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A study of the purposes, identities, and politics

enabled by the NYC Occupy movement

By James Owens

with support from Occupy Wall Street activists

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INTRODUCTION

This is a draft of findings from participatory research I conducted in collaboration with Occupy Wall Street (OWS) activists, primarily from the TechOps, InfoHub, and Works Working Groups.¹ The study focuses on the Occupy movement in New York City and illuminates new aspects of the movement's impact on social relations in the period following the government repression of our camps in late 2011. My intention is to provide activists with relevant empirical understandings that can inform conscious strategic actions to build a movement for

¹ Though I am the author of this initial document of findings, other OWS activists and I collaborated on the goals of research and collected data via fieldwork. The project enjoyed the approval, support, and collaboration of the OWS TechOps and InfoHub working groups.

democratic re-organization. For activists concerned about how our efforts impacted power relations, the study documents the movement's participation in creating alliances with diverse groups from across social divides reinforced by the ruling order. To support activists working to strengthen the democratic basis of our network, the study also documents divisions in our alliances that fall along established lines of social exclusion. Throughout the study, I critically assess ways that our relationships and goals open or close the possibilities for new democratic identities and mass struggle. The empirical findings I present are intended to help organizers take critical perspectives that relate movement processes and strategies to the politics and culture we produce. I also hope this analysis will encourage broader discussion of the politics of purpose and division in the NYC Occupy movement.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

During the first half of 2012, months after the state repression of the encampments on Wall Street and elsewhere, the NYC Occupy movement continued to build power by creating and reinforcing relationships that enabled struggles for a variety of purposes. Our data suggests the primary struggle of the movement in the first half of 2012 may have been for the right to public political communication.² Communication organizing may even have been a higher priority than *mass protests* or *issue campaigns*, the next most common purposes pursued by the NYC Occupy projects in our sample. About 43% of all projects sought to create spaces for public communication, compared to Issue campaigns, which made up about 33% of all projects and most often fought for financial reforms, healthcare, labor, or against corporate personhood. The data suggests NYC Occupy organizers may have directed substantially more energy towards building communicative spaces to cultivate new social definitions of problems and solutions than advancing existing solutions to problems as currently defined. (For more detailed information and

2 Whether the high priority of public communication represents a change from the focus of activism during the high period of media coverage prior to the police destruction of the camps is outside the scope of this study. However, in my experiences with the movement immediately after the 9/17/2011 capture of Zuccotti Park and as described in various first hand accounts of organizing sessions prior that date creating spaces for public political communication was a clearly expressed priority of activists at a very early stage of the movement. Nathan Schneider (2013), *Thank You, Anarchy: Notes from the Occupy Apocalypse*, University of California Press.

charts, see the *Findings* sections below).

The movement helped build democratic power in the form of alliances across social divides reinforced by the ruling order. The network of allies brought together by Occupy organizing in NYC in the first half of 2012 displayed the kind of inclusion across differences of race, class, and social identity that characterize democratic pluralism. The study found Occupy organizing in NYC enabled a pluralistic network of alliances connecting over 200 non-profits, emerging grassroots groups, religious organizations, and incorporated businesses with over 120 Occupy groups. Those partners described themselves and their constituents using a broad range of marginalized as well as professional identities.

Most partners had offices or chapters in multiple neighborhoods or states and were already allying people across geographic space. Partner organizations working in single neighborhoods came from white, mixed race, non-white, and upper, middle, and low-income communities in approximately equal numbers. Neighborhood based Occupy groups enabled people seeking to participate in political action for the first time to intersect with this diverse and politically active network. By drawing together people of widely differing race, class, social identity, and level of experience, the NYC Occupy movement contributed to the potential emergence of political identities committed to a pluralistic democratic community and disputing injustices perpetrated against members of that community.

However, my findings also suggest that competition over movement purposes sometimes developed along lines of established social privilege/

exclusion. Projects seeking to create spaces of communication and wage issue campaigns for healthcare and financial reform tended to emerge from alliances of wealthier, whiter, professional identified partners while non-professional partners from communities of color and low-income allied together to wage struggles for human rights, subsistence, and against foreclosures. Also marked by the lack of participation by more privileged partners, *mass protest projects* emerged from the collaboration of grassroots activist organizations and Occupy groups from white, mixed and non-white neighborhoods of low and middle-income – but with little to no participation from professional partners or organizations based in upper-income communities.

