ATTITUDES AND METHODS OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE IN OCCUPY DENVER

by

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The Occupy Movement arose out of an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the political and economic structure of the country. The objective of my research was to look at individuals in the Denver Occupy Movement in order to understand what their personal goals for the movement were, as well as what tactics they were willing to partake-in as a way to change society's dominant power structures. A key characteristic in Occupy is how diverse it is in terms of the political will and the express direction its members wish it to go in. My anthropological work is applicable to Occupies across the country as well as other similar socio-political movements since it sheds light on how the individual within the movement expresses his/hers agency not only in shaping acts of resistance but the structure of the movement itself. The theoretical framework of my thesis is based upon three foundational frameworks: Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and various social capitals, Giddens’s theory on how agency and structure interact to result in structural change, and concepts in cognitive anthropology. Through these frameworks I show how an individual's background shapes their actions of resistance and mediates how they negotiate the structure and culture of Occupy itself.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend it's publication.

Approved: John Brett, Chair
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

It’s a Tuesday evening in February 2012 and participants of the Occupy Denver movement have gathered in a meeting space that has chairs, benches and a few bean bag chairs arranged in a near-circular formation above a popular local restaurant. There are about forty people attending this General Assembly meeting, or GA as they are commonly referred to, where matters about the group’s finances, public actions, and upcoming events are discussed and debated. In order for the meeting and the consensus process to go smoothly, hand signals are used to alert the person facilitating the meeting when someone wants to talk, ask a question, or make a clarifying point. Hand signals are also used to express agreement or disagreement with a given point. I, like everybody else in the room, was there to hear about, and give input on, upcoming events involving Occupy Denver.

On this particular Tuesday, discussion turns to a planned public action surrounding an auction of one of the thousands of homes that have been foreclosed upon in the past few years since the national financial collapse of 2008. The action being discussed is an organized disruption of one of these auctions that calls for the action’s participants to simultaneously reveal an article of red clothes in a show of solidarity with the foreclosed-upon family. The discussion surrounding this issue became mildly contentious when it became known that Move-On, a national liberal political action committee, was one of the groups sponsoring this action. Move-On first formed in the mid-nineties in response to the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. It was seen by many, including the founders of Move-On, as a purely partisan attack by the
congressional Republican majority that distracted the country and prevented issues of greater importance from being addressed. Since its inception, Move-On has advocated for issues, mainly through internet-based activities such as petition signings, which are important to the base of the Democrats such as drawing down troop levels from Iraq and preserving funding for Planned Parenthood. The issues that Move-On advocates for were not the cause of OD members' objections over being associated with the organization, rather it was the perception that they are surrogates, or advocates, for one of America’s two main political parties that caused reservations. The Occupy movement arose out of a sense that those in a position of power, be it in the financial or political sector, have little regard for the well-being (financial or otherwise) for the vast majority of Americans, in other words, the ninety-nine percent. Therefore, since Move-On is seen to be a strong ally of the Democratic party, even if it is one for its more liberal base, some people in the Occupy movement are concerned that they will be at risk of being co-opted by the Democrats, and hence rendered powerless, or even obsolete, in working to build a fairer society -- an implied goal of the Occupy Movement.

However, as one can guess, not all members of Occupy Denver are apprehensive about joining actions that Move-On (and other groups that are seen to be more in the mainstream then Occupy) is involved in. Those who are fine with finding common cause with groups like this, or even actively advocate for it, say that it is a way to grow the Occupy movement. To elaborate, by participating with groups that are undertaking actions aimed at issues that are tangible, understandable, and to which a large swatch of the American populist can relate to will bring people into the Occupy movement who
would otherwise see the Occupy movement as too extreme and one that has no bearing on the concerns of average Americans. However, conflicts over what sort of political groups Occupy should associate with isn’t limited to groups seen as mainstream but also including groups that are thought to be more revolutionary than Occupy. An older gentleman named Pablo with whom I spoke at this same General Assembly meeting, who was originally from southern Europe, complained about what he saw when he attended a nighttime march in Aurora at the prison complex. The march was to protest the privatization of the prison system that is going on nationally as well as the structural violence that is endemic in the national criminal justice system. According to Pablo, the protest got tense when some young men who were part of the protest started to provoke the police; this struck Pablo as counterproductive and he worried that such behavior would discourage the larger public from becoming involved with Occupy. Pablo wasn’t sure if these young men were members of the Denver Anarchist Black Cross (DABC), which is known for using more provocative methods during protests.

OD general assemblies met in Civic Center Park multiple times a day in the beginning of the movement. As the fall progressed, the frequency of GA's decreased to twice a week (and then down to once a week) and moved indoors during the winter months and then moved back outside to Lincoln Park. During the encampment, GA's were quite large, with people from the greater Denver metro area as well as those camping out attending. By the time I started truly getting involved, the number of people attending GA's could number anywhere from ten to fifty ten. OD participants were homogeneous in some ways and heterogeneous in others. While OD drew primarily
white members of the community, they ranged in age from college students to senior citizens. Occupy Denver was made up of diverse groups of people in terms of issues and political ideologies that came together to form overlapping groups including those concerned with economic justice, food access issues and environmental issues.

**Objective**

The objective of my research is to look at individuals in the movement and to understand what their personal goals for the movement are, as well as what tactics they are willing to partake in order to change the dominant power structures specifically those related to corporate America and the country's political system. This too will be applicable to Occupys across the country. A key characteristic in Occupy, both locally as well as nationally, is how diverse it is in terms of the political will and the expressed direction its members wish it to go. To elaborate on this point, Occupy Denver has a slew of various working groups that are dedicated to specific issues such as advocating for community gardening and teaching people how to start one, stopping foreclosures on single family homes, and organizing marches for (or against) specific goals and events. A person’s background, interests, and general disposition all play a role in which part of Occupy a person chooses to be involved in. I would argue that the public structure under which we live also guides which political issues people will engage. It is differences such as these within Occupy Denver that I plan to explore in my ethnography. The aim of my research project is to look at why people choose one form of resistance over another one; why people are comfortable working with more moderate, or more radical, groups who have some shared values and goals, while other Occupy supporters are adamantly
opposed to being linked to one group or other. This paper will explore how I use ethnographic narratives and reflexivity in my fieldwork. I will also address the anthropological concept of the “field” as well as resistance. Seymour sees resistance “in a context of differential power relationships; resistance refers to intentional, and hence conscious, acts of defiance or opposition by a subordinate individual or group of individuals against a superior individual or set of individuals. Such acts are counter-hegemonic but may not succeed in effecting change” (2006:305). This definition correctly lays out that in order for an act to be resistance, it has to confront and challenge the established power structure with the intent to affect change.

It is important to note that the framework of resistance we are seeing OD through is somewhat different from resistance movements of the past such as the civil rights movements of the 1950’s and 1960’s. As Schneiderrites writes about Occupy Wall Street (OWS):

the movement is being forced to resort not to civil disobedience but to what political scientist Bernard Harcourt has proposed we call “political disobedience”: Civil disobedience accepted the legitimacy of political institutions, but resisted the moral authority of resulting laws. Political disobedience, by contrast, resists the very way in which we are governed: it resists the structure of partisan politics, the demand for policy reforms, the call for party identification, and the very ideologies that dominated the post-War period (2011:C1).

During the struggle for civil rights, most activists and protesters saw the greater structure as one of the routes through which racial justice would be achieved with good reasons: Brown v. Board of Education and the subsequent utilization by the federal government of the National Guard to enforce the ruling showed civil rights leaders that there was a basic integrity in the American structure of government. This is far from the case with OWS
protesters who see that the problems facing American society are endemic to the governance system itself.

**Background**

Occupy Wall Street came to prominence in the fall of 2011 during an economic crisis that included the subprime mortgage crisis as well as the commonly held perception that the large financial institutions that brought the American economy to the brink of collapse in 2008 hadn’t been punished, or even adequately regulated, as the result of their irresponsible and fraudulent business behaviors. In fact, as I was writing this in May of 2013, news broke that a new national group called the Home Defenders League (HDL) were holding a “week of action” in Washington DC to push lawmakers to force big banks, such as Wells Fargo, to work with home owners on mortgage modifications as a way to decrease the tide of foreclosures in the country. The concern over the epidemic of foreclosures has been a major matter that Occupy Denver has focused on in conjunction with other community groups such as the Colorado Progressive Coalition (who is also connected with the HDL) and has resulted in direct actions such as ‘occupying’ foreclosed homes with homeowners.

The inaction of lawmakers to adequately deal with issues such as the foreclosure crisis is viewed by members of the Occupy movement, and many others, as the result of the cozy relationships between big business and Washington. As Piven writes, “over the past three decades, business domination of politics has become nearly total…corporations open Washington offices, launch political action committees…and beef up the trade association that are now virtually a branch of government” (2006:6-7). The wide reach
of corporate power into the halls of government was further enabled by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Citizens United case in 2010, which prohibited limits on political donations by corporations and unions. Unions rarely can compete with the assets of corporations because of their lack of financial power. This ruling by the Supreme Court is often brought up by people within OD as a prime example of how large corporations are able to assert their will in order to push the implementation of laws that benefits their interests at the expense of the general public.

...changes in the targets of participation reflect the process of globalization and the declining autonomy of the nation-state...through initiatives such as privatization, marketization and de-regulation mean that decision-making has flowed away from public bodies and official government agencies that were directly accountable to elected representatives, dispersing to a complex variety of non-profit and private agencies operating at local, national and international levels. Due to these developments, it has become more difficult for citizens to use national elections, national political parties, and national legislatures as a way of challenging public policies, reinforcing the need for alternative repertoires for political expression and mobilization (Norris:2005:13).

Therefore, when the prolonged economic recession propelled Americans to converge on Zuccotti Park, New York in September 2011, the target of their frustrations wasn’t their government but, rather, Wall Street – the symbolic power center of American corporations and the American financial sector. In addition to the prolonged economic slowdown of recent years, members of the Occupy movement also see the growing income gap in the U.S. as unjust and unsustainable. According to the website inequality.org, “in 2007, the top 1 percent's share of national income peaked at 23.5 percent… [additionally] between 1979 and 2009, the top 5 percent of American families
saw their real incomes increase 72.7 percent, according to Census data. Over the same period, the lowest-income fifth saw a decrease in real income of 7.4 percent.”

The encampment in Zuccotti Park also spoke to the increased influence the private sector has on civic life. In modern America the public square has been gradually replaced by private spaces, often spaces of commerce such as indoor malls. This privatization of the civic forums affects the way people converse with their community and governments; it affects the ways dissent can be shown since individuals entering these spaces are subject to laws of trespass as well as rules of conduct determined by the property owner. Thus, when looking at public demonstrations, it is extremely rare to see them in “public spaces” which are in fact privately owned. However OWS’s use of Zuccotti Park exploited the fact that, while it was accessible to the public, it was owned by a private property management group and as a result the curfew ordinances of city-owned parks didn't apply. Therefore, we can say that by choosing Zuccotti Park as the location for their encampment, we can see that OWS was bringing attention to the increased privatization of public spaces while simultaneously finding a way to take advantage of this trend.

**Root and Structure of Occupy**

The Occupy movement, which started in New York City, quickly spread to other major American cities – Boston, Portland, Oakland, etc. – within a month in quite an organic fashion. To elaborate, each Occupy was its own autonomous organization that decided and organized their own direct actions without being dictated by another Occupy group. This doesn’t mean that these various groups never coordinated with each other on
significant marches or solidarity marches – May Day or marches when a given Occupy experienced state repression – only that it was never demanded that one Occupy perform a stated action. In other words, the intra-Occupy structure was horizontally structured, where every individual Occupy group had the same amount of power to put out a call for an action and to either respond by organizing an action within their own community (which was what usually happened in OD) or to decide not to heed the call.

Horizontalism was not only the structure between the various Occupies, but within each of them as well. Participatory democracy, also referred to as horizontalism is a model of non-hierarchical decision making in which matters are decided through a consensus process. Norris describes some common characteristics associated with horizontal organizations:

These agencies are characterized by decentralized networked communications among loose coalitions, relatively flat ‘horizontal’ rather than ‘vertical’ organizational structures, and more informal modes of belonging, including shared concern about diverse issues and identity politics. People can see themselves as belonging simply by ‘turning up’ or sharing political sympathies with an easy-entrance, easy-exit permeability of organizational boundaries (Norris:2005:10).

This form of decision making isn’t unique to Occupy; past movements such as the anti-nuclear movement, as well as parts of the feminist movement of the 1970’s used the participatory form of democracy in their organizations. It is also worth noting that during the initial planning phase of OWS, in the summer of 2011, people from the anti-globalization movement of the 1990’s were very involved and also organized in a horizontal manner. While acting on a consensus model might seem to result in disregard for dissent, this is in fact not the case. As Poletta writes of making decisions through the
means of participatory democracy, “the process of decision-making makes for a greater acceptance of the difference that coexist with shared purpose…consensus often aims…to delineate the range of individual positions…[it] balances individual initiative with solidarity; both of which are critical to successful collective actions” (2002:9). This tension, as we will see in the theory section is one of the main concepts I am looking at: the negotiation individual activists have within themselves when their preferred acts of resistance conflicts with the group’s.

From a strategic point of view, the horizontal structure of resistance movements makes sense in many ways. For one, not having a continuously designated leader allows a greater number of OD members to take a proactive role on one or more ongoing campaigns (e.g., foreclosures, legal battles) without needing to be up to speed on the other issues and actions Occupy is concerned with. It also allows people to step-up and take on tasks in ways that are best suited to their capabilities so that the planning of events and actions will go smoothly. As an outcome of such structures, participants have a bigger stake in the organization and actions and, hence, act with a greater sense of responsibility. Another very important benefit to a movement with many different leaders with revolving and evolving roles (a concept closer to the truth and more empowering than the more commonly referred to “leaderless movement”) is that state authorities cannot target a leader as a means to undermining the movement. By spreading out responsibility amongst the many members of Occupy, the movement ensures its continued viability since it isn’t reliant on a limited number of core leaders.
Factions Within Occupy: Anarchists and Reformers

Denver Anarchists of the Black Cross (DABC) was a strong and vocal presence at the OD encampment in Civic Center Park during the early days. Like in OWS, anarchists in Denver had experience that OD needed; this not only included knowledge about the above-mentioned horizontalism but also logistical knowledge of navigating the legal system when protesters got arrested on marches and during the eviction of Civic Park. The legal support DABC lent primarily came in the form of staffing the legal line: a phone number – which changed event to event - that was operational during marches or other events where arrests were thought to be possible or likely. Through the legal line, people who had been arrested were informed of their rights and connected to sympathetic and trusted lawyers. DABC also provided a lot of bail support for people who got arrested during OD actions.

However, as OD continued on into the fall, tensions grew between anarchist elements within the group and more moderate and reform-minded people. Over the next year DABC involvement in OD decreased dramatically, partly because some of them got involved in other things such as the tar sands blockade in Texas. This said, the main reason why DABC’s role in OD lessened was because they were treated with great hostility during several heated GA’s in which people with more mainstream political ideologies challenged and even objected to principles held by DABC and actions they supported.

Naturally, anarchists had their own criticisms of people who hold different views on state power and violence. In 2012, an anonymous anarchist member of Occupy
Oakland, seen as one of the more militant Occupies, published a piece on how the more mainstream, liberal members of that West Coast Occupy played an obstructionist role in anarchists actions: “a small yet dedicated group of morons set about trying hopelessly to defend the property of their masters. In the name of non-violence, these thuggish pacifists assaulted demonstrators and sought to re-establish peace on the streets” (Anonymous: 2012:174). Clearly, these Occupiers who took it upon themselves to enforce a code of nonviolence didn’t follow the concept of “diversity of tactics” (discussed below) when they imposed their ideals of nonviolence on others. This anonymous writer goes on to question the motives of these non-violent protesters who are choosing their tactic with the assumption that the public will side with them and their movement’s goals if they, the protesters, are seen as victims of state violence. Of course, this assumes that the media will go along with this narrative of portraying protesters who are striving to change the status quo of the system as undeserving of state retaliation which is a highly questionable assumption and doesn’t take into consideration the fact that those in charge of the media, or various media outlets, could have interests which aligned closer to the dominant system rather than the protesters’ interests.

The tensions among the reformers is thus: how to tackle this broken structure -- should it undergo fundamental changes while still keeping in place its skeletal structure or should the entire structure be thrown out altogether. This is the fundamental division between revolutionary anarchists and reformists and it cannot be overcome. There is a great fear in the general public of disorder and however accurate or inaccurate it is, anarchy is linked with disorder and violence.
As time went on, the more reformist elements of Occupy became more confident and forthright in stating their opinion. Actually it happened quite quickly once there was a physical encampment in Zuccotti Park and out of the hands (as it was indeed planned to be) of the primary organizers. It is important to note that while reformists did advocate for things such as a more robust social safety net and a focused job program based on increased funding for public infrastructure, no substantial fraction of Occupy wanted to form alliances with the mainstream Democratic Party. As Cooke stated, “the Democrats cannot be lumped into the reformist category, because they are not in the least advocating pro-worker reforms; they are basically for maintaining the corporate dominated status-quo by rolling back previously won reforms” (2011:online). Here we see an example of how, as mentioned above, the Occupy movement perceived the status quo governmental structure as unable to tackle current economic problems. Cooke elaborates that without advocating for these pedestrian issues (pushing to end the Afghanistan war is another example) there will never be enough people in the movement to effect change.

