe.

Nicholas: Wiki keeps an audit trail.

New Guy 2: That's what we have on the SoCal one.

Lawrence: I'm going to start doing stack.

Colin: We have had neutral facilitation since October when we started. There was a problem when a facilitator brought in his organization. I think there is a video of that. (*New guy tries to interrupt*)

Lawrence: You have to respect stacking.

New Guy 2: Anything that people want to do, you guys have a way of shooting it down.

Tina: We did lose some people.

Colin: There was a tragic confrontation—Tony was trying to build relations with East Bay and there were confrontations.

Leslie: Before you do things, you need to read the rules in place. People have worked hard on these processes. You can't come in and do something completely counter to the process in place. You're brand new; you have to know the history of things. You have to know the minutes—the bylaws; the process, the rules.

Tina: I think you would be a lot less frustrated if you knew the history of OTB.

New Guy 2: You guys have hijacked this process!

Leslie: Those of us here now know those things. There are 5 people here who have been here since Day 1.

Tina: (to New Guy 2) I would like you to be more specific about your grievances against OTB.

New guy 2: My mouth and anybody's mouth—the twitter account—you guys have hijacked it!

Leslie: We don't do personal attacks.

Tina: So, you wanna get access to twitter.

New Guy 2: I want the People to get access to twitter!

Tina: That is a process that needs to be put out in a proposal.

New Guy 2: It was passed on Gay Pride day.

Leslie: That goes against everything that has been passed previously.

New Guy 2: You ladies and Lawrence have done everything!

Lawrence: Can we stick to stack please.

Leslie: We have Ethics rules.

Nicholas: It took us weeks to get a functioning finance committee. It is a slow process. I agree that our Information technology has been a problem from day one. We need procedures for tweeting without jeopardizing passwords so people can't steal things.

New Guy 2: At the restaurant, Lawrence said that he didn't trust anyone who believes in God. The message I got is "fuck you, Muslim!" Lawrence is suspicious of anyone who believes in God.

Lawrence: I've never said anything like that. It is all bologna.

New Guy 2: There are 4-5 people who refuse to let other people have a voice. It has been like this for the 5 months I've been here!

Colin: 1<sup>st</sup> off: Twitter automatically retweets you if you tweet @us. 2<sup>nd</sup>, your comment about us playing into the Gay, Commie, Socialist agenda, like you said on the video last week...*(Tina stops him)*

Tina: Ethics says what you tweet and how you tweet. You should know all of these Ethics things. We had problems with people mishandling their access to social media.

Leslie: (To new guy 2) The more you say, the farther you get away from the rules.

New Guy 2: You keep dictating! You're so perfect; you guys are never wrong!

Nicholas: There is a whole other group for mediation.

Leslie: The rules were adopted; they already stand. They stood before you got here.

Tommy: In the Coast, we don't have this argument. We have an OTC twitter account, and I have an autonomous twitter account; I'll tweet my own thing. I started my own twitter, so we have both "official" and "personal." So, this really shouldn't be an issue. I actually have more followers than the official account, so you can do this too.

Tina: I'm wondering if you could give us a list of complaints. I would like to handle one complaint at a time.

Leslie: It was a consensus—you must have not been to those GAs.

Tommy: You don't need GA to start tweeting. That is the beautiful thing about Occupy—you can be your own leader.

New Guy 2: Where are the Ethics rules? I have no clue.

Nicholas: They are on the Wiki.

Carl: He's been raising his hand (New guy)

New Guy 2: It has been twisted around... There is no other Occupy that has this rule—it's censorship.

Nicholas: Someone made a proposal.

Tina: I didn't hear Lawrence say anything about God. He doesn't have control of the twitter account anyway.

New Guy 2: She's telling me someone hijacked the password.

Lawrence: Leslie said she would give the password to Tina.

Tina: In progressive stack I am giving it to—

New Guy 2: Articles have come out on the homeless in the Bay and it doesn't get tweeted—just because you're not homeless...

Lisa: I don't tweet and I never will. If your biggest problem is the twitter account—get your own! I'm not done yet. You wanna talk about free speech? There are big problems with this country! Take the fire out where it belongs. I am sick of worrying about the fucking twitter account! (*ambulance goes by*)

Leslie: Most of these structures were passed when we had 100% consensus. Right now we have 90%.

New Guy 2: You are saying that one person has the power to block a proposal—that goes against everything that Occupy stands for!

Leslie:

1) Get your own twitter account.

2) Someone posted the NY times article on homelessness on the Google Group.

Tina: (To new guy 2) I am sick of you interrupting.

New Guy 2: This is the people's account!

Tina: We need to move off this topic.

Lawrence: There are 3 more on stack.

Nicholas: Somebody needs to look at what makes the twitter account functional. I am not certain anyone has the correct password. Beyond that, we need to read the Ethics rules.

New Guy 2: This is a joke.

Tina: I tried the password and it didn't work. (To New Guy 2) This energy you have, I would like to see you use it more constructively.

New Guy 2: It is the homosexual and all the women who are running OTB! We went marching and you had a Gay agenda!

Tina: Mic Check! Mic check to myself! *(she laughs and walks out of GA angrily; Jonathan comes up in due time and takes over facilitation).*

New Guy 2: I am walking with Occupiers—to you it is not a big deal to chant “Your gay, your cute, take off your combat boots” to the cops. It matters if you're straight!

Tommy: It seems like you have a lot of problems—then why don't you start your own Occupy?

New Guy 2: You're twisting it, making it sound like, “this middle eastern guy is homophobic...”

Colin: You already said it on camera. *(he is filming this on his phone)*

New Guy 2: You guys share the accounts—

Nicholas: Nobody has the account.

Tommy: We did Occupy the environment, and it was really successful! So you can do this—you can make your own twitter. You can feel empowered to do things on your own.

Lisa: Where are we? Let's start GA.

Tina: The facilitator wants out of her role.

New Guy 2: It's not gay attacks; you are making me sound prejudiced.

Nicholas: We're in "debate."

Jonathan: I will facilitate. You get on stack. There will be no personal attacks. Is everybody okay with that?

New Guy 2: No.

Jonathan: Raise your hand and look at the stack-taker. Okay, announcements! *(Calls on Nicholas, who is passing out informational fliers)*

Nicholas: The Homeowner Bill of Rights private right of action has been voted out of the conference committee. You all are kindly requested to call your representatives in the California Assembly and Senate to ask them to support SB900, which may come to a vote as early as July. SB900 merely says, "It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to amend the state's foreclosure laws to implement and make permanent the servicing standards and other provisions of the National Mortgage Settlement." Courage California and Homeowners for Justice are asking people to contact their representatives to secure passage of this bill.

New Guy 2: Last Sunday at GA two proposals were passed: The first has to do with the twitter account and the second has to do with the n/etiquette rules...you guys are creating division!



Jonathan: That's not an announcement.

New Guy 2: Here are the proposals that were passed—

Tommy: Bastille Day is 2 weekends from now. They are building a new prison on the Coast.

ACLU is protesting it. Bastille Day was the day when the French stormed the Bastille, which housed political prisoners. We want to protest either at the jail or the Wells Fargo, because they invest in prisons. We also have a Really Really Free Market today. We went dumpster diving for it.

Lisa: Is that illegal?

Tommy: We go with someone that has been doing it for years, but you can get arrested for trespassing.

Jonathan: Okay, old business?

New Guy 2: Two proposals were passed last Sunday. The 1<sup>st</sup> is public access to the OTB twitter account. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is that the Ethics rules must be distributed to GA.

Jonathan: Who decided they would take up the action? Who volunteered to contact the tech committee?

New Guy 2: I don't think anybody did.

Leslie: Did you put the GA notes online?

New Guy 2: It was tweeted out but the account holders refused to retweet it. It was written up by multiple people.

Leslie: Point of Process: 1) as a twitter password holder, no one contacted me about this. 2) the rules are on the wiki under "Ethics".

Tina: I understand that people didn't know that the June 24<sup>th</sup> GA was cancelled.

Leslie: People felt that it was cancelled. These are Point of Process things which have been pointed out already.

Carl: I came here because it's GA time. The majority of people (regulars) were not here, but if people want to do a change, I support that.

Jonathan: Someone that was part of GA needed to take responsibility. Someone needs to go through steps to send to tech and n/etiquette.

Nicholas: If I may make a proposal to table these items until Wednesday (since the tech committee meets Wednesdays), you can send these requests individually to those groups.

Leslie: At least one person from Tech is here. (Tina)

Jonathan: As far as the verbage—these are not proposals, these are action items. We are not tabling them because they are not proposals. You are asking tech to bring things, which is an action item.

Zoe: For the record, what is the difference between a “proposal” and an “action item”?

Leslie: Proposals are brought before GA and the GA passes them.

New Guy 2: That's what happened with this!

Leslie: It also needs two votes if you didn't have quorum.

Tina: How many people came?

New Guy 2: 8-9

Carl: 5-6

Jonathan: (*Getting frustrated because people are talking out of turn*) We are not just talking!

Tina: If there were only 5-6 people there, I don't know if that ever got passed.

Leslie: It is a Constitutional thing—2 votes rather than just one.

Tina: My understanding is that a minimum of 5 people need to be present for a proposal to be passed; that's from New York.

Carl: 2 people came late at that last meeting.

Tina: OWS does 100% (consensus) for the 1<sup>st</sup> vote and the 2<sup>nd</sup> vote. 90% can be used a few times.

Jonathan: It still needs to be sent to tech. An action item is something that everyone agrees should be done; something that does not need to be voted on. Okay, new business!

Leslie: You probably want to be a part of this (*trying to get the attention of Colin, who has stepped out the circle*).

Jonathan: We are not at proposals yet.

Leslie: For people who are new who do not know our history—there are steps that need to be taken for one person in particular to be welcomed back into OTB. That is my understanding. If I am wrong, tell me.

Lawrence: I am guessing you are talking about Justin.

Nicholas: He agreed at one point to mediation.

Leslie: But 5 minutes later he said he would not do mediation and stormed off. There are emails on GG. Unless he is willing to do mediation, he is not part of GA.

Tommy: That was the 1<sup>st</sup> event that he came back and then threw a stack of lit at us. He physically confronted two people.

New Guy 2: Was this last Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>?

Leslie: No, this was last November.

Colin: A video captured him trying to shut down GA.

Lawrence: If he shows up, I'm not gonna run him off.

New Guy 2: I was here last GA.

Leslie: (Frustrated) We are only covering November. We are covering the reason he is not part of GA.

New Guy 2: We did this in SoCal, but we left a window open for people to come back. We never shut anyone out of GA.

Carl: (Change of subject) When they voted on the twitter account, I voted for it and I now retract my vote—this group is degrading into a bitch slap—just arguing—my mental health is not great anyway...

Leslie: He has been repeatedly verbally violent with us. He refused free anger management classes. He also called the police on us. For all of those reasons, that's why he is not at GA. He puts things about me personally. That's why I feel threatened.

Tina: Who is next on stack?

New Guy 2: Question: Was he behind the doxing?

Leslie: No, I never believed he had anything to do with it.

Colin: I did.

Leslie: That window for him to come back is there.

Nicholas: What is doxing?

Leslie: Posting people's personal information.

Nicholas: Ok, I'm an old man.

Jonathan: Are we going someplace with this?

Tina: Nobody has a record of it—they weren't keeping records at GA at the time.

Leslie: There is documentation from Outreach—It can't be posted online—includes personal information.

Lawrence: Someone should try to re-piece what happened. Not just go by people's opinions.

Leslie: I sent all the info to Tina.

Lawrence: (To Tina) What do you think?

Tina: The only thing I don't know is if there was a consensus on asking him to leave. I haven't read the GA minutes. I saw the video, and I experienced his behavior the other night.

Lawrence: Someone should be able to piece this together. The official decision needs to be on record.

Leslie: I would prefer that the official record be anonymous. No names.

Tina: He is disruptive, agitating and immature but there should be no steps from preventing him from coming in. He needs to say sorry, that's it.

Leslie: With his behavior, a simple apology doesn't cut it. There is a pattern of behavior; this was not an isolated incident.

Jonathan: I am happy to move on to the next stage of GA. Is somebody going to take on an action item?

Leslie: I just want the record to be clear.

Jonathan: Okay, proposals?

Leslie: I want to resurrect the ten people quorum.

Lawrence: Do we have ten people here? *(People look around and laugh, counting)*

Jonathan: The moderator doesn't count. *(There are 10 people present including the facilitator)*

Lawrence: If we're gonna vote on a quorum, you need quorum.

Leslie: To make it official.

Nicholas: This is kind of a low number for us.

Leslie: It wasn't proposed—it was a gentle agreement.

Lawrence: Friendly amendment: Just that it gets revisited at the next GA. Right now we don't have a ten person quorum.

Carl: Five people.

Leslie: No, I like the ten person; if you have less than that, it needs to be revisited at the next GA

Jonathan: Someone is offering a friendly amendment to the proposal for a five person quorum.

Temperature check on the ten people quorum; less than ten, vote on it at the next GA as well.

(one person neutral (Lawrence), one block (Carl). Not enough to pass)

Colin: (to Carl) May I ask why?

Lawrence: Because of the number of people that do come to GA. We don't have enough people coming regularly at this point.

Carl: Five people is what I've been told is the quorum.

Leslie: This "less than ten getting revisited" thing basically means that more people can vote on it. It unifies the GA (from Wednesday to Sunday).

Carl: I believe it was five.

Lawrence: We voted on it three times! It has never passed.

Leslie: As a matter of practical politics, I come to a Sunday or Wednesday GA and I repeat myself because different people come to different GAs. I have to disseminate the word to a larger group.

Colin: If we set it to ten, that might encourage more people to come; encourage people to be more active.

Tina: Maybe we could look at past GAs and come up with an average.

Nicholas: It sounds like we are trying to lock down what we already have. We have to have an odd number, like a swing vote.

Lawrence: Does everyone have access to a computer?

Leslie: We tend to have a regular cast of characters that are here on one day and not another.

Jonathan: This would be in old business, not proposals. Is this proposal being amended as it goes along?

Carl: Last time I was railroaded—everyone said “yes” and I said “no.” I still believe it should only be three to five people. This is a movement, not for personal vendettas or personal wants.

Leslie: I think this system will prevent railroading. A higher number requires more people to vote on it. (*Jane walks up*)

Leslie: The proposal is that we have a quorum of ten people to pass something. And it must be passed at the next GA if the number is lower than ten.

Colin: The Occupy Oakland quorum is one hundred people. Less than one hundred equals no proposals.

Leslie: Temperature check!

Jonathan: Can I facilitate? (laughs) (two blocks from Carl and New Guy 2, eight sparkly fingers)

Leslie: You guys understand what a block is, right? If it goes through you are saying, “I’m leaving”

Leslie: If we raise it to ten that means you have a lot more likeminded people—more democracy—you can’t target somebody.

Jonathan: Time. This thing has gone on too long. We are going to vote on it. Restate the proposal so everyone understands.

Leslie: I propose that we raise the quorum to ten people and if you don’t have ten at the first GA, the second GA votes on it again. It doesn’t have to be the same people.

Jonathan: Everybody understands it right?

New Guy 2: What if it's the same five people? (*Everyone groans*).

Leslie: Then it's the same five people.

Jonathan: No debate

(*Vote: 8 support; 2 opposed. Not 90%; proposal doesn't pass*).

Jonathan: The issue is tabled; move on! Any other proposals?

New Guy 2: Tonight is the Women's finals for gymnastics. They have a block party that's free.

Jonathan: That's qualifies as more on an announcement. We spent 20 minutes on that last proposal. Anything else? Open Mic!

