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SPACE, POLITICS, AND OCCUPY WALL STREET

by

SARAH HECK

Under the Direction of Katherine B. Hankins

In September of 2011 Zuccotti Park, located in the heart of downtown Manhattan, became a site of political contestation when several hundred activists pitched their tents, set up their signs, and began to occupy the park, in what later became known as Occupy Wall Street. Occupy Wall Street became part of the larger Occupy moment, in which public parks in most major cities and college towns across the nation were occupied for several months by protestors contesting a range of issues including the growing disparity in wealth, corporate influence on democracy, and deepening social injustices. By the end of 2011 the nationwide eviction of most Occupy encampments resulted in the assumed failure of Occupy to challenge successfully contemporary politics and to organize a clear list of demands. In this thesis, I draw on ethnographic material collected in 2012 to interpret the spatial strategies and spatialities of Occupy and argue that for Occupy, this lack of focus is a strength in that it creates a space for alternative political discussions and practices otherwise less visible or nonexistent in the current political system. I examine the spatialities of Occupy, by which I mean the networks, mobilities, and places of Occupy, and argue that such an analysis offers an entry point in which to consider the ways in which space and politics are co-produced. In order to examine the relations between space and politics, I locate the specific spatial practices and strategies utilized by participants both in the highly visible occupation of public parks and direct actions and less visible organization spaces.

INDEX WORDS: Occupy Wall Street, Social movements, Spatial Theory, The Political

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SARAH HECK

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by

SARAH HECK

Committee Chair: Katherine B Hankins

Committee: Timothy Lee Hawthorne

Emanuela Guano

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

To Susan and Geoffrey, without whom this world would make little sense.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 The Post-Political Condition	11
2.1.1 Post Political Governance	15
2.1.2 Criticisms of The Political and Post-Political Configuration	18
2.2 Space and the Political	21
2.3 The Spatialities of Contentious Politics	23
2.3.1 Networks	28
2.3.2 Mobility	29
2.3.3 Place	32
2.4 Convergence Space	34
3 METHODOLOGY	38
3.1 Research Question	38
3.2 Case Study: Occupy Wall Street	39
3.2.1 Study Location	41
3.3 Research Approach	42
3.3.1 Justification	44

3.4	Methods and Data	47
3.4.1	<i>Interviews</i>	47
3.4.2	<i>Participant Observational Data</i>	50
3.4.3	<i>Analysis and Coding</i>	51
4	THE SPATIALITIES OF OCCUPY WALL STREET	53
4.1	Introduction.....	53
4.2	The Networks of Occupy	53
4.2.1	<i>Making the Network</i>	54
4.2.2	<i>Embodied Networks</i>	57
4.2.3	<i>Networking Tools</i>	58
4.2.4	<i>Renewing Social Justice Networks</i>	68
4.3	The Mobilities and Motilities of Occupy	69
4.3.1	<i>Unexpected and Contingent Movement.....</i>	71
4.3.2	<i>Constrained Movement</i>	81
4.3.3	<i>Movement out of the Park: Why Some Choose to Leave</i>	83
4.4	The significance of the Occupied Park	92
4.4.1	<i>Encounters take Place.....</i>	93
4.4.2	<i>Politics of Care.....</i>	101
4.4.3	<i>Reclaiming a Sense of Publics</i>	108
5	CONCLUSION	114

REFERENCES	118
APPENDICES	127
Appendix A – Program from the Peoples Summit May 2012.....	127

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Description of Field Work Locations	42
Table 2 Interview Participants	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Spread of Occupations in the United States, September 17-October 9, 2011.....	72
Figure 2 Geography of Occupy Wall Street Occupations.....	72
Figure 3 News Mentions of Income Inequality, January 2011 - November 2012.....	95

1 INTRODUCTION

Georgia State University is an urban university located in the downtown Atlanta. As you might expect of an urban campus, there are always small surprises and unexpected relations that are bound to occur as you move through the spaces of the campus. Yet, rarely am I ever taken off guard with an unexpected encounter as I walk my usual path from my university office to the train station. I typically pass by Woodruff Park on my way home, located just around the corner from my office in Kell Hall. It is not unusual to see the park populated with all sorts of folks, some play chess, others eat their lunch in the shade, and students mill about between classes with peers. What makes Woodruff and downtown Atlanta a bit unusual compared to most mid-sized cities is the relative emptiness during off-hours. The university owns most of the property downtown and university housing is fairly far from Woodruff Park. On mornings when I arrive to campus early, I always notice how empty the downtown is. Some days I would not pass a single soul as I made my way to my office. I have come to enjoy those quite and peaceful early mornings and the unique experience I have traversing downtown Atlanta, passing the empty park, painted ever so delicately with the soft morning sun.

Imagine then my surprise when walking to class in early October of 2011 I passed Woodruff Park and found it populated by a dozen or so tents huddled together in the early morning sunlight. It was not immediately clear to me what was going on at this point. It was not unusual to see students string a hammock to the trees in a few of the green spaces on campus. I remember thinking that perhaps there was some camping event that had occurred the night before. I continued on my way not really thinking much about the urban campsite as I went about with my day. When I returned to the train station at the end of my day, I passed by Woodruff Park, which was almost overflowing with people. There were tables with cardboard signs reading “end corporate greed”, “people over profits”, and “we are the 99%”. This was not the scene I had passed a few hours earlier and my curiosity drew me to the park to see what all the commotion was about. I sort of mingled at the edges of the park but never lingered long

enough to engage anyone in a conversation. I also never saw any person who looked like they knew what exactly this was all about. However, it was clear that this was not a physical education urban camping field trip. Little did I know that the spectacle of tents was soon to be known as Occupy Atlanta, part of what became known nationally as Occupy Wall Street (OWS) and the eventual object of my research.¹

In late September of 2011, the magazine Adbusters challenged its readers to occupy Wall Street in New York City as a protest of corporate influence on democracy. Initially, what become known as “Occupy” sought to make public issues related to the growing disparity in wealth, lax financial regulations and corporate personhood by physically occupying public parks in most major cities and college towns across the nation. Occupy quickly evolved to include a multitude of social, economic and political issues and ideologies that, when viewed as a whole, sought to problematize the present political order that has served to systemically concentrate wealth and power to a small percentage of the financial elite.

My encounter with Occupy occurred simultaneously with my first semester of graduate school at Georgia State University. I had come into the geosciences department after spending a year working on a degree in public administration. While I valued the professional and practical experience the public

¹ In this thesis, I use the acronym OWS, Occupy, or the Occupy Moment to generally refer to the encampments across the country. When referring to a specific encampment in a city I will include the city’s name, for example Occupy Chicago. When referring to the encampment in Zuccotti Park, located in Manhattan, New York I will use the term Occupy Wall Street. The nuance of the terms is to draw out the different particularities of encampments in different locations with unique histories and geographies. In general, the media referred to all the encampments across the country, including the camps that popped up in other countries, as The Occupy Wall Street Movement. In an effort to limit confusion with the New York encampment I will employ Occupy or OWS when referring to all the encampments in unison. Additionally, I will refer to the participants of OWS as participants, actors, or occupiers unless otherwise indicated by my interlocutors. Respectfully acknowledging the complex, multiple, changing, and contradictory identities one may use to describe themselves and the fact that many folks I encountered in my fieldwork did not consider themselves *occupiers* or even *activists*, I invoke the term *occupier* not as a marker of identity, but as a general term to describe the presence of bodies in the spaces of Occupy. I employ the term occupier interchangeably with the term *participants in Occupy*.

administration degree offered, I found myself longing to return to my undergraduate roots in geography. My first semester of my Master's degree in urban geography was a lesson in discipline and critical thinking but also intense engagement with the world around me. Although I never spent the night in the park during Occupy Atlanta, I found myself curiously visiting the general assemblies while simultaneously reading *Recapturing Democracy* by Mark Purcell and *A Postcapitalist Politics* by J.K. Gibson-Graham in my urban political economy graduate seminar. The spirit of Occupy, the fierce debates in the media, and the intellectually stimulating environment of my coursework and graduate student cohort challenged me to think deeply about what I thought I knew about what it means to make the world a better place. As my professors, other graduate students, and friends can attest, these were times of deep confusion and curiosity for me.

Ultimately, Occupy sparked my curiosity because I had never encountered such passionate political performance against powerful elites outside of Internet blogs and the heated debates at my parents' dinner table. Subsequently, my coursework on urban theory and political economy engaged with theories of radical democracy, alternative economies, the politics of difference, and the right to the city in the context of neoliberalism seems undeniably in conversation with the city of tents just outside the departments' doors. I wanted to know why people came to the park, stayed night after night, and stood for hours in the freezing rain struggling to make a truly democratic decision about what to do next. I was interested in what made Occupy catch like wildfire across the country in a matter of weeks, how a bunch of folks, with cardboard signs, could capture the imagination of the whole country, and world for that matter. I wanted to know what all this meant for struggles for social, environmental, and economic justice.

Occupy and the tent cities that were constructed in parks around the country, most complete with kitchens, libraries, medical centers, and charging stations, was undeniably a protest rooted in particular places. Yet what was so interesting, and what held my attention in between writing term

papers, attending class, and working part time was the ability to tune-in to any general assembly, march, or rally across the nation so long as someone was 'live-streaming' via the internet. Live-streaming became a tactic used by occupiers to record what was happening in real time. While it hardly mitigated issues of access and inclusion, one had to have not only access to a computer but also to internet capable to streaming live footage, it was one of the avenues that drew me to exploring Occupy as an object of analysis as it spoke to directly to much of the literature I was reading. I wanted to evaluate Occupy, drawing from both political theory and socio-spatial theory.

Unfortunately, by the time I was approved by the university to conduct research on Occupy, most of the camps across the country had been evicted by their respective city governments. Occupy Atlanta, like many occupations across the country, was evicted on October 25th 2011. As it turns out, the relative short and impressive Occupy moment did not dwindle after the evictions. After spending the winter months in a previously unused floor of one of Atlanta's last homeless shelters, folks committed to Occupy Atlanta made plans to occupy the midtown office building of telecommunications company AT&T during the spring of 2012. The occupiers camped on the sidewalks of the marble office building, standing in solidarity and organizing workers who were scheduled to be laid-off by the multinational firm. Additionally, Occupy Atlanta had launched two public campaigns to stop the foreclosure of a 108-year-old community church in historic Vine City neighborhood and the home of an elderly homeowner, who was underwater on her mortgage in the historic neighborhood Old Fourth Ward. The group formed a partnership with local unions and national worker's rights alliance Jobs With Justice to stop the Senate Bill 469, which was an attempt to strip Georgia citizens of their right to protest peacefully.

I would be remiss to suggest that I was an active member of Occupy Atlanta during this time; however, I frequented the AT&T site and was able to speak to some occupiers from diverse backgrounds. It was through these casual conversations that I found out about a week of action taking place in Chicago, Illinois, organized in part by Occupy Chicago. Occupy Chicago and a coalition of

organizations united around protesting and politicizing the North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO) and Group of Eight (G8) summits that were to take place in May of 2012. With plans to spend the summer in my home state of Illinois, and inspired by the recent success of Occupy Atlanta in stopping the two aforementioned foreclosures, blocking the passage of SB 469, and reducing the number of employees laid off by AT&T, I spent the Spring semester preparing for field work in Chicago during May 2012.

My fieldwork was conducted over five months after all Occupy camps were officially evicted from their respective parks. In Chicago, where a majority of my fieldwork was conducted, the NATO summit brought over 3,000 people to the city, most of whom were affiliated with Occupy in varying degrees. Months after being evicted from their respective encampment, Occupiers, union leaders, and social justice groups were organizing against the war agenda of NATO, calling attention to regressive national and city policies aimed at underfunding social services and oriented towards private business interests, and facilitating the convergence of multiple occupy participants, social justice organizations, and unions by implementing distinct spatialities and practices of Occupy encampments including participatory decision making, resource sharing, networking, collaborating, and mobilizing a variety of projects seeking to enact alternative futures.

The protests against the NATO conference in Chicago offered me the most accessible place in which to locate individuals who had participated in Occupy just five months earlier. I was interested in their experience within the occupied park. The call to bring tents and occupy Wall Street, a *particular place* that is symbolic of financial capital, was undoubtedly an assertion that space matters. As a geographer I could not ignore what I saw to be the politicizing of public park space, which in the case of Zuccotti Park, was intended for rather apolitical use, yet through Occupy it became a strategy to challenge the growing disparity in wealth and the orientation of government towards business interests at the expense of ordinary workers. One of the things I noticed first about Occupy that captured my attention was the willingness among its participants to experiment with non-capitalist exchange and

distribution of resources, alternative forms of political education and knowledge sharing, and different forms of power-relations. These diverse practices, including experiments with deliberative and participatory democracy as well as the collective use of resources to reproduce the occupied park space daily were taking place in Occupy encampments across the nation. As Occupy spread across the country, inspired thousands to participate, held the media's attention, and was hotly debated, this raised the question: What are the interactions between space and politics? Put another way, how does space produce politics and politics produce space? In what follows, I examine conceptualizations of politics and space, highlighting ongoing debates about the post-political condition and the various elements or contours of space and spatialities to frame my empirical project on Occupy. In much of this thesis I focus on Occupy in the Fall of 2011 in which occupiers across the country collectively occupied a public park in at least every state for six weeks. I rely on secondary data in the form of blogs, editorial pieces, and published commentary in addition to my participant interviews conducted five months later in Chicago. My empirical data, which takes the form of participant observation and interviews, was conducted in Chicago during the NoNATO week of action in May 2012 and was attended widely by former occupiers from across the country. My empirical data speaks to the activities of former occupiers after the Occupy encampments were disbanded in late 2011 in that the NoNATO week of action is a different but complementary moment to the six weeks of the encampments. Combined, my data contributes to a rich and contextualized account not only of the Occupy moment, but to its continued presence in many American cities even long after occupiers were evicted from parks.

To explore the current political moment, I turn the post-political condition, where scholars argue that contemporary political formations emphasize consensus in favor of political acts that challenge the prevailing framework and thus leave little space for open and exploratory political exchange (e.g., Swyngedouw, 2011). Contemporary radical democratic political scholarship has offered a compelling critique of the neoliberal era as post-political in which the opportunity and space for competing political

agendas to be debated is increasingly foreclosed in favor of getting politics out of the way (Swyngedouw 2011; Paddison 2009). Recently scholars in the sub-discipline of critical urban geography have become interested in exploring the ways in which everyday people contest the existing state of affairs; their contribution to the literature on contentious politics offers critical tools to explore social practices surrounding contentious political action from a spatial perspective (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013). For example, the social movement literature in geography has developed several compelling frameworks to analyze the spaces of concerted social action as autonomous geographies (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006), Global Justice Networks and Convergence Spaces (Routledge and Cumbers 2009) and translocal assemblages (McFarlane 2009). As I demonstrate in Chapters 2 and 4 these frameworks are useful for exploring the spatialities of Occupy; however, they tend to respond to a structural critique that place-based struggles must explicitly challenge neoliberalism and link up on a larger, global scale if they are to induce meaningful social transformation. While I take this critique seriously, the literature has predominantly focused on the networking and scale-jumping strategies of the alter-globalization movement often leaving out, or glossing over, questions about what motivated folks and organizations to participate in these 'global' events. In other words, in the literature there is room for accounts of political contestation that pays attention to how particular sites of contestation, for example the occupied park, emerge through diverse socio-spatial relations in contrast to accounts that conceive of the site as bounded and the motive for participation unexamined (Woodward, Jones, and Marston 2012). Moreover, empirical analysis of the spatialities of contentious politics that demonstrates the degree to which a particular mobilization of discontent is signified as "properly political," that is disruptive of the established socio-spatial order (Rancière 2006), is lacking in the emerging dialogue between geographic and political theory. Broadly speaking, studies that include analysis of the different spaces and strategies of resistance within social movements can illuminate how politics, or power-relations, produce spaces and how different socio-spatial relations are embedded in different spaces in

turn produce certain forms of political contestation. In other words, examining the spatialities of Occupy, by which I mean the networks, mobilities, and places of Occupy, offers an entry point in which to consider the ways in which space and politics are co-produced. In order to examine the relations between space and politics, I locate the specific spatial practices and strategies utilized by participants both in the highly visible occupation of public parks and direct actions and less visible organization spaces. I ask three empirical questions related to the spatialities of Occupy: What are the networks of Occupy? What are the mobilities of Occupy? And, what is the significance of place to Occupy?

In this thesis I explore the experiences and spatialities of activists who participated in Occupy Wall Street and occupied public parks across the country for six weeks in late 2011. By spatialities I mean the spatial lens scholars employ or emphasize to draw out the relations between the social and the spatial, such as territory, regions, place, scale, networks, and mobility (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). Whether utilizing a single spatial lens or multiple lenses, a spatial analysis emphasizes the importance of where something occurs, the social and power relations that enable certain bodies, resources, information, and ideas to flow smoothly or experience varying degrees of friction across geographic space, and the spaces that social and spatial relations produce (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). In this thesis I analyze the three prominent spatialities of Occupy, specifically the networks, mobilities, and places and how these spatialities interact with one another to affect the social, spatial, and political dynamics of Occupy. I argue that while the opportunity and space to participate meaningfully in political debates and for non-corporate interests to have the ear of their elected representatives is increasingly diminished in the neoliberal era, Occupy presented an opportunity for everyday people to find ways to negotiate these exclusions and to participate in and create meaningful spaces in which to demonstrate horizontal and egalitarian power-relationships through deliberative and participatory democracy and collective living arrangements. To explore this argument, I locate my research within existing geographic and political literature on radical democratic theory and the spatiality of contentious politics. By doing

so, I hope to contribute to layered understandings of spatial and political dimensions of concerted social action by considering the experiences from Occupy participants from across the country who took part in the extraordinary and ordinary spaces of Occupy.

My goal is to consider the spatialities of Occupy, by which I mean the specific spatial practices and strategies in the highly visible occupation of public parks and direct actions to the less visible organization spaces particularly the networks, mobilities and significance of the occupied park. I juxtapose reflections on those spatialities and the diverse experience of participants in the spaces of Occupy with an exploration of the interaction between the social and political practices that emerged in the occupied parks. Chapter two offers the literature that informs this thesis, wherein I trace the theoretical framework of the post-political condition and the ways in which radical democratic theorists define the political, also known as 'proper' politics (Rancière et al. 2001). Then I review the relevant literature on the spatialities of contentious politic, specifically the geographic literature on networks, mobilities, and place. Next I consider how the analytic framework of convergence space developed by Routledge and Cumbers (2008) can situate an analysis of the relations between space, politics and contestation. In Chapter three I discuss the methodology employed in the study, state the research question, and highlight my positionality as a researcher. In Chapter four I present the empirical analysis of this research, wherein I explore the specific spatial practices ranging from the highly visible occupation of public parks, direct actions, marches, and rallies to the less visible practices such as non-capitalist exchange and distribution of resources, deliberative and participatory decision making, the motivations for participation, and the networks that produced and emerged within the organizational spaces of Occupy. Finally, in Chapter five I summarize the main findings. Ultimately, I argue that Occupy engendered a space in which to contest the commodification of democracy by corporate interests while simultaneously generating non-capitalist and egalitarian social relations and modes of decision-making. It is the sociospatial dialectic of Occupy that provided openings for true politics.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The past several decades have seen a range of social movements contesting established orders and the power of governing elites. The decade of the nineties saw resistance in Central and South America by indigenous peoples, peasants, and trade unions against neoliberal global governance institutions, to an upsurge in trade union and labor militancy in the European Union in response to austerity measures, to the diverse movements formed in response to the collapse of the Asian ‘tiger’ economies (Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007). Additionally, the end of the twentieth century saw the global linking-up of place-based struggles occurring around the world evident in the “Alterglobalization” movement and the World Social Forum in which networks of activists around the globe participate in direct actions intended to halt the exclusive summits of neoliberal global governance institutions, such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Forum (IMF), and Group of Eight (G8), in which the Battle for Seattle was the most widely documented and celebrated instance of the ‘global movement’ (Gill 2000; Glassman 2002; Wainwright, Prudham, and Glassman 2000). Furthermore, counter summits to the exclusive meetings of the WB, IMF and G8 were organized to discuss alternatives to global capitalism and plan strategies to dismantle it (Guano 2014; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Maeckelbergh 2009).

The beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century saw a continuation of social mobilizations against the commodification of democracy, the corruption of political leaders by moneyed interests and the reduction of opportunities for self-determination evident in the ruptures of protests in Tahrir Square in Egypt, the Los Indignados protests in Spain, austerity protests in Athens, and the Occupy Wall Street encampments in the United States (Kerton 2012; Castells 2012; Castañeda 2012; Hatem 2012; Zizek 2012; Harvey 2013). Taken together, these global protests form an emerging succession of struggles related to the inequalities produced by unfettered global capitalism (Zizek 2012). Yet, many political theorists have named the present as post-political, meaning that democratic

decision-making through which conflict is negotiated in collective forms of decision making is increasingly replaced with administrative decision making by which special interests are negotiated by a small group of governing elite. In other words, the opportunity for everyday people to contest the influence of money on democracy is increasingly limited in the era of neoliberalism.

The emergence and visibility of organized resistance to the hegemonic order and the simultaneous naming of the present as post-political raises an important question for me: how can moments of public discontent be understood in the framework of the post-political condition? Of growing interest to political theorists and geographers is the use of the post-political framework to examine political decision making at a variety of scales, particularly in the spaces of governance, and an analysis of the associated implications (Paddison 2009; Swyngedouw 2010). While much literature names contemporary politics as post-political (e.g. Ranciere 1999, 2006), little work examines the possibilities for contesting the post-political condition. In what follows, I review relevant literature that characterizes the existence and practices of the post-political condition. Then I review the literature on the spatialities of contentious politics in order to contextualize how attention to the socio-spatial dynamics of organized resistance might offer a way to analyze what or who is counted as “properly political” (Rancière 2006). Finally, I discuss the analytical frame of convergence space developed by Routledge and Cumbers (2009) as a productive tool to discuss the relationship between contentious political action and the political, which I use to analyze Occupy Wall Street.

2.1 The Post-Political Condition

Political philosophers and geographers, including Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Ranciere, Slavoj Žižek and Eric Swyngedouw, have recently put forward the proposition that *the political* no longer exists in western society and as a result society is organized in a post-political configuration. Scholars characterize the post-political configuration as the consensual approach to democracy and policy formation which forecloses the possibility of *the political* (Mouffe 2005; Swyngedouw 2010; Žižek 1999).

What is considered as *the political* is the struggle between competing visions of society that brings into question, or politicizes, the injustices created by the normal order of things, or the status quo (Dikec 2005; Hewlett 2010; Rancière 2006; Žižek 1999). *The political* thus is inseparable from conflict precisely due to the presence of competing interests and ideologies (Mouffe 2005). Therefore, the post-political condition can be defined as the reduction of politics to the administration of pragmatic, common sense assumptions that guide policy formation in such a way that those assumptions remain unquestioned and unquestionable (Paddison 2009; Swyngedouw 2011). More specifically, if struggle and conflict are to be understood as the “stuff of democracy” then the post-political condition is the eradication of claims for alternatives beyond the dominant narrative of neoliberal capitalism (Mouffe 2005).

Political theorists concerned with the marginalization of the properly political dimension of contemporary life characterize the post-political configuration in four interrelated ways (Swyngedouw 2011). First, the dominant ideology of neoliberalism has depoliticized the economic sphere and conflated it with the social sphere as the only organizing principle for the social totality. Disagreement and conflict are treated as technical issues to be solved through compromise and negotiation without addressing the underlying assumptions that markets are the most efficient delivery of social goods. Second, governmental policy and public resources are increasingly oriented towards the efficient operation and functioning of the economy. This contrasts with the role of the state during the Keynesian era, wherein government resources were directed towards social programs to mitigate the unevenness of the capitalist economy. Third, the depoliticization of the economy limits debates and actions to a narrow set of pragmatic choices that often legitimate the rule of experts to negotiate stakeholder interests. This point is best exemplified by the recent work of geographer Erik Swyngedouw (2010) on the politics of climate change in which he has argued that debates around climate change are framed in particular ways to orient consensus on solutions to reduce carbon emissions that operate within narrowly defined parameters of least cost. Framed in this particular manner, by scientists, politicians,

and other technocratic elites, the space to argue alternative futures and trajectories are foreclosed upon. Instead the debate is framed around reducing carbon emissions through market-based solutions, such as fuel-efficient vehicles, carbon trading, and sustainable forestry, rather than interrogating the social, political, and economic structures that have contributed to a carbon crisis and the necessity of the market to provide solutions to the carbon crisis (Swyngedouw 2011). Lastly, the discontent or apathy of ordinary citizens with the democratic process and the façade of participation is acknowledged and redirected towards the mobilization and normalization of the public management of consensus (Swyngedouw 2011). That is, canvassing of popular views from the opinion poll to ‘town-hall’ meetings comes to stand in for participation in the political process but rather than fundamentally change the terms of the debate, opinion polls and the like actually serve to signal the parameters of what needs to be managed in the public sphere. Opinion polls might reveal that there is a significant percentage of the population that opposes a projected increase in defense spending and some political leaders may use this information to garner electoral support, but the consideration that there might be no military expenditure whatsoever remains fully outside of the terms of the debate. Under post-politics, the public consensus on the limits of disagreement has become so normalized (i.e., there must be *some* military expenditure) that to suggest otherwise would be profane. Instead of making space for those who do not currently have a seat at the table, so to speak, the apathy of ordinary citizens is captured and funneled towards maintaining the seats of those who already sit there. In other words the post-political society is marked by a set of common-sense assumptions, legitimized by a realm of professional experts, and administered fully within the existing framework of neoliberal capitalism and liberal democracy.