These findings may reflect a variety of causes. Producing spaces for public communication seems likely a less urgent issue for low-income groups already fighting against foreclosures, homelessness, unemployment, and police brutality. Upper-income and professional minded activists may lack awareness of the particular forms that poor people's struggles take or may be reluctant to risk their established identities by joining in politically disruptive actions. Relatively privileged groups may also be reluctant to re-frame cherished political goals, such as reforming financial regulation, through issues such as poverty that would make the movement more important to the poor but could also encourage struggles

“A movement for democratic social organization cannot be all inclusive... Which groups and which issues get left out?”

for changes more fundamental than reform of capitalist processes. Finally, activists may also have given high priority to communication projects out of the belief that public interaction and deliberation alone can be a means to social change or, in other words, *that consensus can substitute for or precede common struggle*. The findings presented in this study suggest otherwise. Rather than creating spaces to overcome differing interests, communication projects themselves appear to be expressions of particular interests.

Of course, a movement for democratic social organization cannot be *all inclusive*. Such organization necessarily involves antagonism against the unjust privilege of some groups that requires the subjugation of the rest of us. The question confronting organizers is, which groups and which issues get left out? It's not that activists shouldn't work for a Robin Hood Tax or to end corporate personhood – but to call for the movement to narrowly focus organizing around the issues

chosen by upper middle class professionals is to tell less privileged groups, 'not yet.' Such an approach is unlikely to nurture either a mass struggle or new democratic identity across class lines.

Poor and relatively affluent activists have common opponents: banks and corporations, corrupt officials, oppressive police systems, and, of course, the 1%. One important way to reveal our common opponents *as common opponents* would be for relatively privileged

activists to risk their privilege, like the freedom riders did, in support of the demands already raised by the poor. There are some ongoing Occupy projects in NYC that seem to embody this approach by supporting collaborative organizing among activists from highly vulnerable communities with those from Occupy: *Occupy Homes*, *Occupy Sandy Relief*, *Stop Stop and Frisk*, *Occupy Network*, *Occupy Museums/DebtFair*, *NYC Moral Mondays* and others.

Supporting poor peoples' movements against our common opponents seems a better strategy to encourage a powerful social movement that can make our society more democratic. My argument is that communication organizing *can* contribute to such a movement but only when talk is part of action and action is to enable the most excluded to fight their exclusion. The poor cannot always resist, through protest or other means. When activists help the silenced gain the power to speak and be heard, we expand the stage

of political debate and alter the social context in which rulers strive to legitimate their power.

Enacting our equality through common struggle with the least powerful is how we create democratic community and make ourselves *democratic subjects*. The emergence of that community alters the symbolic and organizational context upon which the ruling order depends and makes another world possible.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Previous research on OWS found the movement enabled the creation of *new political subjects* by providing means for persons with little to no experience in activism to take political action and develop a commitment to social change. But research also found disproportionately high participation rates by professionals and persons with high levels of education.³ These findings raise specific questions: What do the commitments of our organizing efforts reveal about the kinds of political subjects we enabled? Did the movement work mostly with relatively privileged groups or did organizing efforts involve greater diversity?

In this study, I address these questions by examining the alliances and purposes active in the NYC Occupy movement. OWS activists, including myself, gathered data on 124 political projects involving the participation of Occupy groups and carried out *in the New York City area* during the first six months of 2012. We published detailed information on these projects online and in print through *The NYC Occupy Project List*⁴ from February

3 Milkman, R., Luce, S., & Lewis, P. (2012). *Changing the Subject: A Bottom-Up Account of Occupy Wall Street in New York City*. Retrieved from http://sps.cuny.edu/filestore/1/5/7/1_a05051d2117901d/1571_92f562221b8041e.pdf

4 The projects analyzed in this study willingly provided information about goals and partnerships as part of a public outreach project conducted by Occupy activists, including myself, called *The NYC Occupy Project List*. http://tech.nycga.net/?attachment_id=953, <http://tech.nycga.net/files/2012/04/Occupy-Wall-Street-Project-List-Issue-2-FINAL.pdf>, <http://tech.nycga.net/files/2012/06/Occupy-NYC-Project-List-Issue-3-8.5x11.pdf>

to June of 2012. In this study, I use that data to first provide a general overview of the causes we advanced and second to assess our alliances for *equality in participation* by analyzing the kinds of groups we allied with, relative to markers of privilege and exclusion.⁵ My analysis assesses equality by looking for *pluralism* – the symbolic acceptance of difference that is constitutive of democratic organization. In this case, pluralism is indicated in alliances inclusive of differences across race, class, and social identity.

Lastly, I look for conditions affecting pluralism by analyzing the social network of partners and projects to uncover *which communities gathered behind which purposes*. This third analysis places purposes in context with alliances, and alliances in context with social privilege and exclusion. By relating movement purposes to the bounds of inclusion, my approach sheds light of the kinds of politics and subjects enabled by the NYC Occupy movement.