Nicholas: The homeowner bill of rights; if anyone wants a leaflet; I have quarter sheets

Jonathan: As facilitator, I did not vote, But here is my opinion on the proposal: We have two basic groups that come, and the whole point of Occupy is to get everyone involved. If the point is to get people's voice heard, we want a lot of people to vote on it. If you want us to make choices and decisions, we should always have a larger number. The next time, take that under consideration.

Nicholas: I gotta go.

Jane: Do we have language in our bylaws about hate speech? General respect for others?

Jonathan: Yes, it has been in our posted guidelines from day one. To be respectful of all people.

Jane: Can we have a proposal that everyone is respectful of all people?

Jonathan: It should be clearly stated by the person facilitating.

Jane: What do we do if somebody violates that?

Jonathan: Every facilitator should make that statement clear. You can't enforce it.

Jane: I propose that if any language that is discriminatory in nature is stated at GA, we ask that person to leave. To voice hurtful language is completely inappropriate.



Leslie: So what happens if someone gets doxed? What happens with that?

Lawrence: Those exact bylaws have been discussed in Google Group.

Jane: This only applies to GA and OTB.

Jonathan: Is this a proposal?

Jane: Yes.

Jonathan: It has to be stated clearly at the start.

Leslie: Ethics covers OTB accounts and GA.

Jonathan: We are going outside of the boundaries. These proposals are taking too long.

Jane: I am referencing OTB as a whole. There is no space in OTB for discrimination.

Jonathan: What is discrimination?

Jane: Discrimination equals hateful language.

Tina: For a while last fall we had a poster with ground rules. We could bring it; we also have the picture of it.

Jonathan: Can I have a temperature check on what's been proposed? (*8 sparkly fingers*)

Toby: Can we just make 2 proposals? 1) say it at the start of GA so everyone knows and 1) make people leave if the group believes that that's hate speech.

Jane: I propose that everyone at OTB operates under OTB bylaws—respect. 1) No drinking; 2)

No drugs; 3) Be respectful of each other.

New Guy 2: Be respectful is broad. People can get offended by different things.

Leslie: Proposals are made for the good of the people. In what direction is this coming from?

This guy (New guy 2) has been writing things about me on his twitter.

Jonathan: You have a personal grievance. I don't want personal stuff brought into it.

Jane: At the last 2 GA's, there has been language voiced that is hateful. It is inappropriate; there is no space for it at OTB. It does not create a circle of inclusivity.

Jonathan: We are going back and forth. Any clarifying questions?

Leslie: I want to clarify what we consider hate speech. For example: "That's so gay."

Jane: Inappropriate.

Leslie: Some people don't care about it and some people do.

Jane: I think universal language is necessary.

New Guy 2: Can I suggest a working group? You are answering a personal grievance.

Jane: I think the group decides—group consensus. And to state the consequences, such as "three warnings and then asked to leave."

Leslie: It needs to be more specific—specific phrases. Offense #1: this happens.

Jonathan: It doesn't sound like we are ready to vote on it.

Nicholas: You might wanna put it up on the Google Group.

Jane: This is something that needs to be addressed right away. We can come back to this.

Jonathan: Anything else? Is the meeting over?

END

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VIII. CONCLUSION

“Is the meeting over?” (Jonathan). The last line of “This is What Democracy Looks Like!” is the question that many are trying to answer, whether we are activists, researchers, or non-participants. While many city-specific Occupy groups are no longer functioning as collectives, Occupiers as individuals have largely not stopped being active, joining different affinity groups and campaigns that are important to them, forging more connections, and disseminating information about injustices and successes. Occupy is truly the multi-movement, in that it involves and welcomes a variety of methods, participants, agendas and spaces.

This project takes on an anthropological perspective because it is an explicitly historical, holistic and humanistic account of a relatively new social and cultural process moving through time and space. From the beginning, I was drawn to the idea of doing a multi-sited project utilizing an ecological framework. And although I originally envisioned this project as an exercise for my methods class, the data collection phase spanned three seasons and allowed me to add a temporal component to my research. I have described how Occupies and Occupiers have changed through time within “Occupy California: A Quantitative Analysis of Local Occupy Websites,” “Letter to the People’s Mic,” and “This is What Democracy Looks Like!: A Play in Three Acts.” A historical perspective is an important characteristic of anthropology.

This project is also holistic because of my preoccupation with analyzing many facets of the Occupy movement utilizing a variety of methods and theories. I utilized qualitative and quantitative methods, relied on theoretical frameworks like world systems theory, political ecology and performativity, and incorporated a three field approach and interdisciplinary perspective. By analyzing the movement from multiple angles, I have attempted to expand the

boundaries of applied anthropology. Increasingly, applied anthropologists are required to utilize a variety of methods, theories and disciplines in groups in order to study a phenomenon, so this project has been excellent practice.

In addition, the project is definitely integrative, since the methodological approach of “A Comparative Analysis of Local Occupy Websites” is juxtaposed with more interpretive pieces like “Occupying in California: Voices and Contexts” and “This is What Democracy Looks Like!” While the first piece analyzes Occupy websites, the last two pieces incorporate many voices of Occupiers, giving voice to people who have often been stereotyped and caricatured by the corporate media. American anthropology has often been concerned with cultural critique.

Finally, an important component of anthropology is self-reflection, which I engage in with pleasure. Like many other Occupiers, I have been changed by this process, and am now a more knowledgeable, empathetic and effective researcher, activist and a writer. Utilizing quantitative methods and composing a play were activities I had never done before, but I had never been part of a group of activists either. I can only hope that I have also had a positive impact on the Occupiers with whom I have developed relationships throughout this process. The journey is not over, and I look forward to seeing where this movement carries us all.

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X. APPENDICES

A. Power, Ethics and Fieldwork in the Occupy Movement

By Hannah Hart and Kristy Keller, published in the November 2012 issue of *Anthropology News*

As anthropologists, ethics are a main concern and often inspire our research. For Hannah Hart and Kristy Keller, studying the Occupy movement in the San Francisco Bay Area has required strategic maneuvering to meet our ethical obligations while maintaining the validity of our research.

At Occupy the Bay, Hart began her fieldwork by participating in General Assemblies (GA). At the second GA she attended, there was some disagreement regarding decisions that had been made previously due to inadequate record-keeping. Seeing an opportunity to introduce her research project, Hart volunteered to be note-taker for GA as a form of reciprocity. People were supportive and she was given a link to publish the notes online. When some Occupiers asked why she omitted speakers' names, she explained her commitment to confidentiality and protecting her research participants to the best of her ability. It soon became clear however, that this decision was as political as it was convenient.

At one GA, an Occupier asked Hart "can you just remove me from the notes?" She said that some former members of Occupy the Bay were reading the notes, taking people's comments out of context, and posting them on twitter, allegedly to make certain Occupiers look bad. Because Occupy the Bay was so small, some individuals were identifiable through the notes due to their distinct personalities. This Occupier had made a personal attack against an estranged member of Occupy the Bay, and now she was suffering the consequences. Hart was very concerned, as it appeared that her research was causing harm to this person.

Hart asked if everyone would prefer that she post an abridged version of the GA minutes. People disagreed, saying that they valued the detailed accounts. When Hart explained her concern about doing no harm, the Occupier replied, “It wasn’t your notes. There is a lot of history here. If it wasn’t your notes, they would find another way to hound me.” The facilitator mentioned that Hart could remove any kind of name-calling from the notes, but another Occupier disagreed, saying “We need to talk about the real issue here, which is that, at GA, we should not be making personal attacks. Discussion has to stay on the issue, not the person.” Thus, what began as an ethical crisis for the researcher developed into a teachable moment for Occupy the Bay: One cannot be committed to transparency while also requesting censorship of personal insults. In documenting a social movement, the responsibility is not only on the researcher to protect people from harm, but also the participants.

Beyond concerns over political conflict within the movement, the weight of the information that we record and publish as anthropologists can have more serious results. At Occupy Oakland, Keller saw how sensitive information was when the police began using public records, such as photos and video posted online by protesters, as evidence for charging and arresting Occupiers.

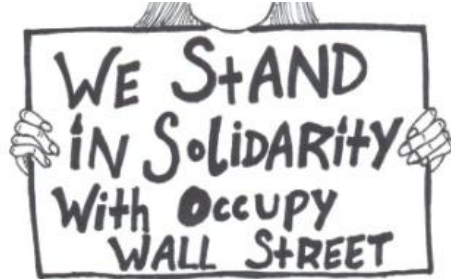
The do-no-harm concept takes on particular weight in a situation where the police may see new opportunities for repressing activists in the content of your fieldnotes. This has resulted in a tricky adaptation for data collection methods that seek to protect the people involved in the movement, but also to provide an accurate representation of the extent of police violence and state power that we see waged against protesters.

At General Assemblies, where police are always nearby, protestors speak freely about action plans, yet there is a fine line between information that may be harmless, and strategies that may increase vulnerability. At Occupy Oakland, the presence of Livestreamers has reduced some personal concern: the police won't be interested in an anthropologist's notes when they can simply watch meetings and actions online.

In Oakland, where a history of police violence and a lack of accountability has left the police force under threat of federal receivership, its failure to abide by its own crowd control policies has resulted in the arrest of hundreds of participants, the detainment of journalists with valid press passes, and severe brutality directed at protesters (for example, Scott Olsen, a disabled Iraq War veteran whose skull was fractured by a beanbag round). While the mainstream media is notorious for citing information it receives from police reports, journalists have been far less likely to report what they observe on the ground, and hence, the movement is painted in a very unbalanced way.

In this realm of politically sensitive research, the primary ethical objective is to uncover what is actually happening: to provide an accurate portrayal of the processes, issues and conditions that are central to the Occupy movement. To address these concerns, this next section includes the ethnographic pamphlet produced by myself, Kristy Keller and Bethany Grove, and currently available on the SJSU department of anthropology blog at <http://blogs.sjsu.edu/anthropology/files/2012/03/Occupy-Pamphlet-Final-1mv67zb.pdf>. It was important to us to produce this pamphlet before writing any academic articles, as a form of reciprocity to our interviewees. In the context of this project report, this pamphlet also serves as an introduction to all three different Occupy groups and their participants, before I delve into analysis and interpretation through three academic articles.

B. Occupying in California: Voices and Contexts
An Ethnographic Take on the Occupy Movement



Written and compiled by Hannah Hart, Kristy Keller, and Bethany Grove

We created this pamphlet with the intention of providing a resource to Occupiers who are interested in learning from the experiences of local Occupies and the Occupiers who are a part of them. We hope that in doing so this resource can benefit those who have been involved with Occupy and would like to learn more about what is being done on the ground in other cities. It can also be helpful for those who are interested in learning more about what Occupy is and how it has manifested in various locations. We are putting this pamphlet together at the one year anniversary of Occupy Wall Street to consider the origins of the movement, what happened in different parts of California as it evolved over the last year, as well as to gather and share thoughts on where the movement is headed into its second year. After initially being drawn to the Occupy movement, our connections and histories in different parts of California led us to participate in Occupy Oakland, Occupy the Bay*, and Occupy the Coast* respectively, three very different Occupies that each make unique contributions to what it means to Occupy.

As Occupiers, we hope to use our background as applied anthropology students to contribute to the movement. This is in no way intended to be an objective account of the Occupy movement—it is shaped by our experiences and participation, just as the perceptions of Occupy held by other Occupiers have been shaped by theirs. While we do not claim objectivity, we do have a strong commitment to protecting the identity of the Occupiers who spoke with us and adhering to their wishes in terms of confidentiality to the best of our ability. We hope that this resource is useful as the movement continues to grow and change. We appreciate all those we have learned from and had an opportunity to speak with along the way.

*Pseudonyms have been used for these Occupy sites.

How can anthropology contribute to an understanding of Occupy?

While there are many perspectives we can use when considering the Occupy movement, anthropology is well-situated to encompass many of the features which set Occupy apart. First, anthropology's cross-cultural perspective allows for the possibility of considering the movement both as a whole and in terms of individual cities. In this respect, it provides the ability to examine unique contexts within cities that shape the direction of a particular Occupy group while also understanding how this group fits into the broader, global Occupy movement. Encompassing the local as well as the global provides the necessary context for understanding the complexity of Occupy and all that it entails, from why it came about to the participants and the social life of the movement. Secondly, media coverage of Occupy is often hindered by its insistence on finding sound bites, leaders, and concrete demands (all of which have caused frustration when dealing with Occupy). Anthropology provides a much deeper understanding of the movement and its goals, allowing them to coexist together as opposed to having to pick one. Unlike the mainstream media, an anthropological approach does not assume that a leaderless movement committed to

direct democracy and without an all-encompassing list of demands will necessarily be inherently ineffective. For these reasons, using an anthropological perspective can provide a viewpoint on the Occupy movement that the mainstream media often lacks and that is able to take into account the complexities and variability within the movement.

A Brief History of Occupy and How It Has Changed

Precedents: The Global Justice movement, Argentina, and the Arab Spring

While Occupy represents a new type of protest effort in the United States enabled by a confluence of social media technology, the movement has its roots in the global justice movement of the last couple decades as well as social movement trends that date even further back. The need for horizontality, consensus, diversity, and communication between activists spread worldwide can all be traced back to the movements of the 1960s, where movement participants were only just beginning to consider and come to terms with these ideas (Maeckelbergh 2009:8). In 1999, the idea that “all struggles are linked and all oppression is rooted in the same structural problems” came to global attention in the form of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, seen as a major event in the Global Justice or anti-globalization movement (Maeckelbergh 2009:1). Facilitated by the developing technology of the listserv, the Global Justice Movement was able to connect movement actors from around the world into a “movement of movements” (Juris 2012:267). Through such actions as the World Social Forum, the Global Justice movement worked to not only bring about a more just, horizontal, directly democratic world but also utilized these values in their day-to-day operations (Juris 2012:267). The protests in Argentina following the 2001 financial collapse in that country, including the popular takeover of factories, have also been seen as precedents for Occupy. More recently, the actions of citizens involved in the Arab Spring to make deep societal change by overthrowing

their governments have been seen as an inspiration for the Occupy movement in the United States. Like Occupy, social media (specifically Twitter), has been given considerable credit for helping to mobilize and coordinate the actions of citizens involved in these protests.

The American Autumn: Encampments, Direct Action, and Technology

The origins of the first iteration of Occupy Wall Street can be traced back to a mid-July 2011 email from *Adbusters* magazine which established the Twitter hashtag #OccupyWallStreet as well as the September 17th date (Schneider). Anarchists, artists, and academics (these categories are not mutually exclusive) were central in mobilizing activists and shaping the practices of OWS. Within a month, there was mobilization both online (from groups such as Anonymous) and on the ground, as organizers met in New York to plan their next move, many of them coming from an encampment called Bloombergville that had been established to protest the mayor's layoffs and social service cuts (Schneider). Occupy Wall Street held its first action in New York City on September 17th, 2011, which was followed by the occupation of Zuccotti Park. From there, as media coverage of the movement grew (including coverage of police efforts to stop the protests) and activists spread what they were doing, branches of Occupy sprang up in cities around the United States and the world, marking a shift to "Occupy Everywhere."

Globally, two key sites of action were Kuala Lumpur, where Occupy Dataran began in the summer leading up to OWS and Spain, where the moment tied into preexisting discontent about the state of the nation's economy (Gabbat et al. 2011).