The term ‘post-politics’ is best illustrated in the essay titled, *The End of History*, where Francis Fukuyama famously declared that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the triumph of liberal democracy and market capitalism (Fukuyama 1996). The perceived inevitability and assumed dominance of a market-oriented society as the basic organizational structure of the social,

economic, and political order has risen alongside consensual modes of governance that evacuates disagreement and contention from spaces of public encounter (Mouffe 2005; Rancière 2006; Žižek 1999; Swyngedouw 2011; Hewlett 2010). Additionally, the evacuation of *the political* from democratic spaces and corresponding modes of governance primarily occurs through the pursuit of a 'consensus' that is grounded in a set of practical, common sense assumptions; assumptions such as the common good, protection of private property, and continuous economic growth (Mouffe 2005; Rancière 2006; Žižek 1999; Swyngedouw 2010). Increasingly politics are guided by the single principle of pro-marketization that frames a set of 'best-practices' to legitimate the technocratic management of the whole of society (Rancière 2006). For example, a city may decide to allocate public tax dollars towards the construction of a new sports stadium under the premise that it will attract future revenue for the city. Residents who live near the proposed site may be concerned that the new stadium will increase property taxes and displace long-term residents of the neighborhood. Typically, the real-estate developer, the city, and the neighborhood will enter into a community benefits agreement in which the interested parties will negotiate the degree to which the developer will mitigate the concerns of the community. In exchange, the neighborhood will not oppose the development project (Salkin and Lavine 2008). What is generally not a topic of discussion is the legitimacy of the city to direct public funds to support economic development at the expense of redistributive policies that could prevent displacement of residents by speculative investments interests. In other words city governance is increasingly oriented towards facilitating economic development and extracting wealth from publically funded projects and policies instead of redistributing wealth towards collective needs outside of a dominant concern for economic markets (Harvey 1989a). The orientation of public policy towards the interests of wealthy investors is the hallmark of post-political governance.

2.1.1 *Post Political Governance*

Geographers have extensively documented the retreat of the political and the decline of the political sphere in discussions in the literature on political economy and the neoliberal city (e.g., Purcell 2008; DeFilippis 2003; Swyngedouw 2009; Dikec 2007; Hackworth 2007). In particular, the literature charts the post-political configuration unfolding through the transformation of political agendas from social redistribution to those of risk management in favor of wealth-generating entrepreneurial policies (Peck and Tickell 2002; Harvey 1989b; Hackworth 2007), the prioritization of pro-market strategies and the power imbued to business interests (Cox 1993), the rise of urban governance regimes characterized by public-private partnerships, techno-managerial management and administration apparatuses (Hackworth 2007; Stone 1989; Harvey 1989b; Peck and Tickell 2002), and the attrition of democracy through the privatization and re-orientation of public spaces (Purcell 2008; Mitchell 2003; Paddison 2009). A central theme in the literature is the regulation of political and democratic processes through the scalar transformation of the state marked by the rise of competitive cities, the techno-managerial class, and discourses of personal responsibility (Swyngedouw 2011)

Neoliberalism has emerged as the dominant ideology shaping policy formation that seeks to justify the appropriation of public tax dollars towards speculative market ventures and the privatization of public goods and services through the discourse of economic efficiency and reform (Harvey 1989a; Peck and Tickell 2002). The advent of neoliberal economic policies has narrowed the effectiveness of democracy as politicians and policy makers appear to form mutual support for neoliberalism as an economic policy and acceptance of the inequalities it creates (Paddison 2009). Thus, the post-political condition is signaled by the consensus among policy makers on a particular political ideology and set of economic 'best-practices' that foreclose the articulation of alternative ways of organizing society (Swyngedouw 2010).

Alarmingly, the evacuation of the “properly political” (Rancière 2006) dimension from democratic spaces has intensified alongside the continuing realities of uneven development, the failure of supply-side economics to offer economic prosperity to the majority of the world’s marginalized, the exacerbation of income inequality, the intensification of environmental degradation, and the increasingly limited control of the majority of citizens to control and influence policy agendas (Swyngedouw 2009; Swyngedouw 2010). Contrary to Fukuyama’s claim, the spread of global capitalism has been attributed with the continued marginalization and disenfranchisement of the majority of the world’s population. Yet, despite the dominant narrative of the inevitability of global capitalism and liberal democracy as the end point of history, the priority of moneyed interests continues to be met with dissent (Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Maeckelbergh 2009; Kingsnorth 2004).

The prioritization of pro-market strategies and the power imbued to the interests of business is characterized by geographer Kevin Cox as what he terms *new urban politics* (1993). Through deregulating the economy and increasing the privatization of public assets, neoliberalism shapes policies and political agendas aimed at dissolving the redistributive functions of the state (Hackworth 2007). Under new urban politics, informed by neoliberal ideology, the roll back of the safety net created under the Keynesian Welfare state that supported governmental programs such as public housing, and social security, for instance, occurs in favor of a roll out of pro-economic development projects such as the revitalization of downtown areas, water front development, and attractions for tourists (Peck and Tickell 2002). The implication of pro-growth agendas supported by city governance is then the diminished space for advancing political agendas that prioritize distributive policies (Peterson 1981).

Moreover, contemporary urban politics operate through partnerships and coalitions among city governments, business elite, property developers, and other stakeholders characterized as urban governance regimes (Hackworth 2007; Harvey 1989a; Peck and Tickell 2002; Stone 1989). Detailed by geographer David Harvey (1989a), growth-oriented urban governance regimes function through public-

private partnerships that are often times nonlocal and operate through disembedded networks with limited democratic control (Harvey 1989a; Molotch 2011; Mouffe 2005; Peck and Tickell 2002; Purcell 2008; Stone 1989). Governance refers to the assemblage of public-private partnerships, non-state, and quasi-state institutional forms and actors that assist government in decision making, techno-managerial planning, and expert management and negotiation of stake-holder interests. Post-political scholars differentiate government, primarily concerned with politics, from governance which “entails an explicit reference to mechanisms or organized and coordinated activities appropriate to the solution of some specific problem” (Urbinati quoted in Mouffe 2005, 103). Post-political governance operates in a context of a generally accepted consensus of neoliberal best-practices, by which I mean the non-disputed management of market-based rationales for public policy reform (Swyngedouw 2010). For example, neoliberal affordable housing policy has favored voucher programs in which the city subsidizes private landlords who are willing to rent housing to voucher recipients thus facilitating private property markets (Hankins et al. forthcoming). Consensus emerges insofar that the interests of public housing tenants, who typically comprise the urban poor, are not prioritized and therefore are not meaningfully included in decisions that devolve publically funded affordable housing arrangements and displace the urban poor. In other words, neoliberal policy favors opportunities to generate wealth over other needs such as non-speculative affordable housing. What makes this example post-political is that the ability of the market to reform various issues with public housing, such as maintenance and infrastructural problems, is taken as common sense. To be clear, disagreement and conflict occur and are in fact encouraged, but these conflicts are assumed to be solved through compromise that legitimate the development project or policy in question, for example community benefit agreements, rather than ask why the market, in this case affordable housing vouchers, is assumed to be the best vehicle through which to deliver social goods. By serving the interests of recognized stake holders who are often not responsible to constituents, urban politics, conducted in this manner, reduces the opportunity and quality of public

participation in democratic policy formulation (Mouffe 2005; Paddison 2009; Swyngedouw 2010).

Politics then is limited to debates on, for example, where a new sports stadium or conference center should be built, rather than opportunities to call into question if public tax dollars should be spent on building a new stadium or office park in the first place.

Along this line, scholars suggest that the shifting of the arena of global governance, "in which traditional disciplinary society is transfigured into a society of control through disembedded networks, like the Kyoto Protocol, the Dublin Statement, and the Rio Summit" (Mouffe, 2005 quoted in Swyngedouw, 2006, p.21) serves to weaken democratic institutions and offers no real forum for dissent or disagreement. NATO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Group of Eight (G8), among others, have shifted the arena of neoliberal governance across national borders to the effect that the actors influencing policies are difficult to locate. In her book, *On The Political*, Chantal Mouffe (2005) argues that at stake in the depoliticalization of international governance is the naturalization of particular power-relations (i.e. western imperialism), which further diminishes the democratic rights for self-government and self-determination of many countries. In other words, because international governance structures are increasingly the space for experts to suggest technical fixes to specific problems, the opportunity to call into question the highly political project of western imperialism is diminished (Mouffe 2005).

2.1.2 Criticisms of The Political and Post-Political Configuration

Scholars who define what counts as the political and what counts as institutionalized forms of politics suggest that conflict and contestation are essential to understanding the political (Mouffe 2005). This body of work is useful for defining what post-politics is, but is less useful in theorizing how the post-political condition is or could be contested. This can restrain empirical accounts of political contestation that take seriously how the political is conceived in actually existing geographies of contestation. For example, structural theorists of neoliberalism are often cited for their skepticism of contentious politics

and ‘bottom-up’ social movements to present a meaningful challenge to the dominant order and to bring about transformative change (Tickell and Peck 2007; Hardt and Negri 2009; Harvey 1990).

However when naming the present as post-political, the literature curiously fails to consider a growing body of work on contentious politics, or concerted counter hegemonic action, when declaring the death or absence of the political.

Take for instance the autonomous movements in Argentina and the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, both of which are comprised of mostly indigenous people who are actively contesting the power of the state to control their local resources, especially their land (Sitrin 2012). In doing so they also enact alternative ways of organizing their members—namely they engage in collective ownership of resources, participatory and collective decision making through neighborhood assemblies, and create alternative forms of power that are not sought through the state or institutional powers (Sitrin 2012). To claim that globally there is a post-ideological consensus that has become dominant in the post-Cold war era that is grounded in the acceptance of the capitalist market and the liberal state as the best organizational foundation of society is to ignore the massive neighborhood assemblies and recuperated workplaces of the Argentinean autonomous movements or the 20 year Zapatista occupation of Chiapas which are in many ways against economic globalization but are also, as Marina Sitrin (2012) argues, “about not asking for power but creating a different power and not asking for liberal democracy to be democratic, but rather about creating real democracy” (xiv). At stake is the assumption that because these and other movements have not dismantled neoliberal globalization writ large, the capitalist market and liberal state remains dominant; contemporary social movements amount to “mere irritants of the machine” (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010, 14).

Post-structural geographers have cautioned that failure to focus on the articulations between neoliberalism and contestations can inadvertently reinforce the hegemonic status and practices of neoliberalism and hinder theoretical analysis to alternative visions and practices (Gibson-Graham 2006;

Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007). Additionally, geographers have raised the critique that debates on what counts as the political subordinate and elide the specific dynamics of contestation as inevitably co-opted by the dominant order. This is akin to the popular critique of Occupy Wall Street's failure to produce a concrete list of demands (Hartman 2011). By this I mean that Occupy is understood as unsuccessful insofar as the movement protested the influence of corporate interests on democracy but was unable to take down the financial industry or significantly regulate the policies and practices of Wall Street. While it is true that OWS did not (or has not yet) fundamentally overturn(ed) the social and power relations that support and uphold corporate interests, in the sense that moneyed interests still dominate Washington; however, I argue in this thesis that new social relations did occur in the occupied park. To occupy a park meant that participants had to figure out how they were going to live together, feed each other, make collective decisions, work on projects, and the like. Occupying the park posed the question of how to live collectively, and this, as Massey reminds us, is "the central question of the political" (D. Massey 2005, 151). The politics that took place in the park may not be legible on the scale of economic globalization, in the sense that capital continues to travel quickly around the globe, the World Bank is alive and well, and stock brokers from New York to London to Hong Kong trade at lightning speed. But, as I demonstrate below, the politics that created those occupied parks and the act of occupying a park that brought forth a politics of care are crucial evidence that suggests there is hope in this post-political epoch. Paying attention to the spatialities of contentious politics, for example, the new networks of social relations that were engendered within the occupied park, offers hope for how social movements may interact with and alter dominant power relations rather than solely be co-opted by dominant interests. On this note, radical political democratic theory and the critique of the 'post-political condition' is ripe with opportunities to examine what makes space political and what makes politics spatial.

2.2 Space and the Political

Recently, there has been a renewed interest in the relations between space and the political among geographers (Barnett 2012; Featherstone and Korf 2012; Dikeç 2012; Dikec 2005; Meyer, Schetter, and Prinz 2012; Hankins and Martin 2014; Davidson and Martin 2014). In conversation with radical democratic theorists such as Chantal Mouffe (2005), geographers have energized interest in the uneven spatial and power relations by paying attention to the political dimensions of conflict and contestation (Kothari 2012; Geiser 2012; Spencer 2012; Schlichte 2012). The key question animating this body of literature is what sorts of spaces do different political practices create. For example, Marchart (2007) argues that Habermasian conceptions of deliberative democracy, including the democratic theories of Hannah Arendt, understand the political to be a space of freedom and public debate. This implies that the political is public and collective as bodies navigate, encounter, and associate with each other. On the other hand, political theorists that ascribe to the Schmittian conception of friend-enemy democracy, including the democratic theories of Chantal Mouffe, understand the political to be a space of power, conflict and disagreement (Marchart 2007). This implies that the political is fundamentally about antagonistic social relations in which there will always be disagreement.

Debates between these two conceptions of the spaces in which the political takes place have received attention from geographers who urge political theorists to reconsider notions of space as an empty container in which politics occurs (Meyer, Schetter, and Prinz 2012). While it is certainly true that not all political theorists and democratic theory starts from the premise that social relations produce space, rather than simply occur in space (Lefebvre 2011), Mustafa Dikec cautions geographers to make notice of the ways in which political theorists mobilize spatial metaphors, concepts, and imaginaries that at first glance may appear to do spatial thinking incorrectly (2012). He argues that multiple spatialities have been at work in different political theorists' conceptualizations of the political and that to understand the relationship between space and the political, attention must be paid to "what animated

them in engaging with space talk when theorizing politics” (Dikeç 2012, 669). Specifically, he analyzes how Hannah Arendt, Earnst Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and Jacques Ranciere conceptualize space in theorizing the political. Typically, the bodies of work of these scholars are seen as ontologically opposed to one other based on associative and dissociative theorizing of the political (Marchart 2007). Yet, Dikec finds that each theorization of the political rests upon a general conception of space as the domain of experience, an effect of relations, actions, and performances. Generally, there is agreement that politics creates space and political spaces are constantly produced. From this analysis he draws three general observations about the relationship between space and the political. First, these political theorists engage with space as a mode of political thought. Second, space is multidimensional; it contains the political (ruptures) and politics (confinement)—that is, space is simultaneously open and closed. Third, space becomes politically important when it is associated with change in the established order of things and when new relations, connections, disconnections, and distributions can be established (Dikeç 2012). Here, Dikec argues that spatial thinking constitutes theorizations on the political that has important implications for how geographers might productively engage with political theory.

An emergent and relational sense of space may not animate modes of political thought, yet it is clear that the political is theorized with interesting spatial metaphors. This begs the question, how is space theorized politically? Or said differently, when is space understood as political? Dikec (2005) reminds us that it is important to qualify what is meant by ‘politics’ insofar that different definitions have different implications for the relations between space and politics. For example, if space is considered political because of the presence of power then space is always already political. Or, if space is considered political because it is a site of multiple social relations and competing interests then space is always already political. While these premises are not necessarily wrong, for Dikec (2005), they are not specific enough. Informed by the work of political theorists, Jacques Ranciere, Dikec suggests “space becomes political in that it becomes the polemic place where a wrong can be addressed and equality

can be demonstrated. What makes space political is when it interrupts the normal order of things” (Dikec 2005, 172). Ranciere’s (2001) definition of the political revolves around a belief in the right of the mass of ordinary people to play a different role in society from the one they have been playing. For example, If the post-political condition is signaled by those who are more powerful than others setting the terms of the debate or agenda and make space according to their beliefs, values, and visions, then this power relation is at the expense of the less powerful to be able to do the same. In other words, the “proper political” moment occurs when there is a disruption or dissensus by the people, ideas, and values that are so far marginalized by the dominant values and ideologies that distribute power to some at the expense of others (Hewlett 2010, 101). This disruption takes place and is signaled by an encounter that cannot be ignored. Take, for example, the occupation in 1990 by the homeless and homeless activists of Atlanta’s Imperial Hotel, an abandoned building located in the central business district. Several decades of market-oriented policy priorities had both diminished the city’s affordable housing stock and demolished many of the public housing structures. With nowhere to go, a group of homeless people claimed the abandoned building as their home, attracting attention from the city’s political and business elite, the news media, and sympathetic supporters. By occupying the building and living in cramped quarters together, the homeless disrupted the very structural forces which shaped their precarious living conditions and demonstrated that housing is not a commodity to be acquired in the market (Steffen 2012). What makes the occupation of the Imperial Hotel an example of “proper politics” is that the homeless who occupied the building simultaneously staged equality and exposed the failure of the market to provide egalitarian access to social goods. Indeed, the disruption of business as usual was both spatial and political.

2.3 The Spatialities of Contentious Politics

As explained above, ‘post-politics’ refers to the critique of a post-ideological consensus that has become dominant in the post-Cold war era that is grounded in the acceptance of the capitalist market

and the liberal state as the best organizational foundation of society. Neoliberalism, itself an ideology, interacts productively with the narrative of a post-ideological consensus to further instantiate a particular moment in time in which neoliberal actors, for example those with considerable financial and political capital, are able to shape the spaces of the city more to their interest and values than people with less financial and political mobility. Take for example the politics that surrounded Atlanta's bid for the 1996 Olympic games in which the powerful business and city elite were able to mobilize considerable resources in order to remake downtown Atlanta conducive to the desires of the Olympic board (Rutheiser 1996). This resulted in the demolition of an entire inner-city neighborhood and the forced displacement of residents to construct a new stadium and the mobilization of public tax dollars towards subsidizing development projects that would attract investors, tourists, and spectators. In other words this effort constituted a reworking of the spatial configuration of the city at the behest of the interests of the business and governing elite (Rutheiser 1996). "Proper political" moments (Rancière et al. 2001) disrupt these spatial and social relations and in doing so make new spaces and social relations, like the homeless who claim the right to be housed by occupying an abandoned building that had hitherto been an unused asset waiting for investors to decide if redevelopment would prove profitable and in doing so conveyed a new sense of community (Steffen 2012, 758). It is in this sense that geographers are keen to remind us that social struggles are simultaneously spatial struggles (Miller 2013, 290). Furthermore these struggles are contentious in the sense that they challenge the dominant power relations of the elite. In this section I turn to the literature on contentious politics to trace the arguments geographers have put forth, including the imperative to pay attention to the spatialities of social movements. Ultimately I argue that there is room in the literature on contentious politics to examine the degree to which mobilizations, such as Occupy Wall Street, are properly political.

The study of social movements, termed contentious politics, aims to theorize the phenomenon of organized social resistance against hegemonic norms (Tarrow 2001, 7). Geographers Helga Leitner and

Eric Sheppard conceptualize contentious politics as “concerted, counter-hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries” (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008, 157). The literature on contentious politics is interested in examining the strategies, mobilizations, values, tactics and motivations of groups of people who organize to challenge and disrupt uneven power and spatial relations. This literature is important because it suggests that people are mobilized to contest uneven spatial and power relations and in doing so remind us that other ways of living and coexisting together are indeed possible.

At the heart of contentious politics is the coming together of individuals and groups to call into question hegemonic norms and to push for social change (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). Recent examples of contentious politics, such as Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, and Los indignados, to name a few, demonstrate that contentious politics often take place *in particular places*, where activists erect their tent cities in the occupied parks and public squares, assembling in the streets. In doing so they often defy the appropriate use of those spaces. Geographers have made important contributions in the study of contentious politics by asserting that geography matters to the imaginaries, practices, and trajectories of contentious politics. The incorporation of spatiality into the theory of contentious politics can be understood as a spatial turn that emphasizes the importance of space as an active agent shaping social relations (Lefebvre 2011; Harvey 2000; B. A. Miller 2000; Martin and Miller 2003; Soja 1989; D. B. Massey 1994; Sewell, Jr 2001). In other words, incorporating a spatial analysis into investigations of social phenomena, such as social movements, can help shed light on the connections between everyday practices and experiences and broader social, political, and economic processes (Martin and Miller 2003).

Geographers have long been concerned with relations between space and the political (Massey 1994; Soja 2010; Harvey 2000; Purcell 2002; Martin and Miller 2003). Geographers are particularly apt

to bring into conversation theories of the political and contentious politics through spatial theory and are keen to emphasize the dynamic relations between the spatial and the social, demanding attention be paid to the ways in which social-spatial relations both negotiates and generates power relations (Lefebvre 2011; Soja 1989; D. Massey 2005). Rather than conceiving the world around us as mere *outcomes* of social struggles, geographers emphasize that the spatial and the social realms are mutually constituting and cannot be separated (Lefebvre 2011; D. Massey 2005; Soja 1989; Harvey 1996; Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008; Martin and Miller 2003; Dikec 2005; Soja 1980; Smith 2008). The interaction between social relations and the production of space in coined *the socio-spatial dialectic* by geographer Ed Soja (1980). Geographers understand space to be polemic, always open and never complete, an affinitive and attractive force where there are always new connections yet to be realized (D. Massey 2005; Gibson-Graham 2006). In other words, social struggles are spatial struggles and that socio-spatial relations are open for politics, and as such, are important sites of contestation.²

For example, taken together the work of Paul Routledge and Andrew Cumbers (2009), Jim Glassman (2002), and David Featherstone (2003) has focused on the alter-globalization movements of the late 1990s. They have paid attention to the spatialities of these transnational movements and protests in which locally rooted networks and social movements organize across the globe through connecting local struggles against transnational flows of capital. For example, Routledge and Cumbers (2009) argue that the alter-globalization movement has produced *Global Justice Networks* in which

² To be clear, in *For Space* Doreen Massey argues for a relational sense of space in which space is understood to be the product of dynamic interrelations or the sphere of multiplicity in which connections and relations are always yet to be made (2005). As Massey sees it, space is always political because the processes and relations which produce spaces are just one articulation of infinite possibilities. Ranciere's (2001) conception of what makes space political is not necessarily in disagreement with Massey's conception of space. The nuance here is that both scholars agree that space is always political insofar as space constitutes and is constituted by an assemblage of power relations that could always be distributed otherwise. What makes space "properly political" for Ranciere is when the distribution of power relations are called into question and then *demonstrated* to be otherwise. In other words, space is always political because there are always openings in which proper politics can emerge.

geographically distant actors join to organize around issues of migrant rights, labor rights, welfare reform, and resist the privatization of social goods through global days of action, mass protests against neoliberal global-governing institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or the Group of Eight (Wainwright, Prudham, and Glassman 2000). In this sense, not only have these social mobilizations scaled their actions to the global scale to contest transnational neoliberal policies, but they also suddenly appear in the local sites where neoliberal transnational policies are crafted.

Moreover, the alter-globalization movement has organized annual social forums in which geographically distant actors come together and create what Routledge and Cumbers (2009) term *convergence space* for reflecting on strategies, exchanging knowledge, coordinating disruptive actions, and determining how to support various projects and organizations. Examining the spatialities of the alter-globalization movement, including the networks, mobilizations, and place-based struggles that comprise the movement against neoliberal globalization underscores the multiple ways in which spatial relations are at the root of social mobilizations.

Conceptualizations of space as constituted by and constitutive of social relations is essential to understanding the spatialities of contentious politics. At play in contentious politics is the struggle to assert the right of various visions of social change to flourish. Whether that is an increase in the minimum wage for working families or more inclusionary and participatory democratic decision making in urban politics, contentious politics are at play in shaping the conditions, trajectories, and outcomes of social struggles in particular places. Visions of social change do not simply exist *a priori*, they are actively produced in practice, thought, and speech. When Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus, her actions were spatial in that she protested *in a particular place* (the bus). Referring back to Ranciere's (2001) conception of the proper political moment, the bus became a polemic place in which a wrong was addressed. More broadly, the actions of tens of thousands of activists in places such as lunch counters, churches, sidewalks, and in the nation's capital, reflected a collective struggle for civil rights,

and consequentially resulted different spatial arrangements, relations, and norms. In this sense, a vision of social change, or how things could be otherwise, constitutes the second premise of proper politics (Ranciere 2001) in that the collective struggle for civil rights demonstrated a vision of racial equality. As such, examining the spatialities of contentious politics is a fruitful place in which to examine the degree to which social movements represent proper politics. Geographers have attended to the spatialities of contentious politics by examining the strategies and tactics contentious political actors draw from to motivate action and change. Leitner et al., (2007) argue that those “practicing contestation make use of multiple spatialities in complex and unpredictable ways to make new geographies” (Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007, 20). The spatialities of contentious politics include, among other elements, networks, mobility, and place. In this thesis I analyze these spatialities of the Occupy Wall Street movement to examine the openings for “proper” politics.

2.3.1 Networks

In the literature, networks have been established as an important spatiality of social movements and contentious politics (Castells 2012; Juris 2008; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Featherstone 2003). Manuel Castells defines networks as a set of interconnected nodes that facilitate communication and action (Castells 2012). Networks of communication are important to contentious politics because they connect actors across space, facilitate communication, exchange information on tactics and strategies, and produce new knowledge (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). Furthermore, networks are important for engendering new alliances and interpersonal connections that affect the trajectories and capacity of contentious actions (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). Additionally, new technologies that facilitate networks of communication influence how social movements organize. Networks of communication during the alter-globalization movement of the 1990s consisted of email chains, listservs³ and discussion

³ Listservs are electronic mailing list software in which a user can send a single email to multiple subscribers.

boards that were the primary vehicle facilitating the coordination and diffusion of diverse global justice movements across geographic space thereby enhancing their scale of operation (Juris 2008; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Maeckelbergh 2009). Anthropologist Jeffrey Juris (2008) has argued that the primary use of listservs in the Alter-globalization movement gave rise to a model of networked organizations based on decentralized coordination among diverse and globally expansive collective actors precisely because of the complex information and discussions that were able to take place and circulate through this medium (Juris 2008). Thus Global Justice Networks (Juris 2008; Routledge and Cumbers 2009) tend to outlast a number of place-specific conferences or mobilizations of the actors constituting the network. It bears recognition the tendency for social movements to organize through diffuse, decentralized and leaderless networks is not new or necessarily unique to the technological advancements of the Internet (Calhoun 1993). Letter-writing campaigns that were popular throughout the early twentieth century certainly meet the definition of networks of communication long before the advent of web based technologies. Additionally, other scholars have pointed out that many of the protestors in Tahrir Square did not have access to social media platforms and were mobilized through face-to-face interaction (Gladwell 2011). In sum, networks are an important element of the spatiality of contentious politics because they permit the flow of information, ideas, communication, strategies, tactics, emotions, and ways of relating to one another across geographic space that challenge the space-spanning networks of states and corporations who seek to contain and diminish disruptive political behavior.

2.3.2 Mobility

By definition, mobility refers to the ability of people, objects, and ideas to move from one location to another over time; alternatively, it describes the degree that someone or something is mobile (Warf 2006). Fundamentally, Massey (2005) contends that space is dynamic and continuously changing. Hence the recent attention scholars have given to mobility as an element of spatiality that

focuses on the dynamic qualities of movement by bodies, objects, ideas, and knowledge. Mobility is not just about movement *per se* it is also about *motility*; the ability or capacity to move. The degree to which someone or something moves and the forces that beckon, command, enable or contain such movement directs attention to the power relations that constitute differential capacities and potentials for mobility (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004). Furthermore, the politics of mobility developed by Cresswell (2010), which I will trace below, encourages scholars to take notice of the power relations and engagements that actors experience as they move through space. As a strategy and tactic of contentious politics, the ability of participants to move is essential for collective action.

