

Summer 9-20-2013

"We don't have any of those:" Looking for leaders in the horizontal structure of Occupy Portland

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10.15760/etd.1418

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“We don’t have any of those.”

Looking for leaders in the horizontal structure of Occupy Portland

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A thesis submitted for the partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Masters of Science
in
Sociology

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Portland State University
2013

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents and examines Occupy Portland's organizational structure and the impact of this structure on the leadership roles of participants. Interviews with key activists and participant observation reveal that the ideologically influenced horizontal organization employed by the movement disrupts the emergence of centralized authority and charismatic leadership. This, in turn, encourages the rise of a "distributed leadership" comprised of multiple, task driven leaders. It finds that these *task-oriented* leaders within Occupy Portland tend to fulfill three specific leadership roles; the facilitation of process, the construction of movement structures, and the organization of actions. This study provides an exploration of conceptualizing leaders in a non-hierarchical, decentralized decision-making social movement and works to give needed expansion to the literature on social movement leadership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go out my committee for all the help and guidance they gave throughout this process. Without them this was not possible. Thanks to those interviewed. You are all wonderful people and terrific activists. I am certain you all will instill positive change wherever you go. Thanks to my colleagues for their camaraderie and support. Many thanks to my family for always being there when I need them. And of course, a very special thanks to my wife, Rebecca, who has given me more love and support than I could ever hope for.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Imagine a social movement. Perhaps what comes to mind are washed out sepia tone photos of women's suffrage or dirty, coal dust covered men striking for a union. Maybe it's a crowd of protesters outside a large government building waving homemade signs brazened with slogans and glitter. Perhaps it's the image of riot gear adorned police officers pepper spraying indiscriminately into those protesters. Maybe it's the iconic black and white televised images of café patrons mercilessly beating young black activists who felt they deserved more. Yet maybe still it's the image of a leader like Martin Luther King, Jr., passionately roaring messages of hope and perseverance to thousands striving against social injustices. In the history of the United States, many different social movements have precipitated change to social inequalities, and it is likely there will likely be many more. Without them society will stagnate, so to understand social movements is paramount to progress. There is a lot to be learned from the way social movements organize, what they sought to change, and what they accomplished. The past informs the present and helps to design the future.

In recent history there has been the emergence of numerous horizontally organized social movements like the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Black Panthers, World Social Forum (WSF), Indymedia, EarthFirst! and Occupy Wall Street. Participatory democratic processes, consensus decision-making and a lack of

hierarchical authority are common within horizontal structures, which set them apart from vertically organized social movements with a centralized authority. The recent emergence of movements displaying this form gives sociologists the chance to expand our understanding of social movements and inform activism of the future. As such, this study focuses on Occupy Portland, an outgrowth of Occupy Wall Street.

The roots of the movement in question began on September 17th, 2011, when thousands of individuals protesting political and corporate malfeasants began their march on Wall Street. This was proposed by the Canadian magazine, *Adbusters*, a publication well-known for their anti-consumerist philosophy. The economic collapse of 2008 and the job losses felt by many Americans were bringing to light the shortcomings of the economic system. More people were finding it harder to make ends meet and frustration around this issue was growing. Health care costs were bankrupting families and people were being evicted from their homes due to unfavorable and illegal foreclosure practices. It was becoming evident to many of the occupiers that the system was not working to the benefit of the 99%.

Much like the Arab Spring protests earlier that year, the interconnecting capabilities of social media like Twitter and Facebook helped the movement quickly gain momentum. As it gained in notoriety, other occupations began sprouting up around the United States and the world. According to a presentation

by Dr. Robert Liebman, a sociologist at Portland State University, as of November 4, 2011, there were Occupations in 2400 cities worldwide. The largest of these was Occupy Portland, with an estimated 400 to 500 occupiers, which was over twice the encampment population of Zuccoti Park, NY. Local news station KGW also reported “an ongoing population of 400 to 500” (Heartquist and Rollins 2011).

Like many other Occupies, Occupy Portland was sparked by a show of “solidarity with Occupy Wall Street” (OccupyPortland.org, Oct 28, 2011). The march and subsequent encampment of Chapman and Lownsdale Square was initiated on October 6, 2011, with a few planning meetings in the weeks beforehand. By the time Occupy Portland was forming, Occupy Wall Street was garnering attention from the media and recognition was growing. In testament to the draw the Occupy Movement had, an estimated 10,000 people participated in the initial march (Haberman 2011); a *massive* level of participation. In contrast, it was estimated that 1,000 people participated in Occupy Wall Street’s September 17, 2011, march. The occupation would last 39 days and end with an eviction on November 13, 2011. However, this did not mark the end of the movement. Occupy Portland continued to remain active, organizing actions and forming groups. Participants even secured an office space to act as a headquarters, allowing the movement to grow and evolve. The persistence of the movement provided an opportunity for study.

Each Occupy effort is autonomous, each with its own General Assemblies and organizational structure. The various Occupy protests that rose in the fall of 2011 represent an emergent social movement, similar in structure to some movements of the 1960s. These “new social movements” (Melucci 1980) are still relatively new. Bureaucratic organizations with specific policy goals and centralized authority have been the norm. In contrast, the participatory democratic methods (Polletta 2002), lack of formal leadership and non-institutional politics of Occupy have set it apart from what has been commonplace. Some journalists, social scientists and news pundits are less inclined to define Occupy as a social movement. Regardless, the Occupy movement has earned a large amount of attention from the media and has emerged in countries across the globe. It has been documented, examined, commentated on, parodied, stereotyped and had its “99%” rhetoric co-opted by other organizations like MoveOn.

Horizontally structured movements like Occupy Portland have not been as heavily examined as many traditional social movements, like those of the labor movements in the early 20th century (Gamson 1975). Additionally, there has been a stronger focus on formal, titled and centralized leadership in social movements, which detracts from the examination of unofficial or informal leadership (Herda-Rapp 1998, Amizade, Goldstone and Perry 2001). According to Morris and Staggenborg (2004) the under-theorization of leadership can be addressed through the examination of leadership and structure. Considering this need, the recent

emergence of the movement and its horizontal structure, Occupy Portland is well poised for examination.

This study informs the relationship between Occupy Portland's organizational structure and leadership by exploring how the form leadership takes is related to the structure it emerges from. Being intentionally "leaderless" through horizontal organization, Occupy Portland did not yield the same type of leadership as a vertically structured movement. Central authority was eliminated through consensus based processes while charismatic individuals were rejected by participants. Accordingly, multiple task-oriented leaders emerged through a "distributed leadership" (Personal Interview, October, 2012) and took charge with many integral and momentum-producing actions. The facilitation of process, the construction of movement structures and the mobilization of individuals and networks were all roles fulfilled by those most active in the movement. Consensus knocked out central authority, but it did not eliminate the need for leadership.