The early weeks of the movement were characterized by the encampments, direct actions, inclusivity, and extensive use of technology to mobilize activists. The encampments facilitated the infrastructure of the Occupation, as they became self-sustaining communities with

committees allowing participants to contribute to each other in whatever ways they felt best able. The encampments also showed an alternative to the capitalist state, providing a visible contrast to its inefficiencies and structural inequality. Direct actions took a variety of forms during this period, ranging from marches to bank protests and port shutdowns. As Occupy grew, efforts were made to bring others into the movement, including unions, other activist networks, and historically disenfranchised groups and neighborhoods. Just as Occupy did not have a single set of demands it was also not limited to one type of activist or cause. Throughout the movement, technology has played an important role in mobilizing participants, whether through Twitter, Facebook, or livestream. This technology has not only allowed for rapid mobilization but has also allowed a parallel protest to exist digitally, whether through the actions of those in Anonymous or the conversation among those watching livestreaming video coming from a protest. Nonetheless, some have commented that unlike the email listservs of the Global Justice movement, the Twitter-verse inhabited by Occupy does not allow for the kind of thoughtfully, sustaining commentary that created long-term links among activists worldwide (Juris 2012:267).

Spring/Summer 2012: Outreach, New Occupations and Creative Actions, General Strike, and Inter-Occupy Communication

As the encampments were largely broken up in the late fall and early winter of 2011, Occupiers began looking for new ways to mobilize without having a central space in which to ground their organization. This evolution has involved several major trends, including a turn to local issues (as well as the staying visible locally), inter-Occupy communication, large-scale mobilizations, and internal community building. While still focused on national issues, Occupiers increasingly looked to address issues within their cities (like homelessness) through new actions such as occupying houses and taking over other buildings to deal with foreclosure challenges locally.

Following the end of the encampment, Occupiers were largely written off by the mainstream media although efforts persisted to carry on marches and other local direct actions to maintain a presence in the community. Efforts have also been made to form new relationships with other community organizations and to spread the message of Occupy locally. Internally, Occupiers have worked to strengthen community within their organizations to deal with burn-out and disagreements, such as by hosting events for Occupiers to come together outside of protests to cultivate the sense of community that may have dissipated after the Occupation. Larger Occupies such as Occupy Oakland have also worked to organize major protests/days of action such as May Day, in order to mobilize supporters. More broadly, Occupiers have worked to communicate amongst themselves by traveling between Occupies and making other efforts to learn from each other. They have also continued to re-evaluate their goals, values, and efforts, such as “Re-imagining the General Assembly,” the “Values Workshop” in the Bay, and the Occupy National Gathering (focused on the envisioning the future of democracy).

OCCUPY OAKLAND

Actions and Strategies



Occupy Oakland (OO) has earned a worldwide reputation within the larger Occupy movement, and one that has been characterized by the mainstream media as having a particularly radical and militant angle. Media coverage has focused mainly on clashes between protestors and police, the shooting of Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen by the Oakland Police Department (OPD), and

excessive repression as seen in the arrest of over 400 protestors during the January 28th Move-In Day action. While these events have been central to activists' focus on police brutality in Oakland, OO has achieved an array of successes in other areas and is represented by a far more diverse community of committed activists than the media has portrayed.

Successful maneuvers at organizing include city-wide actions such as the November 2nd General Strike that brought thousands of Oakland citizens into the streets, the shutdown of the Oakland port during the December 12th West Coast Port Shutdown, and the subsequent general strike on May Day of 2012. Smaller-scale actions include temporarily shutting down banks, disrupting foreclosure auctions, protesting school closures, and organizing community-based outreach campaigns to educate the public about pressing issues (such as the shooting of unarmed African American teenager Alan Blueford by OPD, or how the rising costs of AC transit bus fare disproportionately affect Oakland's poorest citizens). OO has had over 20 committees and working groups ranging from Labor Solidarity and Anti-Repression, to Foreclosure Defense and the Tactical Action Committee. Since the encampment, internal conflict, divisiveness, organizing burnout, and successful counter-insurgency, have left many protestors discouraged. Yet those who have turned away from OO have often created parallel projects that more closely represent their values and goals, such as Decolonize Oakland, revealing the enduring commitment of activists who take a variety of approaches to social change.

Unfortunately, one of the most sensationalized aspects of OO, from outside as well as within the movement, has been OO's embrace of a diversity of tactics, or rather, that it has not passed a resolution to support only "nonviolent" action. While some proponents of nonviolent civil disobedience strongly feel that a failure to shun property destruction will only serve to alienate the general public, the degree of attention that has been paid to this particular issue has distorted

the larger picture. The overwhelming majority of Occupiers in Oakland have not engaged in property destruction, some are openly against it, and some support such tactics even if they don't personally partake in them. The vilification of the black bloc is problematic in that most protestors who cover their faces and brandish shields are not breaking anything, rather, they are the ones who head to the front of a march with shields to protect themselves and their comrades from police projectiles that have been indiscriminately deployed against protestors (peaceful activists, not so peaceful activists, families with children, etc.). What is most significant is that people on both sides of the tactics debate, with many taking a neutral position, continue to participate in OO actions on the basis that the imperative is to address the everyday structural and institutional violence that harms people living in Oakland. This goal is seen by many as more important and realistic than trying to control a handful of protestors who may try to break some bank windows.

Jesse: *If people come and they break things, they are inherently not adherent to anything anyone says, so there's no point in having the discussion. It's a criminal matter, and we can approach it. I, myself, and other people who live down here confront the vandals physically. And the people who want to pass condemnation against them...they don't do that. And, you know, they don't respect or study why these young people are doing it. And it is a fact, an uncomfortable reality that mass property damage has amounted in the billions of dollars over the course of decades nationwide as a result of high-profile instances of police brutality. LA, for instance, resulted in a change in police protocol without resolving the problems of mental illness, corruption, and racism. So, as far as reform and revolution, vandalism is an effective means of reform. And it might even be counter-revolutionary as reform methods are commonly critiqued, but people aren't really having an honest discussion about it. I believe this is largely due to a*

generation gap in activists. There's young people, and people with grey hair. And people my own age...we're very obscure. Political activism was un-cool when I was growing up. A lot of that is the fallout of COINTELPRO: destroying the Black Panthers and creating gangs. You know, when I was a kid we didn't have the internet to talk with everyone, to have the discussion. I had to study Marx on my own and I didn't have anyone to talk to about it. And now they do, and it's cool again. I don't think people really respect and appreciate it -- that, ok, so maybe they're doing the most youthful thing, that's great. That's the thing, when I talk about people changing, the individuals who do this, they're very brave, and they're putting themselves at risk, and they believe that it's what they need to do to be a good person, and to make the world a better place. That's what they believe. Whether they're right or wrong is irrelevant because it's whether they rise to that challenge, or if they're cowardly and they just cheer for it.

The preoccupation over tactics has also detracted from what is seen as the most important and meaningful work to many activists in Oakland (including those who participate in the black bloc): the opportunity to build a self-sustaining and supportive community that can provide for its participants in a way that a government in a capitalist nation simply will not. In discussing the successes of OO, most protestors mention feeding and housing the homeless (as well as each other), providing safe spaces for children and youth, and fostering empathy and education through outreach to Oakland citizens. In addressing local injustice, a great deal of energy has been spent on addressing the ongoing legacy of police violence in Oakland, which has ravaged low-income communities of color, and has been felt to a considerably less degree by Occupier's who've been on the receiving end of police batons, rubber bullets, tear gas, and repeated trips to jail for their participation. The Tactical Action Committee, consisting mainly of young people of color who were born and raised in Oakland, organized the only ongoing weekly event at OO

aside from the General Assembly. The weekly Fuck the Police march has been one of the most diverse actions at OO, drawing many participants from among the local citizenry, as well as those newer to the city who are appalled by the extent of violence that occurs on Oakland streets. Those who have witnessed years to decades of police brutality in their communities feel particularly compelled to fight back and demand accountability from a police force that is best known for their failure to “protect and serve.”

Reform versus Revolution

The word “revolution” tends to evoke images of violence, war, and suffering, yet not everyone believes that revolution has to come about in that way. While many Occupiers feel a revolution of some sort is needed, activists have been participating in revolutionary action since the beginning of the Occupation in Oakland. It may be true that Occupy Oakland can be characterized as radical and militant in comparison to other Occupies, but this must be understood as much in terms of the dedication among activists to provide for the community those daily necessities that the city will not (such as food and shelter), as it is for the infrequent occurrences of property destruction.

The array of injustices that occur in Oakland has particularly shaped the movement’s trajectory, and reinforces the urgency with which activists in Oakland feel obligated to work together, despite a struggle over values and strategies. This urgency coincides with continued police repression, counter-insurgency efforts, the increasing hyper-militarization of the police force, and the failure of the city to address acts of police brutality that disproportionately affect people of color. While there is no overarching ideology at OO, participants ranging from teenaged to elderly often mention the need to abolish capitalism in the struggle to overcome everyday

violence. Such violence is seen as a consequence of the racism, classism and sexism administrated by patriarchal American institutions.

To identify the cause of social, economic, and political oppression in this manner may seem radical in comparison to the analysis or propaganda common at other Occupy sites. It is essential to consider how these radical ideas fit within the political and historical context of Oakland and neighboring Berkeley. From the Free Speech and Anti-War Movements, to the Feminist Movement, and most importantly, the Black Panther Party, it is easy to see how and why Oakland has remained a hub for radical activism, where politically engaged people come to have a “by any means necessary” attitude. The presence of Communist, Socialist, and Anarchist communes has persisted throughout the decades, as has extreme poverty and violence within Oakland’s low-income neighborhoods. In more recent years, the magnitude of protest that broke out in reaction to the 2009 killing of Oscar Grant by BART police officer Johannes Mehserle can be seen as a clear precursor to the fight for justice in Oakland today. In response to a city government that fails to protect its citizens, it is logical that activists would work to build a self-sustaining community that does not rely on those oppressive state institutions for governance. In response to a New York Times article by Jonathon Mahler (2012) proclaiming that Oakland is the last refuge of radicalism in the United States, Davey D (2012) argues he “diminishes the true grind that organizers put in day-in and day-out to improve their community and better this city. Those who take direct action in the face of oppression do so because they have little or no choice. It’s not something to be romanticized, it’s not a game, even if this writer came across a few individuals who thought it was.”

How people describe Occupy Oakland

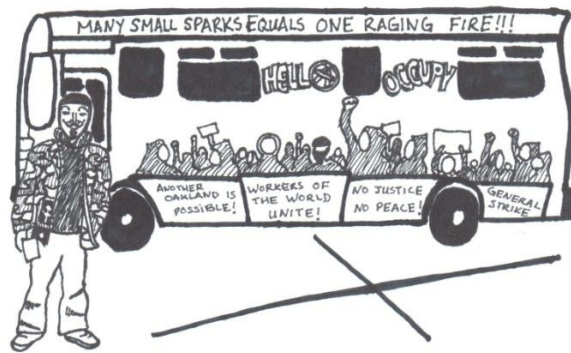
Jesse: *It (Occupy Oakland) still eludes a definition as the Occupy movement as a whole does, because it's more a gathering of discontentment, and a social event. I think it's just as much a response to the apolitical elements of our culture that isolate us, such as technology and uh...just the lifestyle of works weeks, and this kind of thing. It's a response to that as much as it is to any political or economic issue. There's a cultural issue, and Occupy Oakland I would distinguish from the rest of the Occupy movements, as I understand them, as being more about social services and pragmatism, and less about ideology and theory.*

TBG on important things to know about Occupy Oakland: *To me it'd be kind of important, especially with the migration of a lot of different folks from a lot of places, overseas, from around the country, Canada, whatever...a lot of people just automatically think that there isn't anybody from Oakland that's within the Occupy movement, and I'm like, "dude, I'm from Oakland." I've seen Jerry Brown try to tear down our city and drive a lot of good businesses out. I understand how people be feeling, you know, cause they're here now and they're like, "yeah, you know, I live here so this is my community and such and such," and this will always be my community. So, I'm always gonna be here fighting and protesting and having an issue when unlawful things are happening...a lot of people can move and then join some other movement somewhere else because they really didn't really have any loyalty to Oakland in the first place. They really just came as a visitor. I'm not saying that as a bad thing, I'm just putting things in perspective. It just is what it is sometimes. So it's important for people to know there are people out here who will remain out here, regardless of how many times folks are arrested, or anything of that nature. So, we are out here.*

Myriam discussing OO's biggest successes: *Well, probably the first port action when we had sooo many people, you know, and it was so exhilarating and there was so much diversity and camaraderie and little General Assemblies on the port. That was a high point. I actually didn't go on the second port action. I think it was partly I was exhausted and I was just focused on this environmental stuff, and partly I was affected by the publicity about how the unions weren't behind it, and stuff like that. You know I think at the time I just thought it doesn't make sense to do a repeat, it won't be bigger and better. But I actually think, ultimately, it was the right thing to do, because bringing in the other ports to whatever extent we did, provided the leverage that really scared them into...you know, when we passed the resolution saying we were gonna come up to Longview, we won! You know, so that was probably our biggest victory, right?*

Jesse on OPD and the relevance of Fuck the Police actions: *Fuck the police. Yeah...there's not even a need for an intellectual stance on it. When they murdered Alan Blueford, I heard there was a police shoot-out, and that a cop had been shot, and the only thing I believed, the only thing I knew... my epistemic standard was that a man is dead and the police shot him. And that's not even being cynical, that's not even saying, "fuck the police." It's just irrational to believe anything they say. I wanted an independent source. And then it turned out that I saved myself a lot of cognition because then it turned out that, no, he didn't shoot the cop, the cop actually shot himself, and then they're saying, "oh, he had a gun," and I'm thinking that the police plant guns. That's...they get caught at that all the time, and now they're not even able to plant the gun on him. Now they're trying to say it was 40 feet away. And it's not even...see there's a...and I respect the attitude that anyone who shoots at a cop is a worthless piece of shit that is threatening society at its utmost core, and should be killed. But that's... that murdering a cop is different than trying to murder another person because they're trying to murder the thin blue*

line that keeps us in civilization. That's what a lot of people feel and believe. I respect that as a valid argument. It's not mine, but it's valid. Well, if that's the way people feel, then the police said that Alan Blueford was a worthless piece of shit that should be murdered, should be killed. That's what they said by saying that he shot at a cop. So they're slandering a dead child. I mean...there's nothing beneath them when that's what they do, and when they cannot be believed.



OCCUPY THE BAY

Actions and Strategies

The South Bay Occupation began in early October, spearheaded by students from a community college:

Teresa: *We met down at [the] Park. And there were actually quite a few people that had met [up]. Some were activists previously, some had been with other movements, and it really encompassed a lot of ages. Some more active with Vietnam and, more local issues and—California having such a broad, diverse population, it was really neat to see such a diverse group come together. So we marched down to City Hall. And I guess that's when we took a vote about whether we were going to choose to Occupy that day. And so it was passed that we were gonna set up an Occupation that day. So, we [my partner and I] left, and went home, not really*

knowing what was going to be there. And we had joined what was called the Communications group. Communications had set up the Gmail account for [the] communications group, unknowing to us that...Other committees did not set up a way to communicate with each other. And so the next day, when I came downtown to lend my support, there were tents set up that were actually moved back to the...street side where the trees are...because I guess City Hall came and asked them to move back. And so that's where the tents stayed. And it was a lot of people really, walking around, talking, discussing, bringing in maybe some paperwork, newspaper articles or Internet articles. There was food starting to show up from people passing by. We had a lot of foot traffic. I mean, there was excitement in the air; people that weren't even there at the park the previous day, these were people driving by on the streets, and walking by asking. Some people knew and some people didn't. So it was really, um, really a different atmosphere, last year.

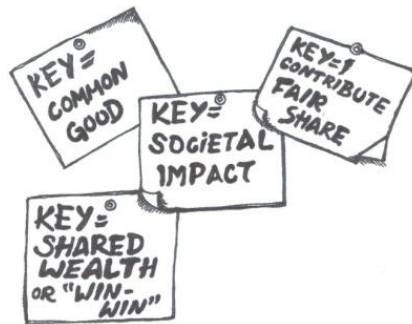
In this passage, Teresa describes the diversity of Occupy the Bay (OTB); that it attracted everyone from seasoned activists and college students, with a variety of interests, ranging from international to local issues. The encampment was a key part of OTB's autumn identity, and the visible presence of an Occupation was something very exciting to the public. Teresa also touches on the reality that people really didn't know what Occupying was; that this was an experiment and people were learning as they worked. Teresa immediately volunteered to be a member of the Communications committee, and illustrates how communication was a challenge for OTB from the outset. Throughout the seasons, communication, transparency and use of social media technologies have been constant and emotional issues for OTB, fueling much internal conflict, fractionalization, and overall disillusionment with OTB.