Within the study of contentious politics, mobility has been developed as an important element of spatiality that refers to the movability of actors and objects through space and time to disrupt and contest the regulation of space by state and corporate institutions (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). Mobility is important to contentious politics in two interrelated ways. First, mobility entails the movement of activists over space and time to appear suddenly in certain places ahead of those seeking to contain their actions (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). Along this line, the mobilities of contentious politics include mass demonstrations, marches, rallies, bus rides, picket lines, and the like. Second, the movement of contentious actors through space and time, for example the Immigrant Freedom Bus rides that took place in September 2003 in which over 1000 immigrant workers and activists in 18 buses journeyed to Washington D.C., is important in shaping the experience and identities of participants, creating new collective understandings, visions, strategies, and tactics (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). Kristin Sziarto describes how the Immigrant Freedom Bus Rides were fundamental in developing broad support for the immigrants' rights movement by raising awareness through rallies and demonstrations held at various stops during the journey (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008, 166). In this way, the shared experience of being in motion among contentious actors presents openings for negotiations of differences between participants and produces new connections

and ways of relation to one another that transform the capacities and potentials for collective action (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008, 165).

Expanding beyond the frame of contentious politics, scholars have turned to mobility as a concept to articulate the power-relations imbricated in the action of movement (Cresswell 2006). The term motility is often invoked to theorize the ability or capacity of persons, knowledge, and objects to move through social and geographical space (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004). As Kaufmann et al (2004) argue, “Motility incorporates structural and cultural dimensions of movement and action in that the actual or potential capacity for spatio-social mobility may be realized differently or have different consequences across varying socio-cultural contexts” (750). Hence, motility conceptualizes the social, cultural, economic and political processes that constitute differential capacities to act within which mobility, or movement, is embedded and enacted. Put another way, different subject positionalities along lines of race, class, and gender, for example, structure the potential capacity for social and spatial mobility. For that reason, geographer Tim Cresswell (2010) argues that there is a politics to mobility insofar that mobilities are both productive of and produced by social relations that involve the production and distribution of power (21). Cresswell develops a framework of six aspects of mobility to describe the politics of mobility; *motive force, velocity, rhythm, route, experience, friction*. Motive force asks why someone one moves and pays attention to the relative degree in which movement is a choice. For example, Hankins et al. (forthcoming) argue that the mobility of public housing residents were forced to move after the demolition of public housing in Atlanta, a move that often came a great cost financially and socially. Velocity, rhythm and route are concerned with the speed, pattern, and motion particular movements take (Cresswell 2010). Experience interrogates the experience of moving or not moving, be by force or choice. Lastly, friction entails asking questions about why a movement stops, what makes it difficult for some to move; questions that inevitably involve aspects of power and domination (Cresswell 2010). Ergo the power relations that imbricate movement, which are always

embedded in differential capacities to move are of great importance to analyzing the relations between space, politics, and contestation.

Cresswell's politics of mobility offers a compelling framework to draw out various elements of mobility. However, for the purpose of this study I will not talk about mobility in quite this way. Instead of focusing my analysis on the movement of occupy participants in space and time I focus on and draw out the occupiers' motility to be physically present in the occupied park. My data suggests that it is vital to pay attention to what mobilizes collective action. This is an essential and often over looked component of mobility because without the motility to be present, the traditional aspects of mobilities that are analyzed in contentious politics (i.e. marches, rallies, and mass demonstrations) would fail to emerge. In other words, it may be fairly obvious that participants in Occupy disrupted the regulation of space by state and corporate institutions by marching in the streets with no permit and by refusing to leave the occupied park until considerable force was taken, but this conception of mobility does not examine why actors were compelled to re-locate and quite literally move to the tent-city and to place their bodies in places where they were not supposed to be. Therefore in my analysis of the mobilities of Occupy, I pay close attention to the interactions, context, and reasons participants articulated when they reasoned why they choose or chose not to relocate to the occupied park and how this choice is differentially accessed along lines of difference.

2.3.3 Place

Influenced by the work of Doreen Massey (2005) place is understood as relational insofar as scholars reject a conception of place as a bounded site in favor of a conception of place as made and re-made through "various sets of social, political, and material processes by which people iteratively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live" (Pierce, Martin, and Murphy 2011, 54). Place is an important spatiality to contentious politics because places are sites of meaning and power (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). In a recent publication titled *The Politics of the Encounter, Urban*

Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization, geographer Andy Merrifield argues that the city is a critical place in which social protest unfolds and urges scholars to pay attention to where these crowds form and from where they draw their energy, in what kind of spaces they occur, and what kind of new spaces they produce (2013). Certain places, such as a bank or a public park, are highly symbolic places and contesting these place images and symbols can be strategic sites of resistance for contentious politics. For example, Emanuela Guano (2014) describes the contentious events that unfolded during a massive protest in Geona, Italy during the Group of Eight (G8) summit in 2001. In anticipation of large protests, the police partitioned the space surrounding the summit, deemed the *red zone* and was protected by a large metal fence. Surrounding the red zone was the *yellow zone* in which protestors were allowed to assemble. Partitioning the space around the summit in this way was a strategy to prevent confrontation between the G8 leaders and protestors. Guano argues “that by designing and building the fence, the Italian government did not just prospect and seek to stave off a violation attempt; it *invited it*” (Guano 2014, 11). Moreover, from the homeless who occupied the Imperial Hotel and demanded shelter, to LGBT activists who chained them selves to a balcony the New York Stock Exchange and demanded affordable AIDS treatments (Christiansen and Hanson 1996) contentious actors place their bodies in places where they are not supposed to be and in doing so utilize the meaning of certain places as sites of resistance.⁴

Additionally, place is important to contentious actors because they can become sites in which to produce other relations, values and ways of being that represent what they are fighting for. For example, Marina Sitrin (2012) describes the autonomous movements that have taken place in Argentina over the past decade in which unemployed and landless workers have occupied and recuperated

⁴ Scholars have shed important light on how social movements and organizations utilize public places such as the street as a site of theatre and performance for artistic and creative action repertoires (for example see Graeber 2002). However here I do not analyze specific instances in which occupiers utilized street theatre as a tactic of protest when examining place as an element of the spatialities of Occupy and focus instead on the act of occupying and sustaining a continual presence in the park.

factories and have organized neighborhood assemblies to recover the rights and representations of indigenous peoples. In this way the movement utilizes these spaces of deliberation and community to practice what Sitrin terms a *politics of affect*, or a politics of care (2012). As such, examining the significance of place to contentious politics, and the sort of relations that occur within those places, is an important spatiality that offers an entry point towards examining how political action produces space and in turn how different spaces shape politics. Furthermore, attending to the spatialities of contentious politics might be one way to unsettle such conceptualizations of the post-political (Featherstone and Korf 2012; Barnett 2012).

The insertion of socio-spatial theory to the study of social movements has shed light on the relational and dynamic processes of contentious politics, investigating how actors engage, what strategies and tactics they employ to legitimize their claims, how they challenge existing norms, and the outcomes of such struggles. What this suggests to me is that there is a limited consideration of contestation that informs the characterization of the contemporary period as post-political. Even so, the post-political literature is useful for engaging with spaces of contention and has the potential to yield productive analysis on whether different mobilizations should be signified as properly political or not (Featherstone and Korf 2012). Next I explain the analytic framework of convergence space developed by Routledge and Cumbers (2008) which I use to situate my analysis of Occupy Wall Street and the relations between space, politics and contestation.

2.4 Convergence Space

Geographers Paul Routledge and Andrew Cumbers develop the concept of convergence space as a conceptual toolkit for thinking through the spatialities of Global Justice Networks (2009). Emerging in the early 1990's, place-based grass roots organizations and movements began to form networks of communication and facilitate the mobilization of activists to engage in direct action against the World Trade Organization and similar neoliberal global governance institutions and the associated emergence

of the World Social Forums (Maeckelbergh 2009; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Juris 2008; Glassman 2002; Gill 2000; Wainwright, Prudham, and Glassman 2000). Global Justice Networks are

flows of communication, action and experience [in which] their forms of practice and communication are embodied and sensual as well as deliberative and representative...Through their participation in GJNs, different place-based political actors such as social movements, trade unions, NGOs, leftist political parties, religious groups, etc., become connected to more spatially extensive coalitions with a shared interest in articulating demands for greater, social, economic, and environmental justice (Routledge and Cumbers, 2008, 37).

Routledge and Cumbers develop the concept of convergence to articulate the spatialities of GJN, or the coming together of multiple flows of relations for particular actors, movements, and struggles at particular moments in time. "Convergence spaces act as associations of actors and resources...which are put into circulation in a continual effort to make political actions durable through time and mobile across space"(Routledge and Cumbers 2009, 89). As such, the concept of convergence space is not meant to articulate a fixed or bounded totality, but rather a conceptual framework in which to frame the specific characteristics of the socio-spatial relations continually made and re-made through the praxis of Global Justice Networks (Routledge and Cumbers 2009, Massey 2005).

Specifically Routledge and Cumbers develop convergence space as a way to analyze the multiple spatial strategies within Global Justice Network. They argue that convergence spaces specific spatial characteristics that facilitate the linking up of diverse movements over space and time. Convergence spaces are comprised of place-based but not necessarily place bound movements. This means that the particular localities of each movement in the network is entangled in the social movements derived from them, nonetheless they link up and in doing so direct their grievances towards different geographic scale that may or may not be locally bounded, such as the city, region, nation, or global. When multiple place-based movements meet in convergence spaces, for example, a World Social Forum, the face-to-face interactions play an essential role in the building and sustainability of Global Justice Networks.

Convergence spaces facilitate diverse movements and participants to generate sufficient common ground to generate a politics of mutual solidarity. This does not mean that the generation of a

unifying vision, however, precludes conflict. Convergence spaces are relational achievements composed of the virtual and material connections that implicate and are implicated by the meeting up of multiple and dynamic relations. Multiple spatialities ebb and flow in convergence space, causing convergence spaces to be generative and active in shaping both the space itself and the political identities of those who are interacting. Convergence spaces facilitate extensive political action by participant movements. Networks tend to be held as the master spatialities in this conception of convergence space. Inevitably, convergence spaces will be conducive of conflict, as spatial practices are uneven from the outset, which affects the dynamics and trajectories of the global justice networks and its associated social movements. Additionally, convergence spaces are sites of contested social and power relations; they are characterized by a range of different operational logics, facilitate spatially extensive political action, mediate and articulate varying geographical imaginaries that contingently come together to form mutual solidarity, and are sites of multiple spatialities. For example, Routledge and Cumbers (2009) develop the term *imagineer* to describe how certain individuals in the network are positioned to conduct more of the organizational work that must take place to re-create the network daily. These individuals tend to have more time, access to resources, and are more mobile than others. They tend to be more heavily involved in the daily organizational decisions and by default hold more power to shape the agenda of a particular day of action or social forum. As such, they tend to reproduce the uneven socio-spatial relations that are present in outside of the network in the sense that most *imagineers* involved in the Global Justice Networks studied by Routledge and Cumbers were from western countries, were college educated, and middle class (2009).

What the convergence space approach affords me is an analytical tool to better discern the spatial strategies carried out by different actors in the Occupy Wall Street movement. To illustrate the benefits of the conceptual advantages of convergence spaces in analyzing the spatiality of contentious politics one can reflect on the post-political literature produced so far. Much of the debate centers

around what constitutes a proper political moment in theory, but empirical analyses of the interactions between politics and space are sorely missing. The concept of convergence space serves to reveal the multiple spatialities and power-relations occurring in spaces of contentious politics. Furthermore it gives critical attention to analysis of the agency of contentious actors.

To summarize briefly, the theoretical and analytical framework discussed in this thesis provides a toolset to examine the spaces of contentious politics and evaluate their political significance. Broadly, this thesis examines the spatialities of Occupy Wall Street, specifically the networks, mobilities and motilities, and the significance of the occupied place (the park). In doing so, I argue that attention to the spatialities of Occupy Wall Street contributes important empirical evidence of “proper politics” (Ranciere 2001). By examining the spaces and spatialities of contentious politics I offer a more contextualized and nuanced understanding of how the post-political condition might be challenged.

3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is concerned with analyzing the spatialities of Occupy Wall Street. I presented the concept of convergence space (Routledge and Cumbers 2009) as an interpretive framework to help me understand the spatialities of Occupy. Specifically the methodological approach of this thesis is a single case study of Occupy Wall Street, drawing on interviews with participants as well as my participant observation of the organizational spaces of OWS during the week of action in May 2012 in Chicago, Illinois. I conclude this chapter with a discussion my epistemological approach and my individual location within the research, considering how my positionality can simultaneously limit and enhance my work.

3.1 Research Question

This research seeks to answer the question: How does the spatiality of politics, and more specifically the spatial strategies of Occupy Wall Street, matter to the legitimization and contestation of existing power relations? To answer this question of how space matters to the political I divide my question into three sub-questions that explore a particular element of the spatialities of Occupy. First I ask what are the networks of Occupy? Here I examine the conditions under which Occupy emerged, the use of social media as a primary networking tool, and the networks that formed within the tent-cities of Occupy. Second, I ask what are the mobilities and motilities of Occupy? I attend to the movement to and from the occupied park by examining ability and capacity for individuals to move and be present in the park. Relatedly, I examine what prevented sympathetic supporters from physically moving to the park and why some, who did, were motivated to leave. Finally, I ask why is place significant to Occupy? In this final section, I examine what the occupied park represented to participants and how it functioned in the broader movement.

3.2 Case Study: Occupy Wall Street

On September 17th 2011, several hundred people responded to a call placed in Adbusters months prior, and started the occupation of Zuccotti Park which came to be known as “Occupy Wall Street”. Organizers set up camp, and watched it balloon from hundreds to thousands over the following few weeks. As news of the occupation on Wall Street received attention from the press and spread virally on social media, similar occupations popped up all over the United States.

Occupy Wall Street was not, however, a spontaneous action made successful solely by social media buzz and plugged-in activists (Schneider 2012). Over the course of 2011 there were a series of national, and international, protest events that inspired organizers to call for the occupation of Wall Street. Some of the most notable influences upon initial Occupy Wall Street organizers were the Arab Spring, los indignados that occupied public squares across Spain, and the occupation of the Wisconsin capitol building in response to the stripping of collective bargaining rights for workers (Kerton 2012; Castañeda 2012).

Many of the occupations that took place during Occupy’s moment were planned through what were called General Assemblies or GA’s. The GA’s revolved around a consensus-based decision making model that focused on horizontality and widely distributed participation. New York General Assemblies took place leading up to the occupation on September 17th, and then took place twice a day during the occupation (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). In Atlanta General Assemblies began in mid-September, a week after OWS had launched, in attempts to plan an occupation that took place weeks later, on October 7th (field notes, 2012). Occupiers in some cities, like Chicago, were unable to claim space to occupy, but were able to use the wave of interest and broad activist turn out generated by the Occupy Moment to hold General Assemblies and plan actions against state and corporate targets (field notes, 2012).

One of the main points presented by OWS and seized by activists around the world, was the framing of economic and political problems as a contest between the 1% and the 99% (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). The 1% referred to those who comprise only 1% of the population but who hold a disproportionate share of the world's wealth and in turn, a vastly disproportionate share of political influence and power. The 99% were the rest, those whose income had not skyrocketed in the past decades, but rather who suffered through the economic collapse starting in 2008.

In this context of the 99% rising up against the 1%, marches, protests, and direct actions were planned and carried out against corporate targets in cities across the United States. This initial call of OWS brought people in droves to occupy public spaces. As occupiers worked to place inequality and corporate influence in the spotlight, it was essential to reproduce aspects of daily life in the occupy camps. The constant presence of activists and organizers required the creation of sleeping spaces, kitchens, libraries, medical quarters, media hubs, and general meeting space (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013).

As political will to tolerate occupiers' presence in public space declined and legal obstacles to eviction were overcome by law enforcement, the state began to intervene and harass occupiers more intensely than before. This caused a shift in attention from creation, provocation, and spreading of Occupy's models and mantras, to occupiers taking a more defensive position in order to hold on to the space they had claimed (Juris 2012). In October, police and other law enforcement began to evict occupiers from occupy camps around the country. The first major evictions in Oakland and Atlanta were coordinated between those cities' mayors and the Department of Homeland Security. In Oakland an Iraq War veteran was shot in the head with a tear gas canister that fractured his skull. By November, camps that had not yet been evicted were feeling the pressure, as occupiers learned of the eviction processes occurring in other camps.

With the eviction of Zuccotti Park in November of 2011, and other parks around the country, the need to use resources to hold on to space diminished, and occupiers shifted their attentions to other ways of disrupting the 1% (Crane and Ashutosh 2013). On December 6th 2011 activists in dozens of cities around the United States held a day of housing action, which served as the launch for Occupy Homes.⁵ Around the country foreclosure auctions were disrupted, homeowners facing foreclosure or eviction began occupying their homes with the help of activists from local occupy groups, and some families moved into vacant homes with the help of occupiers' actions (Gottesdiener 2013).

Despite the fragmentation and reduced visibility of Occupy in the wake of the evictions from the parks, the Occupy moment has endured for over two years at the time of this writing in the form of national days of action, for example the NONATO march detailed in this chapter, new organizations bearing the Occupy name, Occupy Homes, and disaster response groups, Occupy Sandy. In roughly two months in 2011, Occupy gained widespread media attention and gained considerable traction in the public domain, sparking contentious debates about the political landscape and invoking response from city, state, and national governing elites. This thesis details the ways in which the spatialities of Occupy functioned for one of the many moments in the movement.

3.2.1 Study Location

This thesis is informed by the protests organized against the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) summit held in downtown Chicago in May of 2012. NATO is an intergovernmental military treaty between 26 member countries in Europe, the United States and Canada, focused on collective defense (NATO 2013). In preparation for the high profile summit, the city of Chicago was

⁵ Officially formed in 2012, Occupy Homes (OH) is a national organization that confronts corporate influence in the commodification of housing and builds grassroots power around issues of housing and homeownership. Using tactics of public pressure and direct action, OH supports individuals across the country that are facing displacement, and works to place vacant and bank-owned properties in community control. OH supports two city-based sister organizations in Atlanta, Georgia and Minneapolis, Minnesota and works alongside established housing justice organizations and alliances including The Right To The City and Homes Defenders League (Occupy Our Homes 2014).

attentive on “highlighting [Chicago’s] economic vitality, its arts and architecture, and its can-do spirit” (Chicagonato 2012). As the city prepared for the two day summit, a group of actors known as Occupy Chicago, the Chicago subsidiary of OWS, prepared to counter the NATO summit and make public the military agenda of NATO and the amount of resources it appropriates towards such endeavors (Occupychicago 2012). Under the slogan, NONATO “No to NATO”, Occupy Chicago organized a counter summit, The People’s Summit, and a week of action which included marches, rallies, and workshops intended to protest NATO policies (Occupychicago 2012). The events at the NONATO protest were attended by members of various Occupy camps from cities across the United States. Table 1 describes the primary locations where I met and interacted with Occupy participants.

Table 1 Description of Field Work Locations

Location	Address	Purpose
Daley Plaza	Intersection of Washington and Dearborn, Chicago IL 60602	Location of general assemblies and organizational meetings by the Occupy Chicago Group since their formation in September 2011
Cermak Warehouse	500 W Cermak Floor 5 Chicago IL 60616	Location of the Peoples Summit where Occupy Chicago hosted a counter-summit of more than 40 workshops addressing issues such as capitalism, globalization, democracy, labor, healthcare, education, poverty, and racism.
Wellington United Church of Christ	615 W Wellington Ave Chicago IL 60657	Space donated to Occupy Chicago for the week of May 11-25 where traveling Occupiers were fed free meals, given space for planning and projects to support direct actions in addition to a general meeting space to coordinate housing and transportation

3.3 Research Approach

Human geographical research is concerned with investigating and analyzing individual and collective experiences of the social world in order to conceptualize and produce knowledge and understandings of the relations between society, space, people and places (Parr 2001). Qualitative research in geography builds knowledge of the processes shaping our social world through methodologies that consider the feelings, understandings, and knowledges of others’ experiences (Limb and Dwyer 2001). Qualitative methods, then, are particularly suited to exploring the quotidian experience of being in the world. However, researching aspects of everyday life is not an easy task and

no single method will produce an uncontested truth. In fact, qualitative research in geography rejects the assumption that there is a pre-existing world that can be uncovered, known, and measured objectively and instead sees the social world as dynamic, changing and always under construction through intersecting cultural, economic, social, and political processes (Limb and Dwyer 2001; Parr 2001). The social world is understood as made up of struggles through competing social constructions, meanings, values, representations, and performances. Furthermore, and to the point, “the emphasis when using qualitative methodologies is to understand lived experience and to reflect on and interpret the understandings and shared meanings of people’s everyday social worlds and realities (Limb and Dwyer 2001, 6). Characteristically, qualitative methodologies in the social sciences approach the production of knowledge through a relational construction of knowledge that reflects this particular understanding of social life. Additionally, contemporary qualitative methodologies in geography are heavily influenced from the insights of post structural feminist theory, particularly by a standpoint epistemology that all knowledge production is always partial, situated, and contingent (Haraway 2013). As such, the production of knowledge is always a political process that emerges through the particular location and relations between the researcher and the researched.

Recognizing the situatedness of knowledge production raises an important concern for me when deciding how to conduct qualitative research and my role as a researcher. The process of going research is dynamic and many qualitative researchers have identified the importance of critically reflecting on our role within it (Limb and Dwyer 2001; Hay 2010; O’Reilly 2012). The practice of research, like any other social interaction, is laden with power relations and a negotiation of interests (Limb and Dwyer 2001; Elwood and Martin 2000). Gillian Rose (1997) argues that we can never fully know how we are being perceived as researchers, yet it is clear that the issues of reflexivity and subjectivity are an important tension central to qualitative research. My most visible identity categories are that I am a young white woman. My race and gender are the most visceral categories that made me feel like an insider or an

outsider during time in the field. It is without a doubt that how I was perceived and how I interacted with others had an impact on who decided to participate in my interviews and how they expressed themselves in the interview. I tried to be approachable, wear comfortable and casual clothes, and maintain a relaxed tone. In one case I was accused of being a journalist with the intention of representing Occupy in a negative light. Although I did not feel it necessary to confirm or deny the accusations, I offered the individual my Human Subjects consent form, which had a description of my project and my contact information. My approach was to let the individual contact me if he or she was interested in participating. I was never contacted using this approach. In general while I tried to be as transparent as possible, I cannot know how I was perceived socially. Moreover, how I perceived each participant ultimately shaped how I spoke with them, the information I was able to gain, what I was willing to share about myself, and the like. Ultimately, these interactions speak to the dynamic interpersonal power relations at play and the unique insights this may produce.

3.3.1 *Justification*

As I recounted in my introduction, my first encounter with the Occupy movement occurred while I was walking by Woodruff Park in downtown Atlanta a few days after Occupy Atlanta established its camp there in October of 2011. The spectacle of tents and movement of people pulled me off my familiar path to check out what was going on. I was immediately struck by the cardboard posters with messages that seem so familiar now like: “we are the 99%” and “People before profits”. These slogans were inquisitive and immediately made me ask “What does that sign mean by ‘we are the 99%’?” After class, I walked by the park again, sort of milling about on the edges, too timid to engage anyone directly. Those who know me well know that for most of my life I have awkwardly walked the line between feeling relatively comfortable and also fairly anxious in social situations. I felt particularly anxious about participating in Occupy Atlanta, simultaneously too intimidated to engage in dialogue with anyone long enough for them to invite me to participate and yet immensely compelled to linger along the margins of

the park between my classes. Soon I found myself milling around campus, when I would have otherwise returned home, so I could walk past the park at night and attend the nightly General Assembly. I was fascinated by the drama that would unfold during this staging of participatory decision making. Night after night a sizeable crowd would gather in the park to give updates on various tasks that people had worked on during the day, propose ideas for direct actions, facilitate a discussion of any concerns someone would raise. Folks would engage me in polite conversation, hand me a flyer that I graciously would receive before running to catch the train. When at home, I would follow Occupy all over the country through Twitter, Facebook, Live-Stream, and news articles. I was obsessed with reading news articles, status updates, and watching live video of what was going on in occupied parks across the country.

Almost a month after Occupy Atlanta began to permanently occupy the park, Mayor Kasim Reed revoked his executive order he had previously established allowing the park to be occupied. Over 150 police officers, several helicopters, the SWAT team, and mounted police arrested 52 occupiers. I watched the events unfold through my computer screen. Admittedly, watching the eviction I could not help but feel an immense sense of guilt and disappointment that I had missed the opportunity to be involved with Occupy. I was angry at myself for being too shy and cautious to ask questions and engage the occupiers who had intrigued me so much. Yet, my curiosity continued into the spring semester when Occupy Atlanta reappeared in the public domain working alongside the Communications Workers of American Union staging a sit-in protesting the planned layoffs of hundreds of AT&T service workers. It was in front of the AT&T headquarters that I came across a flyer advertising a week long protest in May against the NATO conference. The flyer advertised that coalitions, organizations, and activists from Occupy camps around the country were invited to participate in a ten day direct action plan against the policies of NATO and the G8. After performing a quick web search to gather more information, I decided to devise a research plan that would involve conducting field work in Chicago.

Ultimately, my interests in following Occupy in news articles and social media often brought up themes of public space, democracy, capitalism. These themes often complemented my coursework in urban geography. A key criticism of Occupy from both left and right leaning news sources was the failure of Occupy to produce a list of demands. For example, the following quote from Harvard University professor, Dr. James Sadanius, is representative of concerns that Occupy's lack of focus was quickly becoming the movements Achilles heel.

[OWS] hasn't made a concrete list of demands - they're clear about how they're opposed to the political system and lobbyists and economic special interests but they haven't come up with a list of concrete demands...I think in some sense this is a danger because after people get tired of demonstrating and living in parks then nothing is concretely changed. It would be greater if they could find some leadership and come up with a concrete list of demands (Hartman 2011).

Encountering this concern in many of the editorials and commentary published on Occupy intrigued me because on the one hand it reflected the neoliberal and managerial desire to identify points of concern and then offer technical solutions that I had been learning about in my course work, and on the other hand it identified a pragmatic concern that working towards transformative social change would require much more than sustaining an occupation of public parks. I became interested in Occupy as the object of a research project to investigate this paradox. I wanted to address the commentator's concern by investigating what brought people to the spaces of occupy and how the motivations and experiences of occupiers might tell us something about challenging the status-quo and working towards transformative social change.