In the Occupies of Oakland, New York and Los Angeles unions became involved in the movement. Unions had shown that they had the fortitude to make their political opinion known when they initiated a recall against Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker after he spear-headed state legislation that reduced unions ability for collective bargaining and other things. Even if Walker did manage to hold on to his office, it illustrated that unions continued to play a role in the American political landscape. In conjunction with Occupy Cincinnati, unions were able to force lawmakers to overturn a state senate bill that limited union power. In the coastal Occupies mentioned above,
unions provided needed support including food and medical assistance: "Such combined action and reciprocal support between anti-capitalism and the organized sections of the working class represent a real breakthrough and pose exciting possibilities, but to emphasize the positive developments in the US is not to underestimate the real difficulties the movement will need to overcome" (Trudell: 2012:online). Once again we see how the joint efforts of unions and Occupy broaden the movement’s reach.

**Diversity of Tactics**

A key principle within the Occupy movement was respecting “diversity of tactics”, which meant that a whole range of resistance tactics could be employed regardless of some hesitation to use a given tactic. Not only was it an unspoken rule but part of the Saint Paul principles that was often referred to in OD, and occasionally even read verbatim, that fostered a culture in which solidarity among fellow Occupiers and explicit support for “diversity of tactics” is expected and that any internal debates over protest tactics will be resolved internally. Diversity of tactics in this context allows for activists to undertake harder and more confrontational means of resistance but also implies that individuals shouldn’t be exposed to greater risk than they feel comfortable with without their consent. The St. Paul principals originated after the 2008 protests at the Republican National convention in St. Paul, Minnesota after internal disputes over tactics became public. Some see the concept of “diversity of tactics” as a common way to accept violence within a protest movement. The phrase became popular during the Battle of Seattle and other flashpoints of the anti-globalization movement. It also fit well within the framework of horizontalism because it gave equal weight to every participant's
notion of resistance. In practice, members of OD didn't follow the exact spirit of the diversity of tactics: “In practice, however, the occupiers have kept nonviolent discipline quite well, even if they don’t entirely preach it. Their self-defense against police violence has been mainly with cameras, not physical force…they have often responded to intimidation by chanting, “This! Is! A Nonviolent Protest!” (Schneider, 2011:online).
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For my literature review, I focused on writings about Occupy as well as look at how resistance has been conceptualized within anthropology. Contemporary pieces about Occupy have covered a broad range of topics; I am focusing on discourses on tactics, specifically black bloc, since that is one of the central themes of my paper. Before getting into discussing works having to do with the Occupy movement, I will briefly review some seminal work on resistance theory; focusing mainly on resistance at the individual and local levels. First, since Occupy is very much a group movement comprised of individuals with a slew of different cultural identities, it is important to place class struggles such as OD within the recent history of more personal identity movements.

It was only in the tail end of the last century that popular resistance movements challenging this global economic system emerged. In Chiapas, Mexico the Zapatistas took over towns in the region in an armed rebellion in response to the implementation of NAFTA in January 1994 – the free trade agreement that resulted in Mexican farmers going bankrupt when American corn flooded the Mexican market. While it’s true that part of the defining characteristic of the Zapatistas’ identity was their indigenous Mayan heritage confronting the Spanish-rooted nation-state, it was as much about agrarian reform and redistribution (Edelman: 2001:292). In similar form, the infamous Battle for Seattle protest against the WTO in 1999, was in response to the less then democratic features of globalizations as Ayres writes, “in light of the WTO’s new expanded
mandate, attention focused on the lack of international safeguards for labor and human rights, environmental protection and other social concerns" (2004: 18). It is in these protest movements that grew out of the perceived failings of globalization that the Occupy movement has its deepest similarities. While OWS took a more inward focused analysis, instead of a global one, it criticized the blending of corporate interests with elected legislators; at it most fundamental root, it was protesting the economic landscape that had resulted from globalization.

**Theoretical Roots of Resistance**

There was a shift in the way resistance and collective actions were thought about after the social upheaval of the 1960's. Two theories, new social movements (NSM) and the resource mobilization paradigm, took the place of the old theories such as those delineated from Marxism or those interested in the draw of totalitarianism. The NSM paradigm holds that personal identity is rooted in "social actions" rather than their labor: "the set of cultural, cognitive, economic, and ethical models through which social practices are constituted" (Edelman:2001:288). It is by finding commonalities with the social actions of others, and hence having shared objectives, that group identity and alliances are formed. Resource mobilization (R.M.), on the other hand, holds that social movements form out of common interests and come together to achieve specific goals. RM, being goal oriented, was concerned with how individuals within groups use resources to accomplish their desired ends; because of this focus on groups that had some resources to begin with, and does little to help us understand mass social movements since "its focus [was] on the construction of 'social movement industries' made up of
'social movement organizations', regarded collective action mainly as interest group politics played out by socially connected groups rather than by the most disaffected" (Edelman:2001:289).

In reading the literature from the last quarter of the twentieth century, as well as simply being attentive at the time, one can see examples of the NSN paradigm in American social movements; organized primarily along lines of personal identity—gender, racial, sexually etc., as opposed to class as was the case earlier in the century with the large Progressive and labor movements, the goal of these movements were to expand the idea of “normaley” in order that economic and cultural opportunities weren’t just reserved for heterosexual able-bodied white males. This included making all levels of education accessible to ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities as well as getting rid of the social stigma of being queer. Edelman writes that constructing “identity is a process through which social actors construct meaning on the basis of cultural attributes that are given priority over other potential sources of meaning” (2001:298); most relevant to our discussion is that cultural identity of individuals usurped their connection to the economic class they were a part of. Social movements that ignored the injustices being imposed on the larger working class, even the managerial class, electing to focus on social identity issues and ignored neoliberal globalization only allowed these anti-labor ideologies take deeper root. At its inception, the Occupy Movement refocused people's identity on their economic and class status marked a shift back to class consciousness.
James C. Scott

"Social scientists of various orientations concerned with geopolitics and revolution had ready-made categories ("national liberation," "subversion") for analyzing events in the "Third World." But the turmoil in the developed North highlighted the inadequacy of existing social scientific frameworks and gave rise to new and rich debates" (Edelman:2001:285).

In Scott's classic work about peasant resistance in a Malay farmer village, the author writes about how the rich badmouths a poor peasant and, conversely, poor peasants gossip about a given wealthy land owner when the subject of the gossip typifies the worst stereotypical traits assigned to members of the counter socio-economic group. Specifically, extreme stinginess, predatory business practices and frugality are behaviors that would expose a wealthy villager to social ridicule whereas an explicit and aggressive request for charitable aid by a villager of little means would similarly result in being the subject of gossip. Scott explains this by writing that this type of chitchat, “…are attempts to create and maintain a certain view of what is decent acceptable human behavior ought to be…[it] helps to define what is normal, correct, preferred behavior” (23:1985). Scott’s observations on the function of gossip in expressing and perpetuating social norms isn’t exclusive to Malay culture, on the contrary, gossip is a near (if not absolute) universal way individual human societies reinforce concepts of what are, and are not, culturally acceptable behaviors.

Broadly speaking, the Occupy movement uses a very public form of gossip in much of the same way that Scott saw poorer villagers do in Malaysia. There is a certain
similarity between the scorn directed at wealthy Malays who used high interest-rates loans to seize land owned by farmers who took out loans in order to buy seeds at the beginning of the growing season through shady practices and the subprime mortgage crisis that cause many Americans to get foreclosed on after, at least in some cases, they got an usurious and fraudulent mortgage. However, whereas the gossip in Malaysia is about a specific individual who is personally known, OWS criticized and badmouthed a whole class of people (the “1%”) and entire industries (e.g., the financial industry) and their business models. Criticism and public shaming of individuals involved with industries Occupy is critical of does take place; the best example of this is when large media outlets report on the excesses and crimes of a given high-powered CEO; however, rather than acting as a means to shame other CEOs into behaving in a more socially acceptable way, singling out one unsavory CEO plays into the idea that the problem isn’t with the system but rather that there are just a “few bad eggs” and thus allows a system that Occupy members see as fundamentally broken to continue. The scale of society clearly is the factor for gossip either being or not being an adequate tool for keeping society members from ignoring social norms. In the rural Malay village Scott undertook his fieldwork in, the people who were the subjects of disapproving chatter had personal and social interactions with those they mistreated and, thus, couldn’t ignore the fact that they were being judged by their fellow villagers. This is clearly not the case for the CEOs of large American banks who will rarely interact with their critics.

One of the main theses of Scott’s book is that Malay peasants carry out acts of resistance that fly under the radar – gossip, sabotage, purposeful incompetence, “passive
noncompliance” – because it requires little organization and carries little chance of punishment from landlords and employers. Scott highlights the low risk of these everyday acts resistance by writing that peasants rarely come into visible conflict with authorities as a result of their defiance. He likens the peasants’ acts to African-Americans slaves in the pre Civil War South in terms of their subtlety due to the force with which explicit resistance to the established economic and social order of the day would be met with extreme repression and violence (1985). OWS and the subsequent American Occupy movements forego these less noticeable forms of resistance for very visible forms of organized protests which in places turned very confrontational. While it's true, as one will read below, that some members of OD did perform acts of resistance that are unseen, the most recognizable characteristic of the OM was it's taking over public spaces for all to see.

Scott’s book is one of the major texts in the canon of resistance theory and reframed how anthropologists look at resistance and it is because his work has been so influential that it must be addressed. For my research, however, the concept of everyday resistance takes a different form compared to the nature of that in Scott’s ethnography. Clearly these differences in means of resistance can be traced to cultural and political structures. One major difference is that, unlike peasant resistance in Malaysia, the Occupy Movement was very visible – it was located in public spaces and their criticism of Wall Street as known through public demonstrations and rallies - in its first few months. As the media began paying them greater attention, Occupy members were able to tell the public, when the coverage allowed them to, about the movement which led to
more established social justice organizations to become involved. They undoubtedly faced strong state oppression because of it; the most glaring of these were the coordinated eviction of Occupy camps. While Occupy’s speaking ill of the 1% could be seen as a parallel to villagers using gossip to enforce social norms the comparison ends up being weak. Because of this and the ability for Occupiers to forgo daily resistance and instead participate in confrontational acts of civil and political disobedience, Scott’s framing of resistance isn’t useful in the context of Occupy because of the much more complex social context Occupy took place in.

**Hollander and Einwohner**

In their article, Hollander and Einwohner lay out how social sciences conceptualized resistance by focusing in on two key issues regarding what is considered resistance: it must be "intereactional" on the part of those resisting, and must it be noticed by the target of the resisters. To put it another way, what is the required level of recognition and intent needed for an act to be thought as resistance (2004:534)? They describe resistance as “intereactional” where both those resisting and the power structure define what acts of resistance are (2004:548). They write that the resistance Scott wrote about in *Weapons of the Oppressed* wasn’t recognizable to those the peasants were resisting against, which didn’t negate these acts as resistance according to Scott since acts of resistance don’t necessarily result in change. They go on to write how Scott’s ethnography inspired others in the field to write about everyday resistance, for example Levi’s 1998 work on an indigenous group in Southern Mexico who produce textiles and other goods required for daily live in order to be self-sufficient (540).
In the late 1970s, Ong examined how going from young peasant women living under the watchful and policing eyes of their families to single factory workers with an elevated family status because of their new ability to contribute financially they still were under the surveillance of, or in Ong’s term disciplined by, their Japanese bosses. These bosses had the ability to, “enforce and induce compliance with the political, social, and economic objectives, considered rational and functional for capitalistic production” (2010:5). Ong probes the notion that these female factory workers used traditional female acts, such as complaining about premenstrual syndrome or having a fainting attack, as a form of resistance. To put it another way, within their new roles of industrial workers, they made use of the cultural concept of female emotional and physical fragility to get out of, or subvert, the demands placed on them by a capitalistic work environment. Ong’s ethnography clearly starts out from a Marxist framework but she weaves into it an analysis of gendered behaviors and expectations when looking at resistance methods. Relating it to my own theoretical framework when looking at means of resistance in OD, Ong’s depiction of factory worker “acts of daily resistance” (borrowing Scott’s phrase) were determined by the social and cultural capital they had at their disposal. To put it another way, these women undertook their chosen acts of resistance based on what their social position and personal relationships allows them to.

In the course of her article, Seymour reviews three ethnographies about resistance: Ong’s ethnography dealing with how young women in Malaysian factories resisted the new realities of industrial neoliberalism through a Marxist lens, Raheja and
Gold’s work on gender and kinship in India, and Ahearn’s research on how exchanging love letters in Nepal is changing the social norms of young women there. Seymour faults Ong for not actually digging into the meaning of the psychological terms she uses, “subjectivity” for example, in her exploration of how Malay women employ the cultural concept of spirit possession as a means for resistance (2006: 305). In considering Raheja and Gold’s ethnography, Seymour questioned if there was any real resistance present in the songs of Northern Indian women that poked fun at patriarchy while infusing them with erotic context because these women don’t present an alternate view of gendered norms. She continues in saying that rather than seeing these song as “mental preparation for a changed reality…however, to the extent that they currently provide safe and restricted outlets for women’s dissatisfactions, one must argue that they are actually anti-subversive” (2006: 312). I understand the hesitance Seymour part not to overuse the concept of resistance; however, seeing that the main thesis in her article is that the inner thoughts of individuals are the impetus for actions of resistance and thus arguing that cognitive anthropology must be included whenever we discuss resistance, as Giddens also alludes to when he puts forth the idea that reflection and narratives of past actions and events precedes resistance, her dismissal of the subversive affects of these songs ignore the very possibility of an individual reconstructing their attitudes of gender roles because of the fact that they provide the very mental space to do so.

Lastly, Seymour writes about Ahearn’s ethnography that is also about changing gender norms but this time in Nepal and it’s the result of increased education and literacy. More specifically, Ahearn writes about how the recent increase in literacy has enable
courting couples in Nepal to develop a sexually chaste, yet emotionally intimate, relationship through writing letters away from the watchful eyes of chaperones. In her analysis of this study, Seymour writes that Ahearn provides the strongest example of resistance but faults her for, like Ong, trying to talk about agency without approaching the psychological underpinnings of it (2006: 315). Seymour’s article provides the reader with good examples of how ethnographers strive to find daily examples of resistance.

Norris

Norris writes about different forms of political action during modern times. This narrow look at resistance leads her to primarily concern herself with things related to the electoral process - party memberships - and common forms of political protests - rallies and petition signing. She writes, with regard to political protests, that factors such as age, education and employment history, gender, and race play a role in determining who participates: "Cultural attitudes, closely related to socioeconomic status and education, were also important for motivating engagement; people are more likely to participate if they feel informed, interested and efficacious, if they care strongly about the outcome and if they think that they can make a difference" (Norris:2005:1). I began my own fieldwork with a consideration towards the education and socioeconomic backgrounds of OD participants as well.

In Norris' piece, she goes on to write about how some within the social psychology school of normative theory there is a subset called the "idealists" positing that those who hold that "involvement in deliberative debate, community groups, and decentralized decision-making...mak[e] better people by strengthening citizen awareness,
encouraging interest in public affairs, and promoting social tolerance, generalized reciprocity, and interpersonal trust” (Norris:2005:2). As we will see, similar assertions are made in regards to community gardening and an increase in likelihood that people who get involved with other civic actions as well. It is also worth noting, specifically regarding "generalized reciprocity", that while there was the encampment in Civic Park there was a sense of inter-reliance in terms of daily needs while discourses about public affairs were going on.

**Academia and its Enthusiastic Focus on Occupy**

In a *New York Times* article about academia’s focus on Occupy, Schuessler writes, “academics across the country have embraced the movement since it emerged in September, organizing classes, publishing reams of commentary and issuing calls to “occupy” not just Wall Street but also sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy” (2012: www.nytimes.com/2012/05/01/books/academia-becomes-occupied-with-occupy-movement.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 2011). The speed with which anthropologists began to study the Occupy Movement was quite impressive indeed. Writings on the Occupy movement are varied in their themes since it touched upon many popular topics in contemporary anthropology: use of public space, new technologies as organizational tools, and the inner workings of horizontalism, to name a few. One example of this is Juris' (2012) piece in *American Ethnography* on how social media played a role in how the organization of a diverse group of people into a physical space at the onset of the movement was to be re-imagined after Occupy Boston was raided as a way to decentralize the movement so that individuals only needed to be connected to people.
working on similar issues in a way that is more likely to reach out to marginalized
groups. At the 2012 American Anthropological Association's meeting, papers discussed
a variety of different aspects of Occupy – how GA’s factions; the organization of direct
actions and under what circumstances Occupy used them; the way horizontalism is used
in decision making; and how homeless within occupy was or was not accepted into the
movement.