5 More information on the data and methods is available in the Appendix at the end of this report.

FINDINGS I: WHAT PURPOSES DID OCCUPY PARTNERS PURSUE?

Occupy activists may have given higher priority to creating spaces for political *public communication* than creating *issue campaigns* or even *mass protests* (See Chart 1).⁶ About 43% of all projects (53 of 124) sought to create spaces for *public communication*, most of which pursued face-to-face (24), rather than online (14) or print (8) communication. Issue campaigns were the next most common type of project, making up about 33% of all projects (41). The most prevalent issue campaigns focused on healthcare (7), labor (7), against corporate personhood (6), and other financial reforms (4). With *face-to-face public communication appearing at more than 3 times the prevalence of any particular issue campaign* and with more total projects producing public communication than issue campaigns, the data suggests NYC Occupy organizers directed substantially more energy towards building communicative spaces to cultivate new social definitions of problems and solutions than advancing existing solutions to problems as currently defined.

Of the 124 political projects analyzed in this study only 2 sought to create or revive Occupy assemblies along the lines of the New York General Assembly (NYCGA) or

6 Protests are a prominent characteristic of the Occupy movement that proved to have important differences from general public communication projects. The study nominally distinguishes them in order to analyze those differences.

Spokes Council.⁷ That so few projects sought to produce GA style authority structures does not support conclusions that the leading purpose of OWS or the NYC Occupy movement was to produce large consensus structures.⁸ Another finding that challenges common claims about the movement is that only 4 projects in the sample sought to produce alternative systems compared to 21 projects producing campaigns to *reform* existing financial, education, legislative, and electoral systems. This contradicts generalizations of OWS or the NYC Occupy movement as primarily an exercise in prefigurative politics, that is, more an attempt to produce alternative systems than to reform existing systems.

7 Those projects were *Inflatable General Assembly* and *Spring Awakening 2012: Occupy New York City People's Assembly*. Three other projects also produced assemblies but not as decision making bodies with authority over movement organizing, key features of the NYCGA and OWS Spokes Council cited in public debates on the movement.

8 The projects documented in this sample emerged during a time of dysfunction, decline, and collapse of the NYCGA and Spokes Council as well as a time when neither structure was convening. The data collected in this study demonstrate that projects emerged and organizing continued without those structures in operation. Analysis of the priority or the importance of such structures during the establishment of Liberty Square occupation or the fall of 2011 is outside the time range of data collected for this study.

FINDINGS II: WHO PARTICIPATED IN CREATING THESE PROJECTS?

