

Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere:

Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation

ABSTRACT

This article explores the links between social media and public space within the #Occupy Everywhere movements. Whereas listservs and websites helped give rise to a widespread logic of networking within the movements for global justice of the 1990s–2000s, I argue that social media have contributed to an emerging logic of aggregation in the more recent #Occupy movements—one that involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces. However, the recent shift toward more decentralized forms of organizing and networking may help to ensure the sustainability of the #Occupy movements in a posteviction phase. [*social movements, globalization, political protest, public space, social media, new technologies, inequality*]

October 15, 2011. When I exited the T-station in downtown Boston on the day of global actions in support of #Occupy Wall Street and the burgeoning #Occupy Everywhere movements,¹ I immediately accessed my Twitter account. The latest tweets displayed on my Android phone indicated a large group of protesters was on its way from the #Occupy Boston camp at Dewey Square and would soon turn a nearby corner. Minutes later, hundreds of mostly young, energetic marchers appeared, decked out in an array of styles ranging from jeans and brightly colored tees to black and khaki army surplus attire and various shades of plaid. I eagerly jumped into the crowd and joined in chanting, “Banks got bailed out, we got sold out!” followed by the emblematic “We are the 99%! We are the 99%!” We soon turned to onlookers and began interpellating them,² “*You* are the 99%! *You* are the 99%!”³ After a few minutes, I moved to the sidewalk to take photos and observe the signs on display, which ranged in tone from the populist “End the Wars and Tax the Rich!” to the inspirational “1000 cities, 80 countries Today!” and what could be interpreted as a slightly defensive “Our message is clear, read the fine print!”

Today’s protest would be the second mass march of the week. The previous Monday, Columbus Day (Indigenous People’s Day), thousands of workers and students had joined #Occupy Boston for one of the largest demonstrations the city had seen in years, culminating in the arrest of 140 people past midnight when the Boston Police forcefully evicted occupiers from a second grassy protest site taken after the march along the Rose Kennedy Greenway across from Dewey Square. Like the “viral” images of New York City police pepper spraying two women at #Occupy Wall Street,⁴ videos of the eviction and the aggressive police response, including their wrestling to the ground of several clearly nonviolent members of Veterans for Peace, circulated widely via social and mainstream media platforms, generating widespread sympathy for #Occupy Boston. This afternoon’s march, to mark the ten-year anniversary of the hostilities in Afghanistan and challenge the escalating costs of wars in that country and in Iraq, would again draw several thousand protesters. It would also be one of more than a thousand October 15 #Occupy protests around the world, a testament to the viral circulation of protest in an era of social media (see also Razsa and Kurnik this issue).

When a new mass wave of global activism breaks out, casual observers and reporters often wax eloquent about the ways new media technologies are transforming social protest. During the actions against the WTO summit meeting in Seattle in 1999, for example, news reports fixated on the innovative use of Internet-based listservs, websites, and cell phones, which were said to provide unparalleled opportunities for mobilizing large numbers of protesters in globally linked yet decentralized and largely leaderless networks of resistance. More recently, the focus has shifted to how social networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook completely transform the way movements organize, whether the so-called Twitter Revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia or the outburst of protests around the globe inspired by and modeled after #Occupy Wall Street (see, e.g., Waldram 2011).⁵

In opposition to such techno-optimistic narratives, skeptical accounts inevitably remind us of the importance of deeply sedimented histories and politics of place for understanding the dynamics of protest in concrete locales or of the tendency for social movements to organize through decentralized, diffuse, and leaderless networks since at least the 1960s, if not long before (cf. Calhoun 1993; Gerlach and Hine 1970). Skeptics also remind us that many protesters in places like Tahrir Square did not have Internet access and were mobilized as much through face-to-face networks as through social media (see Gladwell 2011). Similarly, even though many #Occupy Everywhere participants are certainly avid users of Facebook and Twitter—hence, the widespread use of the hashtag sign as a diacritic—not every occupier and supporter uses social networking tools and smartphones. Indeed, #Occupy has also spread through the occupation of physical spaces as well as the diffusion of evocative images through traditional mass media platforms.

However, debates between techno-optimists and skeptics are rather beside the point. It is clear that new media influence how movements organize *and* that places, bodies, face-to-face networks, social histories, and the messiness of offline politics continue to matter, as exemplified by the resonance of the physical occupations themselves. The important questions, then, are precisely how new media matter; how particular new media tools affect emerging forms, patterns, and structures of organization; and how virtual and physical forms of protest and communication are mutually constitutive.

In my previous ethnographic work on the movements for global justice (Juris 2004, 2005, 2008a), I pointed out that network-based forms of social movement organization are not new—networks, for example, also characterized the so-called New Social Movements of the 1970s (cf. Melucci 1989; Offe 1985), but digital tools such as listservs and websites facilitated the diffusion of global justice movements and enhanced their scale of operation by allowing

activists to more effectively communicate and coordinate across geographic spaces without the need for vertical hierarchies.⁶ Moreover, networking technologies did more than facilitate the expansion of network forms; they shaped new political subjectivities based on the network as an emerging political and cultural ideal—that is to say, there was a confluence between network norms, forms, and technologies. The point was not that everyone used new media or that digital technologies completely transformed how social movements operate but that, as new media were incorporated into the ongoing practices of core groups of activists, they helped diffuse new dynamics of activism. Networking logics were shaped by particular cultural-political histories in concrete locales, they were always contested by competing verticalist practices and ideas, and they were inscribed into physical spaces during mass actions. Nonetheless, the use of listservs, websites, and collaborative networking tools helped to facilitate new patterns of protest that resonated with and enhanced certain existing organizational forms and cultural ideals and that were widespread but differentially inflected across geographic contexts. The question that now arises is whether the increasing use of social media such as Facebook or Twitter has led to new patterns of protest that shape movement dynamics beyond the realm of technological practice and to what extent these are similar to or different from the networking logics characteristic of global justice activism.

This initial reflection on the #Occupy Everywhere movements is based on my observations and participation in #Occupy Boston since late September 2011, including the period after the dismantling of the camp on December 10. I especially focus on how social media have shaped the forms and practices of #Occupy, comparing and contrasting the #Occupy movements to a previous wave of global justice activism that was also significantly influenced by digital media (Juris 2008a). How are the #Occupy movements using new technologies? What difference does employing social as opposed to other forms of new media make? How do virtual and physical forms of protest intersect? What are the strategic and political implications of emerging dynamics of organization and protest within #Occupy, particularly in terms of issues such as sustainability, racial diversity, political demands, and movement impact?⁷

In this article, I propose a distinction between a “logic of networking” (Juris 2008a), a cultural framework that helps give rise to practices of communication and coordination across diversity and difference on the part of collective actors, and a “logic of aggregation,” which involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces. I argue that, whereas the use of listservs and websites in the movements for global justice during the late 1990s and 2000s helped to generate and diffuse distributed networking logics, in the #Occupy movements social media have contributed to powerful

logics of aggregation, which have continued to exist alongside rather than entirely displacing logics of networking.

Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and especially Twitter were particularly important during #Occupy's initial mobilization phase, although networking logics have become more salient since the evictions of the largest camps around the United States from mid-November to early December 2011. This shift toward less publicly visible forms of organizing and networking outside centralized physical spaces may help to ensure the staying power of #Occupy—a significant challenge given the vulnerability of the #Occupy movements to disaggregation in the absence of longer-term network structures. A foundation is thus being laid for a struggle that is potentially more sustainable, tactically diverse, and strategically flexible, although this outcome is by no means assured.

Meanwhile, beyond the issue of protest tactics, discussions have also continued around movement demands and political strategy. Whereas the diversity of individualized actors and ideological viewpoints associated with logics of aggregation within #Occupy places constraints on the development of a singular set of demands or an all-encompassing strategy (indeed, many participants are committed to a vision of direct democracy that stresses political autonomy and strategic diversity), occupiers are already building collaborative processes that allow them to articulate shared visions and goals from the bottom up while potentially avoiding the trap of political homogenization and cooptation. At the same time, moving beyond the often entrenched debates between proponents of institutional strategies and those who believe that “real” change can only come from outside the representative democratic system, I suggest that movements such as #Occupy can pursue multiple paths, indirectly shaping policy debates by influencing wider political discussions while simultaneously developing alternative models of democratic self-organization. In this sense, the #Occupy movements have contributed to a shift in public discourse, shining a light on growing inequality and the influence of financial and corporate interests in our economy and politics while constituting laboratories for the production of alternative forms of democracy and community. Finally, achieving racial and class diversity remains a significant challenge for #Occupy, although specific sites, such as #Occupy Boston, have made inroads in building relationships with community-based organizations and initiatives that mobilize working-class people-of-color communities. Any conclusions are meant to be provisional, though, as #Occupy and the broader political context continue to evolve rapidly.