After the encampment was shut down in November, OTB, like many other Occupies was faced with the task of changing the definition of "Occupy" from the act of physically camping out to

Occupying public space in abbreviated and creative ways. The General Assembly (GA) has remained the only consistent OTB event every Wednesday and Sunday, aside from the monthly Really Really Free Market. There are also consistent events and direct actions organized by other individual Occupiers and affinity groups in the South Bay, such as weekly bank actions. OTB's numbers have gradually decreased throughout the winter, spring and summer, with GA attendance ranging from 5 to 25 people. This is not to diminish the incredible efforts by individual Occupiers in the areas of organizing and outreach; simply to highlight the necessity of numbers to a social movement. While the GA has been consistent, and OTB has expressed an interest in experimenting with consensus-building, many individual Occupiers have demonstrated a stronger commitment to direct democracy and "thought work" than organizing and attending local direct actions. The result is often a lot of discussion and not much follow-through. Thus, the GA has become a space to make announcements about upcoming actions and events going on in the greater Bay Area, report back from events that people have attended (as well as the few committees that still operate), brainstorm and propose future actions, endorse specific events and proposed legislation, and attempt to solve problems as they arise by establishing OTB protocols.

However, OTB has had some notable successes that we wish to highlight. First, the fact that OTB organized and operated a physical encampment for nearly 2 months is incredibly impressive, and most of the remaining consistent Occupiers one year later, like Teresa, have occupied since OTB's inception. Second, OTB has had success in organizing with other smaller Occupies on the Peninsula, as well as other like-minded non-profit and community organizations. These coalitions have accomplished what OTB itself could not with low numbers, particularly in the area of battling foreclosures and campaigning for the Homeowners' Bill of

Rights in Sacramento. OTB has also celebrated Earth Day and May Day through activism, with individual Occupiers working with other activist groups to Occupy Saltworks (a measurable success in Redwood City), Occupy Whole Foods, and join the South Bay Immigrants' Rights March. Finally, OTB was successful in completing a 'Values Workshop' to develop its vision for the future, developing clear yet open-ended values that embody what OTB stands for and provide a framework for moving forward. While numbers have dropped throughout the year, we cannot underestimate the tenacity of Occupiers committed to protesting injustice and educating the public.



Reform versus Revolution

As the South Bay lacks the history of oppression and radical activism in Oakland, OTB as it has evolved throughout the seasons has taken more of a progressive, reformist trajectory. The passages from the following interviews are by no means representative of the philosophy of OTB as a whole, but the opinions of a few very active and committed individuals.

Jamie: *These things have to grow, and it takes a couple years for a tree to bear fruit. So these things, I mean, we're now ironing out the "whys." 'Cause we're all here for a reason, but to communicate that to other people, we all have to say the same thing, like in consensus. "Why are we here?" Well, you know, it has taken months and months to get the [values] and the mission*

statement and things just for the local Occupy. What about Occupy: a Political Party! But, the things is that I don't necessarily think you would have to go that far. If some of these people in our government could get that we're the majority. "We're gonna keep doing this 'til we have some sort of say." We're leaderless, but that doesn't mean we can't work with those people who are the leaders in our country. 'Cause there is a difference between having an organization that's leaderless, and of course, having a political sympathy for someone who is a leader. I mean, my God!... And that's what I'm saying is that most of these people—they're not necessarily our enemy. They are part of this thing that's been going on for a long time. And just because they don't participate or they talk against it, doesn't mean that it's not still gonna happen... Well the thing about Occupy and the federal level, is that those people have to be shaken up a bit... They need to know that we can unseat them. And I don't mean like a revolution or anything. They just need to know that we have political power to get rid of them.

Teresa: *We do have choices. And the idea is that we take government back into our own hands. We take our lives back into our own hands. That, nothing really happens without people standing up, without coming forward, standing up, learning the truth. And just saying "No, this is bullshit. We are putting our foot down." And some people are saying that "this is going to lead to revolution, we're gonna go to war, that most countries are going to go into civil war." Um, okay. Most people think of war as taking up arms. War can also be more broadly defined as a conflict of objection. A more peaceful type of revolution. And that's what Occupy is advocating, is a nonviolent revolution. And just to say, "No, we put our foot down." And to just say "No." And that's kind of another thing that kind of pisses me off that, Occupy, for whatever action Occupy has done, Occupy has always been nonviolent, and had the mantra of nonviolence, and this is the peaceful revolution. And whatever violence that has erupted out of the idea and the ideology of*

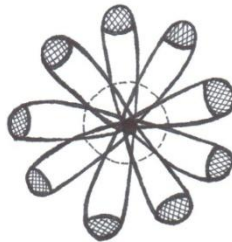
Occupy; violence never propagated by Occupy but either the police or other infiltrators like Black Bloc that advocate violence through means of a revolution. And I mean, we even have people coming in to Occupy, not here in [the Bay], but other Occupy demonstrations and inciting violence, and being called out for the agitators that they are. I mean, you have some right-wing agitators that are planted to start violence. And that's not Occupy's doing. So I mean, really the ideology of Occupy is the peaceful revolution; you put your foot down and say, "No." And come out into the streets and take some action. And I advocate that, I think that we're going to see more of it.

Steven: *Well I think, kind of like talking about where we were in the beginning, what I really wanna see happen is, I wanna see people [in the South Bay and Peninsula] protest the way they do in San Francisco and Oakland. 'Cause, I wanna bring that culture down here. 'Cause a lot of the activism that happens on the [South Bay and Peninsula] is about forming groups with committees and going to city council meetings and filling out petitions and holding signs on a street corner, and I think that's all great, but I also wanna bring in that other element of, Direct Action, Mic Checks and, I wouldn't say confrontational but more aggressive and direct. Not throwing bricks through windows but just some things that are going to make people take notice that are a little more disruptive, and that you tend to see more in the bigger cities, not really in suburban areas. 'Cause what I always said about the bank shutdowns was—Wells Fargo knows that there are going to be bank protesters in San Francisco, LA, New York, but what if they knew that they needed to look out for that in Redwood City, San Carlos, Sunnyvale, you know, all these other cities. You know, then they will be like, "Whoa, what's going on?" So, that's one of the things that's on my personal agenda.*

How People Describe Occupy the Bay

Steven: *Well I think Occupy was about income inequality, but not just income inequality. I think it's just about inequality in general. It was 1% versus 99%, corporations versus people, rich versus poor, power versus powerless, and I think that's what that was. To me, I truly believe that the strength of Occupy is that a lot of different groups with a lot of different issues can come together and work together. For me, that was kind of what it was about, rather than say, one specific principle. I mean if I had to pick out one I would say, sure, income inequality or corporations versus people, those would be the two that maybe I would pick out, but I kind of hesitate to say "this is what I think Occupy Wall Street's agenda was" because it is, strength-wise, the collaborative nature of it. And kind of going back to the beginning, you had a lot of first-timers; they hadn't protested before but they wanted to because of their personal situation, and what they were saying was so horrendous, whether it was lack of healthcare or an inability to get a job or student fees. So, I think it's a—I guess in very general terms it's a protest against the current system, and I think that's where the relationship is.*

Francisco: *Okay, picture the top half of a daisy. And the petals are different constituencies. And the yellow center is the overlap. So if that's the 99%, you're trying to bring together people from very different persuasions, very different priorities. Literally, if you are not just kidding about being the 99%, that means you are going to have right wingers because otherwise you're not the 99%; you're the 50%. And so people at the tips of the petals is where they stand alone, where they are at the extremes on some very specific pet peeve they have, or cause, and that's their thing, but not the same thing as the other petal. But, in the middle, if you draw it as a bunch of ellipses, you can see a bunch of ellipses, all the petals overlap, where the*



yellow center is. And that's the very very VERY few things that a crowd that diverse can agree on...So I started—it wasn't long before I ran into people that said something that was outside of the financial justice theme, and that ran contrary to my beliefs. But they were separate from the financial justice theme that was supposedly the focus then. And I figured, you don't want to be arguing about other things because that will disintegrate things pretty quickly in the group. And I realized the best response was to say, "Partner, I see that differently but that's not even part of the focus, of what brought us both here to Occupy; I'd rather talk with you about things we agree on. Because there is so much we agree on; why would we spend time arguing about things we disagree about? And then we can fight together for that kind of justice." And just completely avoid the discussion. I refer to that as, for example, "taking my Democrat, Obama shoes off when I enter the Occupy living room." And I've continued to follow that practice at other groups I've joined like Move to Amend.

And not everyone has that sensitivity but, if you can explain it to them in a positive light, it keeps the group from blowing itself up; the 99%; because, it's a volatile mix. Some people have laughed when I've mentioned that sometimes I see it as a work of art, where, you are trying to be a sculptor, but instead of clay, you are making your sculpture out of C-4. A C-4 is a plastic explosive; it's much more powerful than say, dynamite. Basically, you put a clump of it, it looks like clay, and set a fuse to it, and that's what they use to demolish a building; to wreck the foundation and cause it to collapse. So, picture being a sculptor but instead of clay, that's C-4 you're trying to make a work of art with; terribly delicate mission; powerful. So, I had not thought these things through to that extent before coming. I had never even been in a movement where I was trying to join forces, with such a diverse group, which at least in theory would include people whom normally I would not stand ideologically, just for one very specific cause.

Steven: *I would say that Occupy is not really a place or a group, but it's an opportunity for people to create change by themselves, and not have to wait for a group to send an email saying "sign this on my petition," or be a part of this political party or exactly this group; it's just a place where—if you have a grievance, if there is something you wanna create change on, you can come to us, you can find like-minded people and you can get something done directly, as opposed to going through the normal channels.*

OCCUPY THE COAST

Actions and Strategies

The Coastal occupation began in Mid-October 2011 in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street. As the movement has evolved over the last year Occupiers in OTC have participated in a wide variety of activities and also turned their attention to local issues on the Coast, focusing especially on homelessness and making change in the city's policies around it.

Carl: *I got very involved. And I immediately, of course, because of my background politically [as a Revolutionary Socialist] I realize these General Assemblies are very much like soviets or workers councils in some of these other countries where things had happened, like in the early Russian Revolution.*

Marie: *Everybody that I ran into was interesting. And interested. And everything that got spoken of was exactly how I felt. EXACTLY. There was no variance in it. There may have been variance in degrees but not in the factors they were talking about. And it was stuff I've been wondering for a long time.*

Carrie: *But I remember [an environmentalist] came to speak at the [building] which happens to be right across the street from where the Occupy encampment was, so that was kind of my big plunge into politics for 2011. I got involved in a follow- up to [his] talk and I went across the street to meet the Occupy people on the same day. I think that after visiting a couple times I wanted to interview someone and then after a while I started seeing that there was regular activities and decided to investigate.*

This early encampment period is described as a time of great activity and enthusiasm for Occupy on the Coast. Occupiers who were present speak of having a few hundred community members present for marches and other activities, with a sense of solidarity among those from diverse backgrounds as described by Marie. The Coastal town in which this Occupy movement exists is considerably smaller than either Oakland or the Bay, meaning the encampment in front of the courthouse was a readily obvious fixture in downtown and received local media coverage in the early stages of the encampment. The initial period, lasted for a number of weeks before being shifted to a central Occupy kiosk staffed by Occupy members. While there were numerous issues with the city around the physical occupation, the harsh tactics taken at other Occupies were not carried out by the city against OTC. There were also divisions within OTC, including around the issue of homelessness and the involvement of Occupiers without homes.

Carl comments: *Well, the County and the City have been relatively hands off. I think they were really afraid to have any ugly incident... Even the couple of times when they arrested some people there this past winter, where we had a bunch of drunks hanging out—we didn't have enough of us to hang out at night anymore and all that. There were a few arrests and there were tickets and things but it never really got really, really, really weird and violent and all this other*

kind of stuff. Part of that is a small town again and they're very conscious of their tourist image and things like that.

Carl: *Now here of course things never got off the ground like they did other places. Initially it was a lot bigger and then we had those raids and it drove a lot of people away immediately. It doesn't take much to drive people away in this town, though, because you'll have a big showing initially for a movement like that and then it will peter out really quickly. People just don't—it's very hard to sustain progressive movement stuff here. It's very difficult.*

In the spring, the kiosk also came down, shifting OTC into another phase of action.

Marie (speaking about the early Occupy period): *You know, we had some sweet things at the park. We had a couple of great food-fests that a lot of people showed up for. Some of the best when we had the kiosk...the kiosk being gone was really hard. And it hit us harder than I really believed it would. I thought there would be more people back by now but that kiosk was a real grounding point even though it got so controversial. I still look when I drive down [the street], I still automatically look over there, because every time I did I would look to see who was there, what was up. See if nobody was there and did I need to go hang or whatever. I pulled a shift until 2:30 in the morning one night. That was interesting.*

Outside of the physical presence in the city, OTC has had a long-running weekly march through the local Farmer's Market, a key community event that draws many people from the city, university, and surrounding areas. Later on the march was complemented by a weekly "Re-occupation" of the courthouse space, with signs and Occupiers present to hand out materials and talk to those who come by. Earlier on, marches were also held prior to GAs, often focusing on a particular weekly topic (such as a bank protest). Occupiers speak frequently of feeling like there

is support within the community when they are out marching or engaged in other activities, despite the small number involved with OTC. The General Assemblies are still going on in OTC and offer a space for Occupiers to come together to discuss current events, brainstorm future actions, take care of weekly business, and build community.

Marie: *I can feel that power— I’ve walked down [laughs] the middle of Farmer’s Market by myself with a sign. And one time a REALLY big sign because I was late or whatever and I wasn’t going to pull the sign down and I thought “You know, I’m going to march, I’m going to march. I’m going to march while I’m finding everybody else” right? I felt no embarrassment, I felt no anything of that nature because there’s a bigger objective, you know?*

Carrie: *I am surprised at how many people give us a thumbs up and seem to know what the issues are or in general what we’re doing. Once in a while we’ll still run across people who say they’ve never heard of Occupy. So I feel like there’s this kind of sleeping masses or something. You know, what happened to all those two and three hundred people who were involved? They’re still here, and they probably have a lot of acquaintances and friends who are equally concerned. So that’s our chance to wake them up or at least wink at them a little bit. We also get some negative feedback once and a while. But that can turn into some interesting discussions.*

Homelessness remains a key issue for OTC, a decision which Occupiers said was made consciously in 2012 to help focus their efforts within the community. Nonetheless, this has been an important issue for OTC since its beginning, due to the participation of numerous Occupiers without homes in the encampment and thereafter. Several from OTC have had fellow Occupiers who are homeless stay with them and developed close relationships with them that they mentioned might not have occurred without their participation in OTC.

Carrie: *But we just decided okay, let's pick a national issue—maybe one or two—and let's pick a local issue. And then we'll major in those. And we'll of course take interest and mention other things but we're going to major in those. So we chose homelessness and we chose the banks and the corporations...And I think that plus having participants that were homeless or borderline homeless kind of pushed us to, you know, "This really needs to be a local issue that we continue on."*

Other previous OTC events have included coordination with Food not Bombs to serve food on a weekly basis, as well as visiting the local homeless day center to talk to those who are using the services. Occupiers were also involved in collecting signatures to get the GMO food-labeling initiative on the November ballot. OTC has held a variety of community events (as mentioned previously). Social events are also held periodically for community building among Occupiers, such as potlucks and parties. Another recurring action is speaking at the City Council meetings during the public comment period. Occupiers have often used this time to push for reforms in the City Council's policies toward the homelessness and to critique steps backward on the part of the city.