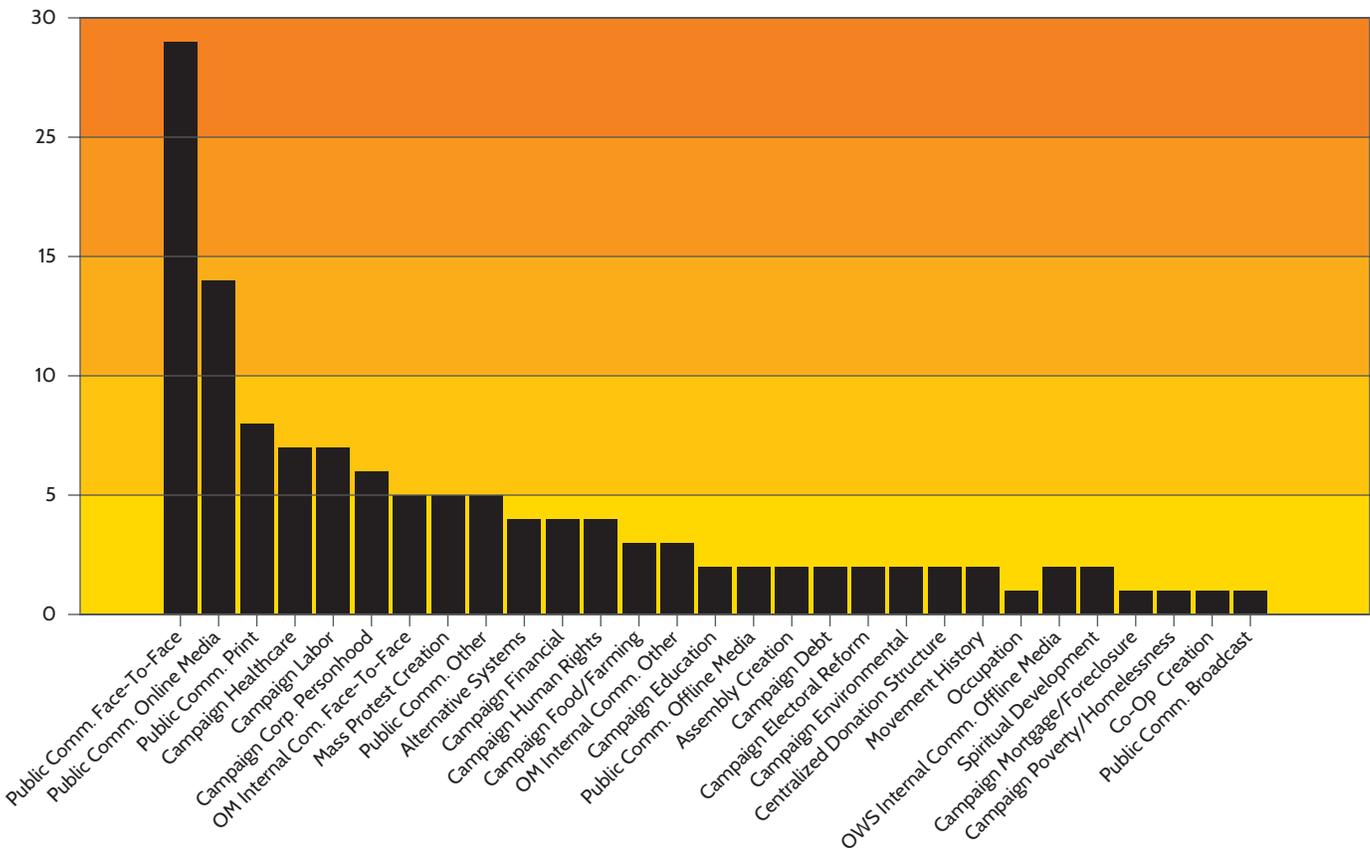
Most partners in the sample were not formally associated with OWS as a working group, caucus, or cluster. Composing 269 out of 470 members, non-OWS partners make up 57% of the partners in the sample (See Chart 2). Further subtracting Occupy identified groups outside OWS (i.e. Occupy Brooklyn, Occupy Phoenix) reveals 211 non-Occupy identified partners. In other words, *almost half (45%) of all partners in the sample are not formally associated or self-identified with the Occupy movement.*

In the sample, the 2 most common types of organizations partnering on Occupy projects are *grassroots*⁹

⁹ I defined *grassroots* groups as those primarily engaged in advocacy *without* IRS registered non-profit status.

(71) and *IRS registered non-profit organizations* (44), which together were more numerous than all the Occupy instances and affinities in the sample (58). These findings suggest that, during the time of the study, Occupy projects may have involved a) heavy participation by a range of social groups already engaged in *activism or social service*, b) that participation included both emerging organizations as well as those approaching or attaining some level of institutional status, and c) Occupy organizing was a social force creating or reinforcing relationships among these groups as well as with new politically active persons. The large number of IRS registered non-profits with an even larger number of groups lacking that status positively suggests that Occupy organizing involved a range of allies with differing social authority and access to resources.

CHART 1. PRODUCTIVE PRIORITIES OF NYC OCCUPY PROJECTS



How did Occupy partners identify themselves?

In their mission statements, websites, and other texts, non-OWS partners described themselves and their constituents using 16 different identities inclusive of the politically active, those sharing precarious or desperate economic and social standing, as well as professionals. Many partners expressed multiple identities. Most commonly, non-OWS partners described themselves or their constituents as *activists*. Approximately 40% of non-OWS partners in the sample identified as activists for an issue or social group and 32% as activists for the Occupy movement (See Chart 3). *Low-income, people of color, workers, and professionals* were the next most common identities, comprising 15-18% of partners. About 10% of non-OWS partners identified with *artists, immigrants, students/educators, LGBTQ, and women*. About 2% or fewer