Nugent, in his rundown of articles by anthropologists on the Occupy Movement
mentioned Razsa and Kurnik's comment about an Occupy-like movement in Slovenia and
how the process of horizontal decision making process is just as important -if not more
so- as the results of the movement (2012:280). I heard similar things from people,
informants and others, in OD, saying how it was a prefigurative movement. In his review
Nugent is interested in "three features of the movements: their temporal registers, their
moral imaginaries, and their implicit and explicit understandings of democracy"
(2012:281). He discusses how ethnographers writing about OWS members placed the
movement apart from the past and saw it as a new form of political and social
engagement. He also writes on how Occupy's narrative of being the 99% is at odds with
the realities of the movement, "a chant that employs the term metastasize is unlikely to be
appealing...to people who are not highly educated or to immigrant groups with limited
language skills. Spontaneity, playfulness, and the like, may be important principles of
expression to those in the Occupy Movement but likely strike many other groups as
irrelevant" (2012:282). Regarding this last point, I heard people in OD discussing during
the run-up to the 2012 American presidential election, as one will see below.
David Graeber, a well-known anarchist anthropologist, is a prime example of how academics, and anthropologist in particular, merged their activism and research in regards to Occupy. He was involved in the pre-encampment planning stage of OWS where he drew upon has experience in alter-globalization movement. As somebody who has written about how governance through consensus worked in Madagascar as well as the cultural and historic essence of debt and rolling jubilee, OWS hit on many subjects he has been interested in throughout his academic career. His role in OWS was written about in a New York Times Magazine profile as well as in Businessweek, which poses a bit of a quandary for a leaderless movement to have an individual be treated as a de facto leader. To be clear, it wasn’t that Graber presented himself as a leader of the movement but rather it was the large media outlets’ inability, or unwillingness, to accurately portray the structure and spirit of the movement.

All this said, Graeber's notoriety gave him a platform to push back on criticism from the Left of Black Bloc; clearly a topic of the upmost relevance to this paper. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, tensions existed within OD between anarchists, primarily identified as DABC members, and more moderate elements within Occupy. This situation wasn’t unique to Denver. Chris Hedges, a well respected journalist on the left, published the article "The Cancer in Occupy" on the widely read blog Truthdig in which he stated that anarchists who took part in Black Bloc had split the Occupy Movement and antagonized people on the traditional left such as union members and environmentalists. In Hedges' words, “any group that seeks to rebuild social structures, especially through nonviolent acts of civil disobedience, rather than physically
destroy, becomes, in the eyes of Black Bloc anarchists, the enemy” (2012). His central argument is that the anything-goes nature of Black Bloc anarchists, specifically their willingness to confront the police and engage in property destruction, ends up playing into the hands of the ruling class and corporate media because it scares Americans who might otherwise be sympathetic to Occupy’s message: “the Black Bloc’s thought-terminating cliché of ‘diversity of tactics’ in the end opens the way for hundreds or thousands of peaceful marchers to be discredited by a handful of hooligans. The state could not be happier. It is a safe bet that among Black Bloc groups in cities such as Oakland are *agents provocateurs* spurring them on to more mayhem” (ibid). During my fieldwork at OD, some of my informants avoided some nighttime DABC marches because of a fear of violence or the atmosphere that fear created, what ended up actually happening was that the DABC was gradually pushed out by more “moderate” elements within the occupy movement.

Graeber responded to Hedges’ article by first dispelling the myth that Black Bloc is an organized group; it is, in fact just a protest tactic that may or may not include episodes of property destruction and may or may not be lead by anarchists. He also questions the notion that police repression of OWS, and Occupy Oakland, was made worse because of more “extremist” elements and in fact what is interesting is that Hedges himself writes that the police raided Occupy camps because the peaceful nature of occupy threatened the powers that be. Graeber, most importantly, explains why OWS chose to embrace the philosophy of diversity of tactics: “diversity of tactics” means leaving such matters up to individual conscience rather than imposing a code on anyone.
Partly, this is because imposing such a code invariably backfires. In practice, it means some groups break off in indignation and do even more militant things than they would have otherwise, without coordinating with anyone else—as happened, for instance, in Seattle. The results are usually disastrous. After the Battle of Seattle - where protestors watched fellow activists actively turning others over to the police—activists involved in such street protests quickly decided we needed to ensure this never happened again. What they found that if they declared “we shall all be in solidarity with one another. We will not turn in fellow protesters to the police. We will treat you as brothers and sisters. But we expect you to do the same to us”—then, those who might be disposed to more militant tactics will act in solidarity as well, either by not engaging in militant actions at all for fear they will endanger others…or doing so in ways that run the least risk of endangering fellow activists“ (Graeber:2012).

In other words, the agreement within Occupies to follow the St. Paul principles was a way to ensure a certain level of unity and trust within the group. Allowing for a wide range of resistance tactics also reflects the fundamental organization of Occupy in two ways: first off, the horizontal nature of the movement simply required that a variety of tactics coexist given the wide swath of society members were from as well as the structural lack of the ability to enforce a standard of protest. Secondly, given how many issues Occupy ended up taking on – corporate power, student debt, the Keystone pipeline, police brutality, etc. – it is logical that members of OD would embrace a large toolbox of tactics.
CHAPTER III

THEORY

The theoretical framework of my thesis is based upon three foundational frameworks: Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and social capital, Giddens’s theory on how agency and structure interact to result in structural change, and concepts in cognitive anthropology. According to Grenfell, "Bourdieu's move away from structuralism was a move towards seeking to understand agents as theory generating agents themselves” (2008:38). Both Bourdieu and Giddens were concerned with understanding how individuals approach situations and interactions are directly influenced by past experiences and practices. It can be said that both men held that “all action is socioculturally mediated, both in its production and in its interpretation” (Ahearn :2001:112). For Giddens, this dialectic relationship between agency and structure is the process by which culture is simultaneously reproduced and altered. Finally, cognitive anthropology seeks to understand the way that individuals organize and reflect on past interactions. When thinking about resistance and cultural change as Giddens does, cognitive anthropology can easily have a role in the conversation since the innate reflectivity involved in his process is impacted by how an individual elects to evaluate his/her behavior and then chooses what behaviors will work best in future situations. In looking at Occupy Denver, I situate my data from my fieldwork within these theories to look at why my informants chose the type of resistance they did.

Agency and structure is a topic that appears in current anthropological writings quite often and it will be a major theme throughout my research. Agency is the socio-
cultural mediated capacity people have to act that, unlike the concept of free will, acknowledges one’s cultural influences how that person is able to act. There must be a specific reason and awareness behind an act for it to be considered agency. However, agency doesn’t have to translate into resistance; if a person has an opportunity to move away to a city where they could have a greater degree of autonomy, but actively chose to stay in their home village, they have still exercised agency; even if they elected to be complacent through their actions. In contrast, structure is commonly understood to be an overarching force that limits and guides one’s actions as well as how one understands what is even possible. Structural forms aren't limited to written laws but also include cultural norms and traditions; and these structural forms influences the range of acts a person can plausibly undertake. In the case of forms of resistance, when somebody elects to confront globalization by participating in a community garden, therefore not relying on large agribusiness for their fresh fruits and vegetables, rather than going on marches protesting the entire global food system, they are utilizing their agency when they are choosing to be involved in one form of resistance over another.

**Bourdieu**

Agency is the socio-cultural mediated capacity to act that, unlike the concept of free will, acknowledges that one’s culture influences how a person thinks. As Berreman wrote, “people manipulate their social identities…in response to the circumstances in which they find themselves, [to achieve] the goals to which they aspire” (1972:71). Even though Berreman wasn’t explicitly referring to agency or Bourdieu, this quote aptly
sums up how individuals move through life by changing their actions to better suit various situations.

Within this framework of agency, I will look at Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic capital, social capital and cultural capital to see how stringent activists as well as milder activists use their various forms of capital to make headway with their tactics. Here we must interject that resistance isn’t a binary between hard and soft tactics but rather its acts and tactics lies on a continuum and that individual activists take part in acts all along this spectrum. As one will see in my discussion chapter, the type of resistance depends not only on one's proclivities but also what is being resisted. I will investigate whether or not fear of losing these types of capital influences the ways that people undertake various acts of resistance or, conversely, if desire for greater symbolic, social, or cultural capital leads some to undertake acts of harder resistance. Bourdieu envisioned capital as a person-specific resource that grew and was refined through the course of a person's lifetime (1986:241); however, it is important to note that the type of capital one can have is limited by the structure they are in.

Symbolic capital can refer to notions of honor and prestige that elicits admiration from fellow community members. For example, with regards to the topic at hand, an individual might choose to camp-out with Occupy Denver in part because of the fact that their peers would gain admiration for them. Unlike social capital, which gain its strength from one’s ability to mobilize group support, symbolic capital is based on personal notoriety earned by more formalized means such as employment or education.
Social capital is based on group membership and the support that a given group can offer the individual. “The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (1986:248). Working within OD, it becomes clear that social capital isn’t spread evenly among group members and this affects whose ideas get picked-up by the group at large. It can also be informative here when looking at individuals who are concerned about the increasing power of corporations but chooses not to participate in the more hard-line activist actions of Occupy Denver out of fear of arrest. Being arrested and charged would, in some social circles, decrease one's social capital due to the stigma of being on the wrong end of the judicial system. Being arrested would increase one's social capital in other social circles.

Lastly, cultural capital refers to skills people have acquired throughout their lifetime that allow them to behave in a culturally appropriate way and even use their skills of social behavior to climb the socio-economic ladder. The acquisition of cultural capital starts in the family and is a means to navigate one’s social environment in a way that is most beneficial to the individual. Bourdieu writes about three different aspects of cultural capital: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state. He came to his conceptualization of cultural capital as a way to explain the reason for the differences in academic success in relation to social class: i.e. why children from lower classes fared worse than their peers from higher classes (1986:243). However, it is important to note that Bourdieu didn't view educational institutions as merely passive
objects that social classes molded to their own desires and requirements but rather as an active partner in reproducing the established social structure itself. We can see the educational roots of cultural capital in the three states of it. The embodied state refers to the "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (1986:243). The objectified state refers to material culture, such as paintings and works of literature, that a person with the appropriate knowledge of the object to make use of as cultural capital. Lastly, the institutionalize state refers to a formal institution (such as one of formal education) that holds the cultural power to determine which cultural capital is of value (1986:248). Therefore, when looking at individuals who say that they elect to work inside the system (e.g., gathering signatures for potential ballot initiatives) as well as outside the system (e.g., participating in Occupy itself) because they are able to adjust their behavior to different environments, we are talking about persons with cultural capital. Applied to forms of resistance, the framework of cultural capital can be a way for us to look at how people navigate relationships in social movements in order to give credence to their activities.

Bourdieu defines habitus as a property of social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a "structured and structuring structure"...it is "structured" by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is "structuring" in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unattended. Thus "structure" comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Grenfell; 2008:51). Habitus refers to the culture in which we were raised and in which we are living. It is comprised of
behaviors that have become practices; over time these same practices become second nature even though they largely resulted from structures that were in place at the time of their inception. Current practices, according to this concept, cannot be understood by looking at stimuli that seemed to produce them or their continued practice. Instead, habitus can only be understood via the past structure surrounding their production (Bourdieu: 2001:533): “Practice is dependent on habitus and capital and field. Habitus is...both structured by conditions of existence and generates practices, beliefs, perceptions...in accordance with its own structure” (Grenfell: 2008:51). Following this logic, collective actions are the outcome of past experiences and perceptions. Bourdieu holds that culture is stable by its nature, that it is not susceptible to change. He is more concerned with the constrictions structure places upon people to create their own agency rather than how they used agency to interact with the structure. Therefore, when looking at resistance and social change from the perspective of habitus, it is only through the use of various capitals that change might occur.

**Giddens**

Society has bearings on what types of actions we think are possible in order to assert agency. Giddens’ theories are concerned with how agency and structure interact with each other. “Giddens consistently links agency to structure through his discussion of rules and resource...Giddens’ theory of structuration...[holds that] people’s actions are shaped (in both constraining and enabling ways) by the very social structures that those actions then serve to reinforce or reconfigure” (Ahearn:2001:117). Giddens is concerned with presenting a theory about how action and structure interact with one another that is
situated within time, space and history. He is concerned with how institutions inform actions and how power adds to our understanding of the interplay between agency and the shaping of "social practices" (2002:232). Daily acts and our reflexive attention to them from a situation in which, according to Giddens, agency "does not refer to a series of discrete acts combined together, but to a continuous flow of conduct" (2002:233). This is an important thing to note because it allows us to extrapolate that present attitudes and actions are the outcome of our previous actions, their outcomes, and our reflections on them. Of course, one can see how this in turn is connected to habitus, but instead of looking at how our complete past experiences influences our own actions, Giddens is concerned with how analysis of one's own previous actions influences her own future actions. Giddens makes the point that when an actor analyzes her actions they not only situate it in a specific point in time but they also remember the setting and circumstances of where the action took place. The author writes, "practical consciousness...exists in the relation between the rationalization of action and actors' stocks of knowledge; and between the rationalization of action and the unconscious. The stocks of knowledge...employed by actors in the production of social encounters, are not usually known to those actors in an explicitly codified form" (2002:234). Clearly this unconscious form of knowledge can also be conceptualized as knowledge gained and absorbed through a person's habitus.

Giddens states that there is a duality to structure: "by the duality of structure I mean that the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the practices that constitutes the systems" (2002:238). Structure is often conceptualized as
the all-surrounding culture in which we all live in and are all a part of, including the laws we live under, and the socio-economic class we belong to. While this is an accurate idea of structure, for my fieldwork, I am more concerned with how the structure of Occupy Denver, a coherent sub-culture interacts, shapes, and creates impediments and opportunities for the individual activist who is an unequivocal member of the group. Being horizontal in nature, every member has a theoretically equal say in the structure, rules, and practices of the group, however the structure Occupy disseminates is still, at its root, separate from individual agency.

While it is a given that those active in OD are involved because they agree that the current dominant economic system is unjust and unsustainable, the means by which they elect to reform, if not completely dismantle, it varies and sometimes these variations comes up against the understood framework and ideology of OD. Therefore, at times when individuals are participating in an act of resistance towards large economic and political institutions they can encounter opposition from fellow Occupiers regarding tactics; as one will in the next chapter regarding Shelby for president. How one deals with these internal structural obstacles within Occupy, through the usage of different capital, is incorporated into the structure of Occupy not only because acts reproduce structure but because of the horizontal nature of Occupy, the individual can shift the structure of the group if others see the benefit for it shifting. This is tied to Giddens’ concept of structure knowledge “as memory traces - of 'how things are to be done' (said, written), on the part of social actors” (236) that are reflected upon and capabilities become the assumed and accepted way of doing things. This accepting of actions is, of
course contextual. As Giddens goes on to write, “Activities or practices are brought into being in the context of overlapping and connected sets of rules, given coherence by their involvement in the constitution of social systems in the movement of time” (2002:237). Referring back to Occupy, the practices of activists in the group forms the rules of OD itself and these rules cannot be looked at one by one, but rather altogether in order to understand how concepts of resistance within the group are seen. It is the formation of these interwoven practices, which are time and space specific, that form the structure of occupy. Therefore, even though the structure of Occupy is the outcome of its members’ resistance practices, there is still possibility for individual members of OD to choose to resist the current corporate economic system in ways that don’t fall in line with all of the accepted rules in Occupy.

It is important to keep in mind when considering ways that the structure of Occupy can impede, as well as create opportunities, the individual activist. Giddens’ notion of duality of structure that every structure, regardless of its scale, both inhibits and facilitates actions; “structure thus is not to be conceptualized as a barrier to action, but as essentially involved in its production in the most radical processes of social change” (2002:239). Giddens is not necessarily viewing resistance’s reliance upon the structure it’s opposing as Foucault does – that resistance is formed by the very power structure it is resisting against because this power structure presents the things which must be fought – but rather that within the structure lies the tools, knowledge, and methods of resistance that are used to fight the dominant power structure. Thus, when we are specifically focusing on the structure of Occupy, the process of bringing proposals to GA can serve as
a way for a person to transform the practices of Occupy to better fit their ideals. For example, some Occupies around the country (not OD) implemented a form of progressive stack that called for underrepresented populations (such as racial minorities) to skip stack and make comments first thus attempting to mitigate white privilege in a small way. Similarly, the American Occupy movement appropriated the nation’s ideal of freedom of speech, assembly and public dissent for the purpose of subverting the country’s current power structure.

In looking at resistance, or conflicts, within Occupy in comparison to Occupy’s larger protest of American political and economic structures, the idea of how much power one has to effect change comes up. Giddens defines power in terms of the “capabilities of actors to make certain 'accounts count' and to enact or resist sanctioning processes but these capabilities draw upon modes of domination structured into social systems” (2002: 241). Following along these lines we can see that individuals have more power within Occupy to change the status quo than to change American capitalism. However, seeing how one is able to have power in a group like Occupy can propel people to work for change in the society at large. We can see that people involved in other types of voluntary community organizations, such as community gardens, are more likely to be more civic minded and involved overall. Glover, Shinew, Parry write that community gardens and other civic-minded groups are fundamental for a functioning democracy because through membership in these groups people get a sense of those common civic processes needed to maintain such organizations (2005:76). The authors continue on this theme of civic-mindedness by saying that "members became more politically active in
their local community. Evidently, leisure-oriented grassroots associations... [are] associated with fostering a more civic culture" (Glover, Shinew, Parry: 2005:77). Following this logic, it can be surmised that people who experience their own power within Occupy are already prone to be involved in civic issues will be even more active because of successful interactions within Occupy.