Thus, this study sought to examine structure and leadership within Occupy Portland. Interviews with key activists and architects of Occupy Portland along with participant observation were completed. The interview participants were all involved with Occupy Portland in its early stages, from the encampment back to the planning meetings. By the time this study took place, Occupy Portland was nearing its one year anniversary. Within that year the encampment was evicted and the level of participation had significantly reduced. The majority of the interviewees' experience with Occupy Portland took place within the first several

months of the movement. As such, the period of the encampment and the period following the eviction up until spring is the timeframe this study focuses on. Likewise, this study focuses on the emergence of leadership, and it is the birth of the movement that should be first examined for signs of that emergence.

In chapter two, I contextualize Occupy Portland in relation to existing social movement literature. A brief overview of the development of social movement theory will be given. Other relevant theory will also be presented, such as subcultural and leadership theory, and subsequently applied as a perspective with which to view and conceptualize Occupy Portland's structure and leadership. Chapter three will cover my methodological approach and lay out my process of inquiry. In chapter four I discuss the roots and values of Occupy Portland. These values are then related to the structure of the movement, and its impact on the form of organization is examined. Chapter five then looks at this value influenced structure and explores how it affects the emergence of a task-oriented "distributed leadership." It then describes what this leadership entails and how the movement benefits from it. Finally, chapter six will discuss the implications of these findings and make suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of Social Movement Theory: Collective Behavior Theory

The history of social movement theory is ripe with changes in perspective and approach. As the socio-historical climate changed so did the form and theory of social movements (Buechler 2000). For instance, before the development of resource mobilization theory, collective action was viewed as irrational, spontaneous and chaotic. By framing all collective behavior from riots to political protests as the reactionary madness of crowds, collective behavior theory is portraying that action as lacking purpose and direction. Theorists considered mobilization and motivation as a reaction to strain with no reference to “class relations or to the mode of production and appropriation of resources” (Melucci 1980:200). That perspective reduces “collective behavior to a social-psychological phenomenon (Buechler 2000:30). By treating all collective actions as understandable through “a single explanatory logic,” collective behavior theory suffered from a “conceptual overreach that took plausible ideas about some types of collective behavior and extended them to all types of collective behavior.” Naturally, this resulted in a failure to accurately explain the variant nature of social movements and created a need for more applicable perspectives.

Resource Mobilization Theory

In response to the myopic and reductionist perspective of collective action as irrational, resource mobilization theory developed. Since the 1970’s, resource

mobilization theory has been a dominant perspective of social movement theorists (Buechler 1993). It did away with the explanatory logic of irrationality and adopted a rationalist perspective. As a result, social movements were being recognized “as normal, rational, institutionally rooted, political challenges by aggrieved groups” (Buechler 1993:218). This paradigm shift greatly increased the capacity for social movement theory to explain collective behavior.

Despite the strides RM theory made, shortcomings have become apparent. For instance, resource mobilization theorists “have equated organization with formal, bureaucratic, centralized structures,” which implies that “only formally organized bodies can act effectively” (Buechler 1993:223). Gamson (1975) evidences this view in his book, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, where he outlines the characteristics of a “successful” movement. Among the most important factors are a centralization of authority, bureaucracy and a focused goal. However, since its publication there has been criticism about how “success” is defined and assessed (Piven and Cloward 1979). Moreover, as admitted by Gamson, the changes among media since the study took place have radically changed the political activist landscape. Consequently, this makes the transferability of Gamson’s findings to contemporary social movements somewhat less applicable. According to Juris (2005), “decentralized network forms are out-competing more traditional vertical hierarchies” (341). Political process theorists have also been critical of resource mobilization theory. The overemphasis on rationality underplays the effect of culture and society on social movements and their actors.

Resource mobilization theory focuses on meso-level analysis which leaves macro and micro elements such as structure and participant interaction under-examined. Due to this meso-level focus and emphasis on formal, centralized social movement organizations, resource mobilization theory is less applicable for examining contemporary decentralized social movements like the Zapatistas, Indymedia and Occupy Wall Street. Fortunately, new social movement theory has been able to fill the void.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theorists are critical of this focus on formal organizations (Herda-Rapp 1998) and the overemphasis on rationality (Buechler 1993; 2000). Contemporary movements have emerged that are less characteristic of their labor union predecessors of the early 20th century (Gamson 1975, Piven and Cloward 1979). Various global justice, anti-corporate globalization, environmental, civil rights organizations and others of relative import have been utilizing more democratic forms of organization (i.e SNCC, SDS, Black Panthers, World Social Forum, Indymedia and EarthFirst!). These social movements often exhibit a less hierarchal structure than traditional social movements (Polletta 2002, Juris 2004, 2005, 2008, Beuchler 2000). Instead they employ horizontal forms of organization and utilize a participatory democratic structure that is “characterized by a minimal division of labor, decentralized authority, an egalitarian ethos and whose decision making is direct and consensus oriented”

(Polletta 2002:6). Additionally, these movements operate with networks of affinity and direct action groups that work independently on collective actions.

Not only have decentralized organizational forms contributed to the relative irrelevance of other social movement theories, but so have the goals of these social movements. Gamson (1975) states that organizations with a single and focused goal are more likely to be successful. Conversely, having multiple or vague goals is a recipe for failure. But some very successful social movements, like the Gay Identity Movement of the 1970's, were focused on identity. The utilization of an identity logic viewed "meaningful social change as a product of individual self-expression" and "suggested that positive change could occur even if differences were not resolved (Armstrong 2002:98). Movements focused on identity politics or without a legislative agenda, like Occupy, are very different from the traditional and vertically structured labor movements that resource mobilization theorist like Gamson have focused on. Because of these changes in social movements, Melucci (1980) expresses the need for a perspective that explains social movement participation beyond a strictly economic rationale.

Subcultural Theory

The notion that a social movement is or is similar to a subculture is not unique. For example, the movements of the 60's and 70's included various groups, like Yippie, that were heavily tied to the hippie subculture. Though many in the hippie subculture preferred to "drop out" and intentionally abstain from

political involvement, certain groups certainly possessed and expressed values of the subculture to which they belonged. Given this, subcultural theory is another means to examine some social movements, particularly those that closely resemble, act like, or are subcultural.

The study of subculture can find its roots in the American and British schools: Chicago and Birmingham. Though distinct from each other in their focus and methodology, both pioneered the study of subcultures. Being in the late 19th century and early 20th century, early subcultural scholars existed in a post-industrialized urban milieu. This setting was relatively new to society and as such those living in it were subject to new and emerging social problems. It became apparent to the Chicago scholars that to adequately examine this new environment, ethnographic methods were needed. In doing so researchers gained a level of access to and intimacy with their subjects that could not be obtained if their noses were buried in a book on social theory. At the University of Chicago “ethnographic research became a mantra” (Williams 2011:21) and as such scholars of the University immersed themselves in the city. In contrast to Chicago’s methodological focus, the University of Birmingham was driven more by theory. Drawing from Gramsci, Althusser, Barthes, they “took the concepts of hegemony, structuralism and semiotics as a set of grounding premises” (Williams 28:2011) for their research. Their Marxist-based perspective saw subcultures primarily as a relation to social class and focused on post-war working class youth. Though certainly pioneers in subcultural theory (Cohen 1955), the

Birmingham school is criticized for being too theory heavy and not concerned enough with methods of research. As a result, data from this era of research is viewed as less tangible than that of their Chicago counterparts.