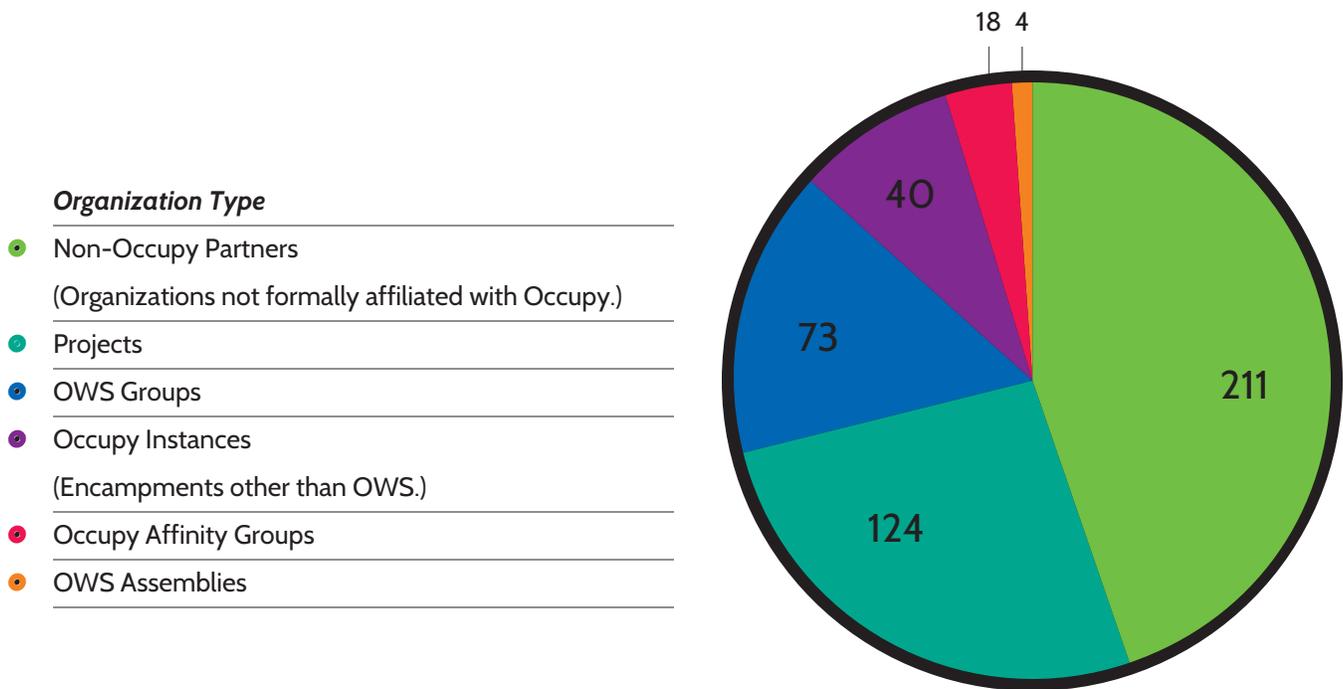
of non-OWS partners identified with *disabled persons* and *prisoners*. Not a single partner identified with *elected officials* and only 1 project identified constituents as *corporate representatives* or *affluent persons*.¹⁰

What kinds of neighborhoods were Occupy allies based in?

The data captured information on 272 non-OWS partners and identified 43 (16%) as grassroots organizations

10 Occupy Money Group, later re-titled the Movement Resource Group, enabled wealthy donors to fund Occupy projects of their choice through a 501c3 organization. MRG partnered with affluent individuals and liberal CEOs such as Ben Cohen and Danny Goldberg: http://movementresourcegroup.org/?page_id=205

CHART 2. ALLIANCES ON NEW YORK CITY OCCUPY PROJECTS, BY RELATION TO OCCUPY MOVEMENT



with offices or meetings held in a single neighborhood.¹¹ This tells us more than the fact that most partners were already organizing across geographic space. Examining Occupy's alliances with such neighborhood based partners sheds light on how the movement intervened in geographies of race and class and provides additional means to assess the