### Cognitive Anthropology

In her article, Seymour argues that anthropologists who theorize about resistance overlook the psychological underpinnings of it. Seymour faults “the anti-psychological stance of Geertz and other leading cultural interpretivists and symbolic anthropologists who have actively rejected ‘the intrapersonal, internalized, meaning-making side of culture” (2006:305). She states that the conceptualization of resistance in anthropology began with the realization in the field that cultural hegemony isn’t complete and all encompassing: certainly a key notion for anyone looking at resistance. While it is true that cultures have a self-propagating nature and that, as the theory of hegemony holds, those in positions of power set the bar for what are acceptable behaviors and values, these established cultural norms are not absolute and do not penetrate into every segment of society (2006:304). It is within these untouched spaces where resistance can first appear. For example, it is widely known that the American economic system is largely dependent on a culture of continuous consumption; however, within certain American sub-cultures - environmentalist, labor groups - there is the assumption among some people in these groups that it is morally preferable to buy as few things as possible because consumerism is looked upon as perpetuating the current unjust and unsustainable system. This attitude
is also present in occupy as one of my informants illustrated when she spoke to me about how she boycotted buying goods produced by companies owned by the Koch Brothers, who are known for supporting right-wing candidates

Agency undeniably plays a large part in the decision of an individual, or a group of individuals, to resist a part of the dominant power structure and its ideology. One of the main points of Seymour's article is that in order for anthropologists to create a flexible theory about resistance - how it comes about, who takes part in it - we need to include human psychology in our analysis (2006: 303). She writes, “much has been written about ‘actors’, their ‘agency’, ‘desires’, and states of ‘consciousness’, …[however] agency [has] not been tied to any theory of how individuals learn, internalize and then are motivated by ‘cultural forms’” (2006: 304). In other words, Seymour is advocating for anthropologists who look at issues of resistance to include a degree of cognitive anthropology, which focuses on understanding how individuals conceive of their cultures including how persons acquire knowledge and categorizes information. D’Andrade writes on this topic that it, “...is the study of the relation between human society and human thought…[it] is closely linked to psychology because the study of how particular social groups categorize and reason” (1995: 1). I would add to this that what shapes our perception and understanding of our culture is our habitus that is unique for every individual and, therefore, exploring the reason why people elect to practice resistance in the ways that they do. While cognitive anthropology has fallen out of favor in the past few years, I include it here for two reasons: first, since one of the things I'm looking at in this paper is to understand how participants in the Occupy Movement conceptualized
resistance, going on without mentioning cognitive anthropology since it is known for the attention it paid to individuals mentally categorizing the world around them. Secondly and along the same lines, given that Gidden's thoughts on how actors interacted with structure include them internally reflecting on past acts to determine future actions, cognitive anthropology provides a foundation to understand self-reflection.

Seymour puts forth the argument that thoughts and acts of resistance can only come about if people internalize their culture differently than those power-holders perpetuating the official culture presents it (2006: 305). This relates to Giddens’ notion that agency comes about as individuals reflect on their daily actions and their outcomes, which then informs their present actions. Scott also mentions the relationship between thoughts and actions when intentions and results inform consciousness and, therefore future motivations and actions. Scott goes on to write that “acts of resistance and thoughts about (or the meeting of) resistance are in constant communication – [also]…it is possible…for human actors to conceive of a line of action that is at the moment either impractical or impossible” (1985:38). While Seymour might not think that Scott and Giddens go far enough to explain the inner workings and organization of how the individual comes to see the need to resist the dominant power structure and finds the motivation to do so, both authors hold that personal agency is a fundamental part to resistance and the process of cultural change.

In his article calling for anthropology to become more fully engaged with human rights, Goodale writes that one of the things anthropology needs to look at is: a “critical intellectual history: the sustained engagement with consequential ideas as they emerge
within, and at times transform, social practice” (2006:32). By this I suspect that what Goodale is getting at, much like Seymour, is that anthropology needs to understand how the mental concept of given culture, and the individuals it is comprised of; of human rights as a part of looking at how universal human rights is applied to local needs. By “mental concepts”, I am specifically referring to understanding how individuals mentally construct notions of complex ideas. With my own fieldwork looking at different forms of resistance in Occupy Denver, part of my aim is to get at how individuals internalize resistance and then act on their own concept of it. Once again, to elaborate on these different forms of resistance, some people I have met in Occupy Denver elect to subvert the economic status quo by focusing on getting people involved with urban gardens and thereby allowing people to take back control of their food from large agricultural businesses. Other people within Occupy Denver, however, feel that more disruptive and disobedient actions such as mass strikes are needed. As I stated previously, resistance is on a continuum, therefore it is not a strict either or dynamic of the two extremes; however, people can lean towards one or the other.

**Conclusion**

As one can see, the theories I am drawing upon have various conceptual overlaps. I chose these specific theories to help me contextualize and understand why people choose to participate in one form of resistance rather than another kind. The answer to this question is an outcome of how one was raised as well how one interacts with the larger society. I’m putting forth the notion that it is a person’s habitus that decides how they chose to resist; what acts of resistance they elect to perform within Occupy Denver.
Following Giddens use of the term power in reference to acts, rather than just intentions, which people are capable to undertake within their given structures, I contend that it is habitus that formulates the way an activist reflects upon their experience of resistance to determine what course of actions, forms of resistance, they will undertake subsequently. The self-reflective nature of Giddens’ process by which individuals both reproduce and change structure is the link between habitus and cognitive anthropology because it is this inner perception of our experiences that affects how we translate our past experiences into future actions that are seen as most likely to be effective. In other words, while there’s no doubt that habitus informs what kinds of acts of resistance individuals take part in, the cognitive interpretation of events is one of the key steps to shaping acts that are situation specific. It is this specificity to act that leads to structural changes. When applied to the topic at hand, I’m arguing that it is the habitus of a person that contributes to their general disposition toward resistance, but it’s their reflection on recent, micro events that informs their actions in the immediate future.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

During the course of the Occupy Movement (OM) there were a variety of resistance tactics employed by its participants: marches, rallies, boycotts. Naturally the various tactics operated at different intensity levels; thus, certain activists/organizers preferred some over others. It is this variation in tactics I was interested in looking at: why is a person more interested in, or have more willingness to participate in, one type of resistance over another. I talked with my informants about their political background, family upbringings and their reasons for being in Occupy; I was aiming at understanding how my participants conceptualized resistance both within Occupy as well as more generally, focusing on things like when certain resistance acts are more appropriate to use both in terms of goals and who is doing the resisting. At the level of the individual, I examined how people worked within occupy to effect change in the group through use of social and cultural capital. Lastly, since the OM occurred nationwide, I will explore the ways in which my participants shifted their focus and analyze of resistance between global and local issues.

Sketch of Participants

Occupy Denver is known for its horizontal organization: there is no one head organizer, or even a group of key organizers. There are however people who have been more involved than others in Occupy Denver, people who facilitate general assembles and consentingly participate in subcommittees. It is these type of people who were my
key informants with regards to understanding the structure of OD as well as the ways the group undertook resistance.

One of the ways I approached understanding what drove my participants to join Occupy was by asking them what other political organization they have been involved with. Not only did this shed light on their interests but it also shed light on what types of groups - and by extension their structure and tactics - they were most comfortable participating in. I also inquired about attitudes about how to bring about change in terms of working inside or outside the system - through typical democratic processes such as through elections or tried and true political organizations that are well known to those in the halls of powers.

Saman is in her early 50s; she grew up in Iran and knew that public fear of anarchy was used by “fascist” –by this she means the Ayatollah and his supporters - to create fear and control. Saman's father was an activist lawyer who worked with Mossadegh to nationalize oil. He also owned a newspaper and was involved with building social movements. Saman described her family as freedom fighters who believed that "what's wrong is wrong", hence they fought the governments of both the Shah and Khomeini. She says that this is why it's hard to look the other way when she sees something unjust in our society. She's also Sufi, so that could also explain how she’d rather create positive change as opposed to tearing down a failing system. It's not to say she is completely opposed to street protest, she isn't, but even there she prefers an artistic, street theater type of protest. She is a very resilient person and doesn't shrink from intimidation, coming from a very male-dominated profession and she has a thick
skin when it comes to common forms of sexism, so her preference for proactive change doesn't come from a place of fear.

Like many people I spoke to, Saman was drawn to the horizontal structure of OD and commented that all of the other activist groups she was involved in were top down, "like corporations." Employment-wise she says that she cannot work within system, and also doesn't like the "top-down" structure of non-profits because they "wanted to tell me what I needed to do and I had to do it their way" so she became very disenchanted with them. When I asked her why she joined OD, she replied: "there are so many problems in this world and I wanted to change some of them."

Before OD, Jennifer hadn't really participated in much activist work but, she did volunteer/"service" work such as working in a food bank and reading to the elderly through Alcoholics Anonymous. Growing up working class in the Southwest, and facing the difficulties that often arise when becoming a mother at a young age (her child was in high school), she joined OD already with a formed critique of capitalism that was partially formed by her resent studies in the social sciences at a local college in Denver. As one will read below, she is very interested in community gardening, from the way it challenges the present corporate food system to the way it can foster community.

I also spoke to Gloria during my fieldwork, a well know figure within OD who ended up becoming very involved with homeless rights issue, as one will see towards the end of this chapter. A middle-age woman with roots in a farming community in the Mid-West, she was first drawn to the movement because of its conversation around income
inequality--she identifies as being raised working class—but continued showing up out of a sense of outrage at the treatment of Occupiers by the Denver Police.

Susan grew up outside America for part of her childhood, due to her father’s job and the way this effected her world view will be explored in greater detail below. She is a single parent of a middle-school-aged child (a very cute and precocious one at that). Her experience with the Denver Public School system through of her child inspired her interest in changing public education.

In talking to James, it became clear that he approaches the concept of social and political change in a proactive way. To elaborate, he thinks that the only way a significant number of people will abandon the current—and, according to him, failing—form of American capitalism is if there are established alternatives they can easily become involved with. To follow this line of thought further, James has been following the crumbling of the Greek economy and the subsequent rise of the far right nationalistic party Golden Dawn and sees that one of the reasons why they were able to increase their popularity was by providing basic services, such as feeding the unemployed which the state had stopped doing. Therefore, he argues, in order to prevent a similar situation from happening in the U.S., social networks providing community support with values closer allied to the left need to be cultivated. It isn’t surprising to find out that James has been involved with the Denver housing collective—a network of houses in which housemates make decisions through consensus and have set meals together—as well as community gardens and permaculture. His goals include getting people to participate in democratic process according to their needs and abilities. His master’s thesis was, in fact on permaculture, which is a system of gardening that uses symbolic relationships among
plants to produce a healthy ("people power"), pesticide-free garden that also extends the idea of interdependence into human interactions that should also include neighborhood daycares. He grew up in an upper middle-class family that was conservative Catholic. When he started listening to punk music, he changed his political views to a more leftist/radical one (he embraces the term 'anarchist' not only as a philosophy but on a day to day level as well). He began his activism right after 9-11 with participating in anti-war actions.

James is a lecturer of political science on Denver's Auraria campus; because of this, he is involved with various groups on campus such as the Auraria Custodians who are fighting for better wages and working conditions. While Auraria Custodian was loosely affiliated with OD, it was also a campaign facilitated by Jobs for Justice, an organization that James started working with in April of 2013 where he put in at least twenty hours a week. From talking to him, it became clear that James works on campaigns and with organizations who are concerned with labor and economic justice issues whether it is with groups such as Auraria Custodians or with the OD foreclosure resistance group, which offered assistance to people dealing with the imminent loss of their homes. As we can see, whether it is by facilitating communal houses or supporting labor issues, James works on projects that reform our economic system with the goal that it will transform in a more substantial way.

Aaron approaches the way he analyzes socio-political problems from the standpoint of "structures of identity;" for example, when I start "looking at racist community lending in Colorado, I start from Marx’s critique of capitalism...this is why
foreclosures issues are so important, it marries capital analysis with a minority population”. In other words, Aaron analyzes the implicit economic power imbalances of our present economic system paying specific attention to how institutional racism fuses with it to produce things like the foreclosure crisis that disproportionately affected minority communities. It is important to note that Aaron has spent part of his academic career looking at post-colonialism and racial issues. Given this, it isn't surprising that Aaron would be heavily involved with Colorado foreclosures resistance group as well as the short-lived Strike Debt group; he wants society to prioritize human needs, human rights over profits. His other prominent role in OD was as a member on the education committee - which arranged teach-ins and reading groups - Aaron himself gave a few teach-ins himself. Primarily he intends to educate people on radical critique of capitalism and about radical forms of organization. His personal view on dramatic social change is that radical change takes time. Aaron has been an activist for twenty-five years, he began by working on environmental issues while in high school.

Aaron was drawn to OD because he saw that the group was willing to grapple with possibilities for changing systemic structures that weren't servicing the populous. He found value in its horizontal (a common sentiment, as one can see) organization of a collective group of people: it "made sense" to him. This is in contrast to the Colorado Progressive Coalition, a group he has some ties to that does work on a range of issues including racial justice ones, which is structured in a hierarchical nature - something he disagrees with and is common within the "professional left". The initial OD camp in Civic Center Park also made an impression on him; the occupying of space illustrated a
concrete form of politics and was an antidote for a type of social isolation that results in matters of societal and political concerns to go unspoken in the public square.

Jared first got involved with OD, its encampment was near his house, in the hopes that he could bring students into the movement. Occupy's approach in framing America's economic woes in terms of the 99% vs. 1%, and especially how that dynamic plays out in government resonated with him. The primary focus of his work as an organizer (he prefers this term over "activist" because of the perception that an "activist" just moves around from one issue to another without building structures needed for a deeper transformation) around higher education issues such as student debt; therefore, discourse around the ways in which corporations are influencing public education, "in teams of funding and influencing content", also drew him to the OM. Also, like others I spoke to, the emphasis on dialogue in the horizontal format struck a chord with him. During our interview, he briefly went into the ineffectiveness of town halls in shaping public policy and mused about what form an alternative model of citizen participation could take.

During his graduate studied in Denver, he got frustrated by how the "pedagogy of graduate school" constricted the ways in which he could learn. He came to see that "education is for the creation and re-creation of the status quo in terms of the distribution of wealth and power and status in society". It wasn't only the structure of education and the ways in which students had to conform to it that propelled Jared into organizing around education issues, it was also the staggering debt students incurred during their time in college: "the education system is structurally doing violence to people in my generation" in terms of student debt. Not surprisingly, he has personal experience with
student debt, in fact he took leave of absence part way through graduate school because he couldn't afford tuition.

Jared knows the importance of dealing with people who are in the system - whether they are power holders actively working for change or power holders who needs a bit of nudging. According to him, they're a fact and significant change can be achieved by strategically working inside and outside the given system: "is a very effective strategy to have groups working on both at the same time". To this thought he added that while he doesn't "disparage anybody for working inside the system, I caution them not to get bought by it". Jared is a biracial man in his mid-twenties who grew up in the Midwest in an upper-middle class neighborhood. He did diversity work in student government as an undergrad and interned in the Colorado state senate doing conflict resolution. When OD started, he became heavily involved early on, frequently facilitating GA's and attending them even more often as well as trying to get an Occupy Auraria started (it didn't really take root).

Because the OM arose out of a grassroots process, notably without the input of any well known political nonprofits, I was curious how my participants viewed working within "the system" as a way to make meaningful change. Much like Jared above, both Susan and James expressed the sentiment that there were tactical advantages to working both within the system and outside of it. Susan commented that she works both within the system and outside of it "I go to city meetings, and [campaign for] ballot measures [but] not candidates"; still, she doesn't believe in the system but work within it till its collapse. When activist’s utter the phrase "by any means necessary", they usually are
referring to strong, hard means of resistance that will undoubtedly evoke a reaction from the state. James, after hearing it during a talk by a respected community member flipped the meaning to say that if it takes working through channels condoned by the powers that be help bring about a desired change, then so be it. It is important to remember that "working with city government or other reformist efforts could help your cause". James gave, as an example, OD getting behind putting a proposition on the ballot that would prevent banks from foreclosing on a house if they didn't possess its physical mortgage note. As we chatted further about this, James spoke about how effective the measure would be toward the important goal of keeping people in their homes. He continued by saying that in OD supporting the measure, it would broaden the base of Occupy: an effective PR move. On the larger issue, James therefore commented that the divide between working outside the system isn't so black and white; "the two can, and should, be complementary. One of the things that I fear as an activist is becoming that small, radical group on a street corner chanting radical slogans and basically just being ineffective". This last comment gets us back to what Jared said about cautioning people from buying into the system as they work within it to make change; both James and Jared are essentially concerned with being trapped within a structure, be it a marginalized radical group or a culturally inept bureaucracy, that will prevent activist from achieving positive change. Giddens writes about how actions not only are limited and enabled by the structure we are in but also how our actions reproduce the structure we are in. Both James’ and Jared's comments can be linked to this notion; especially with Jared's observation the bureaucracy of officially recognized organizing - whether a governmental agency or a large, established charity - group structurally inhibit core changes to take root
because that in itself would be a challenge to the organization itself. With James’ concerns, there are dual structures that contribute to the "marginalization" of small radical groups; clearly the larger structure does this to maintain itself, but if we look at the emic reproduction of the structure of a said small group, putting forth alternative acts and narratives that are too accessible to the general public as a cause for suspicion of forgoing one's ideals and principles. In other words, the inner workings of more radical groups prevent them in engaging with issues in such a way that draws in people outside their group.