I begin by discussing the rise of #Occupy Everywhere, and #Occupy Boston, in particular, providing an ethnographic account of the encampment at Dewey Square and an initial analysis of the demographics and politics of #Occupy Boston. I then examine the relationship between

social media and the #Occupy movements, comparing the emerging logics of aggregation within the latter to the networking logics characteristic of a previous wave of global justice activism. Next, I consider the intersections between virtual and physical protest within #Occupy Everywhere, again comparing the #Occupy and global justice movements, this time with respect to the relationship between digital media and urban space, particularly in relation to tactics and movement sustainability. My argument then shifts to the relation between logics of networking and logics of aggregation during the posteviction phase of #Occupy, as I draw on an ethnographic account of the dismantling of the Dewey Square encampment and an analysis of the trajectory of #Occupy Boston. In the final section, I consider the prospects and challenges for #Occupy Boston and the #Occupy movements more generally, including issues related to movement strategy and demands, racial and class diversity, and political impact.

Occupying Boston

#Occupy Wall Street began on September 17, 2011, in the wake of renewed resistance struggles around the world such as the Arab Spring, the occupation of Wisconsin's statehouse to defend collective bargaining rights (Collins 2012), and the May 15 *acampada*, or campout, movements in Spain (Taibo 2011).⁸ The initial protest followed weeks of organizing in response to a call for the occupation of Wall Street by the online journal AdBusters (2011), which described the new tactic as “a fusion of Tahrir with the *acampadas* of Spain.” Videos and messages attributed to the hacker collective Anonymous initially helped to spread the word about #Occupy Wall Street, and the Guy Fawkes mask, an image of resistance appropriated by members of Anonymous from the film and novel *V for Vendetta* (McTeigue 2005; Moore and Lloyd 1982–89), became an early symbol of #Occupy (see Coleman 2012; Penny 2011). Two thousand people attended the first rally and march on Wall Street in downtown Manhattan, and nearly 200 camped out that night in Zuccotti Park.⁹

The occupation continued to build during subsequent days and weeks, propelled in part by the viral spread of images of #Occupy Wall Street and of police violence via social and mainstream media and in part by the effectively vague yet powerfully simple and resonant frame that called on people from all walks of life to identify with “the 99%” against the disproportionate influence of “the 1%” (symbolically linked to Wall Street) over our politics, our economy, and our lives. From the beginning, #Occupy has been an egalitarian, radically democratic grassroots struggle that has provided a progressive alternative to the right-wing populism of the Tea Party and a framework for understanding inequality and economic stagnation that resonates with wide swaths of the public, from students to workers,

professionals, and the unemployed.¹⁰ Like the earlier protests in Wisconsin, #Occupy Wall Street helped to shine a light on the ongoing effects of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003; cf. Collins 2012), in this case, the 2008 Wall Street bailout and the perceived abandonment of the working and middle classes.

After gaining visibility on Wall Street, #Occupy quickly spread to other cities, including Boston, where I took part in the first planning assembly and joined in the initial occupation on Friday, September 30. The occupation in Boston began when a young woman, upon returning from a visit to #Occupy Wall Street, started the Twitter account @OccupyBoston and called for an open planning assembly on Tuesday, September 27, in the Boston Common. Much to her surprise, she later told me, the meeting drew more than 200 people. On Wednesday, after two evenings of deliberation, a place and time for the occupation were decided, and the occupation began that Friday, capped off by an impromptu march through downtown Boston. The #Occupy encampments subsequently diffused to cities around the country and the world—the global day of action in support of the occupations on October 15 involved some 15 hundred protests in 82 countries (see also Razsa and Kurnik this issue).

When I arrived at the Boston Common, where hundreds of other marchers had already gathered for the #Occupy Everywhere protest on October 15, I started to monitor dozens of local, national, and global #Occupy-related Twitter feeds from the United States, Indignados movements in Spain (including feeds from Madrid and Barcelona, where I had done research on global justice networks), and Mexico (where I had recently spent a year conducting fieldwork on free-radio activism). Hundreds of thousands of marchers had already gathered in the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid and the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona, occupiers were preparing for events in Mexico City, several thousand occupiers and supporters had gathered in Zuccotti Park in New York City, and another large group had gathered in the Bronx. During global justice actions in the late 1990s and 2000s, I usually had to wait until evening to learn what had happened elsewhere that day via movement listservs and webpages, often on computers set up in temporary independent media centers (cf. Juris 2008a; Kidd 2003; Meikle 2002). On October 15, 2011, I was able to simultaneously participate in and follow events in dozens of cities around the world from my handheld phone set.

Meanwhile, the crowd in the Common began chanting, “People’s mic, people’s mic!” to cajole the first speaker at the premarch rally, the mother of a soldier killed in Afghanistan, to swap her electric mic for the human voice amplification system widely used at the #Occupy camps.¹¹ She readily agreed in a show of support for #Occupy Boston, and I then turned back to my Twitter feeds, reading analyses of the quickly expanding protests. After two more speakers talked



Figure 1. Boston protester in Guy Fawkes mask at the global day of action in support of #Occupy Everywhere on October 15, 2011. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.

about the escalating costs of the wars on our servicepeople, our communities, and our federal budget, the crowd, now a couple of thousand strong, began to march out of the Common toward the occupation at Dewey Square, stopping at several sites along the way, including a military recruitment center, a Bank of America headquarters, and a Verizon Wireless store, to denounce the cost of war, bank bailouts, and unfair labor practices. Upon reaching the #Occupy Boston encampment, the marchers filled the open section of the square in front of the grassy area housing the bustling tent city. Some listened to additional speakers, and others began to watch a youth group performing an Aztec dance. Still others walked through the camp itself, in some cases provided “official” tours by volunteer guides. I had spent several days hanging out at the camp, but each time I visited, I found that new tents and structures had sprung up, so I decided to wander through again.

A few minutes after I made my way past the bike racks that marked the entrance to the camp, I stopped at the logistics tent to check the day’s schedule. In addition to the antiwar march and student rally, myriad meetings, assemblies, performances, and “people’s university” workshops, including “An Introduction to the Solidarity Economy,” “Neoliberal Dispossession and the Demand for Demands,” and “Whiteness and Ally-Ship,” were scheduled throughout the day.¹² I then walked down the main “street” inside the camp, past the donations area on the left and, on the right, student and legal tents and the large kitchen area that had sprung up with the help of many local Food Not Bombs members. As with #Occupy Wall Street and the occupation of Wisconsin’s statehouse (cf. Collins 2012), supporters donated pizza and other prepared meals, although the food working group also cooked food from scratch. Moreover, six or seven dozen sleeping tents were set up around the camp,



Figure 2. Activist musicians play during the #Occupy Boston march against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on October 15, 2011. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.



Figure 3. Occupiers protest outside of the Bank of America headquarters in downtown Boston on October 15, 2011. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.

and on any given night several hundred occupiers might stay over. The crowds would swell into the thousands for marches and rallies.

A new library tent was being erected next to the media structure near the main “plaza” at the end of the camp, where the General Assemblies were held twice each day. As I walked by, I noticed a handful of activists busy writing press releases, sending tweets, and editing webpages in the media tent and, on the plaza, a group of forty or so people were listening to the people’s university workshop on solidarity economies. During the evening, General Assemblies—sometimes comprising two or three hundred people or more, particularly on the weekends—might fill the plaza and take part in a complex process of consensus decision making facilitated by hand signals, speakers’



Figure 4. The #Occupy Boston encampment at Dewey Square. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.



Figure 5. Occupier enjoying a hot meal outside tent at the #Occupy Boston camp. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.

stacks, and an established order for announcements and proposals. Although the meetings were frequently long and tedious, many occupiers point to these open, participatory assemblies as embodying an alternative to the current representative democratic order disproportionately influenced by the 1% (see also Razsa and Kurnik this issue).¹³

After passing the direct action and sign tents at the far end of the camp, I walked back along the busy surface road dividing Dewey Square from the Federal Reserve Bank and South Station. Here dozens of occupiers displayed signs to passing cars, eliciting frequent honks of approval and the occasional insult. On this particular day, the highlight was clearly a group of four young men decked out in tiny red Speedo bathing suits holding whimsical signs with messages such as “Speedos Now!” and “1% of this SPEEDO is covering 99% of my ?*@!” There were also many



Figure 6. The iconic Gandhi statue near the entrance to #Occupy Boston at Dewey Square. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.



Figure 8. #Occupy Boston supporters conveying humorous message to passing traffic. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.



Figure 7. #Occupy protester displaying sign along the surface road next to #Occupy Boston encampment. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.