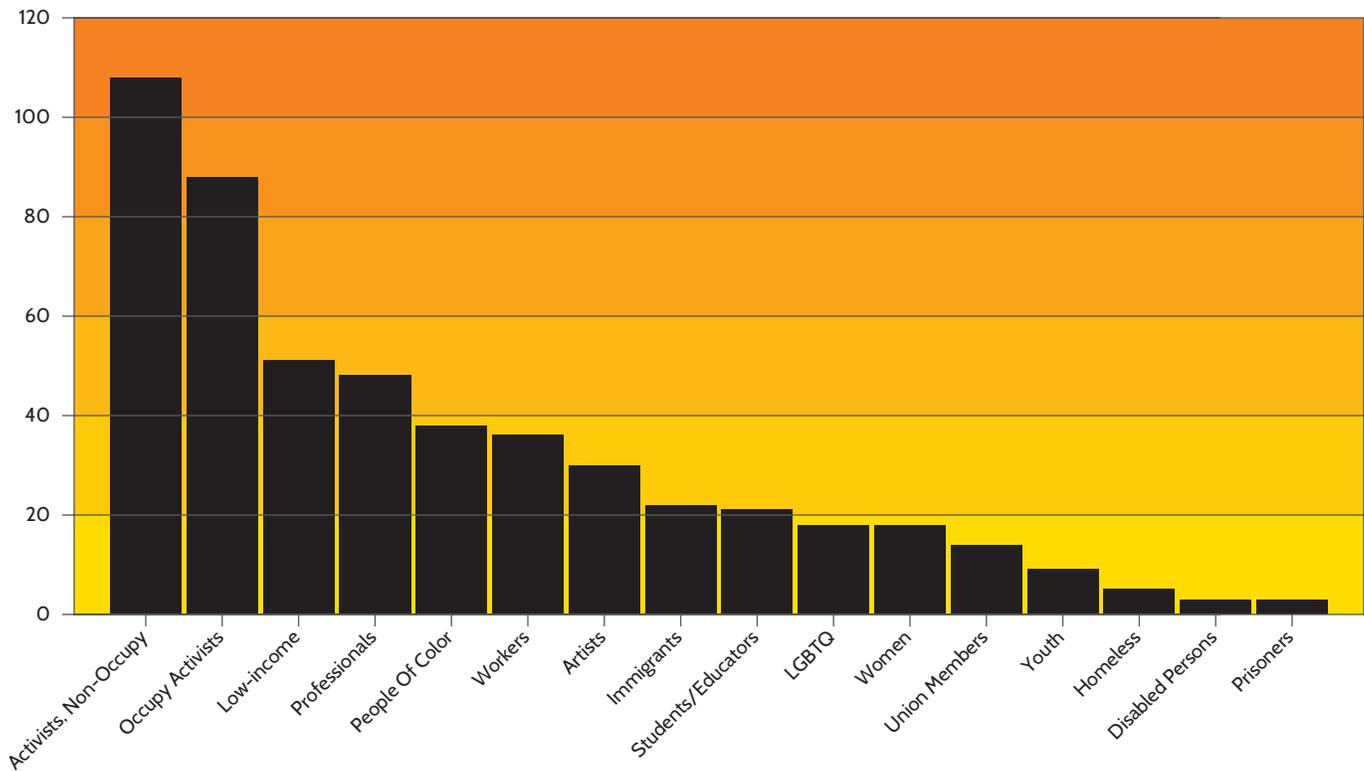
11 The small number, and small proportion, indicates that the bulk of partners found in the sample either have chapters or offices in multiple geographic locations (i.e. Picture the Homeless), are Occupy instances claiming a region encompassing multiple neighborhoods (i.e. Occupy Long Island), or have no clear connection to geographic place (i.e. a blog). The 43 partners identified as working in the social life of specific geographic neighborhoods far exceeds the number of partners working exclusively online, who numbered only 10. These findings caution against characterizing the OWS/NYC Occupy movement as a "Twitter revolution" that *primarily* organizes on and through the Internet.

pluralism enabled through our organizing.

Looking just at partnerships with neighborhood based partners, I found more than 28 projects active across 24 zip codes in the New York area during the first half of 2012, all of which also involved the participation of OWS groups. Looking at the race and class demographics for those neighborhoods,¹² the data identifies 4 *approximately equal groupings of partners*: 10 based in predominantly-

12 Based on US Census (2010), Retrieved Oct. 15 2012, from website: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Following Pew Research Center methods: Upper income communities had household median incomes of \$77,871 and above, Middle-income from \$38,934 to \$77,870, and Low-income had \$38,934 and below. The study measures the *whiteness* of each community: Predominantly white communities are those with > 66% white people, predominantly non-white are those with <33% white people, mixed race are represented by middle third between 33-66%.

CHART 3. EXPRESSED IDENTITIES OF NON-OWS PARTNERS



white and high-income neighborhoods, 11 based in predominantly-white and middle-income neighborhoods, 12 based in mixed or predominantly non-white middle-income neighborhoods, and 10 based in mixed or predominantly non-white low-income neighborhoods.¹³ In short, the data evidences racial and economical pluralism in the NYC Occupy movement alliances at the neighborhood level.

Overall, the sample of projects shows some important indications of pluralism in The NYC Occupy movement. Occupy organizing in NYC in spring 2012 included those deeply affected by historical and ongoing social exclusions as well as those whose relative historical security eroded over the past two generations. Participation included organizations with different levels of access to resources and authority. Organizing also enabled or reinforced relationships among neighborhoods with starkly different racial and class conditions. At the level of identity, pluralism was more limited to a subset of marginalized groups and professionals negatively affected by neoliberal policies and with little ability to shape future policies. Some

marginalized identities were not expressed by Occupy partners (*indigenous people*, for example). Nonetheless, the data shows participation by organizations with differing resources and status but expressing identification with social groups subjugated by the ruling order. These factors positively suggest conditions supportive of democratic antagonism against the power of elite groups who impose and benefit from current policies.

However, the diversity of persons and identities participating in the overall movement also accompanies a rich diversity of purposes. As the next section explains, as partners committed to different purposes they sometimes divided along lines marked by social economic differences.