**Reasons for Being in Occupy Denver**

One of the key features of the Occupy Movement was the wide variety of issues it concerned itself with. While at first glance, Occupy Wall Street in its initial phase of the encampment in Zuccotti Park was focused primarily on the destructive nature of corporate money/interest on our government. It quickly became apparent that this focus included issues related to workers' rights, environmental degradation, the nature of hierarchal power, as well as the widespread foreclosure crisis. Money in politics simply affects every aspect of our legislative system including the rules, or lack thereof, corporations must operate under. It is because of this that Occupy needed to be a multi-issue organization. Much like how different members of Occupy elected to participate in different acts of resistance, the reasons why people got involved with OD varied; this variation can be attributed to their backgrounds, socio-economic status, etc.; in other words, their habitus. This will be seen below when, for example, discussing Jared's interest with changing the system of higher education because of his own experiences as
a masters student. We can look at Susan as someone who's experiences during childhood shapes how she sees the world today when she talks about moving to an island in the Pacific for her father's job: "that gave me a recognition of what can be different and it gave me more of a recognition of a 'we society' versus the typical American 'me society'...being a white person, I was in the minority but my dad had a position of power...when we moved back to the United States, I couldn't understand why black and white people didn't mix more". The OM represented a possible, but ultimately fleeting, alternative way to structure society; therefore we can see how Susan's upbringing drew her to the movement.

While it wasn't really discussed in the media much, two of the OD members I interviewed said that one of the issues they most wanted Occupy to address was the American healthcare system. Both Saman and Susan are of the opinion that American healthcare system, whether before the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. Obamacare) passed or after, the for-profit insurance companies were preventing America from having an effective system that provided coverage for all Americans. Not surprisingly, both of these women favored a single-payer approach to healthcare; in fact, Saman has been involved with Health Care for All Colorado since before Occupy. Considering that Saman and Susan are both middle-age women, it's not surprising that they both would be concerned with the health care system since women are the assumed caretakers in our culture, of elderly parents and young children. Based on my interpretation of lived realities of Occupics and the movement generally, younger man within OD appeared uninterested (let alone involved) with working towards improving the American
healthcare system. As one will see below, there is a structural reason why women of this age are more likely to be concerned with more tangible, or even mundane, issues such as health care and education. Naturally their interest in healthcare also fits into their larger analysis of society, Susan got involved with OD because she wanted more equality.

Primary education is another issue for which we see that middle-aged women, especially those who have children, more concerned with. Jared was a notable exception to this, which isn't surprising given that he is concerned with issues surrounding education in general. Conversely, Saman is involved with the Student Power Alliance, with whom Jared is a main organizer, that focuses on issues in higher education. Susan worked on education issues both in OD and on her own; she campaigned against the passage of Denver's education bonds 3a, 3b because - according to her, these bonds would funnel funds away from existing schools for the construction of new ones, especially charter schools, which Susan objects to on the argument that they don't build community in the same way that neighborhood schools do. The Denver Public Schools system, Susan elaborated when she spoke about the ballot measures, isn't transparent with its finances, thus the public has no way of knowing how funds that resulted from passage of previous educational bond measures were spent. According to her, K-12 education issues don’t get traction in Occupy; especially among the young men in the group who were by in large more concerned with loftier ideas such as the intersection between corporate and political power; in fact, Aaron spoke with me precisely about how white males tend to analyze societal issues on a macro level and hence problems with the local school systems won't be of great interest to them. Again, this can also be attributed to the
simple fact that young twenty-something's in OD simply weren't directly impacted by what goes on within primary education. Since public education wasn't dealt with by Occupy Denver in any meaningful way at the onset of the movement, Susan could not find a niche within OD to organize around public education. Again, it took Susan some effort to find interested members. While she succeeded in organizing a few actions - protesting a school board meeting over the issue of high-stakes standardize testing - she and other parents she knew ended-up forming a small group called Occupy Denver Public Schools. In a similar sense, the fact that they aren't in their twenties and, thus better able to understand the importance of health insurance since they have seen medical emergencies befall a greater number of people.

**Organizing Within Occupy**

Occupy Denver provided its participants the opportunity to develop skills as organizers in a community that had no binding ties to formal organizations such as well-established non-governmental organizations or large political parties. As one of the most active members of OD put it, "what I like about occupy...is that it is not leaderless, it has many leaders for many projects...if they get rid of one leader, a thousand other leaders pop up; one can even say that it is a 'leader-full' movement'. As others also have frequently pointed out, the lack of an identifiable leader made it difficult for the movement to be shut down by the authorities by arresting, dismissing, or casting aspersions on the character of a noted leader. However, there is arguably an even more important result of not having a given leader, or even a hierarchical structure of any sort, which is the way this horizontal structure encourages participants of the OM to take a
proactive role in the group. It not only allowed them the flexibility to design actions as they saw fit, and with other participants they could work well with, but it also allowed members to look at issues in ways more traditional organizations wouldn't yet in way which other would support. I will explore the nature of this in further detail when I discuss how OD responded to the urban camping ban. This section will provide a brief overview of how individuals within OD organized actions in a way that fits with their own preferred forms of resistance as well as their strengths in regards to social interactions and organizing. The exploration of how individuals within Occupy interacted with its structure in a way that enables them to exert their vision of political resistance is a concept that is examined throughout this paper.

Jennifer was drawn to the OD encampment because it was an physical embodiment of "an alternative model for how things could be done" where the mode of operation was sharing -food, ideas, etc - within a conscious community instead of acting as individuals and out of purely individualistic needs. Jennifer’s focus in Occupy was gardening beginning in the spring of 2012 and going into the fall. Community gardening can be seen as a very non-threatening act of resistance with regards to larger social structures, however Jennifer sees community gardening as a way to restructure our food system that is an outgrowth of our economic system: "capitalism removes you from food or clothing production; there's a disconnect, removing people from food production takes away people’s knowledge of how to produce food that makes me vulnerable". She went on to talk about how this separation from food production translates into a lack of control over the food we eat, "organic certification rules can be toyed with". Looking at food
production at the macro level, Jennifer sees how our lack of involvement in food production leads to farm laborers in Latin American being under-paid and an increase is environmental degradation especially when it comes to petroleum use in transport of food.

There’s a few ways that Jennifer’s manner of being involved in OD can be discussed. She has been a part of marches, and even sat down in the middle of Broadway, arguably one of the two busiest streets in Denver, on one of the occasions when the Occupy camp in Civic Center Park was raided by police in riot gear; therefore her decision to focus on softer, more proactive, forms of resistance doesn’t reflect a fear of putting herself in situations which confronts state power. Rather, her interest in creating community gardens – a proactive from of resistance – instead of organizing a large protest against a given agri-business – a reactive form of resistance – points to her understanding that the societal and economic change she desires won’t come about through protesting large corporations who only pay attention to events that have a major impact on their profit margin. By organizing community gardens, she is also building a social network that will morph into a localized economic community that will allow people involved to give less money to the corporate food system (Glover, Shinew, Parry: 2005). Jennifer explicitly stated that community gardens empower people as they enables people to learn how to produce food for themselves. Furthermore, the social network could also lead to them to getting involved in other civic matters. This would expand her social capital and enable her to work towards a society she envisions. It is important to note that planting a garden isn’t always met without hurdles. Jennifer’s
landlord didn’t want her to plant a garden in her yard because he was concerned about liability issues; showing her another aspect of how the structure of the system, involving the legal system in this case, impedes how much control people has over their immediate environment as well as their food choices.

Besides being involved with the community gardening, Jennifer also helped bottom-line the S17 birthday party and that was a big step for her because she never bottom lined an action or party planned before. S17 (short for September 17) is the day OD’s presence started in Civic Center park and thus, as the year anniversary approached in 2012, members of OD decided to mark the day with a celebration. With Jennifer bottom-lining - being the person responsible for organizing the event and making sure that everybody who volunteered to help followed through - Occupy celebrated its year anniversary with a dance party in the park and free food for whoever showed. Both the community gardens working group as well as putting together the one year anniversary party for OD were non-controversial actions within Occupy. Because of this, Jennifer didn't need to employ much social capital within Occupy to get people to help her with the party. This isn’t to say that Jennifer lacked social capital within the group, rather that since she elected to put her time and energy into more popular actions because she hadn't had experience with organizing before OD, her choice to learn how to put together a popular event had more to do with her need to build up skills, as well as self confidence; the sentiment came across in our interview when she noted how important it was for her to participate in the planning of S17 because she never done anything like it before. Therefore, we can say that Jennifer picked how she got involved in OD because she
wanted to increase her abilities, and hence cultural capital, so that she would be a more effective organizer.

As we can see from above, the issue of having an effective movement shaped how members of OD approached the concept of resistance. There was a number of activists that thought satire and humor - as well as large puppets - was the way to get people interested in Occupy and social justice as a whole. In the run-up to the 2012 presidential campaign, a debate began within Occupy over what the official position of OD should be regarding the elections: an election boycott, a write-in vote of "none of the above", or an OD candidate "Shelby the Dog". It is not surprising that a movement like Occupy would concern itself with something as important to the American cultural and political society and the fact that one of the presidential debate was going to be held in Denver only increased interests. On the day of this debate, Occupy held a large "occupy the debate" protest march to highlight the fact that none of the "third party" candidates were allowed to be in the debates as well as corporate influence over the debate. Shelby, a black dog who was "elected" the "leader" of Occupy in order to highlight the lunacy of the expectation that OD elect a leader just to ease city officials, as well as the corporate media, uneasiness around dealing with a horizontal movement. With the presidential elections, a vote for Shelby - according to the proponents of the idea - would connote the fact that the American president is just a figure head that takes orders from campaign contributions - or in Shelby's case, those whom feed her and lead her around on a leash. Those supporting "Shelby for president" also thought satire and an injection of levity would appeal to people who were cynical about the political system.
The resistance to OD endorsing Shelby as a presidential candidate came about for two main reasons. First off, the concept of endorsing anybody for president was in of itself a point of contention because it legitimized the hierarchical structure of our political system itself - which, incidentally was why some were for boycotting the election. Secondly, there was concern about how frivolous OD would look to outsiders by running a dog for president. Where some activist saw a satirical campaign run as a way to pique interest in OD, others assumed it would further marginalize the group by the media. We can see that the assumed effectiveness of an action played a significant role in determining which actions people took part in. Rather than turning the discussion into a divisive debate, some of the supporters of "Shelby" - an altogether affable and level-headed bunch - built a comprehensive website that laid out the options of boycotting the election or having a write-in candidate/voting third party. The main factor in not wanting to rock the boat was the general understanding, as seen by the overwhelming enthusiasm OD had for the "Occupy the Debate" march, that everybody involved in OD agreed that our two-party system is corrupted by corporate influence and doesn't act in the best interest of the American public. This isn't to say that nobody from OD might have voted for either of the two main candidates; speaking pragmatically, Colorado is still a swing state, but whatever an OD member did, or didn't do, in the voting booth they were in agreement about our political system. Therefore, the action one took on this issue easily became a secondary issue because there was a consensus on the core issue. Lastly, the election occurred a year into the OM, after the physical encampment had come and gone and only a core group was left, even more reason not to create a debate.
Tactics

Further elaborating on the ways participants of OD viewed various methods of resistance, this section delves into specific types of acts, such as marches and community gardens, and explain how they were imagined and approached. This is where one's background, position in society - in short one's habitus - comes into the discussion. However, as one can see from above with Shelby for president, the way people chose to resist had to do not only with their own comfort levels regarding a specific act of resistance and its usefulness, but also how acts would be perceived by other members of Occupy Denver. In this sense, the relationship between activist and group is a discursive one in which acts of resistance are both shaped by Occupy and at the same time shape Occupy itself. Given that OD was a leaderless movement, the extent to which the structure of the organization was reproduced and altered by actors within OD was even more pronounced since there wasn't a structural hierarchy to impede organic changes within the movement. Therefore we can say that when looking at structure and OD actors, there are two focuses we need to switch between: the more obvious one of how larger structural forces - neoliberal economics, the American political class - and the OM, and individuals within it, confronted each other; and the structure comprised of the movement itself, and to what extent the OM allowed and inhibited individuals’ desired form of resistance.

In the theoretical discussion of this paper, I discussed the concept of resistance basically stating that in order for an action of resistance to be recognized as such, those participating in it have to be conscious that they're acting to propel change; acts of
resistance also must be recognizable to outside observers. This, naturally, raises the question of whether or not community gardening could be considered an act of resistance. Since one of the main objectives of my ethnography was to understand how participants in the Occupy Movement conceptualized resistance, I wasn't as concerned with whether or not a particular action fell within this definition of resistance. My desire to understand how my informants define various aspects of resistance comes out of the cognitive anthropology school of thought that holds that understanding how people categorize concepts informs how they interact with their culture. This leads to an interesting point regarding the relationship between theory and the participants that a given theory is applied to: those participants may not always agree with every aspect of the theory being applied to them. In looking at resistance acts, it is also critical to note that there can be a large amount of variety between actions labeled as, for example, "marches" and hence one must be quite specific in characterizing a specific case of resistance. This can be seen below when, in discussing marches, I describe one that had a relaxed atmosphere where parents would bring their kids but I also describe a night march that got very intense. The framework by which we understand resistance must therefore include an acknowledgement of not just different forms of it but also different degrees of a specific means of resistance. One of the main ways I elected to look at how members of OD conceptualized the means by which they resisted is to ask them how they defined "hard" and "soft" forms of resistance.

"What's hard and what's soft [resistance] kind of depends on your perspective; some people think a rally outside the capitol is not very soft…it depends on who's taking and what they mean by those things" -Jared
The way people think about methods of resistance, as well as their resulting comfort level with them, depends on a slew of factors relating not only to the person resisting but also to what is being resisted. The situation, as Jared discussed, around resistance includes factors that are directly informed by the larger culture; both Aaron and James mention how organizers of a specific action needed to be aware of the social background of its participants in the action since certain groups of people-most notably men of color- are much more likely to be harassed and arrested by the police. Similarly, when anticipating a march or another action that might turn violent or chaotic, families with children and those who have mobility issues should be made aware of the risk so they can take precautions to ensure they aren't in harm's way. As a side note, there have been marches - night marches and other high-risk actions - I have chosen not to go on since my mobility limitations would endanger me and others if a situation arose where a speedy scattering of those marching would be required. We can see how the fact that since certain groups are less able to participate in actions because they're at higher risk of punishment by the authorities or are unable to run away from harm, plays into decision about what tactic will be used not only because of what might happen to those participating but conversely how something such as multiple arrests will affect the larger movement. Will needing to focus resources on fighting legal battles impede the achievement of larger goals or will unwarranted arrests draw additional people to the movement?

Group dynamics also plays a role in what type of action will be undertaken. Jared discussed how the decision about what tactic, hard or soft, will be informed by what
group and what type of people you are working with - as well as how well you know and trust them. Jared said, "the dynamics of the group [that is part of the resistance], like, is this small group of friends that have known each other for a long time… the less connected... the group you are working with in terms of building the action or the resistance the less disciplined, the less prepared… the softer your tactic has to be". If one is dealing with a small group of friends who trust each other - a group in which there is a lot of shared social capital amongst its members – and who had worked on actions with one another before, then the group is able to undertake riskier actions, ones with higher chances of arrests and violence, because members of the group understand the capabilities and limitations of the group as well as the comfort level they have with these types of actions. "It is completely unfeasible to mount some sort of organized, like, takeover of production facilities, or something, if people don't know each other or trust each other", explained Jared. He also gave the example of the sit-ins that were held in the South during the civil rights movement as a case of a harder act of resistance where a small group (in this case, a few young black men) occupied a segregated lunch counter. The risks in these sit-ins were much higher than the marches along sidewalks during the same time and the small number of men who participated in these sit-ins allowed the group to undertake these actions. It therefore stands to reason that when planning actions involving larger groups, presumably ones in which its members don't know each other very well and so hadn't build-up trust among themselves yet - and the less experience a group has the softer an action should be. Other things that organizers should be cognizant of, Jared elaborated, is what your goals are: "what you are working against or for" as well as the resources at your disposal and "what resources do they have to resist
your resistance.” For Jared, somebody who has studied resistance movements of the past, we can see that logistical factors such as group dynamics plays a crucial part in deciding what types of actions he will attend and support. Since habitus is not only informed by education but also informs the type of learning we can access, it can be concluded that his knowledge of resistance movements was an outgrowth of his habitus. Among fellow Occupiers who (due to their own upbringing) place value upon scholarly knowledge of social movements, Jared's historical understanding of social and resistance movements gives him social and cultural capital; a respect and trust regarding organizing. Since OD sprung up in such a way that strangers with a wide range of experience, and inexperience, Jared understood that actions requiring a high level of trust between participants wouldn't be feasible.

Since resistance is in a sense a dialogue, an interaction between two opponents, it follows that who or what is being resisted also influences the course of action that will be taken. As Jared said, "the scale of harm being done, of whatever it is that you are resisting, will also be a factor…is it that people are being inconvenienced…or are people being moved out of their homes and thrown in the streets into poverty." Methods of resistance, he added, needs to be proportional to what is being resisted. Clearly, the more immediate and harmful the policy being resisted is, the more noticeable and harsh the resistance will be. Case in point: a year or so into the Denver OM, a middle-aged woman from Idaho Springs showed up to a GA asking for help to save her house from impending foreclosure. A few weeks after that, a number of Occupiers went up to Idaho Springs and basically "occupied" the property that was being foreclosed upon to such an extent that
the local police showed up to carry-out the eviction notice in full SWAT regalia. Was such a show of force necessary from the local law enforcement agency? Of course not, but the act of Occupiers physically being present at that contested property was called for because of the impending foreclosure. If the owner of the property had come to the GA earlier in the foreclosure process, the approach taken by OD wouldn't have been occupying the property but rather they would have only focused on assisting her in going through the court system in an attempt to demonstrate fraud or another type of misdeed by her mortgage company. We can therefore see through this example how an act of resistance is based upon the factors such as the immediacy of an issue.