Figure 9. The faith and spirituality tent at the #Occupy Boston encampment. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.

serious messages, including this poignant personal admission: "Make too much money for government assistance, but not enough to support myself: I AM THE 99%!" My self-led tour concluded with a brief visit to the faith and spirituality tent, where a handful of occupiers were quietly meditating.¹⁴

#Occupy Boston was an autonomous, self-managed city replete with its own housing, media, newspaper (Occupy Boston Globe), people's university, security, legal team, library, and even spaces for meditation and worship. I had been to many similar camps in Europe during my previous research on global justice movements (Juris and Pleyers



Figure 10. Musical jam session on sidewalk next to #Occupy Boston camp at Dewey Square. Photo by Jeffrey S. Juris.

2009), but such camps are rare in the United States. There are still no available surveys of the social composition of #Occupy Boston,¹⁵ but data from visitors to the #Occupy Wall Street website (<http://www.occupywallstreet.org>) in early October 2011 suggested that responders were largely white (81 percent), male (62 percent), young (64 percent younger than 35), well educated (65 percent have a college degree or better), and nonaffluent (72 percent make less than \$50,000 a year; see Cordero-Guzman 2011). It is difficult to say how these findings relate to the percentages of actual movement participants, and it is important to keep in mind the effects of the rapidly closing but still significant digital divide,¹⁶ but in the case of #Occupy Boston, my observations indicate similar movement demographics, with significant numbers of young adults, students, and those who are unemployed or independently or informally employed. At the same time, many women and people in their forties and older have been active participants, particularly in the working groups and assemblies. The campers in Boston tend to be younger and are more likely to be male—although not exclusively so, and they include a large contingent of homeless residents.¹⁷ There has also been a visible presence of lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) activists and a handful of active Latinos, African Americans, and Asians.

Nonetheless, one of the main internal critiques within #Occupy Boston has been that it fails to represent the diversity of the 99% and that it is skewed toward the upper end of the spectrum of socioeconomic power and privilege. To address such imbalances in the representation of historically marginalized peoples, an informal network of labor and community-based groups—including Jobs with Justice, City Life/Vida Urbana, and other organizations associated with the national Right to the City coalition,¹⁸ which has a strong base among working-class people of

color, has been meeting regularly to coordinate with #Occupy Boston. Meanwhile, two autonomous yet linked initiatives in Boston—Occupy the Hood and Occupy the Barrio, the first part of a national process, the latter restricted to Boston—have also arisen, building on the Occupy discourse but using more traditional community organizing methods to mobilize poor and working-class communities in largely African American and Latino neighborhoods, respectively. U.S. global justice movements exhibited similar racial and class dynamics, although it seems to me that #Occupy's focus on domestic inequality and unemployment have connected more viscerally with the experiences of marginalized communities. Indeed, given the historical racial and class tensions in Boston, manifested in divisions within and between progressive movements, the willingness of so many community-based organizations to support and engage #Occupy, albeit critically, represents a significant development. #Occupy Boston has also mobilized and received support from the city's mostly white progressive religious and peace communities, various anarchist and socialist formations, and existing social and economic justice movement spaces such as Encuentro Cinco.¹⁹

Politically, a survey of 198 individuals at Zuccotti Park on October 10–11 found that just under a third of respondents identified as Democrats and another third did not identify with any political party. Meanwhile, 5 percent identified as anarchist and 6 percent as socialist, independent, and libertarian, respectively (Schoen 2011). On the basis of my own observations and interactions, I would say that #Occupy Boston exhibits a similar level of political diversity, including radicals (anarchists, socialists, anti-capitalists), left-leaning Democrats, moderates, and even a sometimes vocal group of libertarian Ron Paul supporters. However, what is striking about #Occupy Boston—and this corresponds to what I have heard from colleagues regarding other camps in the United States and Spain—is the participation of a large number of people who had previously not been politically active. Compared to the global justice movements, #Occupy Everywhere seems to have penetrated the social fabric more deeply, reflecting the resonance of the issues addressed and the ability of social media to reach far beyond typical activist circles.

In sum, like the global justice movements before it, #Occupy Everywhere has arisen to challenge corporate greed and unaccountable financial institutions, quickly “cascading” (cf. Appadurai 1996) through the use of alternative and mainstream media from discrete singular protests to a global movement field linking together diverse sites globally. Both movements are also decentralized and make use of directly democratic decision making based on a consensus process. In addition, many specific practices, including novel forms of alternative media, activist camps, and the use of hand signals and the people's mic, diffused from one struggle to the next, often brought by particular activists

and groups. Beyond such similarities, however, are critical differences related to modes of organization and communication that can be explained, in part, by the rise of new dynamics of protest shaped by social media.

Social media and logics of aggregation

As I have argued (cf. Juris 2004, 2005, 2008a), global justice movements during the late 1990s and 2000s were characterized by a pervasive cultural logic of networking that arose as activists began to use digital media. This logic entailed a set of embodied social and cultural dispositions shaped by informational capitalism that oriented actors toward (1) building horizontal ties and connections among diverse, autonomous elements (e.g., movements, organizations, groups, etc.); (2) the free and open circulation of information; (3) collaboration via decentralized coordination and directly democratic decision making; and (4) self-directed networking. A cultural logic is a semiotic framework—produced and reproduced through concrete practices of interpretation that are shaped by specific technological, social, and economic contexts—through which people make sense of their world and their interactions with others. It is a logic of action, a “process of people collectively using effectively identical assumptions in interpreting each other’s actions—i.e. hypothesizing as to each other’s motivations and intentions” (Enfield 2000:36).

In this sense, a cultural logic of networking (hereafter, a networking logic or a logic of networking) is a meaningful framework for grasping the actions of others that is shaped by our interactions with networking technologies and, in turn, gives rise to specific kinds of social and political networking practices. Networking logics thus involve more than a disposition toward building horizontal connections across diversity and difference; they also help other political actors interpret such practices.

A logic of aggregation is an alternative cultural framework that is shaped by our interactions with social media and generates particular patterns of social and political interaction that involve the viral flow of information and subsequent aggregations of large numbers of individuals in concrete physical spaces. Whereas networking logics entail a praxis of communication and coordination on the part of collective actors that are already constituted—including particular organizations, networks, and coalitions (cf. Fox 2009)—logics of aggregation involve the coming together of actors qua individuals. These individuals may subsequently forge a collective subjectivity through the process of struggle, but it is a subjectivity that is under the constant pressure of disaggregation into its individual components—hence, the importance of interaction and community building within physical spaces. Whereas networks are also given to fragmentation, the collective actors that compose them are more lasting (Fox 2009; Juris 2008a).

Cultural logics may also give rise to normative emic political visions or models of how the world should be organized. In this sense, what might be called a “politics” of networking or aggregation refers not so much to an interpretive framework as, on the one hand, to an organizing strategy and a political model that is shaped by a particular cultural logic—for example, the way an emphasis on physical occupations to the exclusion of other tactics is shaped by a logic of aggregation—and, on the other hand, to the struggles and tensions that arise when alternative cultural logics and normative visions interact. Such discordances are reflected, for example, in debates over the importance of maintaining centralized occupations versus developing multiple and decentralized alternative tactics.

Listservs, the primary mode of digital networking and communication in the global justice movements, are a particular kind of networking tool with a unique set of sociopolitical “affordances” (Hutchby 2001),²⁰ allowing users to circulate and exchange ideas and information by posting and reposting as well as to interact, collaborate, coordinate, and debate complex ideas. Global justice movement listservs brought together individuals committed to a common goal, project, or set of interests, not only helping to build discursive communities or publics but also constituting a communicative infrastructure for the rise of network-based organizational forms that allowed groups of actors to communicate and coordinate at a distance.

In this sense, global justice mobilizations against the WTO in Seattle in 1999 or the World Bank and IMF in Prague in 2000 were organized via listservs, distributive tools allowing for complex patterns of coordination and communication that gave rise to network formations such as local Direct Action Network chapters in the United States and the Movement for Global Resistance in Cataluña. An array of shifting, overlapping, multiscalar, and rhizomatic networks emerged, mobilizing activists across geographic regions, campaigns, forms of protest, and political visions (Juris 2008a; cf. Chesters and Welsh 2006; della Porta et al. 2006; Escobar 2008; Routledge and Cumbers 2009; Smith 2008). The listserv as the primary tool of communication and coordination thus helped give rise to a model of networked organization based on decentralized coordination among diverse, autonomous collective actors. These new diffuse network formations frequently outlived the mobilizations for which they were created, cohering into more or less sustainable movement infrastructures beyond any specific set of protests or actions. The “global justice movement” was thus widely referred to as a “network of networks” or a “movement of movements” (cf. Mertes 2004).