13 Middle income neighborhood partners were from 9 mixed race and 3 predominantly non-white communities. Low income neighborhood partners were from 8 predominantly non-white and 2 mixed-race communities. Absent is a presence of high-income communities of color. But the injustice that high-income communities tend overwhelmingly to be white while black and Hispanic communities experience a 27% poverty rate is not a reflection of OWS/Occupy organizing choices but of policies the movement opposes; NYU Wagner, (2011). 'Income and poverty in communities of color, A Reflection on 2010 U.S. Census Bureau Data,' http://wagner.nyu.edu/wocpn/publications/files/Analysis_of_2010_Poverty_Data.pdf

FINDINGS III: WHICH COMMUNITIES GATHERED BEHIND WHICH PURPOSES?

Towards a discussion of the politics of purpose and division in the NYC Occupy movement

In this section I analyze the *social network* of projects and partners to uncover patterns connecting partners and purposes.¹⁴ Some purposes emerge from

14 In NYC, Occupy projects were not organized around a central source (such as unions, democrats, radical left parties, or even the NYCGA). Statistical analysis of the social network of Occupy projects and partners describes a highly decentralized field of organizing with many projects working independently while a small number work with many others. This network shows a very low *density* of .006, reflecting that two-thirds of projects (84 of 124) reported fewer than 5 partners and only 16 reported more than 10 partners.

alliances across social economic divisions. In the data, I identified 10 projects bringing together partners from neighborhoods of different economic and/or racial classes (See Table 1). While 9 of those projects connected middle-income partners with low or upper-income partners, none connected low, middle, and upper income partners. The labor campaign project *Occupy Museums* was the only project in the sample to connect partners based in low and upper-income neighborhoods.

As stated above, the 2 most common types of purpose pursued by NYC Occupy projects were production of public communication channels followed by production of issue campaigns. I found that public communication projects connected partners expressing the widest range of social identities and enabled collaboration between proportional numbers of professional and non-professional

TABLE 1. PROJECTS CONNECTING PARTNERS ACROSS RACIAL OR ECONOMIC DIVIDES

Connected Economic And Racial Classes

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Connected Economic And Racial Classes</i>						<i>Productive Focus Of Project</i>
	<i>Lower Income</i>	<i>Middle Income</i>	<i>Upper Income</i>	<i>Non-White</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>White</i>	
99% Day And City-Wide Assembly	●	●		●	●	●	Mass Protest
Making Worlds: Commons Coalition		●	●	●	●	●	Public Communication, Face-To-Face
Occupy Museums	●		●	●	●	●	Campaign Labor
Occupy Town Square		●	●	●	●	●	Public Communication, Face-To-Face
Spring Awakening 2012: Occupy							
New York City People's Assembly	●	●		●	●	●	Mass Protest
Healthcare For The 99%		●	●			●	Campaign Healthcare
NY Activist Calendar		●	●			●	Public Communication, Online
Operation Book Bomb Tucson	●	●			●		Campaign Education
Where Workers Are Owners Studios	●	●		●	●		Alternative Systems
Occu-Evolve							Occupy Movement
(Building A Mass Movement Via Occupy)		●		●	●	●	Internal Communication

organizations. Both factors indicate inclusion across differences and positively suggest pluralism. Inhibiting the pluralism of public communication projects was the lack of participation by partners based in low-income neighborhoods and, with 2 exceptions, the absence of partners based in predominantly non-white neighborhoods. The public communication projects *Occupy Town Square* and *Making Worlds: Common Coalition* were the only communication projects reporting partners based in predominantly non-white neighborhoods. These projects successfully connected professional and grassroots organizations identifying with highly diverse constituents but did not report the participation of partner organizations based in low-income neighborhoods..

Issue campaigns, like public communication projects, brought together equitable numbers of professional and non-professional affiliated partners. *Unlike public communication projects, issue campaigns more often worked with more partners based in non-white low-income than white upper-income neighborhoods.* In addition, most issue campaigns showed a slightly smaller range of expressed identities that tended to cluster around markers of exclusion at the heart of the campaign. For example, campaigns against homelessness involved poverty advocacy groups and campaigns for immigrant rights included immigrant organizations. In other words, compared to projects producing public communication, *issue campaigns showed lower levels of pluralism but a greater concentration of groups specifically affected by economic, racial, or other exclusions.*

This division is rendered more apparent when comparing the political purposes of partners based in neighborhoods of very different race and class. Projects articulated in participation with the most marginalized communities produced issue campaigns for basic rights (i.e. immigration, education, worker, and gender rights, and against police brutality/Stop & Frisk,) and subsistence (i.e. food, shelter, and jobs). The projects exclusively involving partners based in more affluent neighborhoods focused on macro policies (i.e. financial regulation, ending corporate personhood), alternative economic structures, and expanded communication among activists and the public. As possible exceptions, partners from more privileged neighborhoods struggled for rights to healthcare and marriage.