Carl (discussing the impact of Occupiers at City Council meetings and recent attention to homelessness in local media): *People were hearing what we were saying, you know. And I think they wanted to get ahead of it. I think the interest in the [local paper] and some of these other people who are now speaking up about these things is "Man, these guys are talking some sense and we'd better move on this and get ahead of the curve or we'll have these damn radicals leading the charge." You know what I mean. "So we'd better start putting forth some stuff. We'll steal their thunder." Which is fine with me. If you get them to the point where they're doing that, you know you've got them on the run and you're doing some good stuff.*

Reform versus Revolution

Marie: *And people care and that's what keeps me going too—is that people care. They look for those signs [at farmer's market]. They actually look for them. They know who we are. There is political talk that happens after we walk by because I've heard it. "Oh, yeah, Occupy" and then they'll start another little vein of it. So it gets people thinking—the energy is strong.*

Carrie: *But you know, I think it just goes back to this is the response or the curative response—having compassion for the homeless. But eventually you do have to go up the river and go "Who's throwing babies in the river?" Which leads me back to the banks and corporations. Why is everything kind of screwed up in the first place? So it's both charity and getting to the root of the problem.*

Carl: *So you gotta fight on all those fronts, in terms of making demands on the current system. On the other hand, you need to have a perspective in my opinion—and a lot of them do—where you've gotta aim toward actually creating a totally new society from the ground up that's organized on a completely different basis and on a completely different set of principals, you know, a completely different set of rules, a completely different constitution, if you will. A completely different everything that is basically aimed at eliminating the power of the big corporations and the big banks and the super wealthy and the military brass and the CIA and all these other things. You've got to actually have a perspective of replacing that—abolishing that system and replacing it with a brand new system. While you're making demands on the current system and you're building your forces by making demands on the current system. Because that's how you bring new people in. People who aren't active now, all of sudden they're without a home or they get unemployed or their unions been busted or something like that and they're*

willing to listen to you about those issues. They haven't been political ever before and you can work with them and be active with them and help them fight. And in the process of doing that, not only can you help make gains for them maybe but you can also help to turn them on to your broader movement.

Carl: *And [Occupy] could start to become more of a recognized alternative, representative form of democratic structure, separate and apart from the official system, the official governmental system, you see. Because that's how revolutionary transformations happen, ultimately. There end up being counter poles of power that get organized because the old system cannot be relied upon anymore and it is no longer—it's not tenable because it's too corrupted. Alright? It happened during the American Revolution.*

These perspectives from Marie, Carrie, and Carl help to show their different ways of understanding ideas of reform and revolution within OTC. Marie talks about raising awareness of Occupy locally, including by making the conscious decision to tell all those she comes into contact with in her daily life about the movement. Her comments reference the significant effect Occupy has had in shaping an alternative discourse by establishing a new narrative of increased political awareness. Carrie's comment helps to link OTC's efforts OTC to make concrete changes to the city's policies around homelessness with the other broader structural changes needed for bringing about a more just, equal society.

As a self-identified Revolutionary Socialist, Carl is focused on revolution and creating an alternative form of government. Occupy provides a starting point for this revolution that would enable the working people to take control of the institutions and corporations forming the

foundation of the economy, which would then be “democratically operated under a democratically arrived at planned and rational approach.”

Carl: *In other words, the Occupy movement shows, in embryonic form, a kind of fledgling "new society" being born by example; a possible gathering place in the future for masses of people hit by the crumbling and reactionary current system. Along the way we need to relate to and involve ourselves in struggles over reasonable demands (reasonable to us and to the oppressed people, not necessarily "reasonable" to the 1% rulers. Matching what to them seems "reasonable" should not be our primary concern, although our demands should be within the "reasonable " radar of the majority of the 99%). In this way we link revolutionary projections and goals with current struggles and concerns of regular folks. This is the way to build movements and bring more people toward us -- and possibly radicalize them and help to raise their consciousness as they work with us, discuss issues with us, and get to know us.*

How People Describe Occupy the Coast

Carrie: *There's kind of these loosely defined associations: "Oh, you seem to be fairly good at running meetings, and why don't you be the treasury for a while, how about you take notes and okay maybe not this week." [laughs] It's a lot more intuitive with Occupy—unpredictable. And yet I've definitely gained an appreciation for exploring a leaderless movement. I've never really thought about that that much and never tried it outside of just friendship groups and it's been really interesting.*

Carrie: *First of all, the GAs are outside and therefore very welcoming to anyone who's walking by or vaguely interested. And [the other group she participates in] ...great, wonderful organization—just tends to attract a lot of white intellectuals who do things very thoughtfully,*

carefully. And that's been fun and interesting too. And you know, Occupy, it just feels very different. It feels a lot more Bohemian...it feels a little bit more unpredictable but also really kind of relentlessly willing to address the issues—just local issues, address national and a lot more talk about kind of the dark side of politics. There is that in [the other group] but maybe a lot more personalities of the [Occupy] participants showing and a lot more discussion about the dark side of national politics and international.

Marie: *There have been so many amazing people who are in it. And that's been a joy. As many things that have been a disappointment and a heartbreak, they've been equaled out by meeting some amazing people who are so gifted in so many ways. And then learning my limits [laughs]. And a lot of us have gone through a lot of personal things through it.*

Marie on focusing on homelessness: *For me, and I'm assuming for a few other people, that it grew. Because the more you're in it the worse you know it is. And the more you know about it the worse you know it is. You know, walking away becomes something that you can't do for your own moral fortitude anymore. And you know, when I asked [the couple]—when I said they could stay here, basically until they got a place it's because I couldn't take it.. I personally see very little point of marching and talking and discussing and having a raffle benefit, whatever you want to call it, if there isn't going to be some kind of physical, hands-on action.*

Carl: *...We went through several periods of different people coming in, people leaving, controversies about this, controversies about that. We've held together actually pretty well, given the small town... We're down to kind of a hard core.*

Carl: *It makes a big difference when you've got something that you can care about, that you're dedicated to, that you can be involved in. It makes all the difference in the world. Whatever else*

you're going through health-wise and everything else, it makes a hell of a difference. And I'm really glad it came along just for that reason alone, let alone the movement value of it and the social change value of it.

WHO ARE THE OCCUPIERS?

How did you become involved in Occupy?

***Jesse:** I heard it was going on down the street, and then one day I was high on benzodiazepines from being at the dentist, and I didn't want to just go straight home, I wanted to enjoy it, so I walked toward the plaza, and uh, found a really great scene. It was like a barbeque, a fish fry...people were out and I found some people making origami, and hung out with them, and enjoyed it through the evening, and returned the next day because it was simply a great gathering of people. It wasn't so political. It was more community based. There wasn't a bunch of rhetoric, which I have a disdain for. Um, didn't see a lot of 99%... people weren't even talking about that, they were just managing food and playing music. There were a lot of artists coming out. Uh, church groups. Everyone showing up to do their community thing. And it was a very...that spirit only existed during the first encampment. There was no jaded mentality, there was no anger, there was not people screaming about the bourgeois or the 1%. It was yeah, it was a very good community event.*

***TBG:** Well, I had sort of been following the developments in New York when that all had happened. And I, of course, had been reading up on the stuff going on overseas in Africa and Europe. So, when I heard what was going on in New York, I thought it was rather interesting to say the least. And then when it really started spreading and folks actually really started getting together and starting their own Occupies, you know...I was very interested. I mean, I didn't*

necessarily know what was going on and when Occupy Oakland very first started, I was not around. I was peeking in and I'd peek out, and...I guess, I could say taking a judgmental analysis of the people around. But, so after that, I sort of just was checking out the scene. I mean, I'd pass by downtown all the time for different reasons, so that's pretty much how I started...getting a little in, and a little in. And then I went to a few actions here and there, not really participating too much. But, I've been sort of just picking at it until I got full blown. I was just like, "well, why not?"

Marie: *A friend told me...I was already friends with them and she came over or called me one day and said "Hey, there's going to be this meeting. It's Occupy solidarity with Wall Street and Occupy the Coast and there's so and so...it's been going on." It was just a few weeks in because it was [late October]. So it was brand new. And I felt this literal compulsion from the center of me—there was no option. It wasn't an option not to go. There was no option as far as going went. It was really a heart thing—a gut, heart thing...So yeah, I went and listened and realized how long it had been since I had done it—you know, done anything, actually ever. I vote. I've always voted. And bitching [laughs]...I've always had of course opinions like everybody does and was active politically that way but not in this form... And I was watching. I wanted to see who showed up—I was curious. I mean, that wouldn't have affected my staying or not staying one way or the other. Obviously I'm still here...And we've had some pretty, you know...number three, only three people showing up days. So yeah, I started going. I went down to where the tents were. I went with [the friend], I went alone. Like I said, it just became "I have to go. I have to go. I have to go." Most people that I talked to, there was this surge of kinship.*

Carl: *So, when the Occupy movement hit, it was a real lifesaver for me on a personal level because here was something that was real vibrant. When I first saw the newspaper account of it*

in the paper here, the first couple of times, I figured “Oh, well, it’s not going to be like Occupy Wall Street.” I mean, it’s going to be a flash in the pan, there’ll be a couple of things that people get together a couple of times and it’ll pretty much die. But I kept hearing about it and hearing about it and hearing about it. And they kept having these marches. So I figured, “Well, shit, I’d better go down there and figure out what the hell’s going on.” So I did. And I was immediately drawn into it, got very deeply involved, got involved in the controversy with the people who had raided us a couple times, who didn’t want to submit to the majority, you know. People who had, you know...But they raided us, they stole stuff, they did all kinds of crap. Well anyway, so I got very involved.

Danny: *I guess September 17th my girlfriend and I were up in Harbin Hot Springs, Northern Calistoga kind of a little hippy place which is really nice and on Sunday driving back, listening to KQED I guess, we heard news reports of the Occupy stuff that had started, well, the Saturday while we were up there. Um, I got really excited. We both got really excited, like, this this THIS is what is needed, you know, this is the way to galvanize people, and that’s what’s needed, you know? You gotta wake people up somehow. So, yeah, I got enthusiastic and then maybe next weekend, maybe two weeks later we got a big Saturday march up in Occupy San Francisco. I was really limping then because I’ve had some tough hip surgeries, keeping up with the crowd was hard. But I really wanted to get my girlfriend to this because she’s younger and all of her political action has been online. So this was her first time going to an actual march or demonstration, and she got SO enthusiastic. She took off, it was like 6 hours before I could meet up with her again because I couldn’t keep up, you know, I’m limping along at the back with the people with the wheelchairs, pissed off at her and in a lot of physical pain, but she had such a good time and got so excited. There is no joy like turning someone on to something that’s new to*

them. So, that's how I got involved. We started carrying signs and chanting. And, it wasn't new to me because of peace movement and the anti-Bush stuff. But, the encampment was there, we hung out; we started showing up to some work group meetings, um, but it's a long way away. I didn't get too involved with Occupy San Francisco.

Francisco: *Um, I saw them there. It looked chaotic, a little scary, a little scruffy. I had heard about it and seen video...And I approached, timidly, wondering what I was doing in the middle of this place, with all sorts of people; some of them weren't my usual crowd. And, it seemed interesting. And I saw that ethnically it was not diverse. And I have an interest in ethnic diversity; I have done Latino Outreach for other movements, to get Latinos involved, specifically for Obama for America. I travelled to other states and I formulated strategies and wrote materials to attract Latinos and there were none so I figured, "hmmmm, I'll just ask around and see what's going on." And, a funny thing, I met the women who were at the table there, and they offered some snacks; so it was quite messy; trashcans overflowing. I offered to haul away the trash in my trunk, to make life easier for them. And then later in the week I attended some lunch where they came with these big aluminum trays of food for the people attending, some organization. And practically half of the food was left. It was great. And I thought, hmmm, I know exactly who could enjoy this. And so I asked if they were about to throw it away after the meeting. So I took the other half of the food over there and they enjoyed it a lot.*

Why Do You Occupy?

“Well, I mean, my entire life—and I mean from the time that I was born—there were some things that have happened to me where basically me or my family was taken advantage of and it had an ill effect on me” (Jamie). Jamie is homeless, and his decision to Occupy is

intrinsically connected to his homelessness. This is not to say that every homeless person is automatically an Occupier, but for Jamie, the circumstances that led to his homelessness are primarily structural and systemic, and he recognizes that his struggles are interconnected with the struggles of every person facing foreclosure:

I am involved with Occupy because, I don't feel like I was ever given a chance... I see where there is a lot of violence that has been directed at me... And see, it's the same people, okay! I mean, they are not directly connected to me. I couldn't point to you and say, "that Doctor Meddlebrook, he works at Goldman Sachs!" But Goldman Sachs and these companies that do the pharmaceutical drugs are so anti-marijuana. And then they're connected with Bank of America who's putting Jill over here at 65 out of her home. And this is why I'm so involved with Occupy, is because we've all been taken advantage by all of these people all of our lives, and maybe--it's blatantly apparent to me, it should be blatantly apparent to other people. My situation is remarkably similar to other homeless people. And now lots of people who are being evicted from their houses are being taken advantage of by the high rent prices, and I definitely think that that's taking advantage of somebody because—a smart person would only pay a quarter of their income to rent. Where most people are paying like, 95(%) or you know, somewhere around 80(%)...

Jamie recently said at one General Assembly: "I need to fight for your homes so that I can get one." Jamie's story follows a different trajectory from Francisco's who grew up in Argentina and was in high school when the dirty war was starting, in the 1970s. Thus, he experienced state terrorism first-hand, and can compare it to living in the United States: "one of things I tell people is; I lived the closest thing to *Fahrenheit 451* of anyone I know, because if they found books they

didn't like on your bookshelf, they would haul you in" (Francisco). Francisco's family moved to Spain right before Franco died:

...so I got to live 5 years watching a society emerge from a 40 year dictatorship, into freedom; I have never seen—there are few times where you will see a society evolve that quickly, that you are living in. So, it was amazing. So in that case the dictator was dead and part of the plan was that there would be a democracy...But yeah, I came to UC San Diego and even though I was studying Physics and Math I was also writing the Foreign Affairs column for the student union newspaper. So, it's not like I suddenly developed an interest in politics. It had been there, but I was busy raising—being a single parent and working in high-tech. So, I think for about 20 years I turned that part of myself off and just was a breadwinner and a dad. And then Bush, and the Crash, and here I am, and on the corner is Occupy. And my thought process is, I'm frustrated with inefficiencies where I am contributing right now, and there I was, and I joined. So, yeah, a lot of thinking went in there.

So, for Francisco, becoming an Occupier “was a combination of a primal scream, but also this is a very deliberate demand that I must find an *efficient* mission, an *effective* mission. Not *any* mission. This is not about my emotions; this is about changing something. I am 50 years old; I don't have time to go around screaming. I don't want to spend my time if it's not gonna change reality.”

TBG was born and raised in Oakland, and his decision to Occupy is related to the history of the city:

TBG: *I always say, me being somebody born and raised here, I've really been watching it transform over the past two to three decades. Like...It's not transforming for the better, for the*

most part...you know, be it the gentrification of areas...I don't know, it seems like alienation, so to speak, be it social groups, or be it ethnicities or...I don't know, I just wish it was more...everybody just be all for the people, but everybody don't want to be all for the people. I guess those are the things to me that really matter. You know, like, outreach...you know, education is very important regardless of where you're at or what you're doing. Education, to me, has to be in the forefront, you know. And...for the most part, to me, just the things that are humane.