Referring back to what qualifies as acts of resistance, I found that when discussing soft forms of resistance with my informants that while the assumption that those participating in resistance certainly acted from the awareness that they were resisting a specific thing, the qualification that their acts be seen as such acts is less necessary. Quite a few of the people I talked to spoke about softer means of resistance brought up the boycotting of certain corporations and products as an example of soft resistance. Both Saman and Susan avoid buying goods made by Koch brothers' owned companies. The Koch bothers are widely known to financially back ultra-conservative political candidates nation-wide and are fundamentally interested in pushing a pro-business, anti-regulation agenda which they can more than afford to do since they are among the wealthiest men in America. Refusing to consume products in hopes of affecting policy or to forward a political agenda isn't a new concept. During the civil rights movement African-Americans organized the year-long Montgomery bus boycott in
protest of segregation and in the 80's, there was an international divestment/boycott movement aimed at undermining the apartheid government of South Africa. The fundamental difference between those two movements, which were successful to varying degrees, was that they were widely publicized and were undertaken as campaigns by many people. What Susan and Saman are doing is electing not to buy products so that their resources don't go towards supporting candidates they are opposed to.

Besides boycotting given products, there are other economic forms of resistance that people connected to Occupy Denver were involved in. One was strike debt which started in New York City as a group that bought-up individual debt for pennies on the dollar and then forgave the debt of the (random) individuals': a chapter started in Denver but fizzled out after the first few months. Although the nuts and bolts of strike debt aren't all that radical (and Jared aptly described strike debt as a form of soft resistance) - working within the system to excuse the debt of a relatively small group of random people - within the group it sparked a conversation about the core nature of debt and how our financial system is build upon it which is a fairly gutsy conversation to spread. The simple nature of attempting to lessen the conceptual burden of debt through completely lawful means puts it in the category of soft resistance regardless of what other conversation it spurs. As with boycotting, the effectiveness of this movement is directly correlated with how widespread the campaign is known. The only widely publicized economic resistance during the past few years was a campaign to have people close out their accounts at large banks and move their money to local credit unions. It was a campaign pushed by the Huffington Post, and therefore was both widely known and had
participants from around the country. The reason for this campaign was to translate into action the distrust, if not outright disdain, the populous had for large banking institutions and the governmental bailout they received to prevent economic collapse in the fall of 2008. It is safe to say that many in the OM supported this campaign and actively participated in it. The success of the movement isn't easy to evaluate; if the goal was to demonstrate people's undermined confidence in large corporate banks then it can be seen as a success; however the funds withdrawn from these banks were by no means substantial, and therefore had no impact on their business practices. More importantly, the question of whether or not switching one's banking to a credit union or personally boycotting isn't really relevant in this space because the issue at hand is how participants in resistive acts define them regardless of the perceived successes.

Another form of soft resistance, as illustrated above with the Shelby for President campaign involves street theater that can include anything from a mobile music band to large puppets, as Aaron said: it is marked by festive collaboration and an atmosphere of lightheartedness and joy that can draw people towards the action. On a warm summer night in 2012, OD lead a march through the Santa Fe art district called "March Against Neo-Feudalism: Revenge of the Wage Slave" that aimed to get people to contemplate the fate of the American worker who is trapped in a cycle of depressed wages and debt. Because it took place during the art walk of this area, the mood was already festive and when the march passed by a dance and musical troop, the troop ended up joining the march and at the end of there were people literally dancing in the street. Saman brought up this specific march when we discussed what she would like to see more of within OD
and she specifically referred to this march, which she brought her grandchild to as an example of what activist should do more of since it attracts people into the movement through creating a joyous atmospheric instead of one of frustration and anger. This desire of hers to have a positive, joyful environment fits nicely with her organization of workshops where she has local speakers come to share their experiences with projects that are slowly build an alternative economic and political worldview. Actions such as the "theater of the oppressed" where the Auraria Custodians preformed their stories about their employment conditions with the aim of communicating to the audience the realities of their jobs; by presenting social justice themes in a theatrical atmosphere aims to inform people beyond the activist community. Both Aaron and James spoke about how street theater was a way to impart levity into a political act that informs onlookers as well as inspire fun-spirited collaboration among the participants. As somebody who has seen a few performance of the Romero Troupe, a theater group that performs skits having to do with social movements of the past and present, I saw the camaraderie amongst the actors.

Going back to looking at soft resistance from a tactical point of view, Jarred spoke about how soft tactics are very useful in showing the absurdity of heavy-handed repression by the state. This is one of the major underlying arguments for civil disobedience; to show that minor acts of civil disobedience -"things like protests, anything where you are coming to people and saying things, demanding things, without any material force to back it up or economy force" - evoke major reactions, thus generating attention and demonstrating the repression to onlookers. This leads us to a comment Jarred made, about "the degree to which the group you're resisting is on the
offensive" is something that will influence how soft resistance is responded to; with the hope that heavy handed oppression will demonstrate the need for social and institutional change.

**Community Gardens**

The question of what my informants - eight in all - considered resistance also came up when I asked each of them whether or not community gardening is an act of resistance. Every single person replied that they do, in fact consider community gardens as an example of an act of resistance. This might be because of the recent politicization of our food production system as evident from the writings of Michael Pollen (2006; 2007; 2008). I would also argue that they are more likely to see resistance because they want to see it as such. My participants see any type of resistance to our current form of capitalism in a positive light since resistance means that others want to see it change. As I mentioned above, community gardening doesn't quite fit every definition as an act of resistance, however I chose to include it in my discussion when I realized that the people in OD with whom I spoke all saw it as an act of resistance.

Susan sees community gardening as a form of activism that goes along with the concept of “diversity of tactics”, by this she means that community gardens are one of the tools at an activist’s disposal useful for changing societies for the better. It is clear from her professed desire to buy organic food with greater frequency, which is limited because of its cost, that she echoes Jennifer's objections to the current industrial food system's way of producing food; she also explained how community gardens "change peoples’ conception...of space, time, [and] privacy". From this we can surmise that she views
urban gardening as a way to build community bonds. The concept of public space was of
great importance for many of my informants because they envisioned a well-utilized
community space as a jumping-off point for greater civic involvement, as we can see
from James’ remarks in the very beginning of this chapter.

Aaron similarly expressed these two ideas that community gardens foster
community because of the nature of shared spaced and that they have larger economic
effects. Specifically, he spoke about how they reduce the distance people must travel to
obtain produce while simultaneously providing neighborhoods green, public spaces
where they can hold community events and discuss local issues. Community gardens, he
pointed out, are especially important in food deserts, since it is a place that localizes
production of produce in an urban environment with little access to produce. As Aaron
sees it, community gardens lead people to rethink their approach to goods that they’re
consuming, perhaps changing attitudes about the value of labor and the nature of waste;
here again one can see this idea from OD members that community gardens will foster
community involvement and political activism. In fact, Glover, Shinew, and Parry
(2005) found exactly this to be the case: that persons involved with community gardens
are more likely to become involved in other civic activities as well.

As I stated above, people in OD see community gardening as a form of activism
because they are predisposed to see signs of resistance to the status quo out of the desire
to have people fighting and striving for change. This isn't to say that they aren't justified
in saying that community gardens is a type of resistance for reasons mentioned above
such as it being a tangible alternative to the industrial food system. Given that people
involved in community gardening are actively changing how they obtain food and the
nature of their surrounding physical space, it is understandably seen by OD members as a
type of resistance. I would also add that given the OM intent to structurally reshape our
current form capitalism that has spread to every corner of the globe, viewing community
gardening as resistance provide self-motivation in the face of police repression and an
uphill struggle to change since it demonstrates to them that people beyond Occupy are
working to change that system. Community gardening, as written about with regards to
Jennifer, can lead to interest in getting involved in other issues on a local level.
Therefore, while people involved in OD do see community gardening as a way to change
the current American food system from one that is controlled by large agricultural
corporations with little regard for environmental concerns to one that is more in tune with
the physical and social environment, there is also an innate sense that public gathering
spaces such as neighborhood gardens facilitate civic interests and community cohesion
necessary for social movements. Community gardens not only allow people to learn
how to grow food but it also increases their social capital by the forming and
strengthening of interpersonal and community relationships. As far as cultural capital is
concerned, in civic groups such as community gardens where there are no clear-cut
hierarchical structures, no set channels of powers to resolve interpersonal conflicts,
participants need to develop skills, both as an individual and as a community, to deal with
such issues in a thoughtful and productive way that doesn’t divert energy away from
larger goals.
Hard resistance

In discussing harder forms of resistance, it became quickly apparent that one of the main signs for a given action to be considered "hard" is whether or not it was visible to the public as well as to those targeted by the protesters. In thinking back to what constitutes an act of resistance, it is of interest to note that Occupiers do see a distinction between tactics that are recognized as an act of resistance by the public and those that are less so. As Aaron put it, in order to be a harder act of resistance, it needs to disrupt daily life (for the passersby) "to get an inroad in an embodied, not in the abstracted [way]". In other words, "hard resistance" according to him, must be understandable in that moment and make observers ponder the reason for the action. Aaron spoke of strikes and shutting down banks (via disruptions) as examples. James similarly spoke of disruptive actions - chaining oneself to a bulldozer to prevent old-growth forest destruction, pouring sugar in gas tank of bulldozer, and confronting police - direct actions that includes sabotage.

James made a distinction between harder acts of resistance and more revolutionary acts such as taking up arms. Unlike Jared who included Latin American rebel groups such as the FARC - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - in Columbia and the Zapatistas in Mexico who took up arms and took over territories in his examples of hard resistance as well as things such as organized walk outs, production strikes, and the tar sands blockade which according to him is more than a 'protest', it's the physical blocking an ongoing project.

With regards to when people elect to participate in harder actions, a few people commented that they are more likely to participant in a harder, more confrontational action when their emotions were running high. Susan, when speaking to this, said that
she was more likely to participate in more aggressive marches and direct actions when she's upset. Aaron also spoke to this when he told me how cathartic it was to go on a fuck the police (FTP) march after an unwarranted and fatal police shooting. Up to this point I have written about what resistance tactics people elect to use in terms of tactical advantage and goals, but it is clear that humans act and react because of emotions as well as logic. Therefore we can say that emotions such as fear - staying away from an action because of fear of possible violence or participating in an intense and dramatic action because of a fear over the way things are - can determine the type of actions one participates in. Giddens included emotional reactions in his discussion on reflection; when an actor analyzes their actions they not only situate it in a specific point in time but they also remember the setting and circumstances of where the action took place and hence the emotions that arose from that past actions. Therefore, we can say that if a given previous act of resistance left an actor feeling unsafe and disconnected from their activist community that provides them support then they will be hesitant to go on similar future actions.

**Direct Actions**

Aaron defined direct actions as practical efforts to intervene, facilitate, or disrupt something happening. It is an embodied act that is bounded within time and space and involves use of the physical body; be it for speaking chants, blocking entrances, and so on. Aaron continued, stating a similar sentiment that came up in discussions about hard resistance acts (which are included under the direct action umbrella; remember that Aaron gave strikes and shutting down banks as examples), that direct actions need to
disrupt daily life to get an inroad into the consciousness of onlookers. And, like everything else related to tactics, the appropriateness of a direct action is contextual. In asking my participants when they would be willing to participate in a direct action, Jared commented that, if the cause being protested against or fought for isn't of the greatest importance to him that he would still attend one if he or friends are involved. I interviewed a parent of a younger child who stays away from more arrest-prone actions because they have a child to care for. Saman, not surprisingly given her preference for participating in constructive acts of resistance that can propel people into positive actions, leaves actions when she sees that people participating in them want to cause what she perceives as trouble.

Marches

Until well into the fall of 2011, Occupy Denver would put on marches almost every Saturday or Sunday down the Sixteenth Street Mall. Some of these marches were about general overarching issues such as economic justice and the growing wealth gap in this country while others were more single-issue focused such as ending American military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. The interesting thing about these marches down the mall was that a different crowd showed up at those marches than at the Occupy camp; more families with kids and people of retired-age showed up at them than at the encampment. The marches I went on sometimes had an almost celebratory feel to them, full of upbeat enthusiasm which was both the cause and the result of the large range in ages of the marchers. Just as it was with the movement in general, as time went on, most of the early participants faded away and only those who were heavily involved with
Occupy showed up. The marches became more infrequent because of the approaching winter as well as the fact that there were fewer people showing up for marches as time went on. There was another reason why attendance at OD marches dwindled, according to a main organizer in OD, the "marches [we organized] were unpredictable; sometimes we took the streets and sometimes we didn't; this was one of the reasons other allied groups didn't want to collaborate with OD".

The atmosphere of marches played heavily in my informants’ decision regarding which marches they attend and how they conducted themselves when they go went on one. DABC also holds marches, they are focused on police brutality as well as the systematic problems of the criminal justice system including Fuck the Police (FTP) marches that are perceived to be more risky – i.e., have a higher risk of violence and arrest – and are often held later in the day. The increased danger isn’t the only reason why FTP marched give some OD members pause for thought, some questioned the usefulness of these marches themselves or they disapprove of the way these marches are conducted. For James, the reservation he has about FTP marches has to do with his own internal sensibilities, in fact, he won't attend FTP marches because he finds them to be very stressful and he has to be “emotionally sound” on marches. He has experienced quite stressful situation on marches in the past, most noticeable in New York City where the march he was on was cattled, or surrounded, by the police: he was completely caught off guard. He leaves marches whenever he feels threatened or if the march is challenging "deeply held principle". When on one, he pays great attention to the police and their movements and locations as well as the way marchers react to them.
Susan told me that while she goes on all OD marches, unless they fall on a day when her child has an organized activity, she doesn’t go on marches that aren’t organized by OD. She has been on DABC’s FTP marches before and, just like a few other Occupy members, didn’t like how her fellow protesters behaved. According to her, the FTP march “got messy”, there was a lack of solidarity amongst its participants: “people ran away” when things between the protesters and the police got precarious with little concern for fellow protesters. While other people I talked to questioned the overall effectiveness of FTP marches, Susan found that FTP marches could be informative to the general public if they were signs about victims of unwarranted fatal police shootings, a sentiment echoed by Jared who thinks that FTP marches only work if they’re informative for the casual observer. Susan’s critique of the FTP marches, as one can see, had more to do with the lack of community and a sense of shared responsibility for one another’s safety and wellbeing while out on the streets rather than with the intensity of the marches themselves.

While Susan saw the potential of FTP marches being useful and informative not everybody held this view. Pablo, another participant in OD went on a nighttime FTP march organized again by DABC, but endorsed by OD, out at a prison complex in south-east Denver. Pablo - a middle age man from Southern Europe who is very well read on issues related to economic, social, and political theory – wanted to go on this particular march for several reasons, one of them being because he wanted to get a better idea of the large prison complex. According to him, during the march, members of DABC antagonized police and even provoked the police into becoming aggressive; at the end of
the march those who were demonstrating, according to Pablo, were surrounded by police who were filming the group when an individual from DABC yelled to the police, “what will you do when we answer back with a bullet?” Pablo found this type of behavior to be counterproductive, childish, and uncalled-for. His main criticism about this aggressive behavior is that it would turn the general public against Occupy, therefore greatly limiting its potential for affecting systemic change. He told me with regards to doing such incendiary acts while knowing that it is being filmed, “you cannot give an opportunity to the Denver Police or Fox News, right, to show us with those Denver anarchists guys…you pay a lot for that”.

Aaron also spoke of FTP marches as something that alienates the general public not involved in the revolutionary, or even strongly reformist, circles because the average white middle-class person is raised to believe that the police are there to protect them from criminals – commonly assumed to be black or brown – and rarely abuse their power. For this reason, Aaron asserts that marches that bash the police are not “politically productive” for raising awareness about the frequency in which the police misuse their power to repress decent people and target minority communities in excessive searches. According to Aaron, a more successful approach would be to educate and organize around the need for police and prison reform in a less confrontational manner. As for Aaron’s personal thoughts on the police, he categorically dismisses the refrain heard at Zuccotti Park in the fall of 2011 stating that the police are part of working class. Instead, he views the police as an extension of state power whose purpose is to protect the interest of the state regardless of the interest of any given citizen. He said that while he has gone
to FTP march, it wasn’t because he thought it would lead to any policy changes on the part of the police but rather he went as a way to vent, to express his frustration and anger over an unwarranted police shooting that had just taken place. Once again, we see the need for community, for being surrounded by like minded people who view the need for police reform as being a big motivation for going to direct action and being connection to fellow activists. In general, Aaron decides whether or not to go on a particular march based on the extent to which he agrees with the message that the action – marches are a type of direct action – is aiming to get across. He would also rather go to marches if they help OD.

We can see how important it is for members of Occupy Denver to build and have a community comprised of fellow activists that are not only invested in common social and political goals, but also one that has the interest and well-being of fellow activists at heart. Besides the benefits and motivation for having a supportive community network written about in my section about community gardens, the demographics of OD also plays a part in this desire for solidarity; this can be clearly seen especially in contrast to what type of people are involved in DABC. The media, by in large has portrayed the Occupy Movement as one of youth, which is true to a point, however there were also a significant number of middle-age and older people involved with the OM be it by staying in encampments, showing up to GA’s, or marching on the streets of Denver. When looking at DABC, on the other hand, you see that the majority of their members who plan and go to actions are in there twenties. The social and cultural capitals are interpreted as different things in these two groups. Where a certain type of reckless bravado is admired
as an assertion of power and, conversely, of the police’s assumed illegitimate power in DABC culture, the same reckless actions – especially if it puts others at risk of arrest would be frowned upon in OD. Putting oneself and others at unnecessary risk of arrest is looked down upon by OD because it disrupts the community and the ideal that one shouldn’t put a fellow Occupier at risk. This spirit isn’t only an unspoken rule but part of the Saint Paul principles that was often referred to in OD and occasionally even read verbatim, that fostered a culture in which solidarity amongst fellow Occupiers, and explicit support for “diversity of tactics” is expected. Diversity of tactics in this context does allow for activist to undertake harder and more confrontational means of resistance but it also connotes that individuals shouldn’t be exposed to greater risk that they feel comfortable with without their consent. Therefore, if an Occupier would put others in danger of being arrested, they would be deemed unreliable and untrustworthy, rather due to either their unintentional carelessness or flagrant self-centeredness, and have very little social capital.