I chose to conduct my fieldwork in Chicago during the NONATO week of action because of the unparalleled access to occupiers from across the country. I did not have the funds or resources to travel from city to city nor did I have the connections to contact people involved in Occupy after the evictions resulted in the decreased visibility and accessibility of Occupy. Additionally, I did not want to limit my research to the particularities of an individual city; to increase the diversity of participants, it was important to me to talk to occupiers from all over the country. Thus, Chicago offered me a relatively

inexpensive and feasible study location to conduct my research. As such, a limitation of my study is that it cannot speak for everyone's experience of Occupy. Indeed all knowledge is partial and situated and my project offers a qualitative analysis of Occupy from a geographic lens.

To examine the relations between Occupy, space, and the political I use a qualitative approach. To describe these relations in this thesis I investigate questions of how the political is embedded in relations between the spatialities present in Occupy and the motivations, imaginaries, and experiences of occupiers. These aspects of the research may remain invisible in quantitative methods. In the next sections I describe my research methods, including interviews with a variety of actors and participant observation from Fall 2011 to Spring 2012.

3.4 Methods and Data

Ethnography refers to an established, in-depth qualitative methodology intent on understanding the social world through involvement in the everyday lived experiences of actual people; it is a methodology that focuses on the meaning of individuals' actions and explanations and recognizes the complexity of the social world (O'Reilly 2012). In geography, ethnography can be "used to understand how people create and experience their worlds through processes such as place-making, inhabiting social spaces, forging local and transnational networks, and representing and decolonizing spatial imaginaries" (Watson and Till 2010, 122). While my research does not reflect the sustained and in-depth engagement over an extended period of time that ethnography demands, it does contain elements of critical ethnographic methods, namely participant interviews and participant observations.

3.4.1 Interviews

I relied on interviews to explore participants' motivations and experiences in Occupy, which are relevant towards understanding the relations between space and the political. Interviews took the shape of one-on-one semi-structured interviews and opportunistic chats and questions that arose in the

moment (O'Reilly 2012). I used a semi-structured approach to interviewing in which I asked participants the same set of questions but allowed each participant to elaborate and explore topics that seemed important, even if unasked. This allowed the interview to become more of a conversation where participants could express what was most relevant to them while also allowing fixed responses across participants. Some participants stuck to the schedule while others told stories that expressed their own perspective of their experiences and opinions.

I had little information prior to entering the field on which participants to contact. I was in the field for a total of 14 days and as such was not able to establish the sort of long-term and trusting relationships most ethnographic methods call for. While this may appear to be a limitation, the very nature of Occupy was temporary, given that it was not a long-term organization with established insiders and outsiders (although some participants considered themselves more involved than others). Therefore, participants were selected at random by means of opportunistic sampling and convenience sampling. Opportunistic sampling simply “requires that the researcher be flexible and follow new leads during fieldwork, taking advantage of the unexpected” and convenience sampling “involves selecting cases or participants on the basis of access” (Hay 2010, 44). Both sampling methods are appropriate for this project precisely due to the random nature of my encounter with potential participants. Most participants were met passing by on the street, in a planning meeting, at a rally or march, or in the convergence spaces, as Routledge and Cumbers (2009) call them. I interviewed 15 participants, all identifying as a protestor in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Table 2 below exhibits the background of the 15 interviewees and the pseudonyms I have chosen to assign them for the purposes of this thesis.

Most of my interviews took place during the counter summit, because I found ample time to observe actors I perceived to be involved with the organizational activities of Occupy. I found participants to interview by introducing myself in a friendly and informal way and asked if they would be interested in participating in a research project on activists and their perceptions of different spaces in

Occupy. I would mention that the interview would take about thirty minutes and would be recorded using my tape recorder. I was always sure to ask the participant where they would feel most comfortable conducting the interview (Elwood and Martin 2000). For each interview the participant chose the interview location usually not far from the location in which I engaged them. This included, for example, interviews conducted in a stairway, a few yards down the sidewalk, or in the corner of the room where we met. Before beginning the interview we would read through the consent form together and addressed any questions or concerns the participant had. The interviews lasted anywhere between twenty minutes to an hour, and I held between one and three interviews a day. All interviews were completed in the period from May 7th to May 21st 2012.

Table 1 Interview Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Occupation	OWS Home Camp	Interview Location
Margaret	Female	30	White	Unemployed office worker	Transient	Cermak Warehouse
Hannah	Female	19	Caucasian	Nanny	Portland, OR	Cermak Warehouse
Jayne	Female	33	Caucasian	Adjunct Faculty member at Columbia College	Chicago, IL	Cermak Warehouse
Andrew	Male	20	Caucasian	Full time university student	Lexington, KY	Cermak Warehouse
Adam	Male	27	Caucasian	Construction Worker	Chicago, IL	Cermak Warehouse
Peter	Male	59	Caucasian	Unemployed labor union advocate	Chicago, IL	Cermak Warehouse
Patrick	Male	20	African American	Unemployed photographer	Chicago, IL	Cermak Warehouse
Tyler	Male	25	Hispanic	Unemployed office worker	St. Louis, MO	Wellington Ave Church
Scott	Male	27	Caucasian	Unemployed photographer	Boston, MA	Wellington Ave Church
Joseph	Male	26	Black American	Entrepreneur and former real estate agent	Transient	Wellington Ave Church
Gabriel	Male	21	Aztec/Spanish/Mayan	Unemployed activist	Los Angeles, CA	Wellington Ave Church
Lucas	Male	18	White/Hispanic	Unemployed activist	Boston, MA	Wellington Ave Church
Louise	Female	26	White	Social Worker	Seattle, WA	Daley Plaza
Susan	Female	28	White	Unemployed activist	Portland, OR	Daley Plaza
Michael	Male	19	Hispanic	Unemployed Chef	Transient	Daley Plaza

* all background information is self reported by participants

3.4.2 Participant Observational Data

In addition to interviews, I conducted extensive participant observation of the organizational spaces of Occupy listed in Table 1. Employing the method of participant observation was important to answering my research question because I wanted to know, observe, and participate in the spatialities of Occupy, establish relationships based on trust and mutual sharing of responsibilities and ultimately to offer my time and talents to contribute to feeding, housing, and transporting traveling Occupiers and other participants. In some cases I would passively observe the daily organizing in the designated convergence space located in the Ceramak Warehouse, noting how actors interacted with each other, settled disagreements, made decisions, engaged new folks, and the like. In other cases I would actively participate in the on-going activities like cooking meals in the kitchen and helping coordinate transportation to and from the various direct actions locations during the week. In addition to volunteering I offered various supplies that were listed in a 'needs' list like markers, snacks, and blankets, in exchange for being allowed to conduct my research. Participant observation allowed me significant access for observing the quotidian dynamics of the organizational spaces of Occupy. In order to record and structure my observations, I kept a journal, where I recorded quotes and moments that stood out in addition to summarizing the events of the day and jotting down any questions that arose. A key component of the observation data was paying close attention to decision making practices, particularly during the General Assembly and working groups, the distribution and negation of resources, and the ways in which conflicts among occupiers were addressed and handled. To facilitate my nightly journaling, I kept a small pocket notebook in which I kept a record of any counting I conducted in the field. In order to analyze specific spatial and social dynamics observed in the field I frequently counted observable characteristics of participants for example the ratio of women to men in a particular setting, ethnicity (if it can be known), relative age (documented in broad categories such as

teenagers and young adults, middle aged adults, and the elderly), how many people are served food, shelter, transportation, etc. Counting is used to give a context to the observational data (Hay 2010).

3.4.3 Analysis and Coding

As I have explained thus far, my research asks questions about the relationship between space and politics. Specifically, the empirical question that structures this thesis is what were the specific spatial practices and strategies utilized by participants both in the highly visible occupation of public parks and direct actions and less visible organizations spaces? After the interviews were completed I transcribed them. I then coded the data in order to organize the data into categories or themes (Cope 2008). It is important to make clear that I did not set out with pre-determined codes, rather they emerged through my analysis of the data collected. I did, however, pay close attention to certain themes, particularly how decisions were made, difference negotiated and conflicts resolved.

To structure my coding, I paid attention to four key themes: conditions, interactions among actors, strategies and tactics, and consequences was a fruitful system in which to develop my analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Cope 2008). For the theme *conditions*, I paid attention to the contexts for participation in occupy. For example, some participants expressed that they were unemployed or underemployed when explaining why they were motivated to participate in Occupy. Another participant who had traveled to several Occupy encampments found that Chicago was the most receptive and accommodating to her disability and thus she felt more compelled to continue working with Occupy Chicago but was not interested in working with Occupy Cincinnati. The second theme *interactions among actors* is where I coded my observational data and interview data according to how participants interacted with each other. I coded interactions in which conflict was observable, difference was negotiated, and I noted where the engagement took place, with whom, and how it occurred. The third theme *Strategies and Tactics* is how I coded the reasons participants gave for their participation in certain actions and activities. The last theme, *consequences* is used to organize the data in which a result

or outcome of an interaction or action was articulated by participants. From these broad themes, two large subthemes emerged. Again, my research question asks what are the spatial and political strategies utilized in the Occupy Wall Street movement? The first subtheme highlighted data in which the spatialities of Occupy were articulated or observed. The spatialities that emerged are *networking*, *mobility*, and *place*. Each time I encountered evidence of these spatialities I coded them accordingly. Finally, the last subtheme highlighted data in which the evidence of “proper politics” (Ranciere 2001). Here, I coded data that expressed evidence of the ways in which injustice was articulated and contested and equality was expressed and demonstrated by my participants in terms of the ways in which decisions were made and collective living arrangements were enacted and challenged.

In the following chapters I present the analytical discussion of these relations, how these relations constitute the spaces and spatialities of Occupy and how these relations in turn posed a challenge to the present political order. Chapter four focuses on these spatialities and Occupy as convergence space (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). Chapter five expands the discussion to include how the spatialities of occupy challenge the post-political condition and presented an opening for “proper politics” (Ranciere 2001) to emerge.

4 THE SPATIALITIES OF OCCUPY WALL STREET

“For the future to be open, space must be open too.”

Doreen Massey (2005)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the spatialities of Occupy’s social and political dynamics. Specifically, I ask what were the specific spatial practices and strategies utilized by participants both in the highly visible occupation of public parks and direct actions and less visible organizations spaces? The main aim of this chapter is to map out the three spatial strategies that were articulated through data collected during my field research: Networks, Mobility, and Place. In order to answer my research question, the discussion focuses on each spatiality of Occupy and addresses the following three sub-questions; What are the networks of Occupy? What are the mobilities of Occupy? And in what ways was place important to Occupy? This chapter offers empirical evidence of the relations between space and politics.

4.2 The Networks of Occupy

To analyze the networks of Occupy it is first important to determine who participated in Occupy. As discussed in Chapter 2, networks have been established as an important spatiality of social movements and contentious politics (Castells 2012; Juris 2008; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Featherstone 2003). Networks are important to contentious politics because they connect actors across space, facilitate communication, enable the exchange of information on tactics and strategies, and produce new knowledge (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). Furthermore, networks are important for engendering new alliances and interpersonal connections that affect the trajectories and capacity of contentious actions (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). In this section I explore the networks of Occupy. To do so, I first locate the actors that embody the network, I then discuss how social media was

the primary medium that connected actors across geographic space and shaped the strategies and tactics of Occupy. Finally, I discuss the networks that emerged from the occupied parks.

4.2.1 *Making the Network*

Occupy was first and foremost a network of diverse individuals. In the months between the published advertisement by Adbusters and the first night that Zuccotti Park was occupied, a group of loosely affiliated individuals answered the call from Adbusters and convened in a series of meetings to plan the action, figure out how to go about taking public space, and debate the best way to frame the action (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). Nathan Schneider, a freelance journalist who covers movements for peace and justice, was the only reporter allowed access to these pre-planning meetings. Participants in the pre-planning meetings were mostly young students, artists, organizers, and teachers (Schneider 2012). Particularly influential organizers included anthropologist David Graeber, filmmaker Marissa Homes who had recently returned from covering the uprisings in Egypt, several organizers who had been involved with sleep-in style protests in Wisconsin and New York earlier that year against the austerity budgets implemented by Governor Walker and Mayor Bloomberg respectively, and Georgia Sagri, a performance artist from Greece (Schneider 2012). Most of the individuals and groups involved in the origins of Occupy were heavily involved with activism in New York at the time and the idea to occupy Wall Street had been circulating around activist circles for some time (Castells 2012). The framework of the 99% was first published by David DeGraw on February 15, 2010 (Castells 2012, 101) and had inspired the A99 platform, a network of web-based activists posting information and analyses of the financialization of the US economy and the influence of money in politics (Castells 2012, 101). Earlier in the summer, plans to occupy Liberty Park during a Day of Rage were under way as well as plans to occupy Freedom Plaza in Washington D.C. (Schneider 2012). These existing activist networks and plans converged to form the New York City General Assembly that became the planning meetings leading up to September 17th (Schneider 2012).

The idea of planning a direct action in the form of a tent-city was inspired from uprisings a few months prior in Egypt and Spain (Delclós and Viejo 2012), autonomous movements in Latin America (Sitrin 2012), and the occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol earlier that year (Terkel 2011), all of which featured general assemblies, consensus-based decision making structures, and informal organizations to provide basic services and to a degree, social media, as a tool to facilitate the circulation of information and increase the visibility of the encampment (Homes 2012; Kerton 2012; Castañeda 2012). The influence of Egypt on the idea to occupy lower Manhattan is evident in the advertisement published by Adbusters that brought together a group of mostly strangers to plan the occupation. The advertisement read, “Are you ready for a Tahrir Moment? On Sept 17, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street” (Adbusters 2011). In Tahrir Square the deliberate action to occupy a public and urban square was a strategy to ensure a critical mass of protestors was present in the square in order to pressure Mubarak to resign, reclaim public resources, and provide a place where political conversations and the practice of democracy could be had (Hatem 2012). The inspiration and influence of the events that had taken place in Tahrir Square, including the participation of several individuals who had just returned from Egypt shaped how the September 17th occupation was planned.

It is important to make clear that while the September 17th direct action was carefully planned, what was to become Occupy was above all things a spontaneous moment of collective public protest. The organizers needed to mobilize more than just their interpersonal networks to participate in the action, especially if the occupation was to last for any significant amount of time. In line with what would soon become a major point of commentary about Occupy Wall Street, the pre-planning meetings did not establish a target or list of demands beyond the corruption of democracy by monetary influence. Schneider (2012) describes the deliberate debates that took place between organizers. “Fault lines were also already forming. There were those who liked the idea of coming up with one demand, and those

who didn't. Some wanted regulation, others revolution" (49). Alexa O'Brien, who was involved in planning a similar direct action under the name U.S. Day of Rage was especially influential in keeping the language intentionally vague, arguing that they needed to appeal to both the Left and the Right if they were going to be able to mobilize a large group to the park (Schneider 2012). Schneider goes on to say,

After a month and a half of meetings, the organizers were getting addicted to listening to one another and being heard. Rather than the Glass-Steagall Act of campaign-finance reform, they were talking about making assemblies like this one spread, around the city and around the country... the process of bottom-up direct democracy would be the occupation's chief message, not some call for legislation to be passed from on high (Schneider 2012, 54).

The focus on how to facilitate the spread of direct-democracy assemblies couched in the framework of an anti-democratic corporate-state was a strategy that the organizers hoped would compel individuals across the political spectrum to try in the U.S. what had been so widely televised and successful in Egypt and Spain. On September 17th the organizational activities of the New York General Assembly paid off when an estimated 1,000 people came to occupy Zuccotti Park (Zerbisias 2011).

As previously mentioned, the literature established that networks are important to contentious politics because they connect actors across space, facilitate communication and the sharing of strategies and tactics, and engender new alliances (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). The coalition of activists involved in the pre-planning organizing of the September 17th action were mostly composed of active young political activists, veterans of previous mass protests, and an assortment of politically minded artists, writers and students. This group of roughly sixty individuals (Schneider 2012) set the tone for what was to become Occupy Wall Street. Some of the organizers' strong ties to the pro-democracy movements of Egypt and Spain influenced how the occupation was to be structured and framed. Occupation of public space as a form of direct action implicitly required as many people as possible to participate in order to sustain the occupation and disrupt the day-to-day activities of Wall Street that were seen to symbolize the influence of money in politics. At the beginning stages, organizers focused

on building networks that would connect and mobilize large numbers of individuals to come an occupation of Wall Street through the vague and inclusive language of the 99%.

4.2.2 Embodied Networks

Over the six weeks of Occupy, hundreds of thousands participated across the nation as local encampments spread to every state. As Occupy gained traction the networks themselves morphed from a small network of already active activists to a large number of individuals, most of whom were less involved in activism and were strangers (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). This begs the question, who were the occupiers? There was a wide variation of participation in Occupy. Some people were heavily involved in the park; others came for the General Assemblies or demonstrations such as marches or rallies. Therefore, it is difficult to find reliable and comprehensive numbers on the demographics of Occupy participants. The most comprehensive report of the demographics of Occupy participants was conducted by sociologists at the City University of New York in May of 2012 (see Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013).⁶ They found that a large majority of participants were white, although there was a significant presence of minorities, particularly African Americans. Slightly more men participated than women, and a majority of participants were under thirty and college educated with significant student loan debt. Many participants were students, young professionals from the middle-class. Many participants reported being under or unemployed (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). A little over one-fifth of participants slept in the park but most participated in daily activities and three-quarters participated in street demonstrations (Castells 2012, 167). Other notable participants who were involved to various degrees included middle-aged union members, veterans, and the homeless (Castells 2012, 167).

⁶ Findings are from a survey of 729 participants who attended a large rally at Manhattan's Union square on May 1, 2012 and 25 in-depth interviews with full-time OWS organizers.

My data of the NONATO week of action in Chicago five months after the rise and fall of the tent-cities reflects a similar average participant as Milkman et al.'s (2013) report. The majority of my participants were male, college educated, unemployed and white (see Table 2). In addition to finding that most of Occupy participants were mostly young, college educated, and underemployed, Milkman et al. (2013) found respondents to have a diversity of political and non-political affiliations within Occupy. While generally Left-leaning, many participants indicated that they either do not identify with a political party, considered themselves Independent, or responded Other⁷ (See Table 3 in Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013, 16). In my fieldwork, seven participants indicated they had anarchist leanings and three participants indicated they had socialist leanings. The remaining six did not volunteer this information. Furthermore, many participants in Occupy had never participated or were minimally involved in activism before Occupy (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). Three of my participants indicated that they had been involved in activism before Occupy, two worked for activist-oriented organizations, and the remaining ten indicated that they were newly introduced to activism as a result of participating in Occupy (interviews, May 2012).

4.2.3 *Networking Tools*

During Occupy, the easiest way to interact or stay up-to-date with a given tent-city was through social media. When I first arrived in Chicago, I was unsure of where to find activists involved with Occupy Chicago. I immediately tweeted the @occupychicago handle on the social media platform Twitter, asking where I should go to help with planning and organizational tasks. Within minutes the Occupy Chicago Twitter handle responded providing me the address for the Wellington United Church of Christ; the designated space that would act as the central organizational space for the NONATO week of action. This was the location where I could visit in order to connect with organizers and plug-in to the work that

⁷ The category Other in this report was undefined. However, the authors note that 7% of participants volunteered this information and indicated that they were affiliated with the Green Party or politically identified as socialist or anarchist.

needed to be on any given day. Critical to analyzing the networks of Occupy is to understand how the networks functioned. Networks are crucial for facilitation communication, sharing tactics, strategies, knowledge, and creating new connections (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). In Occupy, the medium of the Internet, and social media in particular, were popular tools that facilitated the communicative infrastructure of the network. Social media is considered *new media* and is defined as “web-based channels for social networking, micro-blogging, and the sharing of user-generated content”(Juris 2012, 274). In a recent study of the uses of social media in Occupy, Neal Caren and Sarah Gabby (2011) identify the five most popular uses of social media in Occupy; to recruitment participants, to share news stories, resource requests, reaction, and re-posting (11). The use of Facebook and Twitter as a tactic was primarily used to mobilize users to come to the park is evidenced in the majority of posts ending with statements like “who will be there?” or “Be there! Occupy Together!” (Caren and Gabby 2011). Common requests for resources made through social media included basic necessities such as tarps, tents, sleeping bags, food, water, and electronic equipment. Indeed it was posts like these that provided me clues on what resources were most needed at The Wellington Church convergence space which I acquired and donated upon my first visit.

The use and impact of new media on Occupy has received wide attention (Castells 2012; Juris 2012; Caren and Gaby 2011; Gaby and Caren 2012; Costanza-Chock 2012). Social media was utilized as a networking technology during Occupy that offered users access and interaction to any given Occupy tent camp through the monitoring of real-time status updates on Facebook, live-tweeting on Twitter, live video streaming on platforms such as Live Stream, the viral circulation of videos on YouTube, and the circulation of pictures, news stories, and blogs (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). In Occupy, social media was primarily used as an organizing tool to increase support and participation (Caren and Gaby 2012). Caren and Gaby (2011) identified over 1500 unique Occupy related Facebook pages that were established between since September 17, 2011 representing The Wall Street Occupation (i.e. Occupy

Wall St), local occupations (i.e. Occupy Chicago), occupying specific institutions (Occupy the Media), and other pages that were created specifically to spread OWS nationally (Occupy Together) (328). Occupy-related Facebook pages were established in every state and usage was highly correlated with college towns and large metropolitan areas (Caren and Gaby, 2012). Recently, the Digital Scholarship Commons at Emory University has acquired the archive of more than 10 million tweets posted from September 2011 to January 2012 related to the Occupy Wall Street movement locating the most concentrated #OWS activity in New York, Oakland, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Chicago (DiSC 2012).⁸

Facebook and Twitter became important web-based applications that allowed occupiers to rapidly circulate information, coordinate movements across geographical space, and mobilize large numbers of individuals to converge in the physical location of the tent-city. Caren and Gabby (2011, 2) found that Occupy-related Facebook pages recruited more than 170,000 active users and more than 1.4 million 'likes' for OWS between September 17th and October 24th, 2011. Social media was used as a networking tool for increasing support for Occupy, especially related to interactions between police and protestors. For example, the YouTube videos of a New York police officer who had corralled and pepper sprayed two women on September 24th, 2011, and web content related to the 700 arrests that were made on the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1st, 2011, are cited with increasing the media attention OWS received by traditional media outlets (Castells 2012; Costanza-Chock 2012; Caren and Gaby 2011).

Social media has been hailed as a revolution for facilitating horizontal and democratic social movements (Castells 2012). While social media does facilitate communication and interaction in virtual spaces, the specific pages for each Occupy camp are managed by a small number of active participants. These committed organizers are common in networks of geographically diverse movements. For

⁸ The hashtag sign (#), especially on Twitter, became a vital tool in the Occupy network facilitating the connection among diverse actors across space. Hashtags are used to tag a particular word, or example #OWS that codes the content and organizes the attached data by hashtag. Hashtags increase the probability that a particular post is more likely to appear in searches to be shared quickly and widely. For an in-depth analysis of the uses of Twitter within the Occupy movement see Croeser and Highfield (2014).

example, Cumbers and Routledge (2009) term the most active participants in the Global Justice Network *imagineers* and suggest that they quite literally embody the network. *Imagineers* are essential nodes in the network that conduct much of the organizational work who prepare, organize, and participate in organizational activities, mobilize resources and facilitate information flows (Cumbers and Routledge 2009, 99). Typically, imagineers tend to have higher access to communicative technology, more time to engage in organizational activities, and as a result may wield more power and ability to direct actions (Cumbers and Routledge 2009, 100). Many of the photos, images, and texts that circulated through user-generated platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were posted by a handful of occupiers on behalf of the local encampments page. For example, my participant Patrick, an unemployed college student on summer break, kept a Twitter account with photos of the NONATO summit generating a live-feed of the summit activities. I stumbled across his personal account during the first few hours of the summit when the Occupy Chicago Twitter handle tweeted a picture he had taken. Scrolling through his feed it was clear that he was heavily involved with the organizational activities of Occupy Chicago and the People's Summit. Many of his posts throughout the day were re-posted by the @OccupyChi Twitter handle.

Later in the day I noticed that Patrick and I were in the same room and I asked him if he would be willing to participate in an interview for my project. He said he would be happy to be interviewed later in the day when he had more time. We talked for a moment before he left to set up a camera for an upcoming plenary session. After he left, I jotted down some quick notes about our conversation. Patrick had recently moved to Chicago shortly before Occupy began. Upon hearing about Occupy he was interested to become involved in Occupy Chicago. In the following quotation taken from our interview later in the day, Patrick articulates the limit of tangentially following Occupy through social media,

When I first came to Chicago, I didn't know anybody, I live on the other side of town where most people live so it was hard to be a part of it at first because it is one thing to look on Twitter and say this is what they are doing, this is where they are going - but if you are not within the group there is a lot of information you miss (Patrick, May 2012).

It was not until Patrick became involved with Occupy Chicago and physically met other occupiers that he was able to gain more access to the organizational work being conducted. After maintaining a physical presence in the group he began to form friendships and gained the trust of his comrades, developed leadership skills as a member of several working groups, and was soon taking on responsibilities as a communication coordinator. Part and parcel of what might have made him appear trustworthy to other occupiers was his fairly active Twitter account (field notes, May 2012). Patrick was a photographer by passion and tweeted pictures of Occupy frequently. Soon, other members started to follow him on Twitter and re-post his photos from various actions and activities. At the time of our conversation, his Twitter account had several hundred followers and many of his posts were Occupy related, re-tweeted by multiple users. Patrick is an example of an *imager* in Occupy. As a young tech-savvy unemployed college-graduate he had a considerable access and knowledge of the communicative infrastructure within Occupy. While anybody could post on the Facebook page or engage any Occupy related Twitter handle, only a handful of participants were given administrative access to manage and post on behalf of the account.

Before I met Patrick, I had interviewed Margaret, who had traveled around to several different Occupy tent-cities during the height of the occupation. When asked about her experience plugging-in to each encampment her response below first caught my attention about the politics of access to the organizational work,

I've had different experiences in different camps. When I came here, to Occupy Chicago I personally knew someone that was more involved in it, and I was able to get a little bit more access and learn more about what's going on. I've found that when I go to other Occupy [camps], when I'm not from the city at all, it's a little bit harder to figure out what's going on. I think that there is a definite issue with horizontalism. Sometimes trying to achieve a less top-down society, people try and deny the structures that they inevitably create. It's not necessarily a clout issue, it's just that people that have more time, more money, more access just end up by the nature of the beast doing more things. If you don't know who to go to, who[m] to contact, you're kind of left out. (Margaret, May 2012).