Although working groups at the emerging occupations continued to use listservs, social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter became the primary means of communication within #Occupy, particularly during the initial phase of mobilization. Significantly, although

#Occupy Boston working groups have their own listservs, there is no overall e-mail list for the occupation.²¹ This is important because different networking tools produce varying effects given their distinct sociotechnical affordances. In contrast to listservs, which allow for more complex communicative exchange, interaction, and coordination and can thus facilitate the development of discrete communities, social networking channels are mainly used by activists for microbroadcasting, that is to say, they allow individuals to quickly, cheaply, and effectively blast out vast amounts of information, links, and updates via person-to-person, ego-centered networks (group pages and accounts also act as individual nodes), taking advantage of powerful “small-world” effects to generate massive viral communication flows (cf. Postill n.d.).²² The combination of Twitter and smartphones, in particular, allows individuals to continually post and receive updates as well as to circulate images, video, and text, constituting real-time user-generated news feeds. The use of Twitter and Facebook can also produce a sense of connectedness and copresence, potentially eliciting powerful feelings of solidarity as protesters read about distant and not-so-distant others engaged in the same or kindred actions and protests (Postill n.d.). However, social networking tools, and particularly Twitter, given its strict character limit, are far less effective than listservs for facilitating complex, interactive discussions regarding politics, identity, strategy, and tactics.²³

Although social networking tools allow activists to rapidly circulate information and to coordinate physical movements across space, they are perhaps most effective at getting large numbers of individuals to converge in protest at particular physical locations. Rather than generating organizational networks, these tools primarily link and help to stitch together interpersonal networks, facilitating the mass aggregation of individuals within concrete locales through viral communication flows. In this sense, rather than mobilizing “networks of networks” the use of Twitter and Facebook within social movements tends to generate “crowds of individuals.”²⁴ At the same time, as commercial platforms that link individuals with friends and colleagues from multiple social milieus, social networking sites, compared to the listservs and autonomous media platforms, such as Indy-media, that were prevalent at the height of the global justice movements, are more widely used, have lower barriers to access and participation, and thus penetrate wider social networks,²⁵ helping to explain the broader degree of participation in the #Occupy movements beyond the traditional activist communities involved in movements of the recent past. During the posteviction phase of #Occupy, however, which in Boston has been characterized by lower levels of public mobilization (e.g., mass marches, rallies, direct actions, and solidarity events) and more-submerged forms of decentralized networking, digital communication has increasingly shifted to a proliferating nexus of listservs used

by particular working groups (e.g., media, ideas, logistics, facilitation, etc.), suggesting the rise of a fragmented mode of interaction combining elements of networking logics and logics of aggregation.

The rise of what I have called “a logic of aggregation” presents a more serious problem of sustainability than that posed by the diffuse networks of a prior generation. Indeed, whereas global justice networks often lasted a few years—although world and regional social forum networks have been longer lived, around since 2001—social networking tools have been most effective at generating protests organized as temporary “smart mobs” (Rheingold 2003), which disaggregate as easily as they aggregate. It is only with the long-term occupation of public space that such “mobs” (it is no small irony that House majority leader Eric Cantor [R-VA]) used precisely this term to dismiss #Occupy protesters) are transformed from “crowds” of individuals into an organized “movement” with a collective subjectivity—albeit internally contested—alternatively defined by occupiers themselves as the “Occupy Movement,” “the ‘99%,” or “the people.”²⁶ This suggests another important difference between logics of networking and logics of aggregation: the relationship between the virtual and the physical, between the online world and the square.

Embodying protest

Mass direct actions such as the blockade against the WTO meetings in Seattle in 1999 and the 2001 “siege” of the G8 Summit in Genoa, as the primary tactic of the movements for global justice, allowed activists to make their struggles visible—to themselves, the media, and the wider public—and to shine a light on the inequities of global corporate capitalism. At the same time, they also provided a platform for networks to build collective identities, to become physically embodied, and to represent themselves to themselves and others (Juris 2008a, 2008b). Meanwhile, the widespread “diversity of tactics” ethic meant networking logics were often physically inscribed into urban space as alternative networks divided action terrains into distinct spaces characterized by diverse protest performances, ranging from nonviolent sit-ins to mobile, carnivalesque street parties and acts of militant confrontation with the police. In this sense, mass global justice actions were temporary performative terrains along which networks made themselves and their struggles visible. Once a particular action concluded, movement networks would continue to organize in submerged spheres until the next mobilization. Global justice movements were thus associated with the mass direct action as a tactic, but the overall “movement” was not identical to this tactic.²⁷ Nonetheless, global justice networks had difficulty adjusting their strategy when mass actions became more difficult to reproduce over time given waning media interest and decreasing emotional intensity.

The link between physical protest and logics of aggregation is somewhat different. Rather than providing spaces for particular networks to coordinate actions and physically represent themselves, the smart mob protests facilitated by social media such as Facebook and Twitter make visible crowds of individuals aggregated within concrete locales. At the same time, given that social networking tools are primarily used for microbroadcasting, they are less facilitative of lasting organizational networks, although sustainability can be achieved via other means that compensate for the specific affordances of a given communication tool. In light of such logics of aggregation and disaggregation, one way to create more sustained movements is to indefinitely extend smart mob protests, physically occupying space to intervene through time, and ultimately building community, affective solidarity, and alternative forms of sociality. This dynamic produces a powerful incentive for politically motivated crowds of aggregated individuals—in the case of #Occupy, motivated to address grievances such as rising inequality, unemployment, and increasing corporate influence over electoral politics—to come together to maintain a physical presence in public places, even as they continue to inhabit online worlds of social networking. The logics of aggregation associated with #Occupy meant that, at least initially, it was widely perceived, by participants and observers alike, as coterminous with public occupations as its primary tactical expression—hence, the powerful impetus to continue occupying regardless of the shifting circumstances.

Logics of aggregation helped to shape emerging tactics and strategies of the #Occupy movements at a critical early stage, but once the physical occupations took hold they were quickly understood by occupiers as the primary source of movement vitality. Logics of aggregation thus helped to facilitate and reinforce a widespread politics of aggregation that conceived the occupations as both an effective protest tactic and a model of an alternative, directly democratic world. Not only did the tactic succeed in eliciting significant and often positive media attention, thus contributing to a partial, albeit limited shift in the U.S. (and to some extent global) political conversation away from an almost exclusive focus on budgetary discipline and austerity and toward a countervailing concern for the consequences of inequality and unemployment, but the occupations were also emotionally vibrant sites of human interaction that modeled alternative communities and generated intense feelings of solidarity (cf. Collins 2001; Juris 2008a, 2008b).

In the #Occupy Boston encampment, myriad expressions of self-organization and consensus-based assemblies involving hundreds of people deliberating and making decisions constituted powerful expressions of direct democracy in action (cf. Graeber 2009; Juris 2008a; Maeckelbergh 2009; Polletta 2002; Razsa and Kurnik this issue). Like similar camps organized during European global justice

protests or world and regional social forums, the occupations were liminal spaces where participants put into practice the alternative values related to the direct democracy, self-organization, and egalitarianism they were fighting for. Indeed, during one General Assembly in Boston, a young female occupier explained that the best part of the occupation was the “small slice of utopia we are creating,” referring to dynamics such as the participatory assemblies, the community building, and the horizontal collaboration. At the same time, the Boston encampment provided a focal point for occupiers, an autonomous platform and space for launching all manner of protests, marches, and public activities.

Indeed, as the number and pace of evictions across the country started to mount, occupiers and sympathetic observers began to articulate the advantages of the tent cities. These might be summarized in terms of their tactical role—occupying space and provoking conflict to garner media attention and inspire participation, making visible the disproportionate influence of monied interests, and creating a symbolic contrast between the concerns of the powerful and those of everyone else; their incubating role—providing a space for grassroots participatory democracy, ritual and community building, strategizing and action planning, public education, and prefiguring alternative worlds that embody movement visions; and their infrastructural role—facilitating ongoing interaction, collaboration, and networking, establishing a point of contact between occupiers and interested members of the public, and furnishing concrete spaces for meetings and activities (see, e.g., Marcuse 2011; Schradie 2011).

Occupiers thus came to realize the vital importance of space (e.g., Schradie 2011). Space is important, first, on a microlevel, as the occupations contested the sovereign power of the state to regulate and control the distribution of bodies in space (Foucault 1979; cf. Feldman 1991; Fernandez 2008; Juris 2008a, Juris 2008b), in part, by appropriating and resignifying particular urban spaces such as public parks and squares as arenas for public assembly and democratic expression (Tilly 2000; Sewell 2001; cf. Zajko and Béland 2008). #Occupy encampments were thus “terrains of resistance” (Routledge 1994), physical sites of contention involving myriad embodied spatial struggles with the police and symbolic sites of contention over the meaning of space. As Marshall Ganz pointed out in a talk at Northeastern University on November 3, 2011, for example, occupiers succeeded by following a classic civil disobedience strategy: placing their bodies where they were not supposed to be. Such “matter out of place” (Douglas 1984) was portrayed by mayors around the United States as a source of great consternation, and many cities reacted by raising concerns about public hygiene to justify the dismantling of camps as acts of literal and metaphorical “cleansing” (cf. Jansen 2001:45).