Subcultures, among other things, are seen to emerge as a solution to a problem (Cohen 1955, Williams 2011, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts 1975). What that problem is and how participation within the subculture provides the ‘solution’ varies from subculture to subculture. For example, a young white suburban male feeling isolated, powerless and frustrated may find power, understanding and belonging in the white power movement (WPM). Participants in the WPM music scene “claim that strong feelings of dignity, pride, pleasure, love, kinship, and fellowship are supported through involvement,” (Futrell, Gottschalk, Simi, 2006:275). Collective identity, one such solution to one of the many social problems that people face, is a major factor in maintaining solidarity and group cohesion (Polletta and Jasper 2001). According to Cohen (1955), the emergence of these problem-solving forms are contingent upon the interaction “of a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment.” Much like subcultures, social movements can act as a space for individuals with shared beliefs to build community and collectively solve social problems.

Horizontal Organization and Participatory Democracy

Francesca Polletta (2002) illustrates how participatory democratic methods impact the decision making process and how it has, or has not,

contributed to schisms within the organizations. Polletta identifies three types of participatory democratic organizations. Each is characterized by particular dynamics within the organization. These are religious fellowship, tutelage and friendship. Each category has unique features that separate them from the others, such as characteristics of decision-making, characteristics of conflict, and how groups mitigate inadequacies. Not every movement may fit neatly into just one specific category, but this categorization system does provide a useful lens with which to examine social movement organization. According to Polletta, participatory democracies foster creative strategies through group input and the use of deliberative talk. Extensive deliberation is required for a consensus decision-making process. Participants are provided an open arena in which to voice their opinion, and they are expected to support their claims and proposals with legitimate statements. This process of deliberation “makes for a greater acceptance of the differences that coexist with shared purposes” (Polletta 2002:9). Additionally, it is this collective ethos that supports solidarity within the movement. Polletta also mentions developmental benefits to participatory democracies. The transparent quality of decision making provides participants with experience in examining the pros and cons of various arguments. It allows them to engage political authorities and develop political efficacy. In this sense, this organizational structure helps educate and cultivate individuals that can function within a democratic system, a priceless characteristic for an effective democratic society.

As is true with other forms of organization, there are pros *and* cons. A major weakness of participatory democracies can be viewed as inherent to its form. The same deliberative and consensus aspects that aid in building solidarity can, under the right circumstances, fail to resolve interpersonal conflict. Consensus practices can act to force people who have conflicting views with the majority to adopt a more popular line of reasoning. If continued momentum of a movement is dependent upon the consensus agreement of a number of individuals and that consensus is being obstructed by a select number of individuals, then there is pressure for those individuals to bend to the will of the majority. Movements that experience these kinds of conflicts may need to assume “some features of conventional adversary forms” (Polletta 2002:15) if they wish to resolve them. By adversary, Polletta is referring to a more centralized form of organization. This problem of conflict resolution has been seen in various groups. Polletta illustrates this by pointing to the shift in the decision-making process and, consequently, the leadership within the Black Panthers. The methods of participatory democracy were viewed by some participants as an obstacle to their goals. As a consequence, a number of participants broke off and the remaining members shifted to a more centralized leadership.

Social Movement Leadership Theory

Melucci (1980), Polletta (2002), and Juris (2008) have shown that the traditional vertically-structured movements with hierarchal and centralized

authority are not the only types of social movements around. With these emergent forms of collective action come different forms of leadership. Intrinsically connected to organizational structure, and therefore necessary for an examination of structure, is leadership. Whereas vertically-structured movements are conducive to centralized authority, horizontally structured movements are not. Horizontal organizations that are structured around an “egalitarian ethos” (Polletta 2002:6) do not produce leaders in the same way a hierarchal organization would. By organizing in a non-hierarchal fashion, social movements eliminate centralized authority. Instead, what emerges is a decentralized form of organization, in which decisions are made as a collective rather than from a top-down method. Without a central authority to dictate direction, the social movement must develop a form of decision-making that is compatible with horizontality, such as consensus. When a structure is hierarchal, it is designed to have a central authority. Decisions and directions are a result of top-down organization. However, with a horizontal structure there is no titled or official position available to be occupied.

A large amount of focus on social movement leaders is operating from Weber’s concepts of authority: charismatic, traditional and rational-legal. According to Eichler (1977), “by definition, rational-legal and traditional authority are not applicable to social movements,” leaving charismatic leadership as the only applicable Weberian concept for social movement leadership. This is problematic at best. The concept of charismatic leadership is largely concerned with the individual, their personality type and ignores the relational aspect

between followers and leaders (Howell and Shamir 2005). From the Weberian perspective, the acquisition of a leadership role is attributed to an apathy and or willingness of the participants to relinquish control; that is to say leaders come into their role through the followers' readiness to give those individuals voice over their own. This position relegates the masses to the status of "followers" and denies them any form of agency, which is also problematic for building social movement leadership theory. Given the history of social movements, it is apparent that alternative forms of leadership are present (Herda-Rapp 1998, Polletta 2002, Amizade et al. 2001). Moreover, not only are social movements not always vertically structured (Melucci 1980, Polletta 2002, Juris 2008), but participants can be active agents that do not always follow the leader (Juris 2008).

According to Howell and Shamir (2005), little scholarly work has been done to "theoretically specify and empirically assess the role of followers" (96). Instead, the focus has been on leaders' actions rather than the relational aspects of leaders, followers and structure (Howell and Shamir 2005). In addition, particular leadership types have also been under examined. Herda-Rapp (1998) states that, traditionally, social movement theorists have focused on "those who hold titled positions, or the spokespersons or visible leaders" (342). This focus on spokespersons by the media has resulted in the false labeling of particular participants as "celebrity leaders" when traditional leaders are not immediately recognizable (Gitlin 1980). Moreover, because of the heavy focus on formal aspects of leadership, theorists have ignored that "social action takes place in

multiple arenas, not simply in organizations and not always publically” (Herda-Rapp 1998:342). Social movement research, then, needs to begin to recognize the influence that informal or non-hierarchical leadership can have on a social movement.

Theorists point to an under-examination of other relational aspects of social movement leadership as well (Morris and Staggenborg 2002). Morris and Staggenborg (2002) contribute the theoretical shortcomings to a failure to incorporate agency and structure into social movement theory. They argue that social movement theorists have failed “to adequately address the importance and limitations of both structure and agency” (2002:6). The impact of a social movement’s organizational structure on leadership influences “the emergence, organization, strategy, and outcomes” (Morris and Staggenborg 2002:7) of that movement. They recognize that a movement’s structure influences its leadership’s capacity to achieve goals and, conversely, leaders can influence the structure of the movement and its capacity to achieve or not achieve its goals, illustrating that “leaders help to create or undermine political and socioeconomic realities that influence the trajectories and outcomes of social movements” (Morris and Staggenborg 2002:41).