Margaret articulates the difficulty that someone relatively new with limited connections to folks in the group might have faced in gaining access to the organizational work during Occupy. Furthermore, my conversation with Patrick indicates that access and the ability to marshal resources and direct daily decisions within the tent city accrued to those who spent more time in the encampment, were highly involved in the organizational work, and had formed trusting relationships with other Occupiers. Therefore, the *imagineers* of Occupy were the participants with the ability to spend the most amount of time in the parks and they most likely were the participants who already had or who quickly developed the specialized skills to participate in the communicative infrastructure. They tended to have more access to social media technology (e.g., computer, internet, smart-phone), specialized knowledge of effective use of social media (e.g., when, where, and how to post), developed contacts with the media, and had the time to engage in these organizational activities (field noted, 2012). My observations in Chicago suggest that *imagineers* were typically under thirty, had some college education, and were tech savvy.

Moreover, Routledge and Cumbers (2009) ground the materiality of networks in what they term *convergence spaces*, a physical locale where actors in the network converge. This is obvious in their example of World Social Forums where actors from across the world travel to a particular place, for example, Brazil, to hold a summit in which non governmental organizations, advocacy campaigns and social movements converge to share strategies and tactics, develop solidarity across national borders, and develop an alternative vision of their collective future (Routledge and Cumbers 2009). In most Occupy camps across the country the convergence space during Occupy was in the occupied park. However because of a unique anti-loitering ordinance in Chicago that prevents the erection of semi-permanent structures in public parks, Occupy Chicago lacked a permanent encampment (CBS 2011). So long as occupiers and their belongings were mobile, Occupy Chicago was able to maintain a continual presence on the corner of Jackson and LaSalle in Chicago's financial district with their supplies (i.e.

posters, food, equipment) in carts on the sidewalk. In order to overcome this restriction, Occupy Chicago was able to lease the fifth floor of the Cermak Warehouse a few miles south of the financial district, about a 20 minute metro ride, in order to offer a more permanent space for congregation. In his interview Adam explained,

Occupy Chicago had a [unique] situation where [in order to rent the warehouse space] certain people [have to be] lease holders and therefore they have responsibility based on the old system of capitalism, where we have to acknowledge that there are these legal things in place and that there are rules we have to abide by. We couldn't all be on the lease and have our neck on the line. So these four [organizers] have their necks on the line [in that] they are trusted with the responsibility to have keys and codes, and that creates an authority (Adam, 2012)

As Adam explains, the ability to have a convergence space for Occupy Chicago in the warehouse required that a few individuals were imbued with the legal responsibilities of caring for that space and making sure the terms of the lease agreement were abided by. In this sense, the convergence space of Occupy Chicago was also highly regulated by the imagineers of Chicago, specifically the individuals whose names were on the lease and who were the gate keepers the building's accessibility. So while general assemblies still took place on the corner of LaSalle and Jackson, most of the organizational activities were conducted in the less visible spaces of the Cermak warehouse. As the main convergence space of Occupy Chicago, the Cermak warehouse was a space for working groups to conduct meetings and work on projects, and it was also the space where occupiers could prepare meals in the small kitchen as well as access medical supplies and other donated resources. As a condition of the lease, Adam informed me that people were not allowed to use the warehouse space as a residence, but were allowed to rest and recover from the day's activities (interview, May 2012). Similarly, Susan who was an imagineer in Occupy Portland discussed in her interview how Portland occupiers were able to acquire an office space located in the basement of a nearby church during the winter after they were evicted from the park that had similar restriction places on use and accessibility (interview, May 2012). She went on to explain how moving from the park to the office space disrupted the accessibility of Occupy Portland to sympathetic supporters who were not previously active in the occupation of the park a few weeks

prior precisely because it limited Occupy Portland's visibility to the broader public and unsettled access to resources that some folks had come to rely on. For example, although the office space provided a much needed convergence space after the loss of the park, Occupy Portland was not allowed to use the space to house occupiers and as such they were never able to regain the ability to provide shelter for the un-housed in the manner that the tent-city was able to do (Susan, interview May 2012).

During my fieldwork I attended The People's Summit, a counter summit to the official NATO summit largely organized by Occupy Chicago and the working group Coalition against NATO and the G8 (CANG8). The People's Summit was held in the Cermak Warehouse during May 20-21st, 2012 and organizers invited "community groups, labor unions, anti-racist organizers, Occupy activists, environmentalists, faith leaders, immigrant rights activists and anyone else committed to social justice to a grassroots, bottom-up forum of, by and for the 99 percent" (CANG8 2012). As a reflection of the networks of Occupy, the People's Summit held several panel discussions and a few dozen workshops (see appendix A). Notable speakers included Joe Losbaker, an anti-war and solidarity activist, Pat Hunt of Chicago area CODEPINK, Andy Thayer of Chicago Coalition Against War and Racism, Suraia Sahar of Afghans for Peace, Joe Lombardo and United National Anti-War Coalition, Reiner Braun of the European Peace Movement and journalist and political prisoner, Mumia Abu Jamal (field notes, May 2012). Attendance was in the hundreds and included two free meals each day (field notes, May 2012). In my field notes I observed about 10 individuals who Adam later confirmed in his interview to be the imagineers of Occupy Chicago, who were largely charged with keeping the summit running smoothly. They walked around with walkie talkies, whispered to one another during talks, frequently ran or walked hurriedly from floor to floor (field notes, May 2012). As a volunteer I was directed at various times by these 10 individuals to fold pamphlets, sweep the floor and set up tables. In this way the imagineers of Occupy Chicago held greater access and authority within the convergence space of Occupy Chicago in the sense that they had the power to delegate how the space was to function.

During the People's Summit the landlord of the warehouse was present and milling around the building. Adam pointed him out to me and informed me that he did not really like the Occupy Chicago group and would often threaten to kick them out if they did not abide by the strict usage rules laid out in the lease (interview, May 2012). The landlord was a large white man, bald and in his mid 50s. He was adamant that no one was allowed to go to the roof, the basement, and any other floor not designated for use by Occupy Chicago participants (field notes, May 2012). On two separate occasions I had an unpleasant run in with the landlord. The first occasion was during the People's Summit while I was waiting in the hallway for the workshop "What is a Capitalist Democracy 2012?" to start. My friend with whom I was staying with during my fieldwork was curious about the People's Summit and had attended the first few sessions with me. She had brought her dog, which we were told during registration for the summit was allowed and common. The welcome committee even stressed that they were willing to make accommodations for the dog so that we could attend the summit without having to worry about the dog, but we politely declined after seeing several other attendees walking about with their dogs. While waiting for the workshop to begin the landlord paced by us several times and eventually confronted us and told us the dog was not welcome and that we were to leave. Despite being told by the organizers of the summit that it was acceptable to have a dog in the building, my friend ended up having to miss the last half of the summit that day to take her dog home. Luckily as she is to have an apartment where she can keep her dog, many of the people in attendance who had dogs were likely to have nowhere to keep their dog while they attended the summit. Similarly another attendee, whom I did not have a chance to formally interview, was a transient person with a black Labrador. He told me that his dog was the only source of companionship he has and his source of protection while he is sleeping under bridges and in abandoned houses. He informed me that the landlord told him to leave as well, and, as a result, he was not able to attend the second day of the summit (field notes, May 2012).

Another encounter I witnessed with the landlord was outside of the warehouse during lunchtime. Standing outside the door of the warehouse was an older gentle man in well-worn clothing who was handing out handwritten flyers detailing his experience as a homeless person. While reading the flyer I noticed the landlord nearby. He confronted the man and loudly announced that the man had to leave the premise because the warehouse was only for registered summit attendees (field notes, May 2012). When I told one of the Occupy Chicago organizers what I observed she informed me that the landlord had no right to turn the man away, that he was welcome, but that she was not surprised to hear of the landlord engaging in unsolicited regulation of the space (field notes, May 2012). She went on to explain that this sort of encounter happened frequently with the landlord and that it made it difficult to utilize the space in the way they might have been able to if they were able to have a permanent encampment in a public park (field notes, May 2012). What these two stories illustrate to me is that the policing of the proper use of the convergence space by the private landlord accrued extra responsibilities to the imagineers, who had signed the lease, than to occupiers who had not. In this example, the grounding of the Occupy network in the convergence space of the warehouse, including who is allowed to be present and what sorts of activities are allowed to take place, was differently accessed. For OWS broadly the materiality of the networks including the convergence space of the tent cities, the imagineers who embody the network and the accessibility of the communicative infrastructural tools that are both physical objects (i.e. smart phone) and virtual objects (i.e. social media platforms) shaped the Occupy network in important ways, primarily geared towards generating the mass mobilization of people to visit the occupied park. For Occupy Chicago in particular the materiality of the network in the form of the privately rented convergence space shaped and in some cases limited the accessibility of Occupy Chicago to sympathetic supporters.

4.2.4 *Renewing Social Justice Networks*

For a total of six weeks Occupy encampments across the country were able to flourish before city leaders began to coordinate nation-wide evictions of the protest camps. As winter came and occupiers returned from whence they came, many were skeptical the momentum garnered by Occupy would be able to last (Crane and Ashutosh 2013). While Occupy-related activities fell out of the purview of the national news media, many working groups continued to meet regularly. In their comprehensive survey of Occupy participants, Milkman et al., (2013) interviewed several key organizers involved with Occupy Wall Street in New York post-eviction. Contrary to the little media attention they had received, committed occupiers continued to spawn new initiatives, support local unions, and launch new organizations. For example, in New York occupiers who were members of the “Occupy University” began to hold free weekly educational seminars in several major parks. In New York and Chicago neighborhoods specific general assemblies began to emerge, focusing exclusively on organizing around issues that are pertinent to the residents of the neighborhood such as Occupy Rogers Park in Chicago. In New York, Occupy Sunset Park supported a rent strike organized by a groups of immigrant tenants against unsafe living conditions (“Occupy Sunset Park” 2012). Occupy participants supported ongoing work of several unions and workers’ rights coalitions, including efforts to unionize restaurant workers by the Service Employees International Union and Jobs with Justice. The Strike Debt working group formed to organize around issues of student debt and the Rolling Jubilee was launched in the fall of 2012. Rolling Jubilee collected donations, using the money to purchase outstanding debt from collection agencies in order to forgive the debt (Gabbatt 2013). In the fall of 2012, super storm Sandy hit the northeastern seaboard and former occupiers formed Occupy Sandy as a self-organized effort to assist the victims and communities affected by the natural disaster (Feuer 2012). Additionally, occupiers in several major cities including New York, Atlanta, and Minneapolis formed the housing justice organizations Occupy Homes to fight foreclosure, evictions and displacement. Occupy Homes has

worked closely with existing housing justice organizations including Take Back the Land, City Life/ Vita Urbana, Home Defenders League, and The Right To The City Alliance (Gottesdiener 2013).

For a substantial number of active Occupy participants, becoming involved in the tent-city was their first experience participating in public demonstrations, direct actions, and activism (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). Among the newly politicized people, many were young, unemployed, saddled with significant debt and concerned about their future. Under the slogan of the 99%, individuals joined together to across the country to protest taxpayer bailouts of financial institutions, money in politics, and police brutality. Communicative networks, especially social media platforms were used primarily to compel users to physically visit the occupied park, marshal vital resources, become involved in organizational activities, and to have their voice heard in the General Assembly. After the protest camps were dismantled by authorities the Occupy platform continued to spawn a host of ancillary organizations and networks, support established social justice organizations, organize labor, and continue to push for progressive policies such as affordable health care, affordable education, living-wage jobs, and organize against pro-corporate anti-democratic policies and practices. Spatially, these networks span across the nation and allow activists to connect local actions and struggles to national economic and political trends. These are the networks of Occupy and they continue to outlast the short time period of the occupied park. In sum, I have argued that the networks of Occupy enabled large demonstrations and Occupy encampments to span across the nation in a short amount of time. *How* participants were able to come together in the occupied park is the focus of the next section.

4.3 The Mobilities and Motilities of Occupy

Mobility is a significant element of the spatialities of contentious politics precisely because disruptive collective action hinges on the ability of contentious actors to appear unexpectedly in certain places (Leither, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). In doing so, participants share an experience of being in motion together as they encounter and interact with one another within and between certain places.

The experience of transversing space together creates opportunities in which actors negotiate difference and foster alternative collective values and actions (Leither, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008). The sort of collective understandings, visions, strategies and tactics that emerge through the experience of collective action and movement through space in turn shapes the trajectories of contentious politics. In geography more broadly, the concept of mobility implies movement through space. However, as I noted above, and as Cresswell (2010) and others have argued, mobility is not just about movement *per se*, but also about the power relations that enable and constrain the movement of bodies, objects, and things. Thus the concept of *motility*, by which I mean the ability and capacity to move, signals the different circumstances in which persons, objects, and things move. In other words, if mobility is about movement or being in motion, then motility is about the specific social, political, and economic processes and relations that structure the degree to which one moves or does not move and the conditions under which movement occurs or does not occur. This is an important and underdeveloped component of mobility as an element of spatiality in contentious politics, because before a collective group of actors can move in concert and disrupt the state and institutional actors they seek to contest, they first must have the capacity, ability, and desire to organize themselves in material places where they can then begin to congregate and/or march through the streets.

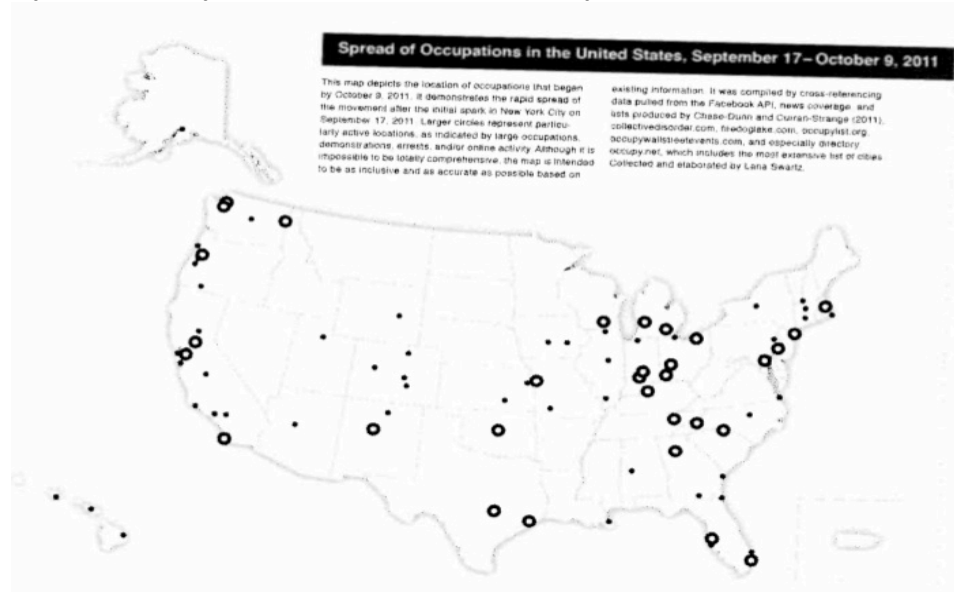
In the previous section, I described Occupy as a form of direct action that implicitly required as many people as possible to congregate in the park in order to sustain the occupation and disrupt the quotidian activities of Wall Street that were seen to symbolize the influence of money in politics. This suggests that the primary goal of Occupy participants both in the pre-planning stages and during the six-week encampment was focused on developing strategies to compel sympathetic supporters to encounter the tent-city and feel moved to relocate to the occupied park. The use of social media and the Internet was a primary networking strategy to increase the visibility of the tent-city and to mobilize individuals to be physically present in the occupied park space. Similarly, the mobilities of Occupy were

primarily centered around the movement of people, knowledge, and things to and from the occupied park. While Occupiers organized and participated in marches, rallies, and other conventional examples of contentious actors moving collectively through space, I do not focus on those specific examples of movement in this thesis. In this section, I draw out the power relations and the motility to actually be in the encampments in order to signal the conditions under which movement to and from the occupied park took place. Specifically, I highlight the conditions that enabled the unexpected proliferation of sister tent-cities across the nation. Then, I turn to a series of stories told by my participants detailing what compelled them to move and participate in Occupy, what prevented others from moving to the park and participating, and why some decided to leave and return home. Ultimately, I examine the motility, or capacity to actually move to and be present in the occupied park in which the more traditional aspects of the mobilities of contentious action, for example marches and rallies, were embedded and engendered.

4.3.1 *Unexpected and Contingent Movement*

As a form of direct action that sought to call attention to the growing influence of money in politics, mobilizing people to join the tent-city was paramount. Organizers hoped an occupation in New York would be successful, and they hoped it would spread to other large cities, but there was nothing guaranteeing it necessarily would (Schneider 2012). Therefore the speed in which Occupy tent cities spread across the nation was surprising. Take the following maps reproduced from Castells (2012). Figure 1 shows how quickly Occupy spread from September 17th to October 9th 2011 in which seventy-five new occupations were started across the United States of which thirty-one were particularly active (Castells 2012). Figure 2 depicts the geography of all known Occupy tent cities that were started in the United States. In short, Occupy spread across the country with impressive speed and by the end of the year every state had at least one occupy chapter declared on Facebook, over 600 in all (Castells 2012).

Figure 1 Spread of Occupations in the United States, September 17-October 9, 2011



Source: (Castells 2012, 164)

Figure 2 Geography of the Occupy Movement in the United States



Source: (Castells 2012, 165)

The unexpected appearance of Occupy encampments and the movement of participants who re-located to the occupied park from Washington D.C, to Atlanta, St. Louis, Chicago, Phoenix, Seattle, Honolulu and many places in between took many city officials by surprise and disrupted the dominant expectation

that the quotidian movement of people through the city as they move from their home to their job, for example, will not result in a collective aggregation of individuals who will contest the affairs of the city and the state.

4.3.1.1 *The Capacity to Move to the Occupied Park*

In order to draw out the motilities of Occupy, I first examine the material conditions that enabled sister camps to form across the nation in less than two months. Sister camps increased the capacity in which sympathetic supporters were able to encounter and move to the spaces of Occupy. However, these sister camps may have failed to emerge had the occupiers in Zuccotti Park been forced to leave within the first few days of the occupation. Scholars have located the unique zoning status of Zuccotti Park as an essential misnomer that allowed the occupation of Zuccotti Park to resist eviction from the city and police early on (Schrader and Wachsmuth 2012). Zuccotti Park, formally Liberty Plaza Park, was built as a public access park in order to satisfy a zoning variance allowing the developers of the adjacent skyscraper to exceed local height restriction (Schrader and Wachsmuth 2012, 243). Distinctly a public-private park, Zuccotti Park did not have overnight-use restrictions like other public parks nearby, which forced the city to pause on issues of jurisdiction allowing Occupy Wall Street to gain critical momentum and news coverage in the first few days of the occupation (Schrader and Wachsmuth 2012, 244). As it turns out, this public-private zoning ordinance was vital to the capacity and ability of OWS to gain momentum. Had the initial Occupy Wall Street organizers chosen to occupy a public park or private property, the city may have acted faster to evict protestors and diffuse the potential of OWS. As a facet of motility, the unique zoning ordinance enabled more individuals to move to Zuccotti Park because unlike single day marches, the encampment was still on going after news coverage of the camp aired.

As I suggested above, media visibility played a crucial role shaping the motility to join the encampment in Zuccotti Park and the inspiration to start sister encampments across the country. Some scholars have located the visibility of Occupy encampments with Occupy's growing online presence,

particularly as Occupy-related hashtags began to trend on social media platforms. From this Zuccotti Park began to receive wide attention from independent and traditional news sources (for analysis of social media usage in Occupy see Croeser and Highfield 2014; Gaby and Caren 2012; Costanza-Chock 2012; for an analysis of independent media and corporate media coverage of Occupy see DeLuca, Lawson, and Sun 2012). In particular, highly contentious events like the arrests of more than 700 protestors on the Brooklyn Bridge during the beginning weeks of the Zuccotti camp have been credited with fueling the velocity in which Occupy gained traction, garnering considerable traditional and social media attention (Caren and Gaby 2011; Costanza-Chock 2012). All of my participants were aware of Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park before they heard of a camp starting locally (field notes, May 2012). For example, Adam, a participant in Occupy Chicago, stated, “When I heard about the Occupy Wall Street thing I was like, Oh man, if I didn’t have the job I have, with this apartment, and this rent, and this friend I was taking care of, then I would totally jump on a box car and go” (Adam, 2012). Adam was sympathetic of OWS from the start but expressed doubt that he would have been able to travel to New York. Adam’s ability to transverse space and encounter the occupation in Zuccotti Park was constrained by his the resources required for him to do so. Adam needed to work in order to pay rent, buy groceries and other necessities required for him to reproduce himself and his labor power. It was not until he encountered Occupy Chicago in early October that he became actively involved with Occupy. Had Occupy remained solely in New York, Adam and many others may have not have become active participants because of the material realities that constrain their motility to re-locate to Zuccotti Park. In this sense, the visibility of Occupy Wall Street on traditional media outlets and social media platforms allowed distant supporters to gain access to events taking place in New York. Contentious interactions between the New York Police Department and occupiers gained the most media attention with many user-generated video content going viral (Caren and Gaby 2011; Costanza-Chock 2012). During the first few weeks of Occupy, this visibility was crucial towards inspiring distant spectators who could not

physically be present in Zuccotti Park to start an occupation in their home city. As a facet of motility, the sudden proliferation of occupied parks inspired by the growing media attention increased the capacity in which participants could create, encounter, and move to the physical places of Occupy.

The capacity of individuals to move through space and encounter Occupy greatly increased as the tent-city model quickly spanned the country. That is, Occupy Wall Street diffused from the local encampment in Zuccotti Park to over seventy-five encampments across the country in the first twenty-six days. As a component of motility, the speed through space and time in which the occupation of public parks spanned implies that sister encampments increased the capacity for many people across the country to physically move to the occupied park and actively participate. For example, when activists in most major cities declared the first General Assembly on Occupy in their respective city, they were typically well attended. Well over several hundred people were in attendance for the first General Assemblies marking the start of Occupy Boston (Juris 2012), Occupy Atlanta (Rankin 2011), and Occupy Chicago (quote from field notes, May 2012). This observation suggests that Occupy Wall Street had generated many sympathetic supporters, but their motility to move to Zuccotti Park was constrained until a local encampment was announced. An important factor that facilitated this motility can be attributed to the relative ease in which the tent-city could be reproduced in other places (Tewksbury 2013). For example, my research participant Louise became involved with Occupy Seattle after the first General Assembly was announced and found the ability to replicate Zuccotti Park to be relatively easy: “We really just needed some tents and a bunch of people--we figured out the rest the next day” (May, 2012). Further assisting the replication of Occupy camps was the movement of some of the initial organizers of particular city-based encampments who had spent time in Occupy Wall Street before moving home to start a local chapter (Juris 2012). For example, one of the lead facilitators for Occupy Atlanta’s first General Assembly had participated in the encampment of Zuccotti Park before moving home and connecting with individuals in Atlanta who were interested in organizing and planning the

occupation of Woodruff Park (field notes, 2012). The support generated via visibility of OWS in the media increased the likelihood that locals were eager to transverse the space of their city in order to meet in a specific location and start their own occupation. By early to mid-October Internet based clearing house websites like *howtooccupy.org* were used to share information and knowledge about how to start an Occupy tent-city, facilitate a general assembly, start a working group, interact with the press, and provide tactical information for outmaneuvering the police (Tewksbury 2013). Furthermore, social media was particularly helpful in sustaining the occupation by facilitation the movement of vital resources into the camps. Many occupations posted a list of needs on Twitter and Facebook requesting items such as food and utensils, blankets and tents, office supplies, medical supplies, computers and monetary donations to assist in bail and bonds for detained occupiers. The marshaling of resources from supportive monetary donors to the actual park space increased the capacity for those who were able to physically relocate to the park to sustain their presence and reproduce the occupied park space day after day. All of my participants agreed that in regard to their respective camps, occupiers distribute resources as equitably as they could based on the particular need of the individual and the best interest of the group (interviews, May 2012). As such, communicative networks through the Internet facilitated the movement and sharing of knowledge, skills, resources and information on how to start and sustain an occupation. This in turn increased the capacity and ability of OWS camps to appear suddenly and rapidly across space that further enabled less mobile supporters who were not located in New York to participate and move to the park. As we can see thus far networks aided the ability and capacities for resources and knowledge to transverse geographical space that aided the motility in which sisters camps emerged and sympathetic supporters were able to relocate to an occupied park. As participants became more motile the opportunity for new networks to form which further shaped the trajectories of OWS both during the occupation and after the evictions. As such, the spatialities of Occupy are multiple and co-implicated (Leither, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008).

So far I have located the motility to spread the idea, knowledge, and skills required for the actual camps to span across the nation. An important aspect of motility is the ability for persons to move or become mobile. Occupy camps could not have emerged all over the nation had people not been eager to participate and physically re-create what was happening in Zuccotti Park. Therefore, what were the particular motilities that enabled participants to physically move to the park once the barrier of proximity to Zuccotti Park was reduced? In the participant interviews employment status, or lack thereof, emerged as a motility that increased their capacity to become active in Occupy and their ability to move to the tent city. Nine of my participants were unemployed or working temporary part-time jobs when Occupy emerged (see Table 2). Eight of the nine unemployed participants were under the age of thirty and expressed that their lack of secure employment afforded them *time* to become involved in Occupy. Susan, twenty-eight, was having trouble finding full-time employment and had decided to move out of her apartment to live with her parents around the time Occupy Portland emerged. Because she was not employed and did not have to pay rent she was able to relocate to the park and become heavily involved with projects and various working groups. She camped almost every night with Occupy Portland until they were evicted from the park (cited in field notes, May 2012). Similarly, Margaret was recently laid-off from her job as an office worker and was actively looking for employment and housing before she became involved with Occupy Cincinnati. Homeless and unable to find steady employment Margaret described herself as economically disadvantaged explaining, “being on the fringe, money and support wise, effected what I was willing to do during Occupy, in terms of risking arrest, but in terms of becoming involved with Occupy I wasn’t risking a job or my ability to pay bills. I had no reason not to go to the park when I first heard about [Occupy Cincinnati]” (Margaret, May 2012). Here, Margaret suggests that persons who perceived their self to have little risk in terms of their daily requirements and responsibilities experienced a greater capacity to actively participate and ability to move to the park and sustain the continuous occupation. This is an important point because it partially explains the

demographics of active participants in Occupy who were mostly young middle class college students and those who were under or unemployed. In general, participants who had greater flexibility in their schedule experienced a greater capacity to move to the park and were more likely to become heavily involved in the organizational spaces of Occupy (interviews, May 2012).