On a second, macro, level, the occupations challenged the transformation of social space into abstract space under the calculus of exchange value that drives neoliberal capitalism. As Henri Lefebvre (2000), argued, the globalization of capital implies a shift from the production of things in space to the production of space itself: “a ‘second nature’ of territorial infrastructures, spatial configurations and institutions through which capital is valorized” (Brenner 1997:142). Projects of social change thus seek to reappropriate abstract space and recast it according to an alternative calculus of use value (Dirlik 2001:36). This is precisely what urban squatters, indigenous communities, unemployed and landless workers, and direct-action activists do when they take abandoned buildings, shuttered factories, and commercial farms and transform them into lived or “representational” spaces (Lefebvre 2000) for community building, autonomous self-organization, and directly democratic decision making (see Chatterton and Hodkinson 2007; Pickerill and Chatterton 2006). In this sense, #Occupy camps, particularly when situated near financial centers, sought to redefine urban space in ways that contrast with dominant socioeconomic orders, embody utopian movement values, and give rise to alternative forms of sociality.

Spatial struggles have thus been critical to the politics of aggregation within the #Occupy movements, but as Peter Marcuse (2011) has pointed out, maintaining and defending around-the-clock tent cities is not the only way to generate the effects associated with physical occupation. Indeed, fetishizing the camps, as Marcuse put it, and focusing too much on their defense also carries with it a potentially significant downside: fatigue and burnout, demobilization during the cold winter months, internal conflicts and safety issues, divisions between campers and noncampers, the eclipse of the larger issues animating protest, increasing repression, loss of media interest, and so on. In my own experience in Europe and Mexico, autonomous spaces are usually either more permanent (long-term squats, rented or owned political and cultural centers, autonomous rural communities, etc.) or more ephemeral (as in the temporary protest camps set up during mass direct actions) and thus are able to avoid some of the potential problems outlined above. Indeed, I had been to many similar protest camps, but I had never observed the same intense commitment to remaining in the streets over such an extended period of time.²⁸

The best way to understand the powerful drive to keep the physical occupations going, I argue, is to recognize that participants have largely related to the occupations not merely as a tactic but, rather, as the physical and communal embodiments of the virtual crowds of individuals aggregated through the viral flows of social media. As an occupier suggested during an emergency #Occupy Boston assembly to discuss an impending police raid on the evening of Oc-

tober 10, if the occupation were evicted, “we can always go back to the organizations that have long been struggling in our communities.” Not that this was a bad idea, but given the lack of a publicly expressed alternative, such as finding other strategies to keep #Occupy Boston going, it did seem to indicate what I observed as a widespread reluctance at the time to imagine the #Occupy movements beyond the physical occupations. The benefit, then, of the evictions was that they forced occupiers to develop new strategic and tactical repertoires that may establish the conditions of possibility for the development of a potentially more diverse, flexible, and sustainable struggle. The challenge now, in my view, and as expressed by many #Occupy Boston participants, is to find alternative ways of occupying space beyond the centralized encampments while also finding innovative strategies for achieving public visibility.

Although global justice movement networks generally extended in time beyond short-term ephemeral gatherings, most only lasted a couple years before dissolving or morphing into new formations. The one example of a lasting network-based form to arise from the movements for global justice was the World Social Forum and its regional and local variants, a hybrid model integrating horizontal and vertical practices and forms. The sustainability problem is likely to be even more acute for #Occupy Everywhere, given the constraints imposed by a logic of aggregation with respect to the need for #Occupy to reproduce itself in the absence of the physical occupations. If they are to achieve lasting change, occupiers will have to find ways of communicating and coordinating as a movement beyond the square. One solution in Spain was to shift to neighborhood organizing after several months in the plaza, punctuated by periodic protests, but this was only partly successful in creating an ongoing sense of momentum (Postill n.d.). The key, in my view, is to flexibly combine strategies, tactics, and forms in ways that integrate logics of networking and aggregation, allowing for collective organizing through distributed #Occupy Everywhere movement networks that extend beyond physical occupations. As the Zapatista-inspired Mexican National Indigenous Congress (CNI) put it, “Act in assembly when together, act in network when apart” (Notes from Nowhere 2003:64). Acting in network beyond the square could give rise to multiple tactics and strategies, including public education, community organizing, neighborhood meet ups, and electronic civil disobedience as well as marches, protests, and decentralized direct actions. Even before the evictions, there were indications that this diversification was beginning to happen. In Boston, for example, Occupy the Hood and Occupy the Barrio, along with efforts to cultivate relationships with neighborhood groups, reflected a desire to build connections with grassroots communities. Meanwhile, teach-ins and panels at universities and community centers represented further attempts to

expand beyond Dewey Square. This shift toward decentralized networking as well as greater tactical and strategic diversity was greatly facilitated by the eviction of #Occupy Boston from Dewey Square.

The eviction of Dewey Square and #Occupy Boston 2.0

I received a message on the morning of December 8, 2011, from #Occupy Boston's emergency text system. Mayor Thomas Menino had given the occupiers a midnight deadline to clear Dewey Square. The order was not unexpected, given the lifting of a temporary injunction against the clearing of the camp the prior day and the recent spate of evictions against #Occupy encampments across the country.²⁹ Indeed, many activists, civil rights lawyers, and observers pointed to the use of similarly obscure health and safety regulations to justify the raids as evidence of a nationally coordinated effort.³⁰ Mayor Menino had been expressing such concerns for weeks as well as a general loss of patience with the occupation. The pending raid of #Occupy Boston was thus not a surprise, but it did galvanize supporters from around the city to come defend the camp.

I finally got to Dewey just after midnight. Hundreds of people were milling about the perimeter of the square and across Atlantic Avenue, and dozens more were seemingly arriving by the minute. After confirming that the raid had not yet occurred, I entered the camp, surprised to see that so many tents had been removed, including many of the larger logistical structures such as the library, food, and media spaces. Having watched the camp grow and evolve over the past two months, I was sad to see so many empty spaces—a glimpse of what was to come. For the time being, however, a few dozen occupiers who were willing to risk arrest were planning their strategy of defense, ultimately deciding to form two concentric circles around the remaining tents and to peacefully resist their removal. I briefly considered joining in, but I soon heard drumming coming from Atlantic Avenue and decided to see what was happening there.

Hundreds of people had filled the street, closing off one of the largest thoroughfares in downtown Boston. Soon a radical honk band started playing, and the drumming circle grew in numbers and intensity, with people dancing, smiling, and sounding occasional chants, such as "We are unstoppable, another world is possible," and the ever popular "Whose streets, our streets!" A few minutes later, a Twitter message was sent out indicating that the eviction would not happen that night. A loud cheer rang out, and the spontaneous street party continued to grow, ultimately reaching upwards of 2,000 people. Everyone knew the reprieve was temporary, but it still felt good to declare victory and revel in our collective strength and solidarity, recalling the similar euphoria at #Occupy Wall Street when the initial order to evict Zuccotti Park was called off. Indeed, during postevic-

tion assemblies, many #Occupy Boston participants would refer to this brief "liminoid" moment (Turner 1982; cf. Juris 2008a, 2008b) as a highpoint of their #Occupy experience.

Another emergency text message went out the next day, calling on supporters of #Occupy Boston to come out to defend the camp again that evening. This time, I made it for the General Assembly at 7:00 p.m. and was surprised to see only a few hundred people. Over the next five hours, the numbers barely grew. Outside of a core group of campers and nonresident occupiers, most supporters seemed ready to move on to the next phase of struggle. Not knowing when the raid would take place, I left to catch the last subway train home just before midnight. As had occurred in other evictions around the country, the raid was finally carried out in the early morning, at just before 5:00 a.m. The city's strategy of waiting out the crowds had been effective. Forty-six occupiers were ultimately arrested nonviolently defending the camp, and the mayor took credit for the relatively "peaceful" eviction, which, in contrast to other raids in cities such as New York and Oakland, involved no pepper spray and no beatings (Bidgood 2011).

For me, the most interesting part of the evening prior to the eviction was observing the subtle tension during the General Assembly between those who expressed their willingness to defend the camp but who also admitted that they were ready for a strategic and tactical shift and those who stressed the ongoing importance of maintaining the physical occupation. As a young male occupier pointed out in his critique of those who had removed their tents and equipment the prior night,

Some people see the camp as a leftist think tank that is promoting political change, while others of us view the camp as an important experience in its own right that is attempting to build the world we want to see. What is important is the sense of community that is created and all the work groups and different forms of self-organization. We have to be clear about this and defend the camp until the end! [Paraphrased from field notes, December 9, 2011]

The occupier was referring to the classic divide between a strategy of political pressure and advocacy and a politics of prefiguration.³¹ Indeed, for some, the occupation had become an alternative utopian community, the main expression of the politics and vision of #Occupy itself, one side of a subtle rift between a core group of on-site campers and those members of the wider #Occupy Boston community for whom the occupation had been a critical tactic but did not exhaust the totality of the struggle.