Beyond Charisma: Expanding Leadership Theory

Howell and Shamir (2005) aimed to expand conceptions of charismatic leadership. By introducing followers’ self-concepts into the equation, they

illustrate two types of charismatic leadership: personalized and socialized. Defined relative to the form of relationship and identification the follower has with the leader or organization, the personalized relationship is centered on a close and personal identification with the leader while the socialized relationship is centered on identification with a collective. Both concepts work to expand our understanding of leadership within charismatically led movements. But with the emergence of “leaderless” movements, social movement theory needs alternative perspectives and conceptualizations.

Eichler (1977) also reassess the operating definition of leadership by looking at the role of followers. Previous research focused on the individual; the leader. But without committed followers or participants there are no leaders, much less a movement. It is also noted that the very focus on leaders, for some social movement participants – like the “leaderless” Women’s Liberation Movement – is interpreted “as a basic misinterpretation of movement structure” (Eichler 1977:100). For Eichler, there was a need to rectify this stark omission. By introducing the role of followers and participants into the defining of leadership, Eichler created a lens for examining leadership in non-charismatically led movements. It is Eichler's intention to differentiate leadership type between charismatically led movements and those with a more horizontal form of organization. The resulting differentiation is *closed and open access leadership*. As stated by Eichler:

“[W]e find that followers of charismatically led movements are committed to a person who is perceived as the only channel through which a follower has access to the source of legitimacy while adherents of a movement such as the WLM are committed to a principle or ideology” (101).

This typology results in not only defining two forms of leadership but also the movements they emerge from. Consequently, Eichler provides a broader foundation with which to examine leadership.

Also expanding beyond concepts of charisma, Amizade, Goldstone and Perry (2001) look at social movement leadership as dichotomous by illustrating two types of leaders: people-oriented and task-oriented. Charismatic leaders (Weber 1962), or any leader that appeals on an emotional level and motivates participants, can be considered people-oriented. In contrast, more bureaucratic or feet on the ground forms of leadership may be characterized as task-oriented. The differentiation between two leadership types illustrates that leaders are not always adored, lauded celebrity spokespersons or highly personable idealistic individuals with grand visions and an uncanny ability to mobilize others. Sometimes they exist in a more functional and less spot lit position.

Conceptualizing Leaders in Non-Hierarchical Structures: Where to Begin?

The work of Howell and Shamir (2005), Eichler (1977), and Amizade et al. (2001) act as a vantage point for future examinations. Social movements have been evolving. The old forms of vertical hierarchies are not always applicable in today's activist climate. Various social activist groups and organizations have increasingly been exhibiting a more egalitarian, decentralized and democratic

form of organization. Horizontal structure and consensus decision-making have become the tools of many prominent prefigurative and social justice groups. Naturally, this change will seemingly have an impact on the roles of leadership and its emergence, to which these expanded concepts of leadership will help inform.

Within social movement theory there has been an under-theorization of leadership (Herda-Rapp 1998, Howell and Shamir 2005, Morris and Staggenborg 2002). What does this do to leadership theory within horizontally organized social movements? If “leaderlessness is, sociologically speaking, an impossibility” (Eichler 1977) and leaders are defined in relation to followers (Howell and Shamir 2005), how is leadership represented in a movement without centralized authority?

Given the aforementioned shortcomings of leadership theory, it is argued that that by examining the interplay between the structure of the movement, participant and leadership roles, theorists stand to develop stronger and more applicable social movement theory. It is clear that an often used approach in the examination of leadership in social movements has been to create a typology and to characterize accordingly (Eichler 1977). The majority of focus has so far been on charismatic leadership and vertical hierarchies. Aiding the rectification of this inadequate perspective on leadership, theorists have broadened our view through an expansion of leadership types, forms and purpose (Eichler 1977, Howell and Shamir 2005, and Amizade et al. 2001).

Conceptualizations of leadership in social movement literature have more often than not been of the charismatic and top-down variety (Eichler 1977, Herda-Rapp 1998). There has been an assumption that leaders are inherently hierarchal and are “in charge” of the movement. This is describing leaders of vertical organizations and it is not directly applicable to what leadership looks like in an organization without centralized authority or decision-making. As such, the conceptualizations of leaders need to adapt to adequately describe horizontal leadership. For instance, whereas vertical leaders are central authorities and, in the case of charismatic leadership, have a personalized relationship with the participants, horizontal leaders have a socialized relationship and decision making authority is no longer centralized. By looking at the work of Eichler (1977) and using the conceptualizations of Howell and Shamir (2005), a lens for viewing leadership outside of charismatically led movements emerges.

Characterizing Horizontal Leadership

Howell and Shamir (2005) provide a new way of viewing charismatic leadership, which in doing so provides a basis for explaining the relationship between the leaders and participants of Occupy Portland. Howell and Shamir use personalized (commitment of participants to an individual) and socialized relationship (commitment of participants to an ideology) to describe two types of relationships between participants and charismatic leadership. However, with the lack of commitment to an individual within the socialized relationship, the concept seems to reduce the role of leader to that of simply decision maker. Any

charisma a socialized charismatic leader may possess is not required as the participants are instead committed to the cause via the group. Given this, it seems that labeling the socialized relationship as a characteristic of a particular form of charismatic leadership is overstating the role of that leadership. However, when removing the decision making component of the leader, as defined by the "socialized relationship," a basis for characterizing horizontal leadership begins to emerge.

Eichler's open and closed access movements parallels Howell and Shamir's concepts, but her models takes "leaderlessness" into consideration. She, along with the basis of Howell and Shamir's typology, provides more foundation for differentiating and exploring the types of leadership that emerge from horizontal versus vertical movements. Eichler (1977) describes an "open access" movement as one where the "loyalty of adherents of a movement is...directed towards a principle or ideology." Conversely, closed access movements are characterized by loyalty "towards a person who controls access to legitimacy" (1977:101). The distinction between leaders in Eichler's open and closed access concepts are based on the access to legitimacy and focus of commitment (1977:101).

In a closed access movement the participants are committed to an individual, most likely a charismatic one. These individuals are purported as having some sort of grand vision or God-given quest. This characterization is not applicable to a horizontal movement. However, the open access movement, in

which participants are committed to an ideology, is far more applicable.

Horizontal movements without centralized authority would have no individual to act as a charismatic authority. Vertical organization is structured around a figure head; someone at the top; a central authority. Horizontal organization is structured around a goal or ideology. The commitment is not to an individual, but an idea and each other.

This is where Howell and Shamir (2005) overlap with Eichler's (1977) open access concept. It seems that the socialized relationship is describing the relationships of a horizontal movement's participants. The concept was originally applied to one end of a dichotomous view of charismatic leadership, but provides foundation for expansion beyond the confines of charismatic leadership. Utilizing these concepts, this study examines Occupy Portland with the perspective that horizontal movements are likely to open access with participants committed to ideology over leaders. Likewise, the lack of commitment to leaders and increased commitment to the collective suggests that leaders will claim no form of central authority or decision making power. Instead decision-making will become decentralized and co-operative. Table 1 below outlines where these concepts fit in horizontal or vertical organizations. Based on the literature, horizontal movements are open-access and led by task-oriented individuals. Because the authority is instead decentralized, horizontal movements should exhibit participants that have socialized relationships to one another and a strong commitment to ideology to values. Conversely, vertical movements are likely to exhibit a centralized

authority that is often charismatic. This then contributes to participants that hold strong emotional ties to the leader.