Movement to the park is clearly dependent on a participant's material capacity to relocate to the occupied park. Interestingly, many of my participants brought to my attention that in addition to their material motility to move to the park they also experienced an affective motility, by which I mean the nonverbal expressions, affinities, dissatisfactions, and feelings that constrained and enabled movement. Paying close attention to the context in which interview participants talked about their experience in Occupy brought to the fore that participants felt Occupy had an attractive or magnetic quality that first provoked their participation and motivated their decision to physically be present in the occupied park. Participants used words that conveyed a sense of attraction to the tent-city such as a feeling, emotion, sentiment, or vibe that moved them to move to and place their bodies in the park.⁹ Rob repeatedly referred to Occupy as 'the Occupy sensation,' suggesting a feeling of excitement that curiosity and provoked the physical movement and presence of many politically inactive individuals to the occupied park space. When I asked Hannah why she started to camp with Occupy she stated, "I am really new to activism and I joined Occupy Portland without really knowing why I was there. I just got really inspired to seize the opportunity because there was so much energy behind [Occupy]" (May, 2014).

In their interviews, participants articulated that part and parcel of the energy of Occupy as a motive force compelling participation was a shared sense that something was wrong with the current state of political and economic affairs. In her interview, Susan articulated that Occupy Wall Street's slogan of the 99 percent acted as a broad signifier mobilizing people across the political spectrum to

⁹ As my introduction suggests this is a wonderment that I too experienced in my encounter with Occupy Atlanta.

amass in the occupied park, “[Occupy is] not a dogmatic movement. You don’t have to agree with a specific line of thought to agree that things are really messed up and that we need to change our world” (Susan, May 2012). Margaret told a story of her experience in Occupy D.C. where a woman joined Occupy after being laid off from her job earlier that day,

I was at a Stop the Machine rally and there was a woman who just walked up with her entire desk in a bag because she just had gotten laid off earlier that day and she had a non-compete agreement so her degree and all her years of experience she couldn’t use for the next two years. [In Occupy] I was able to meet people from all different types of walks of life, all different types of experiences who never before have been (sic) necessarily interested in the Left, [or] were a little bit intimidated of some of the words, especially words like anti-capitalism and I get an opportunity to meet people [who came to Occupy] because they were upset and did not like what was going on... and I think that is what is exciting about Occupy. It’s another time period in our history that I’m actually able to live through where people are coming together, concerned about something and asking why can’t we have something better? (May, 2012).

Not only does Margaret refer to Occupy as exciting, a phrase she uses five separate times in her interview, but she communicates that Occupy’s vague platform compelled individuals who felt upset, angry, and concerned about any number of issues to transverse space and join others who shared a similar sentiment. Louise described Occupy Seattle as having a force: “I think the lack of framing of Occupy as explicitly anti-capitalist, drew people [to move the tent city] because they were curious about the spectacle in the park”(Louise, May 2012). She makes a similar point to Margaret that more people were compelled to move to the tent city because of the visual display of discontent as the coming together of people feeling dissatisfied conveyed in the park, which struck a chord and compelled participation. While some participants became, in their own words, ‘more radical’ by participating in Occupy, the motive force initially compelling their wiliness to transverse space and to actually be present in the park was the sense of a shared feeling of indignation, excitement, and curiosity (interviews, May 2012).

Expanding on the theme that the motivation to participate in Occupy can be located internally is the following story in which Adam explains in detail how he became actively involved in Occupy Chicago. As mentioned earlier, Adam had heard about Occupy Wall Street in New York and had been keeping up

with what was occurring in Zuccotti Park in the news. Since he did not have a way to travel to New York he figured Occupy Wall Street would be another story he would follow in the news. He described himself as being well versed in critical literature and leftist political documentaries and was actively involved in alternative transit activism (interview, May 2012). While participating in Critical Mass, a monthly bicycle ride that protests automobile centric city-planning, Adam encountered Occupy Chicago,

So on that Critical Mass Ride on the last Friday of September we passed the Jackson and LaSalle intersection where Occupy Chicago was happening, and I remember thinking, 'aw man, I want to do this but I am doing Critical Mass today and now I have to work the next couple of days'. So, I went home, but I couldn't stop thinking about Occupy Chicago. So, a couple of days passed and it was October 4th when I first went down there, I stayed around for an hour or so and then went home. The next day I came back again and stayed for a few hours before going home. By my third visit I was just hooked. I didn't want to leave (Adam, May 2012).

Adam explained earlier in his interview that the general message of Occupy as a protest against income inequality and corporate influence on democracy had gained his support from the moment he heard about OWS on the radio. While a critique of Wall Street and contemporary politics deeply resonated with him, what had compelled him to immerse himself and become heavily involved in Occupy Chicago, to rearrange his life in order to be physically present every moment that he did not have to work at his job, was not a sense of rage against the state, mode of production, or any particular institutional power, but a deep sense of affection and affinity that he felt on his third encounter with Occupy Chicago.

And what really sold me [on Occupy Chicago] was this magical moment: On October 15th we tried again [to occupy Grant Park]. When we tried to take the park that night [the police] arrested four occupiers who had been in previous engagements with the police and needed to be bailed out. It was like \$400 or something. And we were all still relative strangers by that point. We all reached into our pockets instantly and pulled out \$20 or \$30 dollars, keep in mind we're not a tight knit community at this point, and within 30 seconds we had the money to bail those kids out. And it happened and they got bailed out right there and that to me was one of the most moving moments of my life. I knew at that moment that these people would have done that for me no questions asked. And that idea really struck me because my own family wouldn't do that for me. And here we are six months later, with many of those same kids and it feels so right and it gives me a sense of culture and community that I have never experienced before. It is very satisfying. And even though [Occupy] is hard work and there are so many shitty things to deal with and there are a lot of risks, it is so worth it for the opportunity and to be part of something historical to be a part of this network of people who want to change the world and make it better, to have the opportunity to create beautiful things, to have this sort of unique type of fun. This is the stuff people will write books about (Adam, May 2012).

I quote Adam at length because his story underscores what Marina Sitrin (2012) has termed *affective politics*, a term she uses to describe the emergent subjectivities shaped by affection and love in the autonomous movements taking place in Argentina. Rather than locating their grievance and placing their energy solely in contesting the power of state, autonomous movements in Argentina focus on creating new social relations and a sense of community based on affection and love as the preemptive political practice (Sitrin 2012). Affective politics stems from the scholarly body of work on affect theory, which theorizes the multiple states of bodily experience between human and nonhuman actors and is related but not analogous to representations of bodily experiences such as feelings and emotions (see Massumi 2002; Deleuze, Guattari 1987; Spinoza 2005). Adam's story is important because it begs scholars of contentious politics to consider other motives that compel actors to move and participate in concerted social action in addition to a grievance with the state or an institution. What this suggests, is that in Occupy, individuals were motivated to transverse space and place their bodies in the occupied park through a shared feeling of collective indignation. The motility to actually be present in the occupied park was logistically facilitated by the fact that many participants experienced some degree of flexibility in their commitments and responsibilities (i.e. most participants were young college students and many were un- or under-employed) and the multiple locations of tent-cities through out the country. The movement of individuals to place their bodies in the occupied park was primarily motivated by a curiosity and attraction to the opportunity to meet others who felt similarly in a specific place and in doing so share the experience of not only contesting state and corporate actors but also to share in the experience of collective social action.

4.3.2 Constrained Movement

The motility to be physically present in the occupied park increased as sister encampments appeared in most major cities across the nation and those with the ability to move to the park and

spend a significant amount of time in the park were well positioned to actually relocate to the park. However, many active participants who were able to move to the park were mostly mid-twenties and college educated, middle-class, whites (see Table 2). This is particularly troubling considering that this demographic does not adequately represent the majority of those who comprise the 99% in terms of percentage. In the United States, the median wealth of white households is 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Latino households. One in seven people are living in poverty. Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to live in poverty. Women earn on average less than men and female-headed households are more likely to be poor (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). These wealth gaps are a few of myriad economic realities that shape the motilities of many sympathetic supporters who experienced considerable constraints in their ability and capacity to be physically present in the park space. The realities of social-reproduction, the demands and responsibilities of one's job, family, and self-care, meant that many sympathetic supporters who may have joined the encampment often could not physically re-locate to the occupied park and attend the long general assemblies or unplanned marches. Furthermore immobile populations, for example the incarcerated, were physically unable to move at their will and participate in Occupy. In this section I draw out the barriers of movement to the park that influenced that in turn impacted the capacity of some occupiers to participate actively.

As explained above, one of the core principles of Occupy is to challenge the concentration of wealth and thus power to a small group of individuals. Part and parcel of this challenge was to enact largely inclusive and horizontal power structures in which decisions were made through a collective, consensus-based, decision making process in the general assemblies during the encampments. Implicit here is that the motility to be physically present also influenced the ability and capacity in which an occupier was able to participate. When I asked participants what they experienced as a barrier to participation, many stated that one had to be physically present to be able to participate in decision-making. Jayne explained that in her experience with Occupy she felt the distribution of power to be,

“largely horizontal. Whoever gets the power is whoever is present. Which fluctuates at any given time. So I’ve been in two meetings with the education committee in which there are five of us are making decisions. And then at the next meeting there may be twenty different people, so whoever is present gets that power” (interview, May 2012). This flux of participation in the decision making structures suggests that movement to and from the spaces of Occupy was dynamic and uneven. As such, those who could not frequently move to the park and be physically present were less likely to become influential in the organizations space of Occupy.

The inclusion of the working-class into the decision-making structures of OWS was a major challenge. The physical absence of the body in Occupy held consequences for the ability of a person to hold influence and power. While the General Assemblies were praised as examples of direct democracy in action, they were often inaccessible to those who could not spend hours each day performing this process. Jayne and Margaret both noted that the requirement to be present might explain why a lot of young students, individuals without families to provide for and unemployed persons had a large presence in Occupy. Margaret, who had traveled to several encampments during Occupy, noticed that people with more time, or those able to sustain a presence in the tent city, tended to gain more access and influence in the day-to-day decisions that took place within the tent-city (interview, May 2012). In this way, privilege and power to influence decisions accrued to those with the greatest ability to move to and stay in the camp while those who were excluded and unable to relocate to the park were also likely to be the most affected by the issues raised by OWS.

4.3.3 *Movement out of the Park: Why Some Choose to Leave*

Occupy was a direct action that politicized the unfairness in the distribution of wealth. Given this, the confrontation of folks along lines of socio-economic difference brought to the fore the reality of maldistribution in society. In their interviews, participation articulated that people who were economically disadvantaged, particularly those who were chronically homeless experienced significant

barrier to participation. Hannah explained that at the height of the occupation before the national evictions, the inclusion of the homeless population in Occupy Portland was becoming a large point of contention. As she explains below, the decision-making structures of Occupy, particularly the General Assembly (GA) became a difficult platform to navigate.

Occupy Portland's biggest struggle was classism. Our encampment was right next to the jail and a lot of local bars. We had no exclusion. There was no gate so it was completely open to the public and at one point there were 200 people staying at our encampment, which meant that some people had to sleep right next to homeless people. And for me, I am not classist, but there were a lot of people who were afraid of the homeless and that was a really big issue and it was like 'Oh they don't have a place to stay so their opinion is less valid than mine or because they don't use big words, they are not as smart as I am and they don't have a right to be a part of it'. It was really difficult because when someone from a different background who can't use these eloquent words comes to a general assembly and tries to follow this process they found it to be so inaccessible and so long and hard to understand. They come in and want to voice in the way that they see fit and there was no room for that, at least in Occupy Portland. They had to follow this structure that they didn't believe in that was imposed upon them, and that meant that they [were not included in] decisions based on how this process is going to develop (Hannah, May 2012).

Here Hannah discusses a central friction in Occupy, which was the relative ability of one to follow the rules of process designated for the General Assembly. While many homeless folks were already physically present in the park before the encampment, class-based tensions reduced the motility or the ability of the homeless to actually become empowered, included, and influential within the operational spaces of Occupy. Susan, who was also a part of Occupy Portland, noticed that in the beginning, the General Assembly felt dysfunctional because there were people who had trouble waiting for their turn to speak, staying on topic, and sticking to the agenda, "at the beginning—there were a lot of outbursts at the GA's because people were not accustomed to situations where they were going to be heard eventually and they were so afraid and accustomed to not getting heard that they would really act out" (interview, May 2012). As a result, the GA's were strictly facilitated, becoming, as Susan put it, painfully bureaucratic. The ability to be present in Occupy, to actually move to the tent-city, did not always equate to egalitarian social relations. In other words, the economic, political, and social processes and structures that render some people homeless and others housed meant that certain individuals were

more able to move and actually be present in the tent-city yet the very socio-cultural structures producing the motility of the homeless simultaneously reduced their capacity to actively participate and become empowered. And as Susan and Hannah suggest, this dynamic influenced various structures in Occupy, including the GA, which further contributed to a reduced capacity of Occupy to accommodate the specific barriers that prevented most of the working class from having the motility to be physically present in Occupy and the chronically homeless from have the motility to become empowered in Occupy.

To be clear, not every camp disempowered chronically homeless participants to the degree that my participants have explained above. Before I began my fieldwork in Chicago I had spoken to a few participants in Occupy Atlanta in front of the AT&T occupation during the spring of 2012. I had noticed a car pull up to one of the larger tents (out of about a dozen) that was erected along the sidewalk. A middle-aged woman hopped out of her car and dropped off several trays of food. An older rugged gentleman accepted the donation and placed the food in the tent. When I walked past the tent I could see that there were several coolers and tins of food. In contrast to the experiences of my participants in Portland, Occupy Atlanta had experienced relative success integrating the chronically homeless participants into the quotidian activities required to reproduce the camp. The man who had received the food donation was a regular Occupy Atlanta participant and had experienced chronic homelessness for quite some time. His main duty in Occupy Atlanta was to handle the logistics of the kitchen. He would prep food like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, accept donations, and distribute food as fairly as he could to all occupiers. While this task might appear banal, as a homeless person he was fairly skilled in making food stretch, and as such had become a vital organizer in the kitchen making sure that every one was fed (field notes, 2012). It quickly became clear that the particular skill set he possessed was essential to the daily reproduction of Occupy Atlanta and as such he was fairly motile within the camp in the sense that he had the capacity and ability to be present and empowered in the camp.

To further elaborate on the motilities of Occupy I will turn to some of the experiences that Margaret shared with me during her time spent in Occupy. Margaret was homeless during Occupy and, unlike Hannah and Susan's experience, found a lot of support for the homeless in both Occupy Cincinnati and Occupy D.C (interview, May 2012). She talked at length about the resources she was able to access through new friends she made in Occupy, including food, short-term shelter, and medical care. Furthermore, through her participation in Occupy, she was able to travel to several different Occupy encampments across the country through connections she made in each camp. Margaret was able to become more mobile and physically move to several different camps because she was both unemployed, un-housed, and had formed relationships of trust with other occupiers in the park space. Her ability to marshal these resources and move from camp to camp turned out to be a vital survival strategy for Margaret, especially because her lack of income and a hearing disability made her feel more at risk during confrontations with the police. Margaret is deaf in one ear and found it difficult to participate in the General Assembly, which functioned through unamplified speech. Margaret stated that she often felt disempowered and frustrated during the General Assembly and sometimes wanted to leave Occupy all together during moments where she felt excluded and ignored. But what motivated her to actually leave Occupy Cincinnati came when confrontations with protesters and police¹⁰ began to escalate (interview, May 2014). During her time with Occupy Cincinnati she began to feel less inclined to be physically present in the park especially when arrests became more frequent and funds to bail protestors out began to run out. Margaret explained that once the collective pool of money that had been set aside for bail was almost gone, she began to feel anxious and worried about what would happen to her should she be arrested (interview, May 2012). Margaret explained that it was unclear to what degree it was illegal to be in the park or when the city was going to decide to evict the group.

¹⁰ Although my participants do not locate confrontations with the police as a significant reason that may have compromised participation by some, many commentators of Occupy remind us that we cannot ignore the role of the police and state repression of the tent-city in dismantling Occupy, barricading the parks and forcing occupiers to return home (Schrader and Wachsmuth 2012).

Because she did not have enough money of her own or a family member nearby she could call for help, she began to feel unsafe and vulnerable in the park. Rather than continuing to stay in a space that made her feel anxious, Margaret decided to leave Cincinnati and travel to Occupy D.C. (interview, May 2012). Margaret remained largely optimistic about Occupy writ large, and so for her, the friction she experienced compelled her to travel to another city with an Occupy camp or established Occupy network. However for others, a negative experience prompted them to move out of the encampment and disassociate with Occupy all together.

In order to understand the mobilities of Occupy it is important to analyze barriers to participation, or what made it difficult for some individuals to move to the park and actively participate and what motivated others to move away from the camps or to stop actively participating. In my data, there were significant tensions particularly along lines of race, gender, ideology and class that either made some hesitant to participate and be present in the occupied park and ultimately caused others to disengage from actively participating in Occupy and remove their bodies from the park all together. Since Occupy, many critical commentaries have called attention to the urgent need for participants in Occupy to take seriously the issue of race and the greater inclusion of people of color in the movements' critique of economic injustices (for example see Sperry 2011; Sciullo 2012; Inwood and Bonds 2012; Barker 2012). Paradoxically, people of color and working class families make up a majority of the 99%, claimed to be represented by OWS, yet less than a third of active participants in Occupy were non-white (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013). Gabriel, who had been involved in Occupy Los Angeles, pointed out that the lack of diversity among the participants who were mostly young white middle class students made some people of color feel uncomfortable: "racial oppression is a big part of why people of color came to Occupy and a big reason why they left" (quote in field notes, May 2012). Further more, Milkman et al. (2013) quote several organizers in New York who were concerned that the most active participants, especially those who were active in the decision-making structures, were largely middle

class white males and criticize Occupy for reproducing the inequalities OWS sought to critique. The general lack of inclusion in Occupy was especially troubling considering that the slogan of the 99% is intended to raise questions about the inequalities produced by capitalism. In their short essay on OWS, Inwood and Bonds quote an organizer from Occupy DC deeply troubled by the proliferation of signs equating student debt with slavery held by white protestors and suggests that the blindness to racial inequalities present in Occupy excluded people of color from joining and physically moving to the park (2012, 518). Occupy's singular focus on class and capitalism (i.e. "We are the 99%) without an equally forthright integration of race and a focus on the ways in which race and class work together to produce capitalist relations (Crenshaw 1991; Piven and Cloward 1978) is an important facet of the motilities of Occupy insofar as the singular focus on economic inequality further marginalized individuals who feel inequalities produced through the racialized and sexualized discourses of capitalism more viscerally than others who comprise the 99%. In this way, the lack of nuance in the slogan of the 99% prompted the departure of some from Occupy or acted as a significant factor in which they chose not to move to a park to begin with.

While it is fair to say that Occupy did not begin as a protest intent to critique capitalism through the lens of race, the slogan of the 99% intended to mobilize as many sympathetic supporters as possible. Historically, communities of color, many of whom are working class, are overwhelmingly the victims of economic violence. Inwood and Bonds remind us that, "these economic geographies are produced through state violence that supports enslavement, colonization, and incarceration, and the racism enshrined in agendas like homesteading, housing police, urban renewal, and suburbanization that have devoured communities of color while facilitating capital accumulation for privileged white Americans" (2012, 517). For example, during the start of Occupy Atlanta, Congressman and Civil Rights leader John Lewis was denied the chance to speak at the General Assembly in front of a large crowd for failure to follow the process of the GA (Wheatley 2011). Occupy Atlanta released a statement later that day

explaining that they had no intentions of disrespecting the civil rights leader but that Representative Lewis was prevented from speaking because he failed to wait until it was his turn (Wheatley 2011). Even though Occupy Atlanta apologized for the incident and Representative Lewis released a similar statement saying he had no hurt feelings and understood the dynamics of protest space, the damage had been done. The event turned a lot of sympathetic supporters and would-be participants away from actively participating in Occupy and placing their bodies in the encampment (Wheatley 2011).

Occupy Atlanta was not the only encampment that experienced challenges incorporating more diverse members of the 99% (Speri 2011; Sen 2011; Maharawal 2011). Gabriel noted that indigenous folks were turned away from Occupy because of the nomenclature, 'occupy', in conjunction with our history of settler colonialism in the United States (field notes, 2012). Additionally, Margaret informed me that she knew women who left Occupy and the occupied park because they felt unsafe in the tent city at night (interview, May 2012). In this vein, scholars and activists have published critical accounts of their participation and locate specific instances in Occupy that made participants feel threatened and unwelcome along lines of race, nationality, gender, sexuality, class, and ability (see Speri 2011; Sen 2011; Talcott and Collins 2012, Barker 2012; Maharawal 2011). For example, Talcott and Collins (2012) discuss the occupied park as a masculinist space in which many women felt unsafe in at night. This is not to say that there was not a significant number of women, LGBTQ folks, people of color and poor and working class folks actively involved and physically present in Occupy. In fact there were successful actions taken to create a feminist general assembly in New York and Occupy the Hood emerged to highlight the experiences of people of color within the larger economic injustice framework of OWS (Talcott and Collins 2012). However, the lack of an intersectional critique of Occupy writ large and the reproduction of socio-economic inequalities along lines difference was a significant factor that made participation in Occupy less appealing to folks who saw the incorporation of these issues essential to their motivation to actively place the bodies in the occupied park space.

Lastly, in this section of my analysis of the motilities of Occupy that asks why people left Occupy, participant interviews locate clashes among political ideologies, specifically around the legitimacy of the state, as a reason why a few choose to disengage and move out of the tent city. As I have mentioned several times, one of the key tactics that mobilized a large number of individuals to the spaces of OWS was the slogan ‘We are the 99%’. Largely, the slogan was ambiguous enough to resonate with folks across the political spectrum and attracted those identifying as Anarchist, Socialist, Democrat, Libertarian, and in a few instances, members of the Tea Party (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013; Sciullo 2012) to place their bodies in the occupied park. As one might expect, not everyone one had the same analysis or take on what the root of economic inequality was, how to dismantle it, or even if economic inequality was the whole story. For instance, Louise, a young white organizer for a socialist organization, detailed the ideological conflicts that were present in Occupy Seattle,

[During] Occupy Seattle there [was] bread-baiting on [both sides of the political spectrum]. So people who are maybe more on the left, more of the anarchist type ideology, take issues with our view of socialism because there would still be a state, and it turns out to be a pretty aggressive conflict. Where for me, I think there are so few anti-capitalists in this world and therefore I think that we should be focusing our energies on uniting under the fact that we reject capitalism and can agree on that and that we should worry about our differences later...It may be that Occupy Seattle has more of an anarchist presence [than other encampments]... On the other side, people who are more liberal [e.g. democrats] think that [socialists and anarchists] are too radical, so we get it from both sides (Louise, May 2012).

Hannah and Susan had similar experiences as Louise. During Occupy Portland, Susan experienced a wave of backlash from activists that rejected the activities of some occupiers that sought to appeal to the state as a course of action, “there are members of Occupy Portland that are angry with my group for writing legislation that has actually been passed through the city council because they are so upset with the government that they just don’t want anything to do with it” (interview, May 2012). During my fieldwork the conflict between anti-state protestors and those are critical of the state but less inclined to

demolish it was most notable in the marches. Anarchists utilizing black bloc tactics¹¹ were most noticeable during the unplanned and unpermitted marches often in sighting an elevated sense of fear. These marches attracted less participation than the permitted march on May 21 and the Robin Hood Tax on Wall Street rally and march organized by the National Nurses Union. Guano (2014) discusses a similar dynamic during the protests of the G8 summit in Genoa Italy in 2001. The large presence of the Black Bloc and the threat of violent police repression made would-be sympathetic supporters of the protest, especially the residents of Genoa, fearful and hesitant to participate (Guano 2014). Within the quotidian spaces of Occupy during the height of the Occupation, intransigent differences among ideologies were difficult to navigate and prompted active participants to physically distance their bodies from the park. Again, Louise articulates her organization's decision to disengage with Occupy,

So occupy initially was very open, when it was bigger, we had a lot of good workshops on socialism, socialist feminism, we reached a lot of people, it was actually very good. But as the numbers dwindled, the people who were left were hostile to us and our message. So we are in solidarity with Occupy in many ways, we go to events and help where we can, but I am not nearly as involved as I was in the beginning because I was very heavily involved in the first four months and then it started to get out of whack (Louise, May 2012).

Louise made it clear to me that she respects the right of everyone to have an opinion about the role of the state and that she did not leave because such diversity existed. Rather, she chose to locate her energy elsewhere and stopped participating in Occupy because the divide between anarchists and the rest of the group became too antagonistic and unproductive for her (interview, 2012). Similarly, Susan commented that splits along ideological lines made it difficult to pass proposals in the General Assembly and contributed to significant fractures among participants in the encampment and created a sense of disorder and dysfunction that she felt limited the ability of Occupy to attract new participants to move to the park (interview, May 2012).

¹¹ Black bloc is a tactic in which a group of individuals wear all black in order to conceal their individual identity (field notes, 2012). For an analysis of black bloc tactics and their use are the 2001 protests against the Group of Eight in Genoa, Italy, see Guano 2014.

As a form of direct action, the occupation of public park space implies the movement of persons to the park space in order to sustain a continuous presence. In this section I have examined this movement in terms of the ability, capacity, and motivation to move both to and from the park. As the concept of motility implies, not all who are inclined are evenly positioned to move. One's physical location and socio-economic position were significant factors that shaped the ability to move to the park. Although the emergence of sister camps across the country increased the proximity participants had to an occupied park, the requirement that occupiers had to be physically present in order to participate in the decision making structures of Occupy significantly affected the direction and organization of Occupy camps. While tensions along lines of difference drove some participants to leave the spaces of Occupy, many were compelled to relocate and live in the occupied park because of the affective connections formed through their physical experience in the park. Moreover, the ability to marshal resources to the occupied park space, primarily through social media platforms proved vital towards sustaining an occupation. As such the motility to come together in the park and continue a sustained presence is an important element of the spatialities of Occupy and part of why the place of the occupied park took on such great significance.