Regardless of where one stands on this divide, the eviction meant #Occupy Boston and #Occupy movements elsewhere were confronting the need to reinvent themselves, to assume a more diffuse, distributed networked form while developing a multiplicity of tactical repertoires. Ample

evidence suggests that this has, at least in part, occurred. For example, at the first posteviction assembly on December 10 on the Boston Common—which was attended by nearly 700 people and recalled the first #Occupy Boston assembly in late September—people chanted, “Occupy will never die, evict us we multiply!” During a series of ritual “mic checks” before the assembly began, one participant after another declared, in call-and-response fashion, his or her commitment to continuing the struggle in new forms, initiating what one facilitator dubbed “Occupy Boston 2.0.” As one occupier passionately exclaimed, using the people’s mic, “The city thought / Dewey Square / was a tumor / on the city’s butt /, but what they don’t remember / is that when you poke a tumor /, it metastasizes / ! We / are everywhere / !”³²

Perhaps most clearly symbolizing this new emphasis on distributed networking was a public art initiative to produce hundreds of miniature tents and to place them at strategic sites throughout the city, including Dewey Square, City Hall, and Bank of America lobbies, among others. Meanwhile, during immediate posteviction assemblies and gatherings, representatives from various #Occupy Boston working groups such as logistics and signs—often identifying themselves on the basis of the former locations of their tents in the camp—declared their intention to “go mobile” with meetings, actions, and protests around the city in support of #Occupy. Moreover, decentralized neighborhood #Occupy assemblies have sprung up in communities such as Jamaica Plain, Alston, and Somerville, among others, and plans have been discussed to initiate a series of “town hall meetings” around the Boston area to reach out to residents who may be sympathetic to the ideas of #Occupy Boston but who have not yet become involved. Although garnering scant media coverage, such small-scale #Occupy sites and meet-ups combine logics of aggregation with decentralized networking logics.

Indeed, despite the shift toward decentralized networking, a logic of aggregation remains strong, as evidenced by the proliferation of smaller #Occupy assemblies and meetings and ongoing calls from many quarters to find new spaces for large-scale physical occupations, including other parks, abandoned buildings, closed schoolhouses, or foreclosed homes. At one posteviction visioning session I attended at Encuentro Cinco, involving 30 people from various working groups, several participants talked about the importance of public space in which to gather—and in which #Occupy Boston’s “houseless” participants might find shelter—whether new occupations, rented storefronts, or donated union halls. Meanwhile, General Assemblies and other collective gatherings have taken place in churches and community spaces around the city, at least temporarily replacing Dewey Square as #Occupy Boston’s primary sites of physical aggregation and community building. What has been particularly striking in the immediate post-Dewey pe-

riod has been the sheer quantity of meetings and gatherings, ranging from continued four-times-a-week assemblies to ongoing working-group meetings (often multiple meetings on any given evening), weekly communal gatherings and open houses on Monday nights, and various special planning and strategy sessions.

Conclusion: Challenges and future prospects

Whether such posteviction momentum can be maintained remains to be seen, as does the ability of #Occupy Boston to reproduce its former visibility through periodic public actions and events. Multiple meetings and gatherings on most nights of the week are surely unsustainable, particularly if occupiers want to reach out more broadly, for instance, to marginalized communities whose residents possess neither the time nor the resources to attend so many activities. Moreover, it is also exceedingly difficult, even for seasoned activists, to keep up with the sheer number and diversity of communication channels, including myriad Twitter feeds, working-group listservs and forums, and #Occupy-related websites and wikis, a drawback of organizing in a social media age that mirrors the proliferation and fragmentation of #Occupy Boston’s physical gatherings. Indeed, #Occupy Boston is a complex, rhizomatic, self-organizing machine par excellence.

Despite such challenges, as occupiers have pointed out, the eviction was an opportunity for the movement to renew itself, and it has started to do so in a way that—in my view—begins to integrate logics of aggregation and networking, potentially setting the stage for, but by no means ensuring, a broader, more diverse, and more sustainable struggle in an era of #Occupy 2.0. #Occupy Boston now seems to be building a more decentralized community-based networked infrastructure rooted in directly democratic neighborhood, city, and statewide (and, perhaps someday, regional and national) assemblies. However, the #Occupy movements will also have to find new ways of achieving public visibility involving creative combinations of direct actions, marches, large-scale public assemblies, and even periodic physical occupations and encampments. Of course, specific strategic shifts and their effectiveness, as well as the longer-term trajectory of #Occupy, will have to be empirically assessed through ongoing comparative ethnographic research.

Another particularly important concern going forward for occupiers is the strategic need to reach out to working-class people and people of color who are disproportionately affected by issues such as inequality, unemployment, and the mortgage crisis. After some initial missteps in communicating with a coalition of community groups that work with these constituencies (e.g., #Occupy Boston began on the same day as a march and antieviction action organized by the Right to the City coalition, resulting in

the partial overshadowing of that action and the mistaken media identification of those arrested in it as occupiers), #Occupy Boston has taken some positive steps in this direction. These include holding an antioppression workshop focusing on racism and white privilege and public support for subsequent antieviction protests as well as an autonomous action in Roxbury (one of the city's historically African American communities where a large number of people of color as well as poor and working-class people reside) organized by Occupy the Hood. #Occupy Boston participants have also supported the efforts of Latino organizers to mobilize area Latino communities under the umbrella of Occupy the Barrio. In addition, meetings have continued between representatives of community-based organizations and members of #Occupy Boston's outreach committee regarding how to more effectively reach out to people of color and build more sustainable relationships of trust and solidarity. These and additional future efforts will be necessary if #Occupy Boston is to more closely reflect the 99%.

Another major challenge confronting #Occupy Everywhere more generally involves the contentious issue of goals. Many observers appear perplexed that occupiers cannot seem to come up with a clear and concise list of demands, and ongoing debates rage within various #Occupy sites, including #Occupy Boston, about whether and how this should be done. To grasp these dynamics, it is important to consider the broader cultural logics I have been exploring here. Specifically, the complex amalgam of networking and aggregation logics makes it unlikely that occupiers around the country (not to mention the world) will consent on the kind of short list of specific, actionable demands that would readily translate into dominant media and political formats. On the one hand, logics of networking compel diverse collective actors to come together across their differences without losing their autonomy and specificity. Within the global justice movements, networking logics meant specific networks and groups could develop discrete goals and demands, such as an end to the policies of structural adjustment, the imposition of a small tax on global financial transactions (Tobin Tax), the putting into effect of fair trade practices, or the end of global capitalism itself, among others, but larger spaces of convergence such as world and regional social forums were characterized by broader statements of principles providing umbrella spaces as wide as possible for diverse movements and networks to communicate and coordinate across their differences. As I have argued (Juris 2008a), the idea of "open space" represented the inscription of a networking logic into the organizational architecture of the forum itself. Although the #Occupy movements have yet to develop such an explicit self-conception, they seem to be operating as similar kinds of open spaces rather than as singular political actors.

On the other hand, the emerging logics of aggregation within #Occupy Everywhere pose an even more significant challenge to the development of a singular set of proposals. As I have argued, rather than generating organizational networks, social media primarily operate via interpersonal networks, resulting less in "networks of networks" than in "crowds of individuals." If the #Occupy movements increasingly operate as aggregations of individuals from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of previous movement experience (including those who may belong to existing networks and organizations but many others who do not), then agreeing to the need for a uniform set of demands, let alone the contents of such demands, will be difficult. Certainly there are widely shared grievances regarding issues such as inequality, lack of economic opportunity, and the influence of corporate money in politics, among many others, but boiling these down to a short list of specific and actionable demands is a much more complex undertaking given the diversity of individual interests and political affiliations.

Both the issues raised and the proposals forwarded by the global justice movement were also extremely diverse, but because so many established collective actors—networks, NGOs, collectives, and the like—were involved, there was a more developed starting point for the process of building shared visions and programs, whether they involved specific institutional reforms such as reenvisioning the role of the World Bank, IMF, and WTO, canceling Third World debt and imposing global financial regulations, or more far-reaching goals of abolishing global financial institutions and working toward local economic, political, and cultural autonomy. Many concrete proposals have also circulated among occupiers related to policies such as a more progressive income tax, the end of corporate personhood, and the public financing of elections. Meanwhile, a similar reformist–revolutionary divide has meant some occupiers have supported reforms such as those mentioned above, whereas many others see themselves as engaged in a more radical set of challenges, whether to the global capitalist system, structures of racial domination and patriarchy, or the corrupted state of our representative democracies. Indeed, the public assemblies, the consensus decision making, the collective spaces in the camps, and the diverse forms of collaborative self-management constitute a set of concrete alternative practices that serve as powerful symbolic yet embodied contrasts between an inclusive, grassroots, and participatory democracy as it ought to be and the current configuration of a representative "democratic" system that serves the interests of the 1%.