For Jesse, Occupying is not about any particular political ideology, but about building community among people who have forgotten how to communicate with each other properly.

Jesse: And that...that's why [we're] Occupying...that's how we're Occupying, is we have this, and it speaks to what we're doing correct for the first time. That was something that I...that I noticed when I first got to the encampment that really flashed on me...was I missed the iphone era. Just when the iphone came out, I missed about three years of American society, and when I came back, everyone had a screen on, and nobody was making eye contact on the Bart anymore...and it was Rip Van Winkle for me, it was very strange, and, there was less conversation. And, when Occupy occurred, that seemed to be a large part of it...was people just saying hello to each other for the first time in a long time. And ...regaining some of that...something that...I've always wondered if I admired my grandparents generation because of something that they had, or if it was just because they were older and wiser. I think they had something that we lost through television. And through...you know, basically being raised by television. It's a huge component of many people's personalities. People...in many conversations people are trying to sell each other something...sell them themselves, or win an argument, or do what they see on TV. And, facebook? iPhones? It got even worse, and it's

topped. I think we hit our critical...our max criticality, and it collapsed, and we started remembering how good it is to say, "hello," to each other.

For Carl, his decision to Occupy ties into his lifelong commitment to activism: "The Occupy movement came along—it was a real God-send because...of course, I've been an activist all my life. I mean, basically decided I was a Socialist when I was 15 years old in high school." He goes on to explain his views on how and why people choose to participate in social movements:

Carl: *Sophisticated levels of political-historical-social consciousness do not and cannot arise in a vacuum. Very few people are natural revolutionaries, who could probably not have ever successfully been anything else (like myself). Most people who become revolutionaries do so only after an intense process of activism, struggle, personal turmoil, and deep involvements -- plus reading, discussions all night, debates, and almost visionary epiphanies. Issue movements, and movements like the Occupy movement which represent combinations and syntheses of overlapping and intertwined issue fights, are the crucibles in and around which these processes take place and in which most revolutionaries are forged.*



Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along?

Francisco: *We live in the Bay Area. So, the theoretical definition would be that, yeah, Tea Partiers, Libertarians, the extreme right, all of those petals of the daisy from left to right, all the way. But, in practice, we haven't seen that. And in practice, the entire Occupy movement has really been a left-wing movement, while attracting quite a few Libertarians. And I've seen quite a few anarchists, who feel strongly about, "government's evil, we should not discuss things with them. They should not exist." I don't feel that way; I don't like using the word, "government." I prefer the word, "administration." 'Cause to me, a government is—I was governed by generals with tanks and rifles, and all sorts of heavy weapons, and they—we were governed. We were ruled over, like a medieval kind. And I think in the U.S. people talk about government and it stirs up the rebellious teenager; "no, you are not going to straighten anything in my room, don't even touch anything in there!" And it doesn't serve society well. We shouldn't be putting people in a place to be administering our assets, our resources. But that's a separate thing. So, the anarchists...And also activists for other causes. Mostly Progressive, Green and that whole lot. Indigenous Rights, that was a very big, a very vigorous group within Occupy.*

And I saw the danger of mission creep—not "creep" as in creepy, but feature creep is a term that exists in software engineering. When you are writing software, your product manager says, "Build this thing with these features." And while you are busy doing that, within the release date, he or somebody else has the bright idea to go, "Oh, could you also make it do this?" And features are creeping in. And the thing gets more complicated; you get more bugs; and then suddenly, ooo you're in trouble; the thing is way too big, way too slow, and there's no way you can get it to the market when you plan to, but nobody ever was quite honest about what was the scope of what you wanted to do. And it just creeps in, it creeps up on you. And gradually, you

started out with something very crisp, very clean, and you end up with Frankenstein. You started with a Ginsu knife, that was one knife, nice and sharp, and now it's a Swiss army knife; it's got corkscrews and screwdrivers and bottle openers as well. And that's a problem and it doesn't do what the original design was supposed to do very well. I saw that happening at Occupy, because not everyone had an appreciation for focus. And to me, that's what attracted me here. We are not democrats, we are not republicans. We are upset about financial justice, Wall Street Boom, one thing--Occupy Wall Street. And it's such a central problem in our society. If we can fix this—so to me it's like, I can come here, this is the biggest problem of our time right now, in this decade. If we can fix this we can probably also create momentum to deal with other really important things.

Myriam: *Mao had this great concept. The difference between contradictions among the people and contradictions with the enemy, right? And Occupy Oakland hasn't gotten that clear, you know? And most left organizations haven't in that we often treat contradictions among the people as if they're contradictions with the enemy. But, I think Occupy Oakland also frequently makes the ultra-left mistake of considering contradictions among the people as being contradictions with the enemy. And, not to say someone like Jean Quan doesn't represent the interests of the 1%; I think she does, she has to or she wouldn't be there...but "one divides into two," another great expression of Chairman Mao...and that if you only see people as bad and opposed to you, they're going to be opposed to you and do things you don't like, but if you look for the ways that you can unite with them, you know, then sometimes you can get further...*

Marie: *And a lot of people were excited [about Occupy in the beginning]. Then we have this society that is everything [snapping her fingers] you know, right now, right now. Have to have answers, have to have whatever, have to have food, whatever it is, right now. There's no learned*

patience anymore so a lot of people fell away. I just almost lost it but I wasn't going to walk when we had the meeting deciding how we were going to communicate. I don't know if you heard about that...It was just amazing [laughing]. It was just incredible. I just thought, "Oh my God." It was deciding between this [waving fingers] and this [giving thumbs up] and this [giving thumbs down]. I think this [waving fingers] got 45 minutes of discussion. I will never forget standing there. And I looked at a friend of mine—a massage therapist, a lot of these people come from [a neighboring town]—and all of this time and everybody's trying to be respectful and all of that. And they said "Well how about this and this?" And I said "How about this?" [raises middle finger] ...I mean, it was beyond—and it was [another Occupier] who's wonderful and very bright and his whole heart was in it. But he acquiesced a little too much to people who wanted to talk one more time about either doing this [waves fingers] or doing this [shows thumbs up] ...And I was very confused by that. That confused me. I thought "Who cares? Just pick something. Let's go!" You know? I'm watching people walk away by two and three at this point. And people that I had seen at other meetings and I that I knew weren't going to come back. [Throws up hands] ...I knew it. And the living democracy thing is—it requires a lot of patience. It requires input.

Steven: *Well I think, that is a tough one but I think it just comes down to the idea that we all have to focus on Conflict Resolution, and I hate to say it but there is a lot of, at least a lot of the original—I don't know if this is the right characterization for it, but a lot of the original conflict in OTB was that people were getting kicked out of the encampment for being threatening or for actively pursuing their addictions in the encampment and stuff like that. And so a lot of the conflict has come from "well, we should be inclusive for everyone anyway, so why don't you let those people in?" But for me, I think Occupy's not going to be successful unless you draw those*

lines because—it is going to piss people off but at the same time it's, it is the same logistic thing. If you are dealing with people who are addicted in your own Occupation, you don't have time to focus on you know, "what events should we do?" You are worrying about like, "is this guy like, shooting up or smoking while we are at city hall?" Or "do I have to worry about this person becoming angry or violent or disruptive at a GA?" You can't function. And it sucks because then people think like, "Oh, clearly you don't believe in inclusiveness if you will not allow for these things." But at the same time, they don't help and they don't—they totally stymie.... And this is the only thing that I think Occupy should take from other traditional activist groups, is that other groups, when they have those problems, those people are cut out... Not necessarily just that because, people can have addictions but just-- don't bring it to a GA, don't bring it to a physical encampment. Those people, I think, should have a voice, but if they become a disruptive presence then you kind of have to say, "Okay, sorry but you can't be a part of this process." Maybe, if they are fine on the Google Group say, "Okay, you can stay on the Google Group but, you can't do this." Or, "come to an event, but you can't do this." For me I feel like those lines have to be drawn; but again, it has to be approached from that mentally of "how do we deescalate." Again, the goal should be conflict resolution, not conflict avoidance (laughs), 'cause that never works. I think-- I dunno--because that has been a problem at every Occupation, from what I've heard, "how do we deal with people who are disruptive, or causing problems within GA, or focused more on their own agenda?"

Inclusivity and Fractionalization

Myriam: *I think these days it's not very inclusive [Occupy Oakland]. I think that the GA's have dwindled to a small group of people who know each other and if you arrive and you've never been to a GA before no one's gonna come up and say, "Hi, welcome," you know, "join us." I*

don't think people really necessarily even know how to join a committee. I mean I--to me, the website looks good, you know? And I don't know whether other people are going to the website and then emailing a committee and saying, "I'd like to join you and get involved." But certainly the GA is no longer an entry point.

In Myriam's opinion, people in Occupy Oakland have forgotten about the importance of Outreach and being inclusive, because people have developed close relationships over the past year. Also, since the GA has dwindled throughout the spring and summer, it is difficult for newcomer's to find an entry point. Danny, however, believes that people need to communicate their needs, rather than wait for people to ask.

Danny: *The first meeting I came to with Occupy the Bay was for people with disabilities as an educational thing...for disabilities and Occupy and how can they work together. So, I was in fairly bad shape in my hips at that time; that was in November; sort of on my last legs. I got forced--I never wanted to have a hip replacement on the other side of my body, because it had gone so badly on this side, and having to do it--they had to take all the metal out again-- but I had to go. I went back for that last surgery December 15th. But I had great difficulty walking—so I was very drawn to that, interested in disabilities at Occupy. But ultimately how I see diversity is about creating a space—not bending over backwards—but creating a space that is friendly for everyone. And for me I—I've been carrying a disability chip on my shoulder for a long time, but denying it because, I'll tell you, and that's a very common practice for people who have an insidious disability that is getting worse over many years, is to live in denial. And I did, and that's good in a way because I made a lot more money by denying it and medicating heavily and so on to be able to continue a career. And the cool thing is, that means I have a lot of savings put away (laughs). So, but disability, well, diversity, I see it's ultimately the job of each of us who*

feels different, whether we identify with a given group or not—it is ultimately our responsibility to include ourselves, and to ask for what we need, even maybe demand what we need, in accommodations. And so, if I need to move around a lot and that makes people uncomfortable, I need to talk about it; that I do, I have to squirm around a lot. I have to lean against things and get essentially acupuncture, because the pain distracts me so much from interacting with people, and I wanna interact; I wanna get stuff done, I wanna listen to them. But the pain keeps pulling my attention away. So, it's up to me though, to communicate my needs. It is up to me to make it happen. Or, I could give up. Or I could say, "Hey, they are doing this to me—they won't allow me in their group" but if I take that view then I'm opting out. And it may be very true that someone's not including me in their group, that may be reality, but I'd like to see it more as, "I would like to include myself." It gets me more included; things happen. So, even if I go to a group where it's all dance, I can go, I can include myself, even dances where I don't know anybody, because that is my strong intention. That's all, so, of course I feel envious of all the people doing cartwheels and things...and I can go there, and I can cry, I can have tears, because I can't do that probably will never be able to do that again, and 20 years ago I could, but still, it's my choice. I can include myself, and have the feelings, or not and have other feelings.

Danny makes a valid point, but Occupies have also experienced prejudice and acts of discrimination against a variety of groups, which can lead to fractionalization or internal critique regarding the reproduction of oppressive structures within the movement, in the case of Decolonize Oakland and Occupy the Hood. OTB and OTC have also had very heated debates about the issue of homelessness:

Marie: *Because then there started being big battles about the dirty hippies...with the city and then it became within Occupy. There was a meeting that was held that wasn't exactly—I don't*

know what it was—it was a “let’s try to get this shit figured out” meeting. I walked away. I lost it in the meeting; in my estimation. A couple said “You didn’t lose it [Marie], you just said...” There turned out to be some classism within the ranks. And to be honest with you, I didn’t even know what classism was... So this was news to me and there was this beautifully written—there are some amazing writers in Occupy, in my estimation. Amazing, amazing writers...Somebody was reading this beautifully written thing about what we wanted to present and presenting who we were and presenting ourselves and all of that. And then all of a sudden it goes on about the “shiftless underclass”...I turned the color of that dress over there [pointing to a red dress hanging up]...It just absolutely—it infuriated me...And I asked people there that it didn’t seem to infuriate. Some of them didn’t react like me and they were infuriated. They were already infuriated. It was very interesting for me to find out how deeply I really believed what I said I believed. You know, deeply enough to embarrass myself. It’s always fun, you know [laughing]...And calling them out on it. And being told...I don’t even know what I was told quite frankly because there really wasn’t anything to tell. And I asked people there who seemed to be in agreement with calling the people who were down there “shiftless underclass.” I said “I’m hard pressed that there isn’t at least a couple here who weren’t called ‘dirty hippies’ in their day too.

Steven: Well, you know this brings up an interesting point. I’ve been talking with our Planning group and with people in OTB...and how like, because there’s been this debate about tactics and stuff, and how maybe the solution is to create a whole other group that’s not Occupy, and not necessarily one that—because one of the debates that’s kind of stymied a lot of local groups is “you should be inclusive of all people, even if they are disruptive,” so we have been thinking of starting a group that’s just focused on Direct Action. Like the stuff maybe [on the Peninsula]

that we would not get consensus for, like Occupying a councilperson's house, or the Whole Foods Action that OTB endorsed but we didn't. Maybe creating a group where, it's only focused on Direct Action, and it's not necessarily—we wanna include the principles of Occupy but we wanna say at the beginning, this is not a group where you can come in and be disruptive. We're inclusive to sexual orientation, race, gender, minorities; these are our principles. We are fighting against—make it very specific—banks, these are the groups we are protesting against. As opposed to Occupy where it's kind of freeform, have it more laid out upfront, and that way it can be a group that-- it's not city specific so anyone on the Peninsula can come and be a part of it. So, I think that might be a part of the future as well. I mean I hate to see things split off but... I think it is kind of already happening kind of organically anyway. People are working to do their own actions and their own events and so I think, maybe that's what I see for the future. Other groups coming out of this and other avenues of action.

NETWORKING

As in most movements that seek to create a space for social change, networking has been central to the movement. Activists have built lucrative new relationships with outside institutions and have also seen failed collaborations. Regardless, Occupy needs people and allies to survive, and fostering relationships is an important part of that process. As Occupiers look to the future, it's helpful to review how collaborations and outreach have been approached thus far.

Government

Among Occupiers, there is a vast continuum between reform and revolution: some simply want a more accountable government that will better serve the people, while others believe the government relies on systematic oppression to maintain capitalism and this will never serve the people. At each Occupation a diversity of goals and values are present and there can be no

assumption that the movement definitively represents a fight for change within the system or a complete overhaul. Many attempts have been made to demand change from the government, and to provide change for each other outside of its reach. Clearly Occupiers agree that the government is not functioning in a legitimate manner, and therefore, some argue that we do not have to accept their claims of legitimacy. In addition to public pleas for governmental and regulative change, one of the most common strategies has been to “think globally, act locally.” Taking on local issues and ordinances in public protest, attending and disrupting City Council meetings, and mobilizing masses of citizens to call City Officials have led to positive outcomes in many areas for activists who are willing to work with their cities to negotiate change. In other areas, Occupiers are partaking in symbolic actions that directly reveal the failure of the government to provide basic services by providing those very services to the community for free (in the vein of Food Not Bombs).