4.4 The significance of the Occupied Park

In a recent publication titled *The Politics of the Encounter, Urban Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization*, geographer Andy Merrifield argues that the city is a critical zone in which social protest unfolds and urges scholars to pay attention to where these crowds form and from where they draw their energy, in what kind of spaces they occur, and what kind of new spaces they produce (2013). Place has been identified as an important spatiality of contentious politics because certain places are charged with symbolic power and offer the opportunity for actors to contests and resignify the meaning of places (Leitner et al., 2008). Additionally, coming together of contentious actors in place is important to contentious politics because these moments of public encounter offer an opportunity to create a

space for the production of alternative values, knowledge, and communities. In this section I examine why the spatiality of place was significant in Occupy.

4.4.1 Encounters take Place

The use of the Internet in Occupy has been a popular site of analysis for scholars interested in the movement (Castells 2012; Juris 2012; Croeser and Highfield 2014; Caren and Gaby 2011; DeLuca, Lawson, and Sun 2012; Costanza-Chock 2012). Some have even gone as far as to announce that Occupy was born on the Internet (Castells 2012). As I have previously discussed, the Internet and particularly the use of social media was indeed an important networking tool and component of the spatialities of Occupy which facilitated the unexpected appearance of sister camps and interacted with the mobility and motility of participants and resources to be present in the park. While the constitution of a virtual space of Occupy-related activities on the Internet is a potentially compelling site of analysis, in this section I argue that physical space, by which I mean the places where Occupy tent-cities emerged, were highly significant to OWS. Anthropologist Jeffrey Juris (2012) argues that Occupy operated through a cultural *logic of aggregation*. According to Juris (2012), a *logic of aggregation* describes the strategies and tactics utilized by a social actors that are primarily aimed at generating viral flows of information leading to the accumulation of a large mass of individuals in a particular locale. Unlike the use of email, listservs and discussion boards in the Alter-Globalization movements, which facilitated lengthy and complicated communication between actors in distant locations, Occupy predominately utilized social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter to mobilize individuals to congregate in the occupied park space. Thus, the occupation of public space was more than a tactic during Occupy: it was the definitive spatial strategy produced by and productive of the networks, mobilities, and motilities of occupiers. In this section I argue that the tent-city was significant to Occupy because it facilitated the face-to-face interaction of strangers to have important conversations and attracted wide coverage from the news media. In doing so, the *place* of Occupy centered public discourse and attention on income inequality

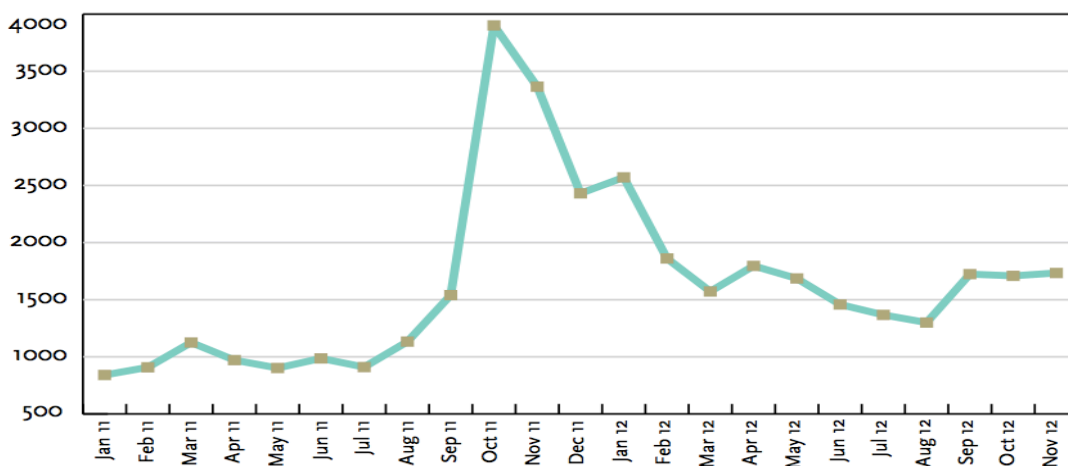
and became the site in which unequal power relations in our contemporary democracy was not only contested but also shown to be one of many ways in which our relations to one another can be organized. In other words, through the act of occupying public parks, Occupy named the commodification of democracy as an injustice and demonstrated more equal power relations specifically through participatory and deliberative democratic decision-making and the equitable distribution of resources.

As mentioned previously, the dominant networking strategy in Occupy was to inspire and mobilize a large mass of individuals to participate in occupying public park space. Tactically, the more bodies that were in the park meant that the occupation as a form of direct action would be more effective in calling attention to income inequality and making visible the contempt, anger, and feelings of powerlessness held by many Americans towards the influence of moneyed interests in politics. In late October and early November most tent cities were facing eviction by their mayors and the focus of occupiers and the media shifted to the fierce defense of the tent cities and the right to stay in the parks. Many participants, spectators and news reports saw the evictions as the end of Occupy. After all, an occupation is defined by the action of controlling territory. Surprisingly, the action of controlling the territory of public parks was not a significant explanation for why place was significant to Occupy. In their interviews, participants articulated that the continual presence of Occupy in the form of a tent-city was vital to Occupy because it brought together a larger number of individuals facilitating important conversations, community-building, and the space in which to articulate and practice alternative values such as participatory democracy (interviews and field notes, May 2012). It is in this sense that the significance of place underscores how Massey (2005) and Pierce, Martin, and Murphy (2011) have understood place as relational, meaning that places are made and re-made through dynamic sets of “social, political and material processes by which people iteratively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live” (Pierce, Martin, and Murphy 2011, 54). A relational sense of place

suggests that the spatial relations produced in the in park through the action of collective occupation created an opening for true politics to emerge.

Unlike many political events and actions that are over by the time a story is aired on the news, the tactic of the occupation and the continual presence Occupy was able to maintain in the park attracted widespread support because it could be encountered. In their interviews, participants were largely in agreement that the tent-cities, and the media attention they had received, had been successful in expanding the breadth of political discussion. Reflecting on his opinion of the impact of Occupy Scott stated, “[Occupy has] given us a platform [to discuss] all these issues [that] are talked about all over the country, but it’s for the most part a private conversation. So, Occupy has made these conversations a public conversation. [Occupy] is out in the open. It is literally in the street [and] cannot be ignored” (interview, May 2012). Indeed, Occupy has been credited with shifting the focus of mainstream political debate to income inequality. For example, Figure 3 below illustrates a 300 percent increase in news mentions of income inequality in October during the height of Occupy.

Figure 3 News Mentions of “Income Inequality” from January 2011 – November 2011



Source: LexisNexis Academic Database, All News (English).

Source: (Milkman, Luce, and Lewis 2013, 38, Figure 6)

Despite criticism that Occupy did not accomplish anything, several participants located the influence of Occupy and the six-week occupation of public parks across the nation on policy. Referring

to the well attended rally and march organized by the National Nurses Union supporting the Robin Hood Tax¹² campaign occurring earlier that day in Chicago, Louise stated,

I must say, that Occupy overall has been very beneficial to raising consciousness to the problems that are present, and even though it may not be explicitly anti-capitalist or it may differ from city to city, we are actually talking about taxing rich people, we are actually talking about taxing corporations, we are making that conversation okay and people are thinking differently about politics, the language is changing (Louise, May 2012).

Indeed the language is changing; The American Dialectic Society named “occupy” the word of 2011 (ADS 2012). Additionally, Occupy gained support and endorsement from several politicians, including former Vice President Al Gore and candidates in the 2012 presidential campaign repeatedly referenced the 99% and the 1% (H. Miller 2011). In his interview, Adam argued that Occupy has shaped public opinion regarding the role and influence of financial and corporate interests in politics and that by doing so, Occupy has been influential in policy debates as well,

[Occupy Chicago] had a momentous victory yesterday. Dick Durbin, a guy that I voted for, is actually trying to overturn Citizens United. Think about that - a person from the Democratic party, a party which [I] don't think gets anything done, is actually doing something that I wish they would do! Who knows how it will turn out in the courts, I cannot wait to watch it unfold. [In] my mind there is no doubt that Durbin's criticism of Citizens United has something to do with Occupy putting that issue out into conversation and pressuring officials to do something about it (interview, May 2012).

As Adam suggests, the sustained presence and ability to maintain an occupation of space intent to politicize the inequitable distribution of wealth and power influenced wider public policy debates and discourses. This speaks to the significance of place insofar as the occupation of public space enabled participants to come together as a public and call into question the privatization of the public sphere. In other words, Occupy addressed a wrong (i.e. wealth inequality and the commodification of democracy)

¹² The National Nurses Union organized several events highlighting the Robin Hood Tax campaign which is associated with the transnational financial transaction tax (FTT) campaign designed to pressure political leaders to adopt a one percent tax on all major trading by banks and financial institutions as a way to raise revenue for the expansion of government-subsidized social services. Although there have been attempts to tax Wall Street transactions in the past, most bills do not make it out of committee. During late 2011 and early 2012 legislation designed to implement the tax gained more support than similar bills in the past had (National Nurses United 2012).

and by doing so has influenced national policy debates and shifted public opinion towards recognizing the injustices produced by the confluence of wealth and political power. Indeed Occupy and the slogan of the 99% has become influential in politics and culture enabling conversations centered on the distribution of wealth and power. Along this line, the conversations, face-to-face interactions and social relations that took place in the occupied park between participants were a significant experience for all of my participants (interviews, May 2012).

Geographer Andy Merrifield (2013) reminds us that public spaces are not public simply because they are labeled as such, spaces become public when “they enable public discourses and public conversations to talk to each other, to meet each other, quite literally. They are public not because they are simply there, in the open, in a city center, but because these spaces are made public by people encountering one another in them” (Merrifield 2013, 66). Many of my participants found the occupied park to be a significant strategy that enabled complete strangers to encounter one another, have face-to-face conversations and collectively figure out how to live together within the park. In doing so, the occupation re-signified what it means to claim a space as public. During my fieldwork, I expected that the primary motivation to travel to Occupy and participate in the NONATO week of action was to protest the power and influence of NATO. When I asked participants why they had come to Chicago, the majority of participants stated that they come for the opportunity to continue having conversations and discussions with other Occupy supporters and to learn from and network with others. To my surprise, protesting NATO was not the prime focus for many of the activists I met and activities I attended in Chicago. For example, of the forty or so workshops held during the People’s Summit, less than half a dozen were exclusively focused on NATO (see Appendix A). When NATO was the topic of discussion, it was commonly used to segue and to highlight other issues, such as education reform and universal health care (field notes, May 2012). Speaking about his general experience in Occupy, Rob expressed

that the language and framework of economic inequality gave him a way to have productive and approachable conversations,

I have many qualms with the movement, or whatever you want to call it, but I think that the Occupy sensation has given me an avenue to talk to uninvolved or politically active people. For example having the 99% or 1% meme as an entry point into a conversation establishes [an] anti-elitist or anti-authoritarian viewpoints. [Occupy] has allowed for that economic justice framework to be popularized, where previously [I] would [struggle finding] an entry point into [conversations about] the anti-war movement [or] pro-public option health care for example. [Occupy gave me a way] to have these kinds of conversations (interview, May 2012).

For Margaret, participating in Occupy and having discussions with strangers gave her the confidence to engage her family in similar conversations. She articulated having difficulty in the past engaging her family in conversations because they do not hold similar political views,

For me [participating in Occupy has] been more of an embodying moment for my family and myself. I've always been the tree hugging liberal in my family and [Occupy helped me feel] more comfortable politically in my personal life...I was always scared about how [my family] would react [because most of my] family is in the military so [politics] was just never something I could talk about with them. [Because I participated in Occupy] I am able to counter what they hear on the news [which] has allowed me to have more of a political conversation with my family and [I am] seeing sides of them that I never [could see before] because I always saw the right-wing republican side. I think that's what is really exciting about Occupy. What I have found through participating in Occupy is that [some] people have been conditioned to accept things as they are and won't admit that there is a problem and [so Occupy has given me] a great starting point [to enter] these kinds of conversations (interview, May 2012).

In addition to facilitating political conversations with people who were not actively involved with Occupy, several participants felt that the encampments of Occupy became powerful spaces for countering critics, especially right-wing news pundits, bloggers, and politicians who sought to delegitimize OWS protestors by relying on narratives of individualism and self-reliance in order to stereotype occupiers as irresponsible free-loaders who are part of a dangerous anti-American mob and who should blame themselves not Wall Street for their situation (DeLuca, Lawson, and Sun 2012). In their interviews, participants saw the tent city as the site in which these narratives could be challenged. The predominant strategy in which participants sought to challenge the charge of extremism was through conveying a sense of normalcy and inspiring people to encounter Occupy and have face-to-face

conversations in the occupied park space. For example Tyler, Patrick, and Scott each spoke at length about their use of social media to circulate images and stories showcasing commonalities among participants and spectators that they hoped would inspire more people to participate.

I want to be on this side of the occupation to give an in-depth perspective of what Occupy really is and what it really means to our community. I want to show people that these are normal everyday people that (sic) you run into; however, they have concerns and wonders and ideas about how our government should be ran (sic), how our money should be spent and [how] people should interact with each other. I want to show people that people are talking about this stuff and that someone here probably shares similar concerns as them. They should come here and we should have a conversation (Patrick, May 2012).

As such, the act of occupying the park attracted media attention that influenced the content occupiers circulated through their network adjusting the strategies they employed to compel more sympathetic supporters to encounter and move to the occupied park. Susan saw the tent-city as an opportunity to challenge mainstream media as well. She found that when curious but skeptical people came to the encampment there was an opportunity to engage in conversations and share information about herself that challenged media narratives that served to stigmatize occupiers as lazy, uneducated, and extremist (DeLuca, Lawson, and Sun 2012).

Again awareness is so big for me, I'm into putting that human face on it. I am a real human being with an education that I kind of reject. I got a Bachelors of Science in Business and I feel that I can share my perspective [with others because of my] fairly common major. This allowed me to have conversations with people that had an inclination to not take Occupy seriously. I feel like I was able to move their perspective in a good direction (interview, May 2012).

While I recognize that not everyone who participated in Occupy might have felt a similar optimism about the conversations that took place in the occupied park space and not all who entered these spaces were catered to in the way that Susan describes, conversations and discussions that took place within the tent cities were important to my participants because their experiences demonstrated to them that it is possible for them to relate to one other in unexpected and productive ways. Participants were eager to rekindle that space five months later in Chicago, which was perhaps the largest single convergence of former occupiers since the demise of the tent cities. It is telling that rather than the

motive to travel to Chicago in order to protest NATO, the week of action presented the occasion to connect with other occupiers from across the country and continue the conversations, friendships, and networks of Occupy. Furthermore, I encountered several groups of activists who had turned down the opportunity to be housed in Chicago in favor of camping together on the shore of Lake Michigan. The experience of the encounter, particularly the conversations and face-to-face interactions that participants experienced in Occupy were powerful occurrences that continued to inspire former Occupiers to re-create, in small ways, the encampments when possible. The occupied tent-city was important to Occupy because participants encountered one another and participated in public discourse, creating a public space. These encounters and the new social relations they produced continue to emerge after the nation wide evictions. This suggests that space, when understood relationally, is always open for true politics to emerge insofar as places are made and re-made through various sets of social, political, and material processes (Pierce, Martin, and Murphy 2011). It is the quality or dynamics of those processes and spatial relations that constitute a space or spaces as “properly political” insofar as the degree to which a wrong is addressed and equality is demonstrated (Dikec 2005; Rancière, Bowlby, and Panagia 2001). Said another way, the park space was not significant to Occupy because of some inherent public quality that can only be found in places labeled ‘public’, rather the park space was significant to Occupy because it brought together a larger number of individuals facilitating important conversations, community-building, and the space in which to articulate and practice alternative values such as participatory and deliberative democracy. These social relations are not always found in spaces that are *labeled* public, but are produced in spaces *made* public by people encountering each other (Merrifield 2013). Thus the particular social relations that came to make the occupied park public and properly political during the encampments continues to emerge after the evictions in unexpected places.

4.4.2 *Politics of Care*

Through the act of learning how to live collectively with mostly strangers, the place of the encampment became important to Occupy because it created a space in which to put into practice alternative social relations. During the People's Summit, I found my self in a workshop titled "The Importance of Self Care for Movement Building and Imagining a Sustainable Future". The group was small and intimate, most were seasoned activists, if not before participating in Occupy, certainly after. The two organizers of the session talked about the importance of taking care of oneself, eliciting stories from participants about their experience bumping against the limits of their body and mind. During Occupy, several participants expressed difficulty sleeping well, eating regularly, and relieving stress and tensions. Participants exchanged similar stories and strategized inexpensive and easy strategies to develop a politics of self-care. During the Summit, free massages were offered, which is where I met Adam. During his interview, he began to wander off topic and started reflecting on his massage,

I was surprised at how much better the massage made me feel physically. Here's the thing; me, with my job and my budget, I couldn't get a massage done by professional people, but this is provided free to me because of the activist work that I do. Some people are unemployed, like me at the moment, and have time and Occupy gives us something to do. It's much better for people to be doing this than to be sitting at home doing nothing, watching TV and eating garbage. These people here are trying to effect change and that's a beautiful thing (interview, May 2012).

Like Patrick, Adam was an *Imagineer* of Occupy Chicago, very active and involved in the organizational activities during Occupy Chicago and equally involved in planning the People's Summit. Adam had recently begun to take interest in taking better care of his body and mind after the height of Occupy had passed. We talked extensively about his experience in and opinions of Occupy. When I asked him how he managed to navigate his job, personal relationships, and his new found responsibilities in Occupy he gave me the following answer,

Well I [manage in] negative ways and in positive ways. [Occupy] is like working an extra job, there is that responsibility and that pressure. But there is also that reward feeling – I know that I am not going home [to] watching a whole season of Breaking Bad, as much as I want to do that, I am actually out there doing something. [My participation in Occupy] also [came] at the

expense of stress, lack of sleep, not eating enough or [not eating] well and all that kind of stuff [is] a lot of pressure.... I can't believe I had a life before this. It just feels right; I am doing the right thing (Adam, May 2012).

Indeed many of my participants who were actively involved in Occupy were challenged at times to remember to take care of their bodies, referring to the difficulty of turning off one's mind, taking the time to eat well, and recognizing when their bodies were tense and over worked (field notes, May 2012). Frequently during Occupy, Susan would miss group meals while she was attending a meeting or working on a project and became concerned when she noticed her body beginning to change. Concerned for the health and wellness of herself and her fellow occupiers, Susan found it vital the occupiers in the encampment become more intentional about assessing each others needs and acknowledging when one's own body and mind needed time to rest and heal (interview, May 2012).

I learned about similar stories of care from other participants in their interviews. Living together in the Occupy encampment meant that occupiers had to recreate collectively the means of daily reproduction, including food, shelter, healthcare, and the like. During my observations of Occupy Atlanta I witnessed examples of the quotidian activities required to sustain the occupation. Occupiers would engage strangers passing through the park handing out handmade flyers about upcoming events they had planned, directing them towards the information table where they could learn more about the commodification of democracy by corporate interests, for example (field notes, 2012). There was a tent designated to house donated meals and coolers where several participants were in charge of distributing food and drinks to fellow occupiers. Another spot was designated to house donated books and literature as well as medical supplies and materials to make posters and flyers. Most participants kept their laptops, tablets, cellular phones, and cameras in their possession but willingly shared with others while working in groups. Often huddled in small groups either in a tent or on the grass, working groups met during various times during the day crafting press releases, planning various actions, and drafting proposals to present at the nightly General Assemblies (field notes, May 2012). Occupy Atlanta, like

most encampments around the country was located in open park spaces between some of the cities tallest skyscrapers. Watching Occupy Atlanta orchestrate these quotidian activities behind the backdrop of buildings donning emblems of some of the country's most powerful multinational corporations struck me as highly symbolic in the sense that the very materiality of the tent city juxtaposed against the looming headquarters of several corporate giants became the site where a sizeable group of mostly strangers were encountering each other and figuring out how to not only organize against the power and influence of major corporations but also how to live together and create the sorts of values and institutions they want to see in our society. In this sense, the presence of the occupied park and the daily cacophony of activities Occupiers conducted to reproduce themselves, attracted more participants to protest the commodification of democracy. Practicing collective ways of living together and organizing themselves challenged the present political order by creating a new public space based on the formation of new social relations, based, in part, on care.

In their interviews participants vocalized how distributing resources, making sure others' needs were met, and caring for each other contributed to a deep sense of community and support among fellow occupiers. Tyler expressed that figuring out how to live together in the park taught him that he had to make sure his neighbors' needs were met: "[we had] to work together to take care [of each other]...there were certain tasks that [had] to be done everyday, maintenance...like checking up on your neighbor...If my neighbor was not [doing well] then it would affect us all (interview, May 2012). Michael echoed a similar statement expressing that his participation in Occupy gave him hope, showing him that it is possible for strangers to care for each other (interview, 2012). Adam found that caring about his neighbor extended beyond making sure their basic needs are met, especially when it came to making collective decisions in the group. "[Making decisions collectively] requires for me to care that my neighbor is well informed, that they [are well] educated, [are in] good health, and that make good decisions"(Adam, May 2012). As I learned in the workshop, practicing self-care within the encampments

was not only about caring for oneself, but also about practicing a politics of self care that understands that the well being of others is connected to the well being of oneself (field notes, May 2012). This is akin to the anthropological concept of *communitas*, a term coined by anthropologist Victor Turner (1969) that refers to a deep sense of community produced through feelings of social equality, solidarity and togetherness shared by participants who experience an event, ritual, or other social affair that produces new ways in which subjects structure their individual and collective identity. Although akin to but not limited to rites of passage, the concept of *communitas* suggests that social relations and experiences that transform a sense of self and sense of community occur through a collective and emergent experience. Moreover the concept of *communitas* and the transformative sense of publics and solidarity that occupiers articulated from their participation in Occupy speaks to the rich and vibrant body of work of affect theory, which offers a potentially compelling framework through which to explore the spatialities of Occupy in terms of drawing out the multiple spheres of experience by occupiers and the liminal spaces their bodies created in the occupied park (see Thrift 2007; Massumi 2002; Deleuze, Guattari 1987; Spinoza 2005). However, to do so is beyond the scope of this thesis. That being offered, what I do wish to point out is how the collective act of living together in the occupied park was important to occupiers because it produced a need to care for others that many participants had not experienced before Occupy. As I will unpack below, this affective experience of *communitas* is vital towards understanding the significance of the occupied park to Occupy.

In participant interviews and field notes, participants clearly felt a strong sense of affection and affinity and a sense of community in the liminal spaces of the tent cities. Several participants spoke about feeling differently when they would leave the encampments. Scott, who always considered himself to be a loner, was surprised that his participation in Occupy produced an unexpected feeling: “I was surprised to find that Occupy had a feeling. I feel this sense of community anywhere I go with Occupy. When I leave the actual occupation, I still feel like I am apart of Occupy, I see people that need

help and I try to help how best I can. I think people definitely learn a lot about Occupy and take that with them when they leave (Scott, May 2012). While Scott felt that he was able to feel apart of Occupy when he left the occupied park, others found the encampments to produce a unique feeling of relief. For Gabriel, Occupy L.A. was both a political and spiritual experience, “During Occupy, [when] I would leave the occupation and go back into [the rest of] society, [I would get] this feeling when I left that space [it felt like there] was a big weight on my shoulders. So I am glad to know that at one point in time there was a space where I was able to take all that weight off (Gabriel, May 2012). Gabriel found that the friendships he formed, the late night conversations he had, music he played with other Occupiers, the community that they were building produced for him a fierce sense of relief while in the encampment. For Susan, learning how to live with others, figuring out how to make decisions as a group, showing care and kindness towards strangers and working through differences and disputes changed how she understood and felt about public space,

My concept of public space has really changed. After the occupation when I see a city park I feel civically moved. I feel connected to being an American. I feel connected to being an active participant in my society, where before I just saw grass. So that has been really powerful to me (Susan, May 2012).

Likewise, Adam stated, “being a part of Occupy Chicago has been the first time that I have been socially satisfied” (interview, 2012). Unable to find work with his degree in graphic design Adam found in Occupy the space to feel both useful and artistic. Adam was able to employ his artistic talents in Occupy by designing poster, flyers, and web-based content. He found his job outside of Occupy to be deeply unsatisfying and was able to channel this frustration into various projects within Occupy.

During my fieldwork I also experienced a unique sensation within the spaces of Occupy, which was different than sensations I experienced when I left those spaces. For example, during my fieldwork I kept a journal of my thoughts, reactions, and events each day. After a particularly long day in which I had participated in two marches I noted that my ankle felt sore and speculated that I might have pulled a muscle (field notes, May 2012). Although I do not recall a specific instance when I may have hurt my

ankle, the next day it began to swell. Before I left the convergence space at the Wellington Street Church (and the night my ankle began to swell), I had signed up to help prepare breakfast for Occupiers the next day. While on my way to the church I noticed that it was fairly painful to walk and decided to stop at a pharmacy and purchase a first-aid wrap to help ease the swelling. At this point, walking was strenuous and I questioned my ability to participate in two marches that were planned for this particular day. As the day wore on I decided to go against my better judgment and participate in an unpermitted anti-capitalist march with a new friend I had made in the kitchen earlier that day. This march in particular drew a large police presence in which the officers attempted to control our movement through the streets of downtown Chicago by blocking off certain roads and intersections with their bicycles and vehicles (field notes, May 2012). The Chicago Police intended to 'kettle' the marchers by directing our movement towards an intersection they had partitioned off with the mounted police unit. The marchers intended to outsmart the police and continue disrupting the normal flow of traffic by spontaneously changing course, which often involved stints of running. Each "side" was intent to out maneuver the other. Within the mass of marchers I hardly noticed my limp ankle. With my adrenaline high, I sprinted with my fellow marchers around corners and through side streets. After a few hours of marching, it became clear that the police would succeed in kettling as many occupiers as they could and some of us decided to head back to the convergence space. As soon as my friend and I stepped out of the high-energy crowd my ankle started to throb. It immediately became clear that I was barely able to walk. Luckily we were near a metro stop and I did not have to walk much further. With the assistance of my kind new friend I was able to make it to the church where there was a first-aid station and ice my ankle.