Partners based in marginalized communities did make common purpose with partners based in middle-class neighborhoods to produce *mass protests*. Specifically, mass protest was a purpose pursued by Occupy instances and grassroots organizations based in predominantly white, mixed, and predominantly non-white neighborhoods of middle and low-income. In the sample, mass protest projects did not include partners based in upper-income neighborhoods and included almost no partners expressing professional identity.

APPENDIX: DATA AND METHODS

The sample is statistically non-representative as it is neither a randomized sample nor a complete population. Although the proportions may not reflect those in the larger field of Occupy organizing, the sample documents actual cases and provides a minimum estimate for the kinds of Occupy projects and partners active in New York City during the time of the study. The information gathered in this sample may be more accurate than other kinds of convenience samples, such as used by online polling. Our data was collected by movement organizers a) in a position to recognize inaccurate or dishonest entries, b) with incentive to gather accurate entries, and c) who employed a vetting and verification process. Contributors revealed their identity to data collectors who confirmed that project's relationship to NYC Occupy affinity or working groups. Following these protocols, data collectors rejected approximately 15% of submissions.

Unlike samples drawn online or through randomized phone calls, this sample is less prone to bias based on access to technology because data collection included face-to-face fieldwork at dozens of assemblies, working group meetings, and other events, a dedicated telephone number, as well as an online form. The sample is biased towards projects seeking greater public knowledge of their work.

The research presented here was produced by activists participating in The OWS Project List with approval and support from OWS TechOps and InfoHub working groups. Though I am the author of this initial document of findings, other OWS activists and I collaborated on the goals of research and collected data via fieldwork.

Each project self-reported its partner organizations. The data consists of 470 projects and partners and

documents nearly 700 relationships among those members. The study analyzes those projects for their productive goals and assesses alliances behind those projects for equality in participation. The study analyzes movement purposes by categorizing projects according to what they sought to produce. The data distinguishes partner organizations 'inside' OWS (i.e. OWS TechOps Working Group), from those identifying with the larger Occupy movement (i.e. Occupy The Bronx or Occupy CUNY), and from other partners 'outside' the movement (i.e. The National Lawyers Guild). The data also distinguishes institutional partners accredited as businesses or non-profits from grassroots groups operating without such authority. To better understand how Occupy intersected with social groups allied across geographic space, the data codes each partner for the range of social identities used to describe themselves or their constituents in their mission statements and other texts. To inform analysis of how Occupy intersected social relations among geographically based communities, the data includes respective US Census data (2010) on class and race for those partner organizations based in a single neighborhood.

Using Pew's (2008) categories, I defined *upper-income* households as those receiving over 150% of the median income, and *low-income* households as receiving less than 75%. This upper income category represents approximately the top 27% of income earners. PewResearchCenter for the People and the Press (2008). Inside the middle class: Bad times hit the good life, Publication No. 793.

<http://pewsocialtrends.org/assets/pdf/MC-Middle-class-report.pdf>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DISCLAIMER

This purpose of this study and the questions investigated emerged from discussions among NYC Occupy activists and myself seeking to find ways to produce and share knowledge that could enable better understanding of the movement's political consequences and encourage critical thinking and decision making. We collaborated on choosing the questions in our surveys and in data collection, a process that took weeks. Activists also vetted the data for accuracy. Activists whose labor created the bulk of data that I analyzed includes but is not limited to: Amy Miller, Ravi Ahmed, Liz Helpern, Drew Hornbein, Lucky Tran, Devin Balkind, Justin Stone-Diaz, Christine Crowth, Heywood Carey, Pea Lutz, Christine Oheron, and others from OWS Works, InfoHub, and TechOps working groups, as well as scores of project organizers who took the time to share their information with us and the larger movement. Laura Ephraim, Ravi Ahmed, Scott Sanders, and Charles Lenchner provided crucial feedback on early versions of this report. Graphic design of our printed materials was produced by Billie Bryan, who also designed and produced this report of the study findings, and Drew Hornbein. I composed the analysis, conclusions, and normative arguments offered in this report and any errors or offenses are my responsibility.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Owens is an organizer, media coordinator and researcher active in movements for human rights and against war. He co-founded peace and media organizations, including Chicago Media Action. His work has been published by *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, as well as *Extra!*, *CovertAction Quarterly*, and others.