Jesse: *What I’m seeing is people obsolete-ing the system, such as the people who clean up, Occupy the Brooms, they clean the town. They’re rendering Public Works obsolete. The Local Business Liaisons, they save businesses. One particular one has been here for over a hundred years, and was going to be taken out. Chamber of Commerce didn’t do anything, neither did City Hall. Local Business Liaison has saved them, protected an institution down here...obsolete-ing Chamber of Commerce. We need to obsolete the Police. I would like to see it privatized. That’s my radical ideological solution to it, but maybe something more like the Black Panthers or the Guardian Angels, some kind of grassroots thing, feeding people, these kinds of things. I believe that’s where it goes...this is a conservative idea that people get the government they deserve. It’s also an anarchist idea, that when we become angels of the Earth, like Madison, if all men were angels, there’d be no need for government. Well, as we become angels, the*

government will become less relevant, and that's the trend that I am seeing, that I've always looked for, and this is the first time I've actually seen potential for it, other than in history.

Carrie: *And I definitely think that people are probably getting used to our presence at City Council meetings for good or ill. But I noticed that things seemed to go well last [time] and um, Carl said something funny and people in the audience kind of liked what he said. That was neat to see. It doesn't always go that way.*

Teresa: *We need government, you know; we just need government that's not fucking corrupt. I don't have a problem with government; I just have a problem with corruption.*

Francisco: *One of the things that happened is, once I got involved, starting to talk to people, I guess people respected my approach and how I expressed things, and they nominated Professor Alberto and me as the people to go with our lawyers, with our legal team and negotiate with the city; with the mayor's office. But that really meant the city manager. So, Alberto and I were the ones doing that, and Jan, as our lawyer typically was there. And we were trying to negotiate for the right to have a camp. It was a tough negotiation. There were people on the city council that did not like it. But then, the Scott Olsen episode happened in Oakland; the vet that got injured by a rubber bullet or a gas canister or something. I think so. So he's a vet, and now his life is in danger for a few days. Huge scandal, and it looked at the Time like Mayor Jean Quan of Oakland was going to be forced to resign over this. And there we were, Alberto, Jan, Tim and I, on the 18th floor of City Hall, with [the city manager] and her legal advisor. And all you had to do was look in their faces. And you could see that they desperately wanted to avoid anything like that happening for purely selfish reasons, for their career. They wanted to preserve themselves as political animals. And they were ready to deal. They wanted a face-saving way out of this mess and were willing to make some concessions that would keep us more or less in a box. Not*

cause too much trouble. They sensed that we were a much more peaceful crowd than Oakland. So, we pretty much had it in the bag.

Churches

Since the beginning of the movement, many Occupies have explored the possibilities of working with churches. In some areas churches have been strong allies and in other cases churches have been very careful to distance themselves publically from the movement, or from certain actions or tactics. As a resource, churches often offer affordable (or free) safe spaces for activists to meet and organize, and kitchens for large-scale food preparation. Churches and church officials may choose to endorse actions to their constituencies and in public. Occupy has looked to churches for assistance in outreach and in support for projects that may be of mutual interest, for example, in feeding the homeless or promoting educational opportunities. Occupiers have also spoken to their own congregations for help.

Myriam: *There was this thing called Occupy the Dream, this brief flare up of an attempt by the Black Churches to unite with us, and I went to the demonstration that we had in San Francisco for that and talked to this minister from that who's at FAME, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, just down the street.*

Francisco: *A community that we have not—for example, we have been talking forever about reaching into the black community, and going to churches and stuff. And it has been all talk and no one has done it. We haven't done even enough into the Latino community.*

Carrie: *One thing that probably makes me a little different than the other Occupy folks is that I'm part of a religious community. I have a motivation that way that's towards compassion, and attentiveness and truth telling and fair leadership. So I think I'm motivated that way too. But then there's also the social/political awareness that is on top of that. It was really a welcome*

time for me to “Wow, community—this seems like a really grass-roots movement.” I don’t know if I really saw myself getting more than knee deep but it’s just kind of a little habit forming, I guess...It’s really satisfying in a way that I kind of have one foot in each. And my great hope would be that some other people from my church would show interest—although they have been verbally supportive. They’re all for it...so that’s been cool.

Nonprofits/NGOs

Collaborations with non-profits organizations have also been fruitful for some Occupiers and have been avoided by others. In the struggle for foreclosure defense, many Occupies in the San Francisco Bay Area have sought to form coalitions with organizations such as ACCE, the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, to ensure that all legal strategies are taken to prevent people from being evicted from their homes by the banks. In the fight against corporate personhood, many individual Occupiers have joined Move to Amend as a way to expand their political reach. On the other hand, hesitance and wariness have also been expressed at the prospect of working with non-profits. Concerns range from co-optation of the movement, to the abuse of collaborative opportunities for furthering liberal non-profit agendas. The non-profit industrial complex paradigm leaves activists questioning the degree to which non-profit organizations can truly be effective in the same fight that Occupy aims to stand for. The debate over collaboration with non-profits can be best understood in relationship to similar discussions over revolution versus reform, and radical versus liberal tradition.

Jamie: *I would like for it (OTB) to get its non-profit status, yes. And I definitely think it’s possible. I don’t necessarily think that it profits any individual, but non-profits profit the commonwealth.*

Teresa: *Back in January I signed on with Move to Amend, our local chapter in Santa Clara County. And I know that a lot of Occupy people have. And it was nice because our former Occupy attorney, Jan, went over to join Move to Amend. And it is nice to be working with her. Very different crowd, Move to Amend. The demographic of our local chapter, at least our Santa Clara County one, were a different demographic. In standing back and looking at really the downturn we have undergone, all of the attacks at people at large, I couldn't—I really tried to trace it back and came back down to the rise of the corporation. And really everything that I've seen, we can't really turn things around, in my opinion, until we get this problem fixed with Citizen's United. With getting Corporate Personhood overturned. With getting the 28th amendment to the Constitution saying corporations are not people. And that was the biggest frickin' mistake this country has ever, ever made.*

Steven: *There are people in our group who are very vocal like, "we don't want to have anything to do with Moveon." For me, I'm pretty skeptical about Moveon but my thing is, as long as we're not working within the organization, we are just working kind of together on things we agree on, that I'm fine with.*

Labor Unions

The Occupy Movement has overwhelmingly stood in support of workers around the world. From the beginning of Occupy Wall Street and its many offshoots, Unions have come out to contribute and show support for the movement. Union workers have played pivotal roles through participation and provide valuable organizing experience. Yet just as non-profits are tricky terrain, so are Labor Unions when it comes to collaboration. Some activists are concerned that Labor Union leaders often side too much with those in political power, and do not necessarily fight in the best interest of the workers. However, overwhelmingly Occupiers have

looked beyond that concern to support Unions and workers in any way possible. Since Unions themselves do not always have the numbers needed to make an impact during a strike, Occupy has been seen as a powerful ally in that they can provide ample bodies to support the cause. While there is a great deal of ongoing solidarity work between Occupy and Unions, the relationship has not been an easy one. At Occupy Oakland, the decision to organize actions that support Union workers without the support of Union bureaucrats caused some tension. When Occupy Oakland organized the West Coast Port Shutdown in support of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) during their fight against Export Grain Terminal (EGT) in Longview, Washington, without the public support of Union leadership, some questioned the decision (Thompson, 2012). However, the impact of the Port Shutdown, and a threat by Occupiers to come to Longview to support workers on the ground, are credited as actions that helped lead to negotiations between the ILWU and EGT. While collaborations between Occupy and Unions can be seen as a slippery slope from either side, the political power of such alliances cannot be underestimated. As Unions continue to decline, alliances between protestors (many workers themselves) and rank and file workers provide greater opportunities for larger direct actions that disrupt the flow of capital and increase public spectacle to ensure that labor efforts receive the public attention they deserve. In the commitment to support workers, some Occupies have also introduced efforts to organize un-unionized laborers, such as precarious workers, fast-food employees, and even the unemployed.

Steven: *One of the things that we have been learning about [our] County is that, not only is the government a little more right-wing, but the unions are more right wing. Like, they pushed for this development--they also pushed for the new county jail which—if the ACLU went to the county board of supervisors and said, “we don’t need this jail;” minority groups went to the county*

board of sups and said, “more funding for schools, not jail,” but the buildings and trades union labor council said, “we want this jail, regardless of the cost.”

Outreach and Getting Out Into Communities

Throughout the movement, a variety of tactics for outreach have been employed. Door to door outreach efforts seek both the perspectives and participation of community members not yet involved. Other strategies for community outreach involve capacity building and self-sufficiency in ways that allow us to rely less on corporations and the government. Barbecues and potlucks bring out a great deal of people who are curious about the movement, but may not know much about it, or may not have felt comfortable jumping into General Assemblies or Working Groups. These are opportunities for providing important community trainings and for the exchange, between Occupiers and community members, of knowledge, perspectives and experiences. Community gardening projects on empty lots or unused blighted land serve the same purpose and introduce sustainable sources of healthy food to local communities, which can then participate in the gardening and the direction of the action. Outreach-based activities also tend to be the most popular, appealing to a broad array of political ideologies and perspectives. At the end of the day, most people do want to create sustainable communities, and gardening or feeding children is an excellent starting point because it gets people out of their houses and into new spaces where they can dialogue with others and learn about what’s happening around them. Efforts at political literacy for adults and free schools for children and youth are also popular projects that incorporate the broader community and provide the types of resources community members want.

Broader outreach and movement building efforts seek to build from the energy of local sites of activism. Inter-Occupy has set out to create a dialogue among local sites of resistance to

strengthen solidarity and strategy. Global alliances and solidarity actions with Occupiers that have seen harsh political repression have been ongoing since the beginning of the movement. Individual Occupiers have been travelling from city to city, and town to town, to learn about new strategies, share experiences and to provide trainings (such as *Less Wall More Street*). The vast system of communication that has made these efforts so efficient includes Indy media outlets, Occupy-based publications and zines, twitter, facebook, livestream and websites like Rise-Up that enable safe spaces for online organizing.

Myriam: *The concept of going to the community and giving people a chance to tell us what they think about us, to give people a chance to hear what we're really trying to do, you know, was perfect -- the idea of organizing with communities in whatever way -- getting involved in campaigns that are happening within communities like Brooms was doing.*

Marie: *I still want to march in the neighborhoods. I've been asking that for MONTHS. "Can we please march in the neighborhoods?" Of course I haven't brought it up recently and now since we don't have a Saturday march that...because I wanted to march in the neighborhoods. I really felt that because everybody's in their little nest here. Even this neighborhood—it's still a varied neighborhood, though.*

Steven: *Well, it's interesting because I think the biggest hurdle for us is that a lot of people—I mean you'd be surprised but a lot of people don't even know what Occupy is or what Occupy Wall Street is, even to this day. Like, even if they do know, they don't know that Occupy [the Bay] exists. So in that sense the Outreach hasn't worked. So, but if they do know, their sense, a lot of time, is what they hear in the Media. And like, a lot of people just think, Occupy=Occupy Oakland =Black Bloc. And you know, they just made that mental leap. And it's been interesting; we've done a few bank shutdowns and protests where, people have literally yelled at us saying*

“you guys are funded by George Soros!” (laughs) and I’m like, “if we were funded, I would be doing this every day, not you know, once a month.” So, it’s interesting because, you’d think people are smarter than that, but, from dealing with the public; you do see a lot of those misconceptions come up. A lot of people do ask, “Who do you get funded by?” and “so you’re in touch with Oakland, aren’t you?” and “you’re in touch with New York City, aren’t you?” You know, “who’s running the show?” Or they still ask, “I’m totally behind you guys but like, you guys don’t have a consistent message.”

THE FUTURE OF OCCUPY

Occupy One Year Later

Since January of 2012 there has been great speculation among the media and the public as to how the Occupy Movement would be able to survive post-encampment. Each Occupy site we have been involved with has lessened in numbers, and this coincides with the destruction of the encampments, successful police repression, negative media spin, internal conflict, and organizing burnout. However, each of these sites of protest remains and the struggle is ongoing. Whether some Occupies fizzle out or become something new, this first stretch has set a significant precedent for what may come in future struggles for resistance. A new generation of young people has come to challenge the existing order and many will remain politically active. They have been joined by and have learned from seasoned activists with experience ranging from the Civil Rights and Anti-War Movements to Global Justice and Anonymous. The scope of technology, media and instant communication across the globe has opened up new possibilities for protest and for building global solidarity. The scale of the Occupy Movement has been the largest and most public ongoing protest in decades in the United States. A new era of political consciousness has erupted and new perspectives about how the world works and how we can

make it better are not easily forgotten. As hard as Occupy activists have worked, they have also learned a great deal about what works, what doesn't work, and how to pace themselves in organizing and action. Rather than lamenting the end of the Occupy Movement, we should be asking "what will happen next?" The first anniversary of Occupy Wall Street is on September 17th, 2012, and this will be followed by local anniversaries across the country and globally.

The Future of the Occupy Movement

As different Occupies struggled to maintain strength, unity and collaborative prowess coming into 2012, activists wondered: What types of actions will be necessary to continue the trajectory of the movement? How can we maintain the movement and continue to build the ranks?

Clearly, the actions taken to continue the movement have been as broad and diverse as the cities where they have taken place. While some held weekly marches to show that Occupy is not going away, others went after larger scale actions such as building take-overs, or put their efforts into community outreach.

Beyond attempts to build the movement, a significant amount of work has also been done to sustain those activists already involved and to explore how they can continue to work together successfully. At Occupy Oakland, attempts were made to increase outreach through community barbecues. In many cities, Occupiers began attending City Council meetings. Inter-Occupy, a coalition of Occupy's that meet by teleconference, and activists from Occupy Philly worked together to organize an Occupy National Gathering (NatGat) that was held in Philadelphia over the July 4th weekend. While their goal was a visioning exercise about what a democratic future might look like, many participants felt the most rewarding aspect of NatGat was the ability for activists to share stories and strategies from their sites of occupation, and to adopt new ideas and tactics (Trimarco 2012). The conclusive document from the event, *A Vision for a Democratic*

Future (2012), lists the changes activists envision, for example: 203 people hope for “clean water, air, and food,” 186 people desire to see “free education for all,” 158 envisioned “no war,” 116 mentioned “sustainable human society,” and 110 foresee, “a culture of direct democracy.”

Thoughts on the Future

Teresa: *I think really as we see more job loss, as we see the unions start to really buckle, the teachers, and the students are unable to go back in the fall because they can't afford their loans anymore, as more people are forced out of their homes and can't afford healthcare, I think we are going to see a resurgence of, at least not Occupy but people coming out to the street in one form or another, in one group or another. One coalition. One cause or another, coming out back to the streets. Because times will force them out. It'll happen, and I'm just kinda waiting for that.*

Carrie: *I feel more optimistic toward local issues than national. Because I feel like it's a small enough town that we could contact people....I feel like we could really be grass roots and well-informed and vocal, so I feel like the potential for being really involved and even successful is pretty good as far as that issue on a local level. As Marie says "I don't think it's going away." And it's very much connected to the national stuff. That's going to take all of our energy and hope and creativity to address. But I think that [if] a bunch of people started camping out on Wall Street last fall then stuff is pretty glaringly bad and I think that people have it in them to be creative on a national level too. So I do kind of feel hopeful.*

TBG: *The future of Occupy really lies with the motivators, I guess I could say, because one way or another, there are certain people who could motivate. Some people are good motivators and facilitators. They're good at it. Why not do it if you're good at it? Efficiency is important.*

Myriam: *There was the phase of the camp. You know, and there was the phase of the General Strike and the big GAs and all that. And then there was the phase after Move-In Day, you know,*

to May Day. And then there's the post-May Day phase that's kind of like a big drop-off. Um, I think whatever comes in the future, we're gonna see that it was in debt to Occupy Oakland, you know? That Occupy Oakland is the seeds or roots of something...we don't know yet what.