In my journal I noted this phenomenon repeated itself in the next few entries. For the next few days my ankle would throb constantly, making it difficult to stand for long periods of time. However, every march and rally I attended for the rest of my fieldwork I would make notice that I could not feel my ankle throbbing (field notes, May 2012). In my journal I attributed this sensation to the adrenaline I

experienced in a large crowd. While it is true that there is most likely a physiological explanation for this experience, it is also true that I only experienced this lack of pain when in the presence of a large crowd. What this suggests to me is that my bodily experience within the spaces of Occupy, by which I mean the marches and rallies, was very different than my bodily experience when I was not in those spaces. Furthermore, the act of being together in these liminal spaces of Occupy produced a unique sense of friendship during the marches that is akin to the sense of community my participants articulated above. This affective experience was not necessarily unique to the occupied park insofar as Occupy Chicago was never able to actually sustain an occupation of a public park due to a unique anti-loitering ordinance that disallows for any semi-permanent structures to be erected in public places in downtown Chicago. This meant that in Chicago, occupiers could maintain a 24-hour presence so long as they and their belongings were mobile and moving (i.e., it was illegal to sustain a tent city). In other words, the physical spaces of Occupy Chicago were temporarily constructed when occupiers were in the same physical location, which in this particular example is located in the act of marching together. So while I did not experience an Occupy sensation within the occupied camp like my interlocutors describe above, precisely because there was no sustained physical occupation of a public park, I did experience a unique sensation during Occupy events in which I was in the presence of several hundred Occupiers specifically marches and rallies (field notes, May 2012). At the time of this writing, this is a sensation that I have not experienced since my fieldwork.

The sense of satisfaction, community, and friendship felt by participants in the spaces of the physical encampments speaks to the ways in which places are socially produced; a relational sense of place (Massey 2005). What I mean by this is that through the occupation of public space participants, many of who were formerly strangers, came together to put their grievances and ideas into action. This necessarily required that they figure out how to live together in order to sustain the occupation. These encounters, conversations, and decisions produced a space in which participants were able to establish

alternative ways of relating to one another, make collective decisions, and ultimately demonstrate care and a sense of responsibility for the person sleeping, standing, or sitting next to them. As Rob articulates below, the genuine wiliness of participants to come together to create the practices and values that were essential to their critique of wealth and thus power inequality was a prime advantage of the tent-city and why the occupied park took on such great significance in Occupy,

When I was very frustrated with Occupy Lexington, I remember a friend of mine always coming up and telling me, where else can you have open political dialogue and resource sharing? [Occupy created] that kind of community space [that] is rare in [our] privatized [and] individual lives. So that community space [in Occupy] is important and it was one of the elements that was seen as threatening by authorities (Rob, May 2012).

Moreover, both Rob and Susan pointed out that during Occupy many conversations were had that brought to the fore various skills that occupiers possessed. From construction, plumbing and electrical skills, to gardening, sewing, and the like, occupiers possessed many talents that taken together, provided Susan with hope that it was possible to imagine living in some sort of collective capacity (interview, May 2012). In this way, the occupied public park became signified through Occupy as a collective social good.

4.4.3 *Reclaiming a Sense of Publics*

In politicizing the influence of moneyed interests in politics, activists in Occupy asked fundamental questions about the relations between capitalism and democracy. As such, the encampments became sites in which to create the values and social relations that inequalities in wealth and power inhibited. Not only did participants relate to the encampments as the site to call into question the erosion of democracy by corporate influences, but they also related to the encampments as the site in which to enact alternative democratic decision-making structures. Participants sought to practice a form of direct democracy in the form of the General Assembly (GA). As a democratic decision making structure, the GA possessed qualities of both deliberative and participatory democracy (Purcell 2008). The GA is touted as a horizontal, leaderless, and consensus-based meeting. In general, the

General Assembly was held every night and was the platform through which decisions were proposed, deliberated, and if consensus was reached by a majority of those present, was approved. Decisions to pass or block proposals were made by gauging consensus, through the use of hand signals, until a majority of those present approved of the proposal (field notes, May 2012). In this section I turn to participant interviews to discuss Occupiers' experiences in collaborative decision-making and in doing so argue that occupiers claimed a sense of public space by creating a space for deliberation, participation, and representation in democratic decision-making.

When I asked participants about their experience with the General Assembly I received conflicting responses. Some participants described the assembly in a positive light, articulating that the GA created an empowering and egalitarian model space. For example, Patrick describes the GA as an organism: "It is quite beautiful when you look at the General Assemblies and watch everybody come together...on the same horizon or same plane and everybody [has the opportunity to become] a leader. [The General Assemblies] help us to work together to come to a consensus about how we're going to put the proposal passed in action" (Patrick, May 2012). When Patrick mentions a leader here, he is referring to the opportunity for anyone to submit a proposal and present it to the assembly rather than the existence of a person or committee in an authoritative position (interview, May 2012). Similarly, Michael articulated a similar enthusiasm that the GA "showed everyone that we can make decisions without a single leader or casting a single vote" (interview, May 2012). The attitudes Patrick and Michael held towards the GA express the desire for the GA to be viewed in an optimistic and positive light as the preeminent example that groups of people are capable of making collective and democratic decisions without formal representation or leadership. This desire reflects the wider intent of Occupy, which is to call attention to the formal democratic institutions of the state, which have become co-opted and made dysfunctional by moneyed interests. Considering that GA's were primarily held in the occupied park, the place of that democratic assembly became a significant spatiality insofar as Occupy was understood to

be contesting the legitimacy of the state to democratically represent the people by demonstrating that they could organize and manage their own democratic process.

In light of the celebration of the practice of direct democracy, many participants articulated in their interviews that they found the General Assembly to be less than ideal. In terms of practicality, the GA was often ill-equipped to facilitate collective decisions in large crowds. GA's attracted hundreds of participants, which begs the question of how everyone was equally positioned to participate. For instance, Margaret who has a hearing disability found it difficult feel able to participate meaningfully in modest sized groups. Additionally, well-attended GA's demanded that there be strict limits placed on the amount of time a speaker is allowed and the scope of possible discussion topics. Rather than feeling a sense of empowerment, participants became frustrated with the lengthy and cumbersome process to pass proposals (field notes, 2012).

Furthermore, the GA required participants to reach consensus in order for a proposal to pass. To what degree consensus was considered reached varied across camps. Consensus could be declared even if some participants were in disagreement. However, if a participant blocked a proposal, meaning the passage of particular proposal would cause them to quit participating, the proposal became tabled and set aside for revisions. Participants were sympathetic to the intentions of the GA but found the practice to be problematic and unproductive. For example Louise describes her concerns,

I like consensus building in theory but I actually don't think it's the best in practice. I get that you want everyone to agree on something but its hard with consensus building because you are basically forcing people to agree, whereas if you are voting democratically [where] majority rules, a lot of people would be upset because they didn't get what they wanted, but the majority would be satisfied and people wouldn't be forced on all agreeing on something they don't actually agree on. So I don't think consensus building is the ideal form for decision-making (interview, May 2012).

Louise raises an important question about the normative assumption that consensus is desirable, which suggests that there are not competing interests and ideologies present in the assembly. This assumption poses questions for the democratic and egalitarian possibilities of OWS. Furthermore, Occupy sought to

contest the concentration of power to a small group of individuals yet the demand that one must be present to participate excluded those who were unable to attend, including the incarcerated, poor, and working class who statistically make up a majority of the 99%.

The problems posed by the GA resulted in committee groups, which were small groups focusing on specific issues or areas of interest. Many found that by participating in committees, they could circumvent the GA all together, thereby avoiding the arduous process of consensus. Specifically, in Occupy Chicago the GA quickly devolved as a primary decision making structure:

I don't feel the general assembly is very effective. [In Occupy Chicago we have] bowed away from it. Basically the committees have learned that they can do whatever they want to do. It used to be that the committees had to ask for permission but there would be no consequences when we would make decisions without a general consensus. So with no consequences it is just as easy to ask for forgiveness than permission (Adam, May 2012).

As such, different encampments began to experiment with different decision-making structures to replace the GA. For example, the Spokes Council in Occupy Wall Street operated with similar rules and procedures as the GA, but instead of being open for anyone to attend, it was only open to a representative from each working group (field notes, 2012). Most encampments were not large enough for such a structure, but many found that having relative autonomous working groups that went through the GA when they needed help broadcasting an event or executing a project more productive (Jayne, interview, May 2012). Finally, participants expressed that there was an emerging call to rethink the purpose of the GA. "I think that we need to redefine what democracy and freedom mean in our culture, and I think that is best done through platforms like the General Assembly" (Susan, May 2012).

Similarly Louise stated,

I don't know if it is necessarily the structure that I see continuing, but it's more the consciousness that I see continuing than the structures. There have been so many groups in Seattle that have branched off from Occupy and kind of formed their own groups that are tailored to the interests of the groups and they have splintered off Occupy but are still connected in that they use the language, use the mic[rophone] checks, taking stock. So a few things like that in relation to process that I have seen move beyond Occupy (Louise, May 2012).

As both Susan and Louise suggest, the structures and processes for decision-making in their respective camps were open to critique and to a degree responsive to the concerns raised by occupiers. This suggests that while the occupation of public parks was intended to call into question unequal power relations and dysfunctions in contemporary democratic decision making present in our current political order, the practice of direct democracy taking place within the occupied park was also open to critique. I highlight the conflict around decision-making structures for two reasons. First, many participants saw the direct practice of deliberative and participatory democracy in the occupied park vitally important to protesting the influence of money on democracy. Despite the long and arduous process of the GA, many people were committed to standing outside for hours, strategizing on how to improve collective decision-making and how to make it more accessible. Indeed the sizable crowd that many GA's attracted during the occupations even in the rain was a major source of attraction and curiosity for me especially given that in this post-political epoch the more formal spaces of governance from town hall meetings to legislative sessions and the like tend to attract less widely attended and committed participation by the demos. In this way, the significance of the park space was to politicize that the public is interested in participating in collective decisions and to claim that their voice should not only be heard, but for their stake in the decisions made in the political arena to be taken seriously without a consideration of their class position. Second, the lengthy debates and strategies to reform the GA or try other decision making structures suggests that participants were eager and willing to think critically and deeply about the best way to structure collective decision making. Keeping in mind that many participants felt the GA to be a very lengthy and cumbersome experience, the practice of collective decision-making in Occupy should not be viewed as a ready made model for democracy in society writ large as a way to reform uneven power positions in politics. Rather, the experience of figuring out how to live together and make egalitarian decisions suggests that things can always be otherwise and people are willing to engender those alternative futures into being. Thus, the significance of the park space was the opportunity to

demonstrate alternative ways of living, relating, and caring for one another and to insert these values into the public register. In other words the occupied park was significant because it created a space in which the political agendas of the elite was countered by the needs and desires of those who are often not actively included in and empowered by post-political modes of governance. By demonstrating that collective decisions can be made and that people want to have a voice in politics that is not predicated on their relative wealth, the occupied park space became the polemic space of “proper politics” (Ranciere 2001) in which a wrong (i.e. commodified democracy and inequitable distribution of resources) was addressed and equality (i.e. direct democracy and collective social reproduction) was demonstrated.

5 CONCLUSION

“Having power means, among other things, that when someone says, 'this is how it is,' - it is taken as being that way”.

Catherine MacKinnon (1987)

The modest grouping of tents in the heart of major American cities re-signified public parks and urban space as sites for public assembly and democratic expression; they were the symbolic and material sites of contention over the meaning of space. Protestors placed their bodies in places they were not supposed to be, in numbers they were not supposed to amass. Being out of place in the dominant order of things provoked media attention, participation, and ultimately a hold on the American imagination. Thus, the occupation of public space was more than a tactic during occupy, it was the definitive spatial strategy. I began my research by asking what are the spatialities of Occupy? In this thesis I have traced the networks, mobilities and motilities, and the significance of place to Occupy. I argued that the networks of occupy enabled people to come together in the occupied park and that the motilities and mobility of Occupy addressed the ways in which people and resources were able to come together in the occupied park which were vital towards sustaining a continual presence. I ultimately argued that the tent-city was significant to Occupy because it facilitated the face-to-face interaction of strangers who constructed a community and a space in which to articulate and practice alternative values such as participatory democracy and the equitable distribution of resources. The motility of participants to be physically present and participate meaningfully in the occupied park further shaped the trajectory of Occupy. Participants who had the time and resources to re-locate to the occupied park were more likely to become more influential in the decision making structures of Occupy. As a protest against the influence of money in politics, the requirement that participants must be present in order to participate further instantiated unequal social and power relations that allowed some to participate more often. Even so, those that participated within the occupied park space experienced powerful face-to-face conversations, formed new social relations, and encountered and negotiated differences.

For Occupy the right to public space was a crucial claim. People were drawn to the occupied parks because they wanted to be seen, heard, and encountered. They wanted to be considered in decisions and have a stake in political decisions. The experience of the encounter, particularly the conversations and face-to-face interactions that participants experienced in Occupy were powerful and continued to inspire former Occupiers to re-create, in small ways, the encampments when possible. By occupying public parks together for several weeks, occupiers created a public space and a political space for democratic assemblies and collective distribution of resources. In doing so, Occupy is an example of a “properly political moment” (Ranciere 2001). Dikec (2005) reminds us that the political moment is spatial in that Politics occurs in a polemic place in which a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated. Occupy Wall Street occupied space because doing so called attention to the mal-distribution of wealth and power in society. Part of Ranciere’s conception of the political is that it gives a name to that which had no name (2001). The relevance of the slogan of the 99% versus the 1% continues to the time of this writing. Indeed, OWS gave a name to a particular set of ideological and political commitments and grievances that has become part of the public lexicon. Furthermore, within the occupied parks, occupiers demonstrated equality. In the decision to occupy a park immediately means that occupiers had to recreate the means of daily reproduction from food and shelter, community and friendship, to collective decision-making. Occupiers demonstrated that politics is something to be struggled for, that social relations, and the types of spaces we create can always be otherwise.

As such, the networks, mobilities, and motilities of Occupy are significant because they produced a public and collective space that not only contested the influence of moneyed interests on democracy but showed us how things can be different. Although the occupied park was significant to many of the participants in Occupy the loss of the park after the nationwide evictions and dismantling of the tent cities by state forces should not signal failure. The social relations and connections made in the

tent-cities have produced new networks, mobilities and motilities, and spaces of Occupy that continue to outlast the time of the occupied park. For example, existing social justice networks, organizations, and unions have been able to develop a new cohort of organizers and activists. The recent visibility of union-organized, worker-rights campaigns, for example, the living wage campaign organized by the Service Employees International Union and Jobs with Justice, has incorporated former occupiers into their ranks and has mobilized workers to organize around policies that affect the 99%. Some occupiers have created new organizations bearing the Occupy name, for example Occupy Homes and Occupy Sandy. Both of these organizations continue to organize in favor of the 99% and fight against the influence of money on our ability to survive and live well. Moreover, new networks and relations made in during Occupy have helped to marshal resources for organizing and transporting people to support various actions occurring across the country. The NoNATO week of action in which I conducted my fieldwork was well attended by former occupiers precisely because transportation was provided by the National Nurses Union at no cost to the riders. While the loss of the park space, which acted as a centralizing spatiality during Occupy, is understood by many commentators to be devastating to the Occupy movement insofar as the state was able to locate and disrupt those who sought to challenge its power, I find hope in the socio-spatial relations Occupy produced both at the time of the encampments and post-eviction. As such, a relational sense of place suggests that the potential for the political to emerge is always present in collective action.

The significance of this research, I hope, is both theoretical and empirical. The research on the spatialities of Occupy develops our understanding of the multiple spatialities at work in contentious politics. Leitner et al. (2008) argue, “participants in contentious politics are enormously creative in cobbling together different spatial imaginaries and strategies on the fly” (158). This research contributes to insights into the specific spatial imaginaries and strategies at play in Occupy and offers reflections on the political implications of such practices. The discussion in geography of the potential for different

spatialities of social change, from the importance of locality (Massey 1994), to scaling up concerted social action (Peck, Brenner and Theodore 2008), to networking across distant geographies (Routledge and Cumbers 2009) is alive and well, but those participating in contentious politics may not engage in these debates. As Kristin Sziarto argues, they are more likely to “draw on their experience and knowledge crafting and intuiting strategies they hope will succeed, and which simultaneously engage multiple spatialities” (Leitner et. al., 2008, 166). This means material conditions of contentious politics are constituted through and shape political mobilization and trajectories of concerted social actions. Furthermore, by paying attention to the ways in which decisions were made, resources distributed, and the negotiation of difference that took place in the organizational spaces of OWS offers insight into how the political might be inserted back into the public sphere. In other words, the experiences, relations, and practices that were formed within the occupied park suggest that people are willing to engage in the messiness of the political. Finally, this empirical research contributes to the growing body of literature on the post-political condition and extends this discussion by arguing that the Occupy Wall Street moment offers one example of how the post-political condition can and has been challenged. The claim that we currently live in a post-political epoch where the space of politics is increasingly diminished in favor of administrative modes of governance implies that the sort of spaces we create and do not create affects and is affected by the sort of politics we engage in. Therefore, politics, by which I mean the social relations that produce and distribute power, are rooted in space. Altering the social relations that are made and re-made in certain places changes the power relations that shape our politics and the ways in which we live together. In doing so Occupy presented an opening for the political to emerge and reminded us that our world is open to change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Program from the Peoples Summit May 2012

REGISTRATION From 9 am on...
Enter and exit through loading dock, north side of building

SATURDAY AT THE PEOPLES SUMMIT

PLENARY 1 10 am— 11:30 am NATO/G8: Their Agenda of War and Austerity Abdul Malik Mujahid, Sarah Chambers, Eric Ruder, Col. Ann Wright, Helem Abudayeh, Chair Pat Hunt									
WORKSHOP 1 11:45 am— 1:15 pm Perspectives on Socialism, Communism, Anarchism									
Lou Downey, John McDonald, J. Wade Hemm, Tom Rainey	Barbara Moreno, Joe Scary, Debbie Southern	The Attack on Public Education and the Fight Back in Chicago Becca Barnes, Sarah Chambers, Susan Dir	What is Capitalist Democracy 2012? Hector Gariboa, Maria Gamboa, Karla Enriquez, Antonio Lopez	Prison System Injustices: Racism, Solitary Confinement, and the Detention of Immigrants Gregory Koger, Mark Jenkins, Lynne Jackson, Anthony Rayson	Racial Inequality: Trayvon Martin and the Fight Against the New Jim Crow Stephen Weiss, Matthew Sutton, Ken Richardson, Anticka Gordon, Bayla Hopp Pflum, Free Howard Morgan Campaign	Rush Limbaugh, Radio Policy, and the 2012 Illinois Radio License Renewal Window Mitchell Szczepanczyk	Health Care is a Human Right Adeleina Marshall, Sonia Rutherford, two doctors from Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine	Stop Political Repression and Free Political Prisoners Helem Abudayeh, Bill Chambers, Steve Eckardt	Artistic to Arent: A Philosophical Primer on the Right to Protest Michael Gutierrez Room 521
WORKSHOP 2 2:15 pm— 3:45 pm The University as Corporation: Student, Faculty, and Staff Resistance									
Ben Schacht, Lorella Capibient, Shaanah Richter and Oskar Bednarek	Defending Political Prisoners of U.S. Wars: Guantanamo, Bagram, indefinite Detention, Bradley Manning Michael Dautsch, Candace Gorman, Stan Smith, Debra Sweet, Michael Thurman	Confronting the Job Crisis Mel Rottenberg and The Chicago Political Economy Group (CPES)	How Can U.S. Activists Support the International Struggle Against U.S. NATO Bases? Esa Räsänen, Benignite Elin, Col. Ann Wright, Marion Kuepfer, Leif Bolger	The Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Greed, Power, and Our City David Appleby, Eve Shapiro	Summit Protest Politics Chris Cullen, Danny Prael, Mike Staudenmeier and a representative of ANSWER Chicago	Two Models of Sustainable Community Systems: Resilience Circles and Transition Initiatives Holly James	The post 9/11 Targeting of Muslims: Naming the Victims, Naming the Repression Lynne Jackson, Cathy Cullen	Occupy Our Own Labor: An In-depth View of the Mondragon cooperative Carl Davidson	People's Media vs. 1% Media Joe Mazzei, Maria Schenker, Miles Kempf, Jason Risa Trakhtensky, Samuel Barnett, Brett Lefrak, Laura Garcia, Bob Lee
PLENARY 2 4 pm— 5:30 pm Building a Movement for the 99% Zoe Sisman, Kathy Kelly, Harvey Wasserman, Nathan Rahm, Bernard Harcourt, Rev. Janette Wilson, Chair: Lisa Winbush									
DINNER BREAK 5:30 pm— 7:30 pm For dinner, we encourage you to stretch your legs, get some fresh air, and find a nearby restaurant. Several are nearby in Chilton and Pilsen (a few options are listed on the information page). However, if you don't have funds for dinner, have mobility issues, or are volunteering at that time, you may request a free dinner served in 501 by Food Not NATO. Please tell registration by 11:45 am on Saturday if you need to reserve a Food Not NATO dinner.									
MUSIC, POETRY, THEATER & FILM FOR THE 99 PERCENT 7:30 pm— 11:30 pm Occupy Chicago Read Arts Collective brings you... Rebel Diaz, When Flying Feels Like Falling, Salem Rich Trials, FM Supreme, a theater piece, poetry and more!									
The Killing Floor Award-winning feature film set in the Chicago Stockyards, with producer Esa Räsänen									
Room 700									
Room 709									



IF YOU ARE ABLE, USE THE STAIRS (NOT THE ELEVATOR) AND THE PORTABLE TOILETS IN THE PARKING LOT BY REGISTRATION!

Useful stuff

Childcare Room 503
Food Not NATO Room 510
Info tables Room 511
Registration Loading dock
Toilets Port-a-potties in pug lot
Plenaries 7th floor
Workshops 5th and 7th floors

REGISTRATION: From 9 am on...
Enter and exit through loading dock, north side of building

SUNDAY AT THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT

PLENARY 3 10 am— 11:30 am		An Injury to One is an Injury to All: Fighting Oppression to Unite the 99%. Suria Sahar, Anton Ford, Jorge Mujica, Jan Rodolfo, Chair: Brianna Bodin									
WORKSHOP 3 11:45 am— 1:15 pm	Impacts of Climate Change: From Migrations to Our Local Water Supply	Public Sector Unions and the Fight Against Austerity	Mother's Day: A Women's Call to End War!	Consent and Gender Liberation	The Generations of Globalization	Drama's New Imperialism	The Importance of Self-Care for Movement Building and Imagining a Sustainable Future	A New Quality, A Unique Time: Protest, Politics, Stand Beside Tactics and a Vision for a New Society	Re-imagining Culture of Resistance: How to Stand Beside Iranian People in the Anti-War Movement: uniting to Stop a U.S./Israeli War on Iran	Immigration, Globalization, and NATO	
	Jerry Mead-Lucero, Claudio Lucero, Jeff Lucas, Lina Casten, Beverly Walter	Elizabeth Labisz and other public-sector workers	Medea Benjamin, Nancy Kerridge, Pat Hunt, Nicole Cobson	Dea Michel	Joosjan Sawyer, Margaret Christiano, Yesson Paez, Greg Heppelbuch, Quina Weber-Shik	Cat Ann Wright, Syrae Saraz, Ashley Smith	Stephanie Derrick, Meg Marshall	Beth Gonzalez, Brooke Haggerty, Matt Scullio	Ali Asad Sheikh, Jafar, Debra Sweet	Orlando Sepulveda, Lorena Chavez, Maria Pizarro	
Room numbers	709	705	710	700	715	500	501a	501b	504	505	
LUNCH BREAK 1:15 pm — 2:15 pm / Free lunch provided by Food Not War! in room 510f											

WORKSHOP 4 2:15 pm— 3:45 pm	War is a Lie	U.S. Military Intervention in Latin America/ Colombia as a Model for NATO's war in Afghanistan	The Strategic Aim in Opposing NATO in Chicago	Israel: Strategic Asset to the Global 1% and the Palestinian Boycott Divestment Sanctions Movement	Making the Connection: Environmental Struggle, Economic Justice, Peace and Solidarity Movements	NATO and Afghanistan: What's Wrong with the "Good War"?	65 Years of War is Enough: We Are Not Your Soldiers	The History of Workers' Resistance and the Prospects for Independent Working-Class Political Action	Syria, Iran, U.S./ NATO: Intervention, Rebellion, Resistance	The Arab Spring and the Politics of Self-Determination
	Haskell Meyer	James Jordan, Vicki Cavannes, Sam Smith	Pat Hunt, Joe Insaboke, Andy Thayer	Leo Giorgianno, Emma Rubin, Richard Work, Pauline Collman	Karl Fulton and members of the CANOE Environmental Committee	Kathy Kelly, Eugene Cherry, Kevin Gersdke, Eric Ruder, Debra Sweet	Randal Heathcock, Abdullah Ray, Iraq veteran, Jay Becker	Jerome Fuller, Tom Alvir	Saman Serpent, Tom Raley, Neal Resnick, Hosni Dargahi, Gary Emmert, Zohra Kaderi, et. al	Alan Maass, Marco Rosario Rossi
	Room numbers 709 705 710 700 715 500 501a 501b 504 505									

PLENARY 4 4 pm— 5:30 pm	Our Alternative Vision: A World of Equality, Peace and Justice	Medea Benjamin, Renee Braun, Joe Lombardo, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Chair: Sarah Wild
	THANKS FOR TAKING PART IN THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT.	
	Healing in the Spring	

CLEAN-UP!
5:30 pm—
6:30 pm
Many hands make light work! This entire event was put on by volunteers, and we hope you'll pitch in to make clean-up and break-down speedy. Please spend an hour or so if you're available to stack chairs, clean up, and so on. There will be an announcement about how you can help at the end of the final plenary. Thanks!

THANKS FOR TAKING PART IN THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT.

Changing the world requires collective struggle, but it also requires a collective process of discovery, debate and dialogue about *how* to organize that struggle.

In other words, it requires *ideas*—tested in practice by the 99 percent. We hope the People's Summit made at least a small contribution to this aspect of the project of changing the world. Next, we hope we'll be seeing you on the streets of Chicago for the collective struggle part. Plug into **Occupy Chicago's week of action** (details at OccupyChi.org) with different themes each day between now and May 21.

And don't miss the legal, permitted, family-friendly **mass march** on Sunday, **May 20** (details at cangb.org). Meet at noon for a rally at Grant Park's Petrillo Band Shell (corner of Jackson and Columbus), then march to McCormick Place.

Healing in the Spring

Need some good feelings? How about some healing? Local massage therapists and members of the Midwest Peihl Community invite summit participants, especially mothers and activists, to get free healing, Peihl, shiatsu, Thai massage and more will be offered. Bring some calming energy to counter the stress NATO brings wherever it invades.

11 am — 3 pm, Room 521

IF YOU ARE ABLE, USE THE STAIRS (NOT THE ELEVATOR) AND THE PORTABLE TOILETS IN THE PARKING LOT BY REGISTRATION!