**Black Bloc**

Perhaps one of the most distinct forms of protesting, or a distinct group that can be within a march, is a Black Bloc. While they are often portrayed in the mass media as a violent cohesive group of anarchists, the back bloc is seen as a tactic by members of OD which isn’t formed by a pre-existing group; although some, most notably Aaron associated Black Bloc with anarchism. In discussing Black Bloc with people in OD, I was struck by how it was universally seen as a tactic rather than a well-defined organization that existed outside of protests. This was even true for Occupiers who held
some reservation about Black Bloc. It seems that within the culture of OD, it was understood that the way in which the general media spoke about Black Bloc was divorced from reality. It was a type of solidarity within the culture of OD, a self-identification in which they distinguished themselves from the larger society as people who actually understand the nature of Black Bloc.

When I asked my participants about Black Bloc, I heard responses that touched both on its practical and theoretical nature. Susan, for example, talked about the psychological meaning of presenting oneself as a part of a unified group; she sees wearing all black as a means of acting as a collective that shows solidarity with each other, a bit like the way workers on strike all wear red. On a more tactical note, she sees the Black Bloc formation as a way for protesters to hide their identity from the police and any security cameras that might be in the vicinity of a march. Speaking to this point, Susan herself never participated in a Black Bloc, but she hid her identity during some marches by wearing a hat and glasses. This made her feel safer. Jarred also spoke about the practicality of hiding one's identity on marches that are likely to be confrontational and where protestors would likely be met by police violence. In this comment we can see an underlying assumption that Black Bloc incites violence, or forms during high intensity marches. By "inciting", it's important to note, I don't necessarily mean that Black Bloc would provoke police violence through an act of violence themselves, but rather that a cultural mythos surrounding Black Bloc as being aggressive themselves. Jared elaborated on the violent dynamics between the police and Black Bloc by linking the increased militarization of a wing of local police forces, stating that "it's just a fact", and
Black Bloc - it is a response to that; according to him, it's a way that protesters directly confront unlawful police and, thus can be seen as a defense tactic.

Both Aaron and James brought up how black bloc often consists of activists with "white privilege" who are from a middle class background. In other words, the typical participants are those who belong to communities who haven't been under heavy policing nor have been disproportionately arrested in the war on drugs. Therefore, the usual participants of Black Blocs have to worry less about past records and future entanglements with the system. They are of the opinion that forming a black bloc on a march that consists of vulnerable populations – persons of color, lower income people, the elderly, or immigrants – is a sign of their privilege that allows them to flaunt the risk of arrests. This isn't to say that James is categorically opposed to them; in fact he has been a part of them, specifically an anti-RNC march years ago. What is interesting is that it is the result of his reflection on being a part of a Black Bloc and how emotionally taxing it was to participate in it that gives him great pause about being a part of another one. Here, we once again we see in practices Giddens' concept of actors reflecting on their past actions and the emotional reactions that accompanied them to guide present actions.

**Importance of Occupying Space**

In the section above, I mentioned that Occupiers see community gardens as spaces of resistance in part because they provide a public space for informal and formal community discussions. The idea of having a tangible and public space where social actions occur face to face is an important one that came up in my interviews about the
defining characteristic of the Occupy Movement: occupying public spaces. In discussing why occupying space is so important one of the things I heard from my informants is that occupying public spaces brought people out of their isolation and into conversation with each other and developed ideas about how to create positive social and economic alternatives as well as strategies of resistance. Aaron talked about how the Occupy encampments were in direct contradiction to the prevalent isolation found in the modern American lifestyle. James describes the encampment as the “physical manifestation of shared space”, which is an astute observation that acknowledged online communities as shared spaces while at the same time drawing a distinction between virtual and physical shared spaces. The encampment, according to him, enabled people to meet face-to-face and to discuss issues and act together. Unlike virtual discussions conducted through online communications, interacting with people in a concrete, non-virtual space “forces us to communicate, listen, and reach agreement” with one another while, usually, maintaining a basic level of decorum and civility. Considering the 24/7 nature of the Occupy Denver camp, with its communal organization of food distributions, security matters, organized discussions, etc. the bonds that developed between those staying in Civic Park came not only from a shared ideology – not to say that OD is a politically homogeneous movement, it isn’t – but also from striving to get basic needs of fellow occupiers met. We can see James' work with creating space for alternative living, housing collectives, as a way to create communities and shared interdependence coming out of a similar conception of how shared spaces strengthens bonds. As a result, the Occupy movement became very different from online activism as well as changed the
manifestation of protest movements, as some of my informants pointed out, because of this reclaiming of physical and public space.

Not only did the encampment make members of the movement personally invested in each other but it also created conditions where the community of Occupiers was invested in maintaining the communal space within Civic Center Park. This widespread desire to keep a tangible, concrete space for the Occupy movement and, as Aaron pointed out, created a direct challenge to the privatizing and militarizing of space. The loss of public space, especially through the transfer of public spaces to private ownership, has been in the milieu of the left – Naomi Klein, Thom Hartmann – for the past decade or so. Much of the concern has been precisely along the lines being discussed here: loss of space where community members can engage in dialogue that results in social bonds and civic participation. Therefore, it isn’t surprising to hear people involved in Occupy voice concern over loss of public space and how it relates to a loss of community and civic participation. Within the OM, the focus is not only on occupying space that went through this transfer from public to private ownership but it also intentionally reasserted the public’s right to be in public spaces and to make use of those spaces in however they deem fit; not only was Civic Center Park reclaimed for public use but the fourth floor of the Denver central library become a space where meetings were held to organize and inform the movement.

Aaron found that having a physical space where GA’s were held and teach-ins were given brought the political out of the abstract, where it often is for the majority of the population in regards to the workings of the federal government, to a more tangible
understanding of how issues are examined and consensus are arrived at. This is related, once again, to the enthusiastic support of community gardens I found within the Occupy Movement. Both the encampment in Civic Center Park and neighborhood gardens brings ideas and projects out of the theoretical realm and back to the mundane and manageable.

**Local/Global**

There is an extremely positive effect to working on projects all the way through their completion that can be seen, both in the metaphorical and the literal sense which builds confidence in one’s ability to organize and implement solutions to given problems. It is one thing to analyze systemic problems such as how corporate power came to have such a strangle hold over the political system but finding the solutions to this problem is very hard to arrive at, let alone implement, because of how the system is invested in maintaining the status quo. Because the Occupy movement was concerned with such a wide range of issues, there was always a tension present between spending time focusing on local issues – creating community gardens, fighting Denver’s Urban Camping ban – and tackling issues that were more conceptual and had a broader impact. Aaron remarked that people of color and women are more likely to focus on local issues:

> the dominant group in society always universalizes its own position. Part of it is ideological. Marx said this, like every group that comes to power will universalize its particularity, it will generalize its own position in order to justify its rule. But I think culturally and epistemologically...white people, and I'm talking about in the US because they are the majority in relation to power and men as well... will always see people of color as different.

Aaron elaborated by saying that white males tend to focus on issues like capitalism and the environment while people of color, women and other groups that have been
historically left out of the power structure see the particular distribution of power and
discrimination in daily life. Therefore, political and cultural problems affect people not
identified with the white male power structure differently; not just the immediate issues
but as multiple problems. Aaron continued, people of color will work on environmental
racism issues, e.g., working to get toxic dumps out of their towns or on community
gardens; things with a more localized bent to them. While focusing on more concrete
projects generates community involvement and clearly stated goals and solutions, these
localized problems will always be nested within the large economic and political power
structure. Aaron elaborated on this point:

[It is] complicated because if you are doing localized politics without an
analysis of social structures and, um you know, interrelations between
your activity and even global relations then, yah, probably change isn't
going to come,...you're not going to be focused on things that might
contributed to larger structural change

The broad range of issues Occupy focused upon meant that there was a larger analysis
through which local issues were seen but nevertheless the tension over where to focus
one’s attention still remained.

There was definitely a noticeable gender split on questions of focusing on issues
such as local educational issues, homeless and expanding healthcare in America, but I
hesitate to attribute this split solely a preference between focusing on the more local
issues on a person’s analysis of structural problems. Women in OD have been out-front
on the issues mentioned above, however as I have mentioned in an earlier section, this is
largely due to social spheres that women interact in. Again, we can point to Susan and
her involvement with campaign against charter schools and state-wide standardized
testing and her being a mother of a school-age child as a reason why she, as opposed to the young men in OD, was concerned with education reforms. However, it cannot be said that she was unaware or uninterested in issues on a more global scale. During my interview with her, she spoke passionately about her activism during the 1980’s opposing American intervention in Central America. Therefore, we can see that even if a person elects to focus on more local issues, that doesn’t mean they are not interested in larger issues, but rather it can be that personal proximity to an issue will influence where one will focus their time. The factor of one’s age comes into play as well, or to put it another way, the phase of life one is in: again, in looking at Susan's past and present activism, we can see that being a parent has shifted her focus from global issues to more local ones.

Giddens discusses a process of individual reflection upon their past acts that enables people to shape their present actions based on how they behaved in that past. If we take this idea in conjunction with Bourdieu's habitus, which holds that the structure people were raised in - including class, education, gender, familiar roles - instructs our behaviors in the present and in fact throughout our entire lives, we can say that Susan's experiences caused through parenthood, shifted her focus from issues of American foreign policy to that of public education in Denver. Not only does her reflections on her actions as a parent influence the issues she engages with and the acts of resistance she undertakes - with reference to Giddens - but her shift in focus is a reflection of her habitus and the cultural structure which says that it is acceptable for women of school-age children to become involved with matters of primary education. The PTA, for example, is a respected community organization in schools that has a long tradition of raising funds
for school-related activities composed primarily of women. Susan's activism fit this model but then pushed it to a point that questions and resisted core ideas in modern day education such as standardized testing and charter schools. This reflects back to her activism during the eighties in a sense that they both had to do with questioning fundamental structures.

It is also important to note that while local issues are by in large connected with specific goals and strategies to reach those goals, not all national or even international movements are lacking those things. To elaborate, Saman has been involved in the single payer health care movement on the state level with the clear understanding of it being connected to the nation-wide push for universal healthcare. While not exactly a local issue, it is definitely a movement with specific goals and strategies rather than one with an overarching theoretical worldview – the destruction of our current system of capitalism within the healthcare system– but without any concrete steps to bring about that desired society. Her social forums are a perfect example of how a person’s ideological interests and actions blur the line between larger theoretical issues and more local, tangible initiatives. Her goal in putting on these social forums is to educated people to empower them to build a movement. According to her, "we have a silent majority; maybe they are quiet because they don't know any better and are afraid". She sees herself as "planting seeds" to help grow a movement. At a day-long event she organized in early September 2013, topics up for discussion ranged from looking at how Boulder successfully created a municipal electric power company through the local initiative process to a discussion on how harmful it is to the fabric of America that the collective we never have adequately
discussed the genocide of native Americans at the birth, and subsequent expansion, of our country. Even though the main topic of the day had to do with gaining personal freedom in regards to having more economic, academic, and media realms, as one can see, larger more theoretical topics always have a way of being included.

The division between focusing on more local or national/global issues, as I’ve observed, didn’t arise among and between occupiers (at least not for the most part) but within themselves. Like most everything else in life, there are finite time and energy resources that organizers have to work with; therefore the decision to work on more theoretical questions or more immediate matters often comes down to questions of time…and need. As with the encampment in Zuccotti Park, OD’s camp attracted many homeless/houseless individuals to it because they were fed and found a certain level of community and safety within the physical occupation. This resulted in very palpable tensions between those from a middle-class background and those who lived on the street: there were complaints of disruptive behaviors during GA’s by homeless people who were intoxicated and counter complaints of middle-class occupiers not understanding what it is like to be homeless and not really caring. Gloria started checking out occupy because of the growing economic disparity in the US. Having grown up in a farming community in the mid-west, she always identified with the struggles of the working class. She really got involved in Occupy after she saw how the police viewed and treated people within the movement. Her attitude towards the police had undergone a major shift since joining Occupy Denver; like many white Americans, she was raised to respect the police to such an extent that once when her son got a
speeding ticket, she assumed that her son was in the wrong. It was only when she saw
the increasing police targeting of OD, including the multiple raids on the encampment
with the police dressed in full riot gear, that her discomfort with, and criticism of, the
police started.

After Denver’s urban camping ban passed, Gloria became almost solely focused
on boycotting businesses that supported its passage. The city ordinance prohibited
anybody from camping without permission, where campaign was defined as laying down
under a blanket. Enforced by the Denver Police Department, it was for Gloria, who by
this time was very critical about the DPD, saw it as another example of the police, which
is an extension of state power, working in conjunction with corporate interests to beat
down on the most vulnerable in our society. The ordinance was strongly backed by the
Downtown Denver Partnership, a business association comprised of businesses operating
in and around the outdoors 16th street mall. The ordinance was presented as a way to
“clean up” downtown Denver so it would attract more businesses and tourists while
simultaneously offering increased services and beds for the homeless population. In
reality, however, very few resources were put towards increasing the number of beds
compared to the focus put on enforcement. When all was said and done, only 160 new
mats, and this is counting the 140 cots that a church group called Capitol Hill United
Ministries (CHUM) put in seven churches. The outcome of the ordinance, simply put,
was that the homeless population ended up either migrating to the outskirts of Denver,
where resource for them are sparse, or finding poorer lit areas off of the beaten track of
the Sixteenth Street Mall that were less safe and still enduring being woken up by the
police every few hours or so and being told to move on. OD opposed the ban from the beginning and held protests and sleep-ins both before and after the ban was passed by the City Council. The first business targeted for boycott was the popular and locally owned breakfast-lunch place, Snooze Eatery. Gloria and her compatriots would picket the restaurant every Sunday morning and simultaneously serve hot meals to the homeless across the street. This restaurant was picked because it had opened its second restaurant right next door to a homeless center in an area known to be frequented by homeless people because of the social services being offered in the area and Gloria understandably found it offensive that a business would open its doors in a part of downtown known for its high population of homeless persons and then turn around and back an ordinance criminalizing homelessness. Gloria held her weekly presence at Snooze for ten months until they released a statement saying that after seeing the results of the ban, they regret supporting it. After her success with Snooze, she refocused her efforts on The Palm, a more upscale restaurant that is an international chain: they resented their support for the ordinance after five and a half months.

In talking with Gloria about her time consuming involvement on not only boycotting targeted backers of the ban but organizing, preparing and serving food at these weekly protests, I was rather surprised to find out that she saw the tension between the housed and the homeless people within Occupy as well as her deep commitment to fighting the urban camping ban as a distraction from larger economic issues in this country. She had put her energy into fighting the urban camping ban because she sees people who are homeless as those who are the most susceptible to abuse, both on the
personal level as well as the systemic level. While the boycott of Snooze was approved by OD's GA, for the first few weeks, hardly anyone joined Gloria at the Sunday action. Gloria, not one to be meek, kept announcing the protest at every GA and even started making her own “Boycott Snooze” buttons to pass out. As weeks passed, more people started joining her; in fact, by the time Snooze relented their support of the ban, she had assembled a group of protesters that followed her to the next restaurant that would be graced with her weekly presence. Her way of starting her small action is a perfect example of how one can simultaneously work through Occupy in the face of opposition, or at least a high level of apathy. She proved herself to be a reliable part of OD throughout the encampment she provided food to the OD kitchen and let Occupiers shower at her home and even spend a few nights there if they were in need of a break from the consent activity at Civic Center Park. Therefore, we can say that Gloria gained a significant amount of social capital within OD throughout the fall that she could call upon to get people to join her in boycotting Snooze. Her boycott also highlights a key feature of the horizontal organization of Occupy in regards to actions: namely, assuming an action gains GA approval, the ability to attract participants hinges not only on its message but also on the amount of respect and confidence the group has in the organizer of a specific action. We can thus see how the structure of OD allowed individuals to exercise their agency for the expressed goal of transforming the movement when there was some opposition to going in a particular direction. The power of such agency stems from Occupy’s leaderless structure because any member can organize a successful action through their social capital without having to contend with an established hierarchal power structure.
The focus of the Occupy movement was to create awareness and dialogue of the increasing economic instability of the American middle class, which was strong and stable only a few decades ago. This desire to go back to the conditions that allowed the middle class to prosper ignores the role exploitation of developing countries and the role it has played in creating such a historically large middle class; this is contrary to what the anti-globalization movement was concerned with. In concrete terms, this focus on the middle class occasionally resulted in a few members in OD questioning the focus the group gave to fighting the urban camping ban. I remember a man involved with OD questioning when the Denver City Council passed the ban, why the group was so invested in fighting the ban since the main purpose of Occupy was to change financial institutions in such a way that would aid the average working American. He wanted OD to get back to holding direct actions in front of banks, for example. When Strike Debt emerged he followed through on his desire to focus on the financial system by becoming involved in the Denver chapter.