Horizontal	Vertical
Open Access	Closed Access
Decentralized Authority	Centralized Authority
Task-Oriented	People-Oriented/Charismatic
Socialized Relationship	Personalized Relationship

Table 1: Horizontal versus Vertical Organization

The literature and this characterization of opposing organizational forms brings up a question: what is leadership without followers and without authority? Much of the literature on leaders assumes a top-down decision making leadership. This marks a shortcoming in leadership theory. By exploring the relationship between structure and leadership of Occupy Portland, this study will work to expand the body of knowledge around horizontal, non-charismatically led social movements. Understanding movement structure, then, is essential to examining the relationship it has with other aspects of a movement. Polletta and Juris do well to illustrate the functioning's of participatory democracies and decentralized organizations. But to further aid in this endeavor, this study turns to subcultural theory. The birth of the movement and how it evolved is instrumental to understanding the structure. As such, subcultural theory can provide insight into the ideology, the emergence of and participation in movements like Occupy.

Subcultural Theories and Occupy Portland

This research study, falling in line with Chicago's line of reasoning, will utilize participatory observation. Additionally, seeing as Occupy Portland is an ideological social movement ripe with class-based rhetoric, this study will also take a cue from the Birmingham school and recognize the importance of ideology on its form. It will not be the place of the thesis to explain Occupy Portland's emergence and leadership as strictly subcultural. However, subcultural theory is useful for shedding light onto its values, ideology, motivations to participation as well as its emergence. The structure and processes used in Occupy Portland are directly related to the values and ideologies held by its participants. As such, increasing our understanding of how these values and ideologies came to be, to which subcultural theory is useful, increases our understanding of how the movement and its participants operate.

Occupy Portland is a prefigurative movement and as such it aims to model a form of organization that can in turn be adopted by the larger society. Consequently, prefigurative movements create "a new society within the old" (Fisher 1971 as cited by Armstrong 2002). This microcosm of society exists with a set of ideologies, principles and shared values brought into it through its participants. As a social movement built around these shared values it fosters collective identity and builds solidarity (Polletta and Jasper 2001), an essential component to any subculture or social movement. Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1975) demonstrate that subcultures often emerge as a "cultural response"

or a “solution” to a problem (1975:15). They go on to say that some subcultures “appear only at particular historic moments: they become visible, are identified and labeled (either by themselves or others): they command the stage of public attention for a time: then they fade, disappear or are so widely diffused that they lose their distinctiveness” (1975:14).

Many participants of Occupy Portland would take offense at the notion that the movement has faded, disappeared or lost distinction. However, many of those interviewed felt that Occupy Portland has, for all intents and purposes, “died.” But regardless of perspective, this makes an apt description of the Occupy movement’s place in the American conscious. Certainly the emergence of a movement that came in response to the economic collapse of 2008, wars in the Middle East and corporate-political corruption is intrinsically tied to the events of its time. The birth of the Occupy movement was the culminating response to modern economic and political failures. As such, it could only appear at a particular moment in time: this moment. In this sense, Occupy Portland can be likened to a subculture; a cultural response to a problem.

In the following chapter I discuss the methodology of this study. I first set up the guiding research questions of this study. I then go over my choice of using an inductive approach consisting of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. A brief overview of the interview participants is given as well as tables outlining their involvement with the movement. Finally, I will lay out how the data was analyzed.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Research Questions

This study is guided by four main research questions. What is the organizational structure of Occupy Portland? Are there leaders in the movement? What do those leaders look like? How does Occupy Portland's structure affect leadership? Through these questions this study explores the relationship between the structure of the movement and its leadership positions. It examines how leaders emerge and what they do for the movement. Additionally, it observes how the movement and its various components are organized and function. All of these components work to create an understanding of the movement. Through these questions this study stands to gain valuable insight that can aid in the guidance and evolution of Occupy Portland or other movements of similar organizational methods.

Approach Used

This study examines the organization of Occupy Portland and how leaders operate within it. Older and more traditional social movements like the labor protests of the early 20th century operated under a vertical structure. These movements tended to exhibit a hierarchy of authority. At the top was the central authority figure that had a large amount of influence on decisions and dictated the direction of the movement. In contrast, horizontal organizations like Occupy Portland, Earth First!, the Zapatistas and the dynamics of the World Social

Forums follow a “cultural logic of networking” (Juris 2008) that contributes to a more egalitarian form of organization, consensus based decision-making, decentralized authority and a host of affinity groups (Therriault 2012).

Additionally, this study acts to inform the connection between movement structure and the emergence of leadership type. Does leadership exist in Occupy Portland? What are the characteristics of its leadership? How does the form of leadership in Occupy Portland relate to its structure?

To collect the data that advances this understanding, this study examined the experiences and perspectives of those most involved in the movement through semi-structured interviews and observation of the movement in action through participant observation. Each interview took place with an individual that had either been identified as a “leader” by a fellow participant of the movement or by myself in accordance with the operating definition of leadership used in this study. Participants who were identified as leaders played significant roles in either the facilitation of meetings, the guiding of discourse, and/or are a prominent figure in the activism surrounding Occupy Portland. Participants who initiated actions, demonstrations, working groups, or founded committees were also seen as taking a lead role in Occupy Portland activity. The interview participants’ roles in the organization of direct actions, positions on affinity groups, visibility in the media and prominence within the activism surrounding Occupy Portland made them key organizers in the movement and thus valuable sources of data and insight.

Eichler (1977) states that with “some social movements it is easy to identify primary leaders,” those “who most contribute to group locomotion.” However, when dealing with less traditional movements of a horizontal nature, identification is not as clear. Because decision-making is a consensus process, identification based on authority is not relevant. There is no primary leader. For Eichler (1977) “leaderlessness is, sociologically speaking, an impossibility” and is instead “a descriptive statement about the decision-making structure of a movement” (1977:100). As such, a more flexible definition that was more applicable to horizontal leadership was required. Moreover, with the under-theorization of leadership (Morris and Staggenborg 2002) and the over emphasis on charismatic and titled leaders (Herda-Rapp 1998 and Howell and Shamir 2005) a need has been created for focusing on less traditional leadership.

Data Collection

Interviews

Ten interviews ranging from forty minutes to a little over an hour were conducted over the course of the summer, fall and winter of 2012-13. Initial participants were recruited through a sociology course of Dr. Liebman’s at Portland State University. From there, snowballing was employed, aiding in the identification and contact of additional interview participants. This seemingly helped establish trustworthiness. Because they were contacted by fellow Occupiers, the act of interviewing and talking about key organizers became less of a concern. As a result, this study gained additional fruitful interviews. LeBlanc

(2002) demonstrates that snowball sampling has great potential to identify subjects that are heavily involved in a particular culture and, consequently, are capable of providing valuable insight. As leaders identified other leaders, this study gained further understanding of leaders' perceptions and experiences of leadership, which assisted in the collection of richer data. Many of the interview participants identified previously interviewed individuals as "key organizers" and "leaders." This cross referencing of other leaders seems to not only illustrate the small size of key and influential organizers, but also lends credibility to the claim that the individuals interviewed herein *do* hold leadership roles within the Occupy arena and are therefore credible sources of information. Additionally, the seemingly small number of key organizers also speaks to the representativeness of the relatively small sample size.