Nonetheless, the individualized nature of participation in the #Occupy movements, including that of many actors with little previous political experience, presents a particular challenge in terms of developing common proposals.

Moreover, the political differences within #Occupy are even greater than those within the global justice movements, given the majoritarian populist impulse that has welcomed not only progressives but also many libertarian supporters of free markets, including followers of Ron Paul. In many ways, then, the politics of the #Occupy movements as crowds of aggregated individuals is more ambiguous than the expressly antineoliberal (or anticapitalist) politics of the movements for global justice, whereas the tension between directly democratic and populist impulses within #Occupy is more pronounced.

In sum, whether one considers #Occupy's perceived lack of specificity (as opposed to the myriad proposals generated by individual participants) as a weakness, the combined logics of networking and aggregation militate against, but do not necessarily preclude, the creation of a uniform set of demands. Indeed, many occupiers have been hard at work developing both online and offline systems for aggregating and synthesizing the manifold experiences, proposals, and ideas being generated by occupiers and sympathizers around the country, ranging from the We Are the 99% Tumblr to handwritten messages on paper banners, declarations such as the one released by the #Occupy Wall Street General Assembly, and various wikis that have sprung up on #Occupy websites, including one on the #Occupy Boston wiki dedicated to creating a statement of purpose. These wide-ranging experiments in horizontal collaboration reflect the cooperative ethic of the free software movement (cf. Juris 2005; Postill n.d.) and also recall similar experiences in the movements for global justice, including the European Social Consulta project I examined during my ethnographic fieldwork in Barcelona (Juris 2008a).³³ Given the prevalence of social networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook and the associated logics of aggregation, there is reason to believe that such experiments will continue to reach ever greater numbers of people, making the #Occupy Everywhere movements particularly powerful laboratories for the production of alternative democratic practices.

How, then, ought we to view the achievements and future prospects of #Occupy Everywhere? The occupations succeeded in achieving a great deal of visibility in an extremely short period of time, in part because of the positive feedback loops that obtained between mainstream and viral social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. In this sense, the #Occupy movements have raised awareness about issues such as inequality, unemployment, financial deregulation, and the influence of corporate money in democracy, helping to shift public debate away from a nearly exclusive focus on market discipline and budgetary austerity, even as these discourses remain widespread. Going forward, however, it is important to remember that social movements operate through multiple temporalities and across diverse spatial terrains (Juris and Khasnabish in

press). This recognition can help activists move beyond an overly rigid opposition between more policy-oriented and more prefigurative conceptions of #Occupy.

Movements are oriented toward short- and medium-term goals related to the immediate material and cultural needs or the political rights of constituents, and on this register, movements direct their activities, however indirectly, toward institutional political spheres. However, influencing policy outcomes does not require direct institutional intervention and is thus not necessarily incompatible with prefigurative strategies. As mentioned above, the impact of the #Occupy movements can already be gleaned from subtle shifts in public discourse, including that of U.S. politicians, who are increasingly talking about unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Indeed, this shift may even have an impact on the 2012 U.S. presidential election (cf. Hardt and Negri 2011). To have a more tangible impact, though, such discursive shifts will ultimately have to be translated into concrete policy changes, but in my view, and that of many (but certainly not all) occupiers, this is the domain of progressives in government, not #Occupy as a whole. In this sense, individual activists may meet with, lobby, or otherwise seek to influence legislators, even as the wider movement maintains its distance from formal political institutions.

In other words, the #Occupy movements have both responded to and helped to create new discursive and political conditions of possibility (or what social movement scholars refer to as "political opportunities"; cf. McAdam et al. 1996), but it is up to elected officials to develop and shepherd through concrete policy reforms. Moreover, occupiers are rightly weary, in my view, of the dangers of co-optation, given the potential for demobilization and divisiveness. Indeed, given the powerful logics of aggregation within #Occupy, which assemble individuals from diverse backgrounds and traditions, it is particularly important for the #Occupy movements to remain autonomous from any given partisan program or political party, which, as occupiers around the country have pointed out, are all implicated to one degree or another in the complex web of corporate finance they are denouncing. That said, the extent to which the #Occupy movements can use collaborative tools and processes to gradually assemble and synthesize key statements, proposals, and even demands, the more effective they will be at communicating their message to a wider public through mainstream media channels. In other words, there may be creative ways to transcend the tension between calls for greater clarity of focus and a directly democratic impulse toward diversity, decentralization, and autonomy.

At the same time, social movements are also oriented toward longer-term horizons, promoting deep structural changes aimed at transforming social and economic relations and overcoming multiple forms of domination around axes such as race, class, and gender. At the broadest

level, social movements struggle to build deeper versions of democracy (cf. Appadurai 2002) and new, more egalitarian forms of sociality. Unlike that of the short and medium term, the terrain for such future-oriented struggles is not the state but the autonomous, self-generated networks of movements themselves (Juris 2008a; cf. Cohen and Arato 1992), spaces for the generation of alternative practices, codes, and values that have the potential to both aggregate and migrate into wider spheres of everyday life (Juris 2005; cf. Melucci 1989). Indeed, many occupiers are calling for radical transformations in the organization of society, politics, and the economy, even as they struggle to address internal racial, class, and gender hierarchies inside the camps. Meanwhile, evolving forms of consensus decision making, self-organization, and collaborative networking represent ongoing experiments that prefigure alternative models of sociality and popular democracy. Such practices were at the heart of the movements for global justice, but new viral forms of communication are potentially diffusing them into wider social spheres. In my view, the strategic challenge for #Occupy Everywhere is to develop more sustainable forms of movement beyond the physical occupations while addressing shorter-term political goals and longer-term cultural and democratic aspirations.

Notes

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1. My use of the Twitter hashtag sign (#) to refer to the #Occupy movements mirrors activist practice, reflecting the importance of the social networking platform to the ongoing organization and development of #Occupy (see also Postill n.d.). Hashtags are used to highlight particular key words, making them more likely to appear in Twitter searches and to “trend,” increasing their viral diffusion. I use the #Occupy hashtag, which was in common circulation during the October 15 actions, to emphasize the global dimension of #Occupy Everywhere.

2. In Louis Althusser’s (2001:115–116) usage, *interpellation* refers to the way ideology hails or calls out to concrete individuals, constituting them as subjects.

3. Regarding the origin of the phrase “We are the 99%,” see Weinstein 2011. Significantly, Joseph Stiglitz (2011) had referred to “the 1%” and “the 99%” in a May 2011 essay in *Vanity Fair*. Of course, there are important exclusions and hierarchies within the 99%, surrounding axes such as race, class, gender, and sexuality, among others (see also Razsa and Kurnik this issue). Occupiers in Boston have begun to discuss these dynamics as part of their efforts to build links with working-class and people-of-color communities.

4. According to the online Merriam-Webster dictionary, *viral* refers to something “quickly and widely spread or popularized especially by person-to-person electronic communication” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>, accessed January 2, 2012). See Postill n.d. for an analysis of digital-media virals in the context of social movements, and the Spanish Indignados movements, in particular.

5. Regarding the debate on the role of social media in the uprisings in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt and whether these should be considered “Twitter revolutions,” see Beaumont 2011. For recent scholarly analyses of how activists in the Middle East actually used social media during the Arab Spring, see *International Journal of Communication* 2011, particularly Eltantawy and Wiest 2011, Wilson and Dunn 2011, Rinke and Röder 2011, Aouragh and Alexander 2011, and Lotan et al. 2011. See also Tufekci 2011a, 2011b.

6. For more on organizational networks and contemporary social movements, see Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001, Castells 1997, Diani and McAdam 2003, Escobar 2008, Hardt and Negri 2001, Fox 2009, and Riles 2001.

7. By *social media*, I am referring to web-based channels for social networking, microblogging, and the sharing of user-generated content. Typical examples of social media, according to this definition and in popular usage, are corporate-driven websites and channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube that are often associated with the rise of “Web 2.0.” Other kinds of digital platforms and tools, such as e-mail, listservs, wikis, and traditional blogs and webpages (e.g., those not primarily used for social networking and sharing user-generated content), fall outside the bounds of this definition. One of the problems in defining *social media* is that the term has come to mean all things to all people. For a discussion of some of the diverse ways of defining social media, see Cohen 2011.

8. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2011) suggest that these examples of resistance, together with similar protests in Israel and Greece, constitute a new “cycle of struggle” that is articulating demands for economic justice while rejecting prevailing systems of representative democracy and putting into practice alternative forms of grassroots, assembly-based democracy.

9. For a personal account of some of the organizing for and the first few days of the #Occupy Wall Street protest, see Graeber 2011.

10. For an analysis of increasing inequality in the United States, see Stiglitz 2011. See Hungerford 2011 on the extent and causes of growing U.S. income inequality. Since the 1980s, corporate influence over taxation, regulation, and labor laws has led to the most extreme wealth inequities since before the Great Depression (Collins 2012; cf. Hacker 2010).