TBG: *I personally feel it's gonna get even more crazy these next four months going through Christmas through New Years. I'd like to see how, not only Occupy Oakland, but all the Occupy's take in their own little anniversaries. Anniversaries are where they'll make plans for the next year, you know? This has been a very interesting year. A lot of folks have learned a lot of things about a lot of people. And regardless of who's the president, we're gonna be here doing this probably, so...(trails off laughing).*

CONCLUSION

Jesse: *People change in the course of engaging in these events. People came to feed homeless people, and that's pretty much all it was, and that made them different people. And then when they got shot and gassed for it, that made them even more...uh, radicalized is a word...I don't like that word. I like the word sophistication. People are sophisticated, and they're becoming more intelligent, and more empathic, and more aware. And there are a lot of lessons I learned that I never learned from school or work. It's just been personally enriching. And we're bettering ourselves by doing this. Whether or not the tactics approach the system I think is irrelevant because we're changing.*

Whether through personal experience or conversations with Occupiers, we have noticed that people really have changed as a result of their participation in Occupy. People have developed a new level of understanding of the way the world can be, while cultivating empathy, knowledge, and skills. For some, Occupy has meant a new chance to fight for their communities and create new ones, while for others it has also meant working towards the country they want be a part of.

Regardless of participants' backgrounds or political ideologies, this has included forging new relationships with a diverse and passionate group of people committed to social justice and freedom. We have also experienced this change trajectory on a personal level. Not only were we able to grow as people and Occupiers, but we also have developed a more nuanced understanding of our respective cities and the many communities within them. Our goal with this pamphlet is to provide an opportunity for Occupiers to grow and learn from each other. Regardless of the future of Occupy, the movement has shifted the national narrative and disseminated knowledge of horizontal organization while normalizing direct action.

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C. Unpacking Occupy's Remains: a Comparative Analysis of Ephemera

Near the end of the fall 2012 semester I realized that I had not really thought about the materiality of Occupy. I had collected all of these ephemera at meetings and actions, and had not made any attempts to analyze it. My research partner, Kristy Keller, had also collected ephemera with Occupy Oakland, so I decided to compare the ephemera from both Occupies. I originally thought that I wanted to do a poster or a scrapbook of ephemera, but eventually decided that the best course of action was to conduct a quantitative analysis using word clouds to help visualize the different types of ephemera collected at both research sites, and the dominant themes that emerged within those ephemera. My hypothesis was that the dominant themes embedded in Occupy Oakland ephemera would be significantly different from the dominant themes in Occupy the Bay's ephemera. I analyzed these themes using Z-tests, comparing proportions of themes presented in Occupy Oakland's ephemera to Occupy the Bay's. Delving into the materiality of Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Bay was important to me because I wanted to see whether the spoken language used at meetings and actions was similar to the written language used in fliers, pamphlets and proposals. This component is simultaneously a material and a linguistic analysis.

METHODS

The first method used was collection, which was ongoing. Ephemera was collected from February-August 2012, and filed away for safekeeping. Occupy Oakland ephemera were collected by Kristy Keller, and Occupy the Bay ephemera by Hannah Hart. Keller collected 130 pieces of ephemera from Occupy Oakland, and Hart collected 40 pieces of ephemera from Occupy the Bay. The difference in number is due to a variety of factors: Occupy the Oakland has historically attracted many more people than Occupy the Bay, and thus there have been more people to pass out ephemera, and many more actions to attend; the other reason is that Occupy

the Bay does much organizing online, and so more information is spread electronically. You will see the difference in number reflected in Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Bay's word clouds.

Categorizing Ephemera

After collecting the ephemera, the next step was to organize it. I decided to first organize ephemera by "type." I organized Occupy Oakland's ephemera first into the following categories: fliers (full page), fliers (half page), fliers (quarter page), pamphlets/brochures, General Assembly agendas, business cards, stickers, proposals, letters/personal appeals, alternative newspapers, informational manuals, committee/working group documents, Occupy newsletters and miscellaneous. After organizing Occupy the Bay's ephemera I discovered two more categories, documents for reference and teaching/facilitation aids. In total, I created sixteen types/categories.

Counting Ephemera

After documenting the presence and absence of each type of ephemera, I counted the individual pieces of ephemera in each category, removing duplicates. For Occupy Oakland, the totals are as follows: fliers (full page) = 31, fliers (half page) = 18, fliers (quarter page) = 30, pamphlets/brochures = 3, General Assembly agendas = 7, business cards = 5, stickers = 5, proposals = 5, letters/personal appeals = 2, alternative newspapers = 6, informational manuals = 5, committee/working group documents = 5, Occupy newsletters = 7, and miscellaneous = 4. For Occupy the Bay, the totals are as follows: fliers (full page) = 8, fliers (half page) = 4, fliers (quarter page) = 1, pamphlets/brochures = 4, business cards = 1, stickers = 1, proposals = 4, letters/personal appeals = 2, committee/working group documents = 5, documents for reference = 5, teaching/facilitation aids = 3 and miscellaneous = 4. Since these counts are so different, I chose to work with percentages, since these totals can be misleading.

Coding Ephemera for Themes

After sorting into categories, the next step was to code each piece of ephemera for dominant themes. I used different colored post-it notes to accomplish this task, and wrote the words and themes that stood out to me. After doing so, I tallied the number of times each theme was mentioned, and chose the top nine-ten themes from each Occupy to analyze. The dominant themes that emerged in Occupy Oakland's ephemera are as follows: Occupy, Police Brutality/Repression, Prisons/Detention, Solidarity, Racism/discrimination, Community, Labor/workers, Economic and Social Justice, Education/Learning, and Entertainment/Food. The dominant themes that emerged in Occupy the Bay's ephemera are as follows: Occupy, Banks/Finance, Foreclosure/Eviction, Education/Learning, Economy/Economics, 99%/1%, Community, Judiciary/Courts, State/Political Corruption. Since some of these overlap between Occupies, I analyzed sixteen themes using frequencies and Z-tests.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Cloud 1: Occupy Oakland Ephemera Types



The above word cloud shows the frequencies of types of Ephemera collected at Occupy Oakland meeting and actions. As you can see, fliers dominate the cloud, particularly quarter sheets and full sheets. Thus, we can conclude that the primary purpose of ephemera with Occupy Oakland is to spread information about various events and actions. The words that are visible but less prominent are General Assembly Agendas, Occupy newsletters, and alternative newspapers. It is clear that the ephemera at Occupy Oakland aim to spread information to various parties, though we do not know what that information entails as of yet.

Cloud 2: Occupy the Bay Ephemera Types



In Cloud 2, we see that there is comparatively less ephemera with Occupy the Bay than with Occupy Oakland, probably for the reasons discussed earlier. There are a few words that jump out though: full page fliers (just as with Occupy Oakland), committee/working group documents, documents for reference and pamphlets/brochures. Thus, while the high frequency of fliers and pamphlets indicates information sharing, there is also a high frequency of ephemera being distributed that was not generated by participants in Occupy the Bay (documents for reference), and documents that are not meant to be spread to the general public (working group documents). Also, while General Assembly agendas, Occupy newsletters and alternative newspapers were

prominent types of ephemera collected with Occupy Oakland, they are missing from this cloud. Therefore, we can conclude that there is less ephemera being generated to spread information with Occupy the Bay than with Occupy Oakland.

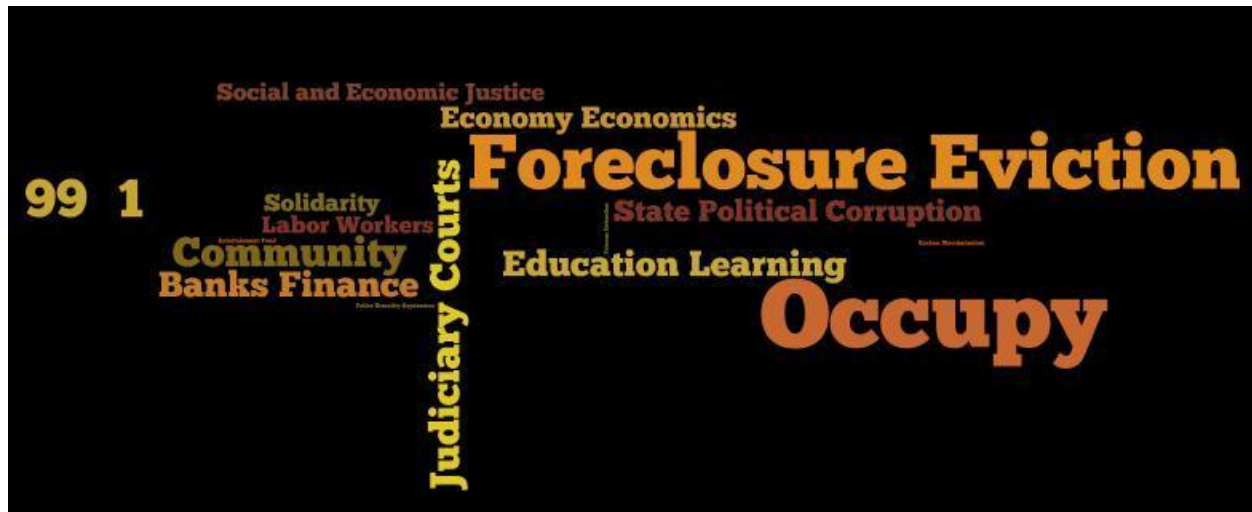
Cloud 3: Occupy Oakland Ephemera Themes



In cloud 3, the first word that jumps out at us is “Occupy.” I chose to code for Occupy because I wanted to see how much of the ephemera was Occupy-related. Clearly, the majority of it is. The second dominant theme is Police Brutality/Repression, which was especially frequent on fliers. Often, the themes of police brutality/repression and building community were present on the same piece of ephemera, which I found to be an interesting relationship. It may be possible for a future study to investigate this perceived relationship further.

Other prominent themes that emerge are Solidarity, Labor/Workers, Education/Learning, Prisons/Detention, Racism/Discrimination, and Entertainment/Food. I noticed that Entertainment and Food were often mentioned with building community, and Racism/Discrimination and Prisons/Detention were often mentioned on ephemera sharing themes with Police Brutality/Repression. Since the Oakland police are known for being particularly militant against Oakland communities, especially activists, these themes are not surprising.

Cloud 4: Occupy the Bay Ephemera Themes



As with Occupy Oakland's word cloud, Occupy is the first word to jump out at you, showing that much of the ephemera collected at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions is Occupy-related. Another very dominant theme is Foreclosure/Eviction. This does not surprise me because foreclosures were very often discussed among Occupiers at GAs, and Occupy the Bay during my period of involvement was very active in trying the help people keep their homes and protesting at housing auctions. The third most dominant theme is 99%/1%, showing that Occupy the Bay was very comfortable with the distinction between the 99% of Americans and 1% of Americans. Foreclosure/Eviction and 99%/1% were not dominant themes within Occupy Oakland ephemera. Other prominent themes are Judiciary/Courts, Banks/Finance, Community, and Education/Learning. While the first two themes were not prominent within Occupy Oakland ephemera, Community and Education/Learning are frequent in both. However, the emphases on community and education are different. In Occupy Oakland's ephemera, the emphasis is on building community to make the police obsolete, and educating people about global capitalism, inequality, and how to create autonomous spaces. In Occupy the Bay's ephemera, the emphasis is on how to create a community garden, since that has been an interest of some participants, and

educating people about banks/finance, the judicial system, and foreclosures. Thus, these themes are not easily separated, but have relationships with each other.

Z-Tests

Table 6:

Z-Test Results				
Ephemera Themes	Occupy Oakland*	Occupy the Bay**	Z-value	p
Entertainment/Food	0.1	0.025	1.5089	1.13104
Education/Learning	0.12	0.15	-0.4982	0.61708
Labor/Workers	0.16	0.1	0.9401	0.34722
Occupy	0.49	0.4	0.9975	0.31732
Social and Economic Justice	0.11	0.05	1.1271	0.25848
Solidarity	0.18	0.1	1.2033	0.23014
Community	0.29	0.175	1.4448	0.14986
Prisons/Detention	0.12	0.025	1.77	<0.10
Racism/Discrimination	0.12	0.025	1.77	<0.10
Banks/Finance	0.06	0.15	-1.8226	<0.10
Economy/Economics	0.05	0.125	-1.6517	<0.10
State/Political Corruption	0.05	0.125	-1.6517	<0.10
Judiciary/Courts	0.07	0.175	-1.9833	<0.05
Police Brutality/Repression	0.31	0.025	3.6754	<0.01
Foreclosure/Eviction	0.04	0.325	-5.098	<0.01
99%/1%	0.07	0.225	-2.7793	<0.01

*Oakland Ephemera: proportion out of 130 total

**Bay Ephemera: proportion out of 40 total

In this section, we will see if the differences between the dominant themes within Occupy Oakland ephemera and Occupy the Bay ephemera are statistically significant. The z-values with statistically significant p values are on the bottom half of the table. We can see that both Prisons/Detention and Racism/Discrimination were statistically significant at the .10 level. This means that ephemera collected at Occupy Oakland meetings and actions was more likely to contain these themes than ephemera collected at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions. These results show me that environment does have an impact on the agendas of city-specific Occupies.

We also see that Banks/Finance, Economy/Economics and State/Political Corruption were statistically significant at the .10 level. This means that ephemera collected at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions was more likely to contain these themes than ephemera collected at Occupy Oakland meetings and actions. Even more prominent for Occupy the Bay is the corruption of the Judiciary/Courts; this is statistically significant at the .05 level. The overarching theme here is corporate greed and corruption at all levels of government, which in my experience were huge emphases at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions. Some of these concerns were rooted in the local, for example, someone losing their home due to corruption in the judicial system, others concerned themselves more with global inequality due to these conditions.

Closer to the bottom, we see that Police Brutality/Repression is statistically significant at the .01 level. This means that ephemera collected at Occupy Oakland meetings and actions is much more likely to contain this theme than ephemera collected at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions. This makes sense, since some participants with Occupy the Bay actually support and sympathize with the police, especially since the passing of pension reform in San Jose. Police Brutality and Repression is an ongoing issue with both Occupy Oakland and Oakland in general, and is often linked with the themes of Prisons/Detention and Racism/Discrimination.

We see that Foreclosure/Evictions and 99%/1% are statistically significant at the .01 level of significance. This means that ephemera collected at Occupy the Bay meetings and actions is much more likely to contain these themes than ephemera collected at Occupy Oakland meetings and actions. Since issues like police brutality, racism and prison were less of a concern among Occupiers during my involvement; it does not surprise me that these themes regarding inequality, financial justice and property ownership are more prominent. Since the South Bay is very suburban, the right to own and keep a home is an important value for many people.

Finally, I want to discuss the non-significant results, because they show the commonalities between the values of Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Bay. The themes include, entertainment/food, education/learning, labor/workers, Occupy, social and economic justice, solidarity and community. While I think that the emphases for entertainment/food and community are different for Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Bay, I think that the other four themes represent the common values between the Occupies. While entertainment/food and community for Occupy Oakland was more in the context of community bar-b-cues, for Occupy the Bay food and community were mostly related to trying to start a community garden, which is a bit of a different initiative. The other themes; supporting education/learning, labor/workers, Occupy, social and economic justice and solidarity are common values that both Occupies share and promote. So, while Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Bay may differ on the conditions that they are *against*, participants are fighting *for* the same things. So while Occupy Oakland may be against police brutality/repression, racism/discrimination and prisons/detention because that is a concern for a lot of local communities, they are advocating for the same values as Occupy the Bay. Conversely, while Occupy the Bay may be against foreclosures/evictions, judiciary/courts and banks/finance because those issues are the concerns of local residents, what they have in common with Occupiers in Oakland is a commitment to educating the public, supporting workers, social and economic justice, solidarity is above all, Occupying. Rather than focus on what divides us by city, by experience or by ideology, we should focus on the values that bind us. It is in the best interest of the mainstream media to focus on the fact that Occupy lacks a specific agenda, but we need to remember that the differences are not as important as the similarities.