Each individual was invited to participate in an anonymous semi-structured interview regarding their experiences with Occupy Portland. To aid in the building of trust, the interview was framed as a means to better understand how social movements like Occupy Portland operate and how its evolution might inform future movements. The idea being that the more we learn now, the more effective new social movements in the future may be. Framing the purpose of the interview in this way was a preemptive measure to dissuade any reluctance on the part of the interview participant. Prior to the research it was made clear by various Occupy Portland participants that there had been efforts on the part of the police to secure lists of key members of the movement. It was their understanding that

this effort was being undertaken so as to better combat Occupy Portland and to target specific individuals. Given this common sentiment among participants, it seemed necessary to establish trust.

Participants were asked about their role and experiences within the movement. In an effort to maintain a comfortable atmosphere and ensure a quality interview, participants were offered to select a setting of their choosing. The majority of the questions were open-ended and were followed with probing questions to elicit further elaboration and clarification. They were designed to inform the research on how the movement is organized, how leadership roles emerged, what the organizational and decision-making processes were, how demonstrations were employed, how active participants were and what leadership roles in Occupy Portland looked like. Below is a sample of the initial questions that were used to start off the interviews. It is important to note that due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, follow up questions were often unscripted.

How did you hear about Occupy Portland and how long have you been involved? How were decisions in the movement made? What did the General Assemblies consist of? How does the General Assembly work in an ideal world? Who facilitates these meetings? How do the councils/committees fit into the larger Occupy Portland? Are there leaders in Occupy Portland? If so, what are their roles? What makes a leader a leader?

All but one interviewee had been involved in Occupy Portland since the October 6, 2011 march or earlier and he was still involved at the early stages of the encampment. As participants that got involved early they have demonstrated

initiative in organizing. This level of commitment seems to indicate leadership and makes them more desirable to interview than the average participant.

Additionally, their early involvement gives them the benefit of perspective.

Having been involved at its inception they have more experience in the movement than many other participants who may have only participated in a few marches.

Below is a table giving a brief overview of the interviewees' pseudonyms, demographics, involvement in Occupy Portland and what kind of activism they may have done in the past. The lists are not exhaustive. The earliest interviews only briefly mentioned their previous activist experiences. Consequently, they may have mentioned being active, but lacked specifics. As such, Table 2 below indicates where interview participants were most active and influential.

Name	Race	Gender	Age	Pre- Movement	Movement Activity
Kristen	White	F	20-30	Anti-war (ANSWER)	Legal training
Jake	White	M	30-45	Attorney	Legal observing, Solutions committee, media for PAL, environment spoke, community alliance against coal (not OPDX)
Phil	White	M	20-30	Looking to get involved in activism	Info Team, PR Team
Trevor	Black	M	20-30	Specifics unknown	Kitchen, info team, Occupy the Pearl, civil disobedience workshop
Ron	White	M	45+	Community planning	Interoccupy.net, facilitation team
Shawn	Black	M	20-30	Environmental justice, Sierra Club	Facilitation
Emma	White	F	20-30	Looking to get involved in activism	Library
Lauren	White	F	20-30	Bioregional awareness	PR team, Web team, social media site
Sarah	White	F	20-30	“organizing in college”- specifics unknown	PAL, Spokes Council, Facilitation Team
John	White	M	30-45	Specifics unknown	Facilitation team

Table 2: Interview Participant Background

Participant Observation

For the duration of this study, public meetings of Occupy Portland (i.e. the general assembly and spokes council) were attended with the goal of identifying key leadership figures and to better understand the movement's structure.

Observations were recorded in the form of field notes and pictures. Participant observation, through immersion into the subject and setting, has great potential to produce rich, detailed and accurate data. Understanding the relations and roles between the participants, the leaders, and the structure is essential to understanding how the movement functions and how leadership emerges. The General Assembly and spokes council meetings are scheduled regularly and are available for the public to attend. Public space is very important to Occupy Portland and the other Occupations across the United States. The initial occupation of Chapman and Lowndale Square was about occupying public space and creating visibility. Moreover, transparency and openness are core principles of Occupy Portland. By having occupations, meetings and protests in public spaces, Occupy Portland is demonstrating this value. As such, the General Assemblies and Spokes Council meetings are invitations to the public to come, listen and participate in Occupy Portland.

These meetings provide a look into the operations of Occupy Portland. General assemblies are the site of the consensus decision-making process and the spokes councils are the gears of the Occupy machine. Given this, they act as ideal spaces for participant observation and promising sources of data. During the time

of this study, Occupy Portland, was no longer in the encampment phase. Now that the organizational efforts of Occupy Portland are not being directed at camp organization, the movement has entered a second phase. This increasingly points to the benefits of participant observation. With such a heavy focus on public space and the next evolution of Occupy Portland happening within that public space, participant observation is uniquely positioned to extract valuable data that can inform us to the coming stages.

Justification

Participants' roles and position within the movement are essential to understanding the relationship between leadership and structure. This is especially true when it comes to leaders. According to Morris and Staggenborg (2002), "leaders help to create or undermine political and socioeconomic realities that influence the trajectories and outcomes of social movements." As such, qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews of leaders and participant observation seem ideal. According to Douglas (2008), interviews and participant observation are extremely effective at gaining relevant data and producing a "stronger more adaptable research design," (Douglas 2008:151). Because of the emergent nature of the findings involved in inductive research, having a flexible design is essential. Interviews allowed the participants the chance "to explain expressions used [and] clarify issues as they emerge," which aids in the reduction

of “ambiguity, conceptual inconsistency and uncertainty in the data” (Douglas 2008:151).

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), when the focus of a study revolves around an organization, such as a social movement, a case study is a productive form of investigation. They identify in-depth interviews as being an effective means of inquiry into lived experience and roles of individuals. Moreover, when joined with participant observation, “interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people” (Marshall and Rossman 2011:145). Understanding these meanings and activities is crucial to addressing the research questions, making a qualitative approach ideal.

Researcher Role

So as not to influence the behavior of the Occupy Portland participants during demonstrations, I assumed a researcher role in between *known* and *unknown investigator*. I did not “advertise” my presence as a researcher, however, if it was necessary for the gathering of data (which it was not) and did not compromise natural behavior (which it did not), my role as a researcher would have been made known. To what was likely a further boon to the reduction of consequentiality, I matched the general demographic of many other participants; young, male, white, 20 somethings with backpacks and beards are common at Occupy Portland sites. As such, considering I did not appear out of place and the

public nature of the data sites, it seems reasonable to suspect that my presence did not affect consequentiality. I assumed the same role at the general assemblies and spokes council meetings as well. Because these meetings are transparent and open to the public, observers commonly attend. Thus, revealing my role as a researcher was not necessary unless I was approaching an individual for an interview.