11. The people’s mic is a practice by which everyone in listening distance of a speaker collectively repeats the speaker’s words, establishing a mass call and response that significantly expands the circle of those who can hear. In addition to the practical effects of voice amplification, many participants point to the resulting sense of community, solidarity, and mutual support. The people’s mic was also employed in the global justice movements, as depicted in the opening scene of the activist documentary film *This Is What Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley 2000) portraying a jail solidarity action during the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999.

12. “Solidarity economy” is an alternative development framework encompassing practices and projects such as cooperatives, local exchange and currency systems, fair trade, ecovillages, community-supported agriculture, participatory budgeting, and free software. According to the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network (n.d.), the principles of a solidarity economy include solidarity, mutualism, and cooperation; equity in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, and sexuality; social welfare over profits and the unfettered market; sustainability; social and economic democracy; and an organic pluralist approach. *Ally-ship* refers to the practice of building relationships of solidarity, trust, and mutual support with oppressed communities in struggle on the part of privileged groups who recognize and work to counteract systems of privilege that benefit them.

13. Decision-making processes at the #Occupy assemblies continue to evolve according to distinct local contexts and political cultures, but the general outlines established at #Occupy Wall Street (which incorporate practices and models from previous traditions and struggles, including the global justice movement and the Spanish Indignados, among others) remain in place. These include the holding of mass, open assemblies in public spaces; the use of “modified” consensus (equivalent to 75 percent support in Boston); allowing for individual “blocks” of proposals (defined in Boston as a decision that would cause physical harm to the group or force someone to leave #Occupy Boston); the use of a system of hand signals to indicate things like “agreement,” “lack of agreement,” “point of information,” “clarifying question,” “stay on point,” “move on,” and so on; the use of facilitators; and a clear order of proceedings divided into individual and working-group announcements and proposals. Most #Occupy camps also had a working-group structure, whereby the ongoing work and coordination of the camp was carried out in smaller groups around activities such as logistics, media, food, legal, security, direct action, and outreach as well as around particular constituencies, including women, students, labor, and people of color.

14. The strong participation of progressive religious groups was evident in the camp, including a bloc of Jewish occupiers and supporters who held services at the camp on holidays such as Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

15. A national survey of #Occupy sites around the United States is currently underway, coordinated by a decentralized network of activist researchers called “#Occupy Research” (<http://occupyresearch.wikispaces.com>, accessed January 4, 2012).

16. Although the gap is shrinking, African Americans and non-English-speaking Latinos still lag behind whites in terms of Internet use. At the same time, people of color are far more likely to access the web via mobile phone technology (Smith 2010).

17. Indeed, one of the most notable aspects of #Occupy Boston, like many other #Occupy sites across the country, has been the commitment to providing shelter for “houseless” occupiers during both the pre- and posteviction period.

18. City Life/Vida Urbana is a highly respected organization that has spearheaded antiforeclosure eviction actions around Boston, particularly in working-class and people-of-color communities such as Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. For its part, Jobs with Justice is a coalition of progressive labor and community-based groups. These and other Boston-based grassroots organizations, such as the Chinese Progressive Association and Alternatives for Community and the Environment, among others, have been active in the Right to the City alliance and were also part of the Boston Freedom Rides that brought many young people as well as low-income people of color to the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit in June 2011.

19. Encuentro Cinco is a movement-building space in Boston’s Chinatown that was founded after the Boston Social Forum in July 2004. It currently houses various progressive organizations and hosts frequent political and cultural events. Since the eviction, many #Occupy Boston working groups and initiatives have been meeting there.

20. In the interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies, the concept of “affordances” was introduced as a way to navigate the Scylla and Charybdis of technological determinism, on the one hand, which views new modes of social relations as actively caused by particular forms of technology, and technological constructionism, on the other hand, which views technological artifacts as entirely socially shaped, both in terms of their form and meaning (Hutchby 2001:441–442). In contrast, a theory of “affordances” (Gibson 1979) views technologies as artifacts that “may be both shaped by and shaping of the practices humans use in inter-

action with, around and through them” (Hutchby 2001:444). Ian Hutchby specifically defines *affordances* as “functional and relational aspects which frame, while not determining, the possibilities for agentic action in relation to an object” (2001:444). For analyses of technological affordances in relation to the Internet and social media, see Wellman et al. 2003 and Boyd 2011.

21. An #Occupy Boston community forum was created not long after the December 10 eviction, but it has not been that widely used. Local #Occupy movements have also made extensive use of interactive webpages and wikis (e.g., see <http://www.occupyboston.org> and <http://occupywallst.org>, accessed January 2, 2012), and the Occupy Together site (<http://www.occupytogether.org>, accessed January 2, 2012) was set up to facilitate interoccupation coordination. Websites have also been set up to facilitate the sharing of video streams produced at #Occupy sites across the United States and the world (see <http://occupystream.com> and the various #Occupy-related channels on <http://www.livestream.com>, both accessed January 2, 2012).

22. “Small world” networks are constituted by nodes that are all interlinked through a small number of connections or steps. They take their name from the “small world phenomenon” (Milgram 1967) popularly referred to as “six degrees of separation” (Watts and Strogatz 1998; see also Barabasi 2003; Buchanan 2002; Watts 2004). In the context of social media, or what Manuel Castells has dubbed “networked mass communication,” the small world effect, or “networks of networks exponentially increasing their connectivity” (cf. Buchanan 2002), means that “one message from one messenger can reach out to thousands, and potentially hundreds of thousands” (2009:348).

23. Social networking tools can induce a sense of belonging to a wider public, and it is true that organization pages on Facebook provide a platform for more directed information exchange and commentary, but neither allows for the kind of coordination and elaborate discussions and debates facilitated by listservs that can help form communities of practice. Moreover, as Zaynep Tufekci points out in a blog about the challenges Egyptian protesters face in expanding their movements beyond online circles, “Social media is more useful for disseminating one message—we are fed up and want Mubarak out—to as many people as possible than for targeting different messages to different audiences” (2011b). None of this is to overlook the problems posed by listservs, however, such as off-topic posts, spamming, and flame wars.

24. Stefania Milan (2011) also noted in a blog about “cloud protesting” that many of the “nodes” in contemporary social media-powered protests, including the occupations, are made up of individuals rather than networks or organizations.

25. Interestingly, Milan (2011) points out that many “computer-savvy activists” from an earlier generation, including many of those involved in the movements for global justice, are wary of commercial media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. In this sense, movement-developed media and communication platforms such as Indymedia contribute to the creation of autonomous movement infrastructures and can help protect against surveillance and repression, yet they also have a much more limited potential reach.

26. Regarding Cantor’s use of the term *mob* to depict #Occupy protesters, see, for example, Kroll 2011. For statements of how occupiers themselves characterize their emerging subjectivity, see #OccupyWallStreet New York City General Assembly 2011 and Occupy Boston 2011. As Setrag Manoukian (2010) perceptively points out, the attribution of a particular name to a crowd is always already a political act, implying “the interpellation of a political subject, that is, a process of disambiguation that extracts one or more names (society, mob, mass, class, etc.) out of amorphous and nonhomogeneous gatherings on the streets” (2010:242). Whereas terms like *mob* or *crowd* tend to criminalize, *people* has a relatively

positive valence but always already implies a relation to the state and tends to homogenize. In contrast, *multitude* involves a “multiplicity of . . . singular differences” (Hardt and Negri 2004:xiv).

27. As Barbara Epstein (1991) argues, one of the weaknesses of the Direct Action Movement of the 1970s and 1980s—the radical wing of a series of movements, including struggles against nuclear power and U.S. intervention in Central America—was precisely its inability to move beyond mass direct actions when they were no longer effective as a tactic.

28. In many developing countries such as Mexico, extended public occupations or *plantones* are a modular form of protest, as evidenced during the popular uprising in Oaxaca in 2006, but in the United States they are relatively rare.

29. Occupations in Oakland and Portland were also evicted on November 15, #Occupy Los Angeles and #Occupy Philadelphia were raided on November 29, and #Occupy San Francisco was cleared on December 7. #Occupy Boston had been, for a time, the last remaining occupation of a large U.S. city.

30. See McVeigh 2011. Oakland Mayor Jean Quan even admitted in an interview with the BBC to participating in a conference call with mayors of 18 other cities to discuss plans for clearing the #Occupy encampments (Lopez and Johnson 2011).

31. For more on “prefigurative” politics, see Epstein 1991, Graeber 2002, Juris 2008a, Polletta 2002, and Raza and Kurnik this issue.

32. The slashes in this passage mark the points at which the crowd, using the people’s mic, repeated the speaker’s words.

33. This project was facilitated by new technologies, but it was also to be a distributed process of local consultations and assemblies modeled after the 1999 consulta against the foreign debt in Spain and the Zapatista consultas of the mid-1990s.

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