The hesitation on the part of some occupiers to getting involved in advocating for the homeless, in a very front and center manner, isn’t a surprising attitude considering the issues Occupies across the nation had with some homeless individuals disrupting GA’s and some housed Occupy members feeling uncomfortable with having to interact with homeless members. However, in referring back to the not-always-clear dichotomy between local, more concrete issues and global and more theoretical ones, the tensions in the Occupy Movement as a whole might be viewed as the local/tangible intruding on the global/theoretical; reminding those occupiers who are preoccupied with larger economic
system of how its failure can be seen at the micro level and impacted not just the middle class, but the less fortunate as well. To hark back to what Aaron said, in order to effect change in a meaningful way, one needs to have the ability to move back and forth between grappling with local issues and wider trends that gave way to the conditions in which one’s local situation came to be. I was speaking to an old friend who had been involved with Occupy LA and she likened this ever shifting perspective to looking at a specimen on a slide through a microscope and constantly having to zoom in and out so you are able to see all aspects of the specimen.

**Globalization/Middle-Class Focus**

There is a tangible link between the anti-globalization movement of the nineties and OWS. Considering that many of the organizers who were present at the embryonic planning stage of OWS also were involved in the anti-globalization movement in the 1990's, the connection between the two protests movement can be clearly seen. Furthermore, the main themes of the Occupy Movement - too much corporate influence in politics that results in their benefit at the expense of the average American worker dovetails well with the prior movement's criticism of globalization that argued that multinational corporations' goals and welfare superseded those of the populists in whose country they were operating in. However, as I began to converse with more and more people involved with OD, it became evident that most of them didn't see any connection between the anti-globalization movement and the Occupy movement; in fact, most of the people I spoke to didn't even know what the anti/alter-globalization movement was. This points to a key characteristic about Occupy; it was by in large aimed at restoring the economic and political power of the American middle-class, be it by talking about
skyrocketing student debt or the housing foreclosure crisis. While many individuals within the Occupy movement openly questioned the sustainability of capitalism – socially, ecologically, and economically – the movement by in large was more concerned with reigning in corporate power, especially financial institutions’ (as evident from OWS being located on Wall Street), and reforming the relationship between the halls of power of business and government rather than tearing down the entire system.

Conclusion

Thinking back on my fieldwork, subsequent analyses and how they are situated within the present understanding of resistance movements, there are a few points that which I now wish to highlight and elaborate on. The first of this is the value my participants placed on the need for community. I would also like to discuss how they viewed and defined resistance. I will also touch upon the role of online organization in OD. Lastly, I will touch on some current organizations here in Denver that are an outgrowth of OD.

In stepping back and contemplating my research on OD, one thing that really leapt out at me was the how important community and horizontal processes was to my participants. While there is no denying that members of OD joined the movement with the goal of generating change on the political and financial landscape of the country, the mechanics and physicality of Occupy was a draw as well. Jennifer, for example got excited by the encampment in Civic Center Park because it provided an example of an alternative community where mutual aid and a sense of solidarity was the base it was built on; a situation that was far removed from what is thought to be the norm in
American society. Aaron similarly echoed this sentiment by highlighting the tangible physical space of the encampment that allowed people of various backgrounds to discuss a wide range of issues. The close proximity of people to one another mandated that disagreements be dealt with in a civil manner; again fostering community. Jared too spoke about how it was the process of OD in of itself that presented such a change to the status quo and simultaneously demonstrated an alternative to hierarchical decision making.

We can see how Susan prefers marches that are non-confrontational because it facilitates an environment of solidarity in OD that fosters the trust among activists that strengthened the movement. It is out of this trust that activists in OD could lead and organize actions. In looking at how Gloria was able to organize a protracted protest against the urban camping ban we can see how this element of trust translated into a successful act of resistance. We can also see evidence of Giddens’ notion that acts both alter and perpetuate the structure in which they are undertaken. While Gloria was able to influence the direction of OD, she did it by reinforcing the structure by going through GA to gain approval for it. This in turn increased her social capital within OD because it demonstrated an ability to organize without alienating or upsetting her Occupy community. Therefore, it can be said that the trust that goes along with social capital was fundamental in fostering acts of resistance undertaken by OD.

Another aspect of my research that is worth highlighting is the issue of how resistance itself is defined. Since one of the main objective of this ethnography was to understand how participants in the Occupy Movement conceptualized resistance, I wasn't
as concerned with whether or not a particular action fell within this definition of resistance; taking my lead from cognitive anthropology, which holds that understanding how individuals conceptualize and categorize the culture they inhabit. Therefore, while Hollander and Einwohner hold that in order to qualify as resistance, an act must be undertaking with a conscious goal of change a specific thing (or system, or action) and that their act be recognizable by those responsible for what they're resisting. This leads us to an interesting point regarding the relationship between theory and how participants that a given theory is applied to: those participants may not always agree with every aspect of the theory being applied to them. This is best illustrated by the discussion around community gardens, a subject about which all my participants agreed was an example of resistance but wouldn't qualify as resistance since this oppositional act isn't visible to agri-business or others who comprised our industrial food system. From a cognitive anthropologist point of view - as well as for those subscribing to Scott's definition of resistance - it doesn't matter whether or not a individual's act of resistance is noticeable to what is being resisted. It is more about what cultural internalization propel the actor use their agency to resist. If people reflect on their past actions, as Giddens theorized, on actions that they thought were acts of resistance, if those acts still stir positive emotions, then those acts will likely be repeated, even if the greater impacts of said acts were minimal. Because acts of resistance come into being from a process of self-reflection as well as taking into account who is doing the resisting and what is being resisted. As a result of this, methods of resistance isn't one of a dichotomous nature between soft and hard resistance but rather is a continuum for which the parameters of
what is considered hard and soft resistance is ever shifting for individual activists as well for movements.

Finally, Juris’ critique of decentralized online networks is that they connect people to each other rather than to actual groups. My fieldwork observations didn’t reflect this, however. While social networking in OD has become more decentralized and issue specific it is still organized through online groups be it a Facebook page (as in the case of strike debt) or a Google group where actions are announced and statements are written in such a way that a multitude of people are reached and involved.

The question of whether or not the Occupy Movement has changed anything is an interesting one. Clearly, the overall structure of American capitalism hasn't change as a result of it, however, it has affected the overall culture in other ways. For one, it brought the issue of income inequality in America to the forefront of the national discourse; this can be seen, for example, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century, a book by Thomas Piketty (a French economist) has become a bestseller in America. The book explicitly examines the causes of income inequality. Besides this, the OM brought together activists and organizers in their respected cities and gave rise to grass-root groups like Occupy Sandy - which came into being after Hurricane Sandy hit New York City to provide much needed goods and clean-up services that the city failed to provide in a timely manner.

Presently, in Denver there are five active groups that can be linked to OD in one way or another: the Colorado Foreclosure Resistance Coalition (CFRC); Denver Homeless Out Loud, Boycott Tattered Cover, Colorado Extraction Resistance, and
Connect Colorado-for which Saman helps organize forums on various topics. CFRC has a clear and direct line from OD; as one will recall that Aaron was involve with the OD working group that fought unjust foreclosures in various ways including helping people navigate the legal system and "occupying" housing where foreclosures are impending; CFRC has continued along these same lines. Likewise, boycott Tattered Cover is another manifestation of boycott Snooze; it is still spearheaded by Gloria and includes both people who were involved with OD and those who weren't. It is important to note that unlike Snooze, who was boycotted because the owner spoke out in favor of the urban camping ban, the Tattered Cover Bookstore is being targeted because it is a member of the Downtown Business Partnership, even thou it expressed neutrality on the ban and belongs to the American Civil Liberties Union, a group that opposes the ban.

Dhol formed in responds to the urban camping ban and while some of its members were involved in OD, most weren't. While the group initially was comprised of people that were involved in OD, over time that changed; also more homeless individuals joined, Dhol in fact, members of Dhol make it very clear that they are not connected to OD or Boycott (who's tactics are divisive within Dhol) because, for one, groups that are involved with issues regarding homelessness are hesitant to work with an organization related to OD. Dhole is working on several things: they put out a newspaper - Get Loud - that informs both the homeless and housed communities about life on Denver streets. Besides this, the group is working on building small houses that could house the homeless at some point. They are also starting to put together a homeless bill of rights with the hope that it will one day become law. The need for a homeless bill of rights became apparent during the passage of the urban camping ban and its aftermath; it's
effect on the targeted population, which has been extensively documented by Dhole during a detailed and wide-ranging survey of homeless individuals they undertook a few months after the ban was implemented which showed how much harder basic things such as getting enough sleep had become.
CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

The means by which an anthropologist conducts her fieldwork greatly influences not only the quality of data that will be collected but the frames through which issues are being looked at. Along these same lines, while the primary focus of any anthropological study is the immediate culture, or sub-culture, at hand, there is an added benefit in situations where concepts in a site-specific projects are applicable to wider issues. Likewise, the field isn't a closed, isolated system; the immediately surrounding field impacts culture and underline the way the environment is experienced as powers emanating from beyond the field site, shaping the site yet existing largely outside the control of the site. These forces are not fixed but are in flux. They appear and disappear in ways that are often incomprehensible and unpredictable to the participants” (Burawoy:2003:653).

Therefore, as Shore and Wright wrote about fieldwork, "the challenge is to select small sites that open windows onto larger processes of political transformation” (2010:12) while, I would add, keeping in mind how larger factors influence the local site. This is a logical method to advocate for, using a micro community to see how a larger cultural movement carves out space for itself in their larger society, in order to inform us about how a social movement that is expressly outside our political system undertakes the effort to reshape our economic and political systems. With this in mind, it is important to understand how the ethnographer will approach the collection of data as well as the field itself.
I began my fieldwork at OD in February 2013 by attending GA's, teach-ins and by going on marches and other type of direct actions. I joined OD not only because for the purpose of academic research but also because the larger goals of the OM - particularly those attempting to narrow the wealth gap and income inequality - aligned with my own political views. Maskovsky (2013) writes about the tensions anthropologists experience while performing an ethnography on a movement they're actively participating in. He specifically talks about how hard it was for graduate students to participate and study the OD movement while simultaneously completing his graduate course work. I too experienced this conflict between my own fieldwork on OD and my coursework; especially around finals. By late summer, I joined OD social media committee. This entailed participating in the managing of the Facebook page and twitter feed of OD as well as sending real-time updates during a couple of actions to those taking part in them to update them on routes. By attending GA's and direct actions, I gained an understanding of which issues grabbed people's attention as well as the interpersonal dynamics of the group.

I conducted my first interview in the summer of 2013, but the rest of the seven interviews took place in the spring of 2013. The length of my interviews varied; the shorter ones were about an hour while the longer ones took about three hours. Beside the eight subjects I have written about here, I conducted three other interviews which provided me a fuller picture of the movement but failed to address the specific topics I was investigating.
Sites/Settings

In looking at my fieldwork with regards to the issues writers such as Ferguson and Gupta (1992) tackles, a few issues come to mind. The first one is how an ethnographer can conduct fieldwork within her own culture in a way that has legitimacy. The first thing a native ethnographer must do in this situation is establish very clear physical boundaries for where the ethnographic study will take place. In the case of my fieldwork about Occupy, there was three specific spaces where I conducted my ethnography; the meeting room I wrote about at the opening of this paper, Denver’s Civic Center Park – which is where the Occupy camp is, and public streets when, and where there are marches. However loosely structured Occupy Denver is a community, it is still one; because of this, we can gather that the culture of this community is partially shaped by the spaces it is confined to: whether the confinement is self-imposed or not.

Much like during the Arab spring, the Occupy Movement uses virtual media, i.e. Facebook and dedicated websites, as an organizational tool. This not only include posting details about upcoming events, protests, and such online but it also refers to larger issues within Occupy Denver. For example, the group’s mission statement was set up in a Google word document which could be shared, commented upon and edited by various members of the group. Another example of how virtual space became a community space was seen in online discussion threads where disagreements over wide-ranging subject matters that had bearings on the general movement. I would argue that the collaborative nature of Occupy’s online space is the direct outcome of their commitment to horizontal democracy.
As those of us with access to the internet know, this new form of media is a two-way street (unlike television) where consumers of content can also respond and even distort content they see. So, now we can view the Internet as a new part of “the field” - in the way Gupta and Ferguson discussed it - how anthropology has, especially in the past, had a hierarchy of fieldwork sites based on their distance (culturally and/or spatially) from Western European culture and its decadence – American culture, Canadian culture, etc. Where does the digital field site lay in this hierarchy? The key part of expanding the field to include the internet, as Wilson correctly writes, is to remember that the internet can indeed be considered part of a field, it’s not a field on its own and therefore cannot be studied in isolation. When using the cultural text of a chat community, it is key to bring in larger cultural concepts of how power structures shaped ideas of what qualifies as important information, before use of the Internet became common. Can an anthropologist be “a native” of an online community when she hasn’t contributed any material to it; or, to look at it from an entirely different light, is contributing to an online community that is within one’s field site just part of the grand tradition of participant observation? I have to deal with this question directly because I presented a workshop at an Occupy Denver space on using the medium of digital stories to help build social movements and have already been asked whether or not I wanted to put up some materials from my teach-in on the Occupy Denver website.
Para-Ethnographies

I conducted eight lengthily one-on-one interviews with peoples who were heavily involved with OD at various stages. These interviews, in tandem with my participant-observation fieldwork, provided me insight to how individuals chose to navigate OD in such a way that allowed them to undertake acts of resistance in the way they saw fit. Not only did they give me insight into the reasons and means of their involvement but because my interviews took place a year or a year and a half after the major Occupy Denver encampment took place, my informants contributed their own analysis of OD in a para-ethnography.

Half of my informants either taught at the college level or were college/grad students. Although other characteristics of my participants such as age and socio-economic background better represented OD as a whole, I did discretionally interviewed people involved with academia and part of that is because those were the most approachable for me, given my own personal background. Because I interviewed academics who had thought about resistance in both a theoretical and practical sense I expanded my understanding of OD. This isn't to say that only professors and students can provide insights on theory at all, however there is a certain discourse that academics can navigate that ties together the praxis and act of resistance that extends itself well to insights regarding theory. Jared's comments on how soft and hard resistance aren't set stances but rather a continuum that is always conditioned on what is being resisted and who is doing the resisting is a good example.

Para-ethnography also helps us reconcile situations where our theoretical
frameworks and our assumed definitions doesn't quite line up with what we are seeing in the field or hearing from informants. As I mentioned above, all of my informants agree that community gardening was an act of resistance; contrary to the definition of resistance I was working off that stated that one of the main characteristics of an act of resistance is that it is observable and understandable as an act of resistance by those responsible for what is being resisted. Therefore in the case of community gardens, multi-agribusiness would need to be aware that community gardens had come about as a proactive way to express dissatisfaction with our current industrialized food system.

Para-ethnography provides room for the ethnographer and the interviewee to move away from commonly accepted terms and craft new ones that better fit the specific issue being look at. Therefore, one of the implications for para-ethnographies is that it leads to more finely-tuned concepts that users forth a more nuanced understanding of the topic at hand.

This practice of para-ethnography benefited both me and my informants because while the primary reason my informants got involved in the movement was to voice their dissatisfaction with the economic and political situation in the country, as time went on, some of the people I interviewed developed complex analyses of Occupy and social movements in general therefore as we talked, both my participants and I exchanged ideas contributing to a clearer understanding of such topics. Much as Holmes and Marcus wrote about their engagements with participants and the way they took into account their “subjects' analytical acumen and insights to define the issues at stake in our projects as well as the means by which we explore them” (2008:86), I too found myself taking the
notions and thoughts about social movements and resistance my informants had and incorporated them into my own ideas on the topic.

Lastly, much like the Occupy Movement itself, para-ethnography is horizontal by nature. Rather than having an academic expert imposed her interpretation upon a culture separate from her own. The collaborative nature of para-ethnography mirror the spirit of the OM and thus adds to the participant-observation experience of classical anthropology, leading to a more holistic understanding of horizontalism, on the part of the anthropologist by taking-on that structure within her own work.

**Reflexivity**

Around the 1960's, the field of anthropology underwent a self-examination en mass in which one of the major outcomes was the practice of bringing self-reflexivity into ethnographies. Burawoy describes self-reflexivity as including concepts of, "the observer as participant; the reconstruction of theory; internal processing and; external forces" (2003:648). Simply put, self-reflective ethnology acknowledges that anthropologists bring their own worldview into the field with them and this colors the ways in which they interpret and theorize what they have seen in the field. Turning to my own research, I went into the field with my own political leanings much in line with Occupies' criticisms of the overbearing influence large corporations have on our political system, hence it was a very simple thing for me to willingly participate in OD. I was a bit slow with getting involved with the movement, initially showing up to GA's first in Civic Center Park and then at the Deer Pile as the weather got cold and then, going to community teach-ins held in the same space.
Due to my speech disability, it can take a bit longer for me to get to know people but by spring I had made enough connections with people in the group that I could actively participate in many of the group's social media tasks such as posting information about upcoming events and actions as well as loosely mediating posts on the OD public Facebook page. I write this not only to illustrate the ways I was an active participant but also to give one a sense of how I established trust and built relationships with people within the movement. As is often the case with anthropologists and their "informants" (a word that brings with it an uneasiness considering the ways law enforcement agencies undertook surveillance of the OM) the distinction between friendships and the former becomes nonexistent especially as socializing takes place among members of social movements.
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