Data Analysis and Coding

Using inductive exploration, this study allowed the findings to emerge from the data (Thomas 2006). Raw data, such as interview transcripts and observation notes were put into a unified format. The data was then read and coded as common themes emerged. This study was interested in themes of influence, process, leadership, participant roles, organizational methods and anything else that informed the research questions. Once identified, a framework built around these themes was constructed.

Amizade, Goldstone and Perry (2001) and Eichler (1977) provided a basis to characterize leadership. This typology was used as a basis for identifying forms leadership as expressed by the interview participants. *People-oriented* leaders versus *task-oriented* leaders (Amizade et al. 2001) and *open access* versus *closed access movements* were the concepts used to examine leaders of Occupy Portland. As these characteristics emerged in the transcripts and observation notes, they were coded appropriately.

Each recorded interview was first replayed and major themes were identified. After the initial themes were captured the interviews were transcribed and codes signifying the previously identified themes were attached to the transcript. The transcripts were then reread and additional themes were identified. Additionally, the interviews were replayed and data that directly related to the emergence of leaders or the structure of the movement were pulled. The sections of the interviews that acted to inform the research questions were then highlighted and/or isolated from the rest of the transcript. In this way, only the most important data was used. Secondary themes that did little to explain or inform this thesis were not subject to analysis.

In the following chapter I present and discuss the findings of the study. I begin with the values of equality and democracy evidenced within Occupy Portland and how these inform the horizontal structure of the movement. I tell the story of how Occupy Portland came to be and how it is organized. To do this I explain the role of the General Assembly and its consensus decision-making process. As well as how structures like the Spokes Council and Portland Action Lab emerged to better the movement.

CHAPTER IV: HORIZONTALITY AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN OCCUPY PORTLAND

The Dawn of Occupy Portland: Emergence of Collective Action

Describing how an organization is structured and functions is only part of knowing it. Understanding also comes from how that structure came to be. For Occupy Portland that structure seems to grow out of the values of its participants and the subsequent ideology that it operates from: participatory democracy. This chapter will address the first research question: *What is the organizational structure of Occupy Portland?* In the following pages I will examine the organizational structure of Occupy Portland and explore its roots in the values of its participants' and Occupy Wall Street.

Starting from humble beginnings as an idea in the anti-consumerist magazine, Adbusters, Occupy Wall Street quickly grew, expanded and rose to the attention of the media throughout the fall of 2011. It has been heavily criticized across much of the media for lacking leadership, direction and focus. To many involved the movement embodies a certain frustration with and desire to change fundamental social inequalities (Personal Interview, November, September, 2012). In this sense the movement *has been* focused. However, the factors that contribute to social inequality are complex and cannot, therefore, be easily condensed into one set of grievances. So it is of little wonder why a decentralized world-wide network of movements comprised of millions of individuals would be

focused on anything *but* a vast assortment of causes.¹ There is no *one* cause. With the lack of publicly visible focus and leadership, and no “celebrity” leader (Gitlin 1980) to act as spokesperson or liaison, there is little to categorize the movement or those involved to a curious public. There is no single goal that can be co-opted or turned into a sound bite. These characteristics of the broader Occupy movement have generated much confusion, wonder, criticism, optimism, skepticism and activism. The decentralized, yet loosely connected form that Occupy movements adopted across the globe is, in many ways, unique. Consequently, Occupy provides an opportunity to explore the very characteristics of the movement that many have both criticized and lauded. The focus of this study is on the structure and organizational methods and their effect on leadership. However, in the following sections I focus on the structure of Occupy Portland as I’ve come to understand it through participation, observation and interviews with key activists. I explore the structure, how it came into place and how it works. To begin I will examine the values of Occupy Portland and what that means for its structure.

Values in Occupy Portland

To begin the illustration of participant values one can look towards statements made by Occupy Portland, its participants, its working groups and affiliates. The rejection of hierarchy and political institutions, objection to high levels of corporate control, and the embracement of equality, fairness and

¹ Liebman (2011) reported, as of November 4th, 2011, there were 2400 Occupy Movements across the globe.

participatory democracy stand out as the core guiding principles of Occupy Portland. For example, a rejection of political institutions is exemplified in interviewee Sarah's hope that there would be mass non-participation in the 2012 election; that "people would basically give up on that system, just like we gave up on lots of other things." Similarly, during a General Assembly in the spring of 2012, where a proposal for a protest of the Romney campaign was discussed, many chuckles and informal jokes were thrown around the assembly. One man, laughing as he spoke, said, "I thought were *all* Republicans here." The proposal was passed quickly, but the facilitator went on to say that their opposition to Romney was not an endorsement of Obama. Everyone nodded their head and gave twinkle fingers of support. He continued saying, "when Obama comes to town we should have just as much if not more energy" because of the "neoliberalism that he represents." A young, boistrous and somewhat disruptive young man loudly and proudly shouted "fuck politicians." The rejection of the two major parties, and often the smaller ones, as corrupt was common verbage in conversations with participants. With his statement, the facilitator made it very clear that Occupy Portland was not intersted in partisan politics. What both of these examples indicate is a devaluation of the legitimacy of the current political system and a desire to see it changed.

Actions often speak louder than words. In the case of Occupy Portland, the actions, marches and demonstrations are indicative of the values of its participants. For instance, the marches against the banks, like *Occupy the Banks*

on November 17, 2011, demonstrate Occupy Portland's interest in ending corporate corruption. Occupy Portland has helped mobilize mass withdrawals from the large for-profit banks like Wells Fargo and to support smaller, more localized non-profit credit unions. Demonstrations in solidarity with labor activists, such as the march on October 26, 2011, shows that Occupy Portland has an interest in labor rights. OccupyPortland.org posted this value statement that had been passed around during the march: "We object to corporate greed and the systematic destruction of workers' rights and living wage jobs; and we call for substantive economic and political changes that empower and represent the people!"

Aside from dissatisfaction with current political and economic systems, Occupy Portland places a lot of importance on fairness and democracy. The Portland Occupier, an online news media that grew from Occupy Portland, in a piece on the evolution of Occupy Portland refers to "the democracy and equality we value" (Alvarez 2012). Kristen cited Occupy's commitment to democracy and fairness as being in line with her values and an impetus for her involvement. She saw Occupy Portland as valuing "kindness, love, equality and transformation." Furthermore, the General Assemblies "embody what Occupy wanted to be, which was ultimate democracy" (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). The commitment to equality is also evidenced by Occupy Portland's hesitation to acknowledge or appoint leaders. The use of horizontal organization was intended to distribute control to all participants. "People see leaders as a bad thing" and trying to be a leader "in and of itself, was like not a thing you were supposed to

do” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). When reaching out to Occupy Portland for interviews I would sometimes say I was interested in talking to people that have taken on leadership roles in the movement. More than once was I met with a knee jerk recoiling to the word and told “we don’t have any of those.”

The adoption of participatory democratic processes along with the stance Occupy Portland has taken on various issues such as corporate personhood or the use of non-violence suggests that the movement is heavily guided by its values. The values of equality are dispositions that influence the subsequent form of the movement and the actions it takes.

Cultural Logics of Networking & the Occupy Structure

Interviews with the Occupy Portland participants reveal that they exhibit what Juris (2005) refers to as a “cultural logic of networking” (192). This logic is tied to specific *cultural dispositions* within the Occupy efforts that promote horizontal organization, freedom of information and decentralized decision making. According to one prominent activist, Occupy Portland “followed the lead of Occupy Wall Street a lot. It was automatic that we did whatever they did and if we wanted to do something different we actually had to make that change.” “Wall Street sort of set the standard of using G.A.s and consensus” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). Lauren, also a prominent activist that got involved early on, remembers that “when Occupy started it was very much, like, ‘look at what New York’s doing and we’ll model after New York.’” On September 29, 2011, Occupy Wall Street drafted a declaration which stated:

“As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments...

“Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone...

“To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal.”

This declaration lays out the values of democracy, non-violent protest, collective problem solving and anti-corporate corruption that sparked the Occupy Movement and began drawing participants. Taking the lead from Occupy Wall Street, Portlanders whose values and interests reflected the broader OWS context were likely drawn to Occupy Portland’s movement because they recognized it as a space where their own personal values and ideologies would be supported and valued. These values, in turn, impacted the larger organizational commitment to a very specific form of movement structuring. The decentralized nature of the Spokes Council, the consensus decision-making at the General Assemblies, the collaboration with affinity groups and use of direct action are all outgrowths of a *cultural logic of networking* that is present within Occupy Portland and builds upon the efforts and intentions of other Occupy entities.

As Juris' concept proposes, movements that utilize this logic will exhibit horizontal organization. The horizontal organization of Occupy Portland shows two main structures that give form and direction to the movement, the General Assembly and the Spokes Council. It is through these bodies that decisions are made, networks linked and plans are determined. The *cultural dispositions* of the participants influence the form of the movement. When participants hold particular values, like democratic fairness, they are less likely to create a system that is anathema to those values. Instead, it is more feasible that they will adopt ideologies and forms of organization that are compatible with their perspective, such as participatory democracy.

If movement participants exhibit a *cultural logic of networking*, it implies that the cultural and subcultural dispositions are not isolated from their participation in the movement. Participants are bringing those aspects of their self into the movement. The principles of anarchism, for instance, can be linked to Occupy Portland and the larger Occupy movement. This is not to say that Occupy Portland is an anarchist movement; it isn't. It is also not to say that all participants hold anarchist principles; they don't. It is only to say that there is evidence of *cultural dispositions* in participants of Occupy Portland that seem to have lead towards a *cultural logic of networking* and that the principles of anarchism, as one example, point to the subcultural roots of these dispositions.²

² Graeber (2011) demonstrates how Occupy Wall Street exhibits anarchistic principles by outlining four main points. They reject the "existing political institutions," the "existing legal order," are anti-hierarchal and utilize

This logic of shared decision-making and diffuse leaderships is very much in line with the values of Occupy Portland participants, particularly the values of freedom, equity, fairness and transparency (Alvarez 2012). The development of numerous jointly run committees and sub-committees formed by or out of Occupy Portland demonstrate the group's commitment to sharing power and authority; the ongoing effort to rotate facilitators or spokespersons at General Assemblies so that all voices are heard, and the efforts to make consensus-based decisions all reflect the values of Occupy Portland's participants.

Occupy Portland is a prefigurative movement (Lehr 2012) and as such it aims to model a form of organization that can in turn be adopted by the larger society. In many ways, Occupy Portland is both a "model" and an "experiment" in social organization (Personal, Interview, August, 2012). Consequently, these prefigurative politics act to create "a new society within the old" (Fisher 1971 as cited by Armstrong 2002). This microcosm of society exists with a set of ideologies, principles and shared values brought into it through its participants. In a sense, it is creating a subculture.

Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1975) demonstrate that subcultures often emerge as a "cultural response" or a "solution" to a problem (1975:15). In addition, some subcultures "appear only at particular historic moments: they become visible, are identified and labeled (either by themselves or others): they command the stage of public attention for a time: then they fade, disappear or are prefigurative politics. These principles are not strictly anarchist and can be found in other non-anarchist social movements, such as the Gay Identity Movement (Armstrong 2002).

so widely diffused that they lose their distinctiveness” (1975:14). Many participants of Occupy Portland would take offense to the notion that the movement has faded, disappeared or lost distinction. However, many of those interviewed felt that Occupy Portland is, for all intents and purposes, “dying.” But regardless of perspective, this makes an apt description of the Occupy movement’s place in the American conscious. Certainly the emergence of a movement that came in response to the economic collapse of 2008, wars in the middle-east and corporate-political corruption is intrinsically tied to the events of its time. The birth of the Occupy movement was the culminating response to modern economic and political failures. As such, it could only appear at a particular moment in time; this moment. In this way Occupy Portland can be likened to a subculture, one which acts as a cultural response to a problem (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts 1975, Cohen 1955).

The values of participants in Occupy are paramount to form of the movement they co-create. Shared values are a means for social movements to develop collective identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001), cohesion and community. Subcultures and social movements attract people of like mind (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk 2006). Likewise, Occupy Portland has attracted participants that hold similar values. Freedom, equity, fairness and social equality are mainstays in the Occupy Portland principle repertoire. These valuations act as what Juris (2008) calls *cultural dispositions* that, along with other perspectives held by Occupy Portland’s participants, play a role in how Occupy Portland’s decision making processes and organizational methods are structured. This was primarily played

out in the General Assembly meetings, the space where collective discussion and decisions happened.

General Assemblies: “What Makes the Movement Move”

All social movements must make decisions about direction, goals, and structure. As a participatory democratic movement, Occupy Portland’s direction is decided on via the General Assembly meetings, the collective decision-making body. It is the role of the General Assembly to facilitate decision-making through participatory democratic processes and modified consensus. In this way, there are no individuals making decisions on behalf of the movement, only collectives. One facilitator I had seen at many General Assemblies, rallies and the Spokes Council summed up the role of the General Assembly as being what “makes the movement move.”

When the participants are gathered the facilitator calls the assembly into session. After asking if there are any newcomers the facilitator then goes over the General Assembly process. The facilitator explains that Occupy Portland operates from a modified consensus, which dictates that a 90% consensus must be had before a proposal can pass. Various committees of Occupy Portland and affinity groups that act independently from Occupy Portland bring proposals to the General Assembly. Those representing the various groups state their proposal to the group. Participants must ask themselves, “Is this proposal consistent with the aims and ideals of Occupy Portland?” The facilitator then goes through a set series of events. The first is a round of clarifying questions. Once participants

have had the opportunity to voice reservations, the proposal moves to the evolutionary amendment or statements of support phase. At this juncture participants have the chance to suggest changes to the proposal or voice their agreement. After that the assembly is asked if they have any concerns or objections to the proposal. Finally, after deliberation has been completed a vote is made and a decision is made about whether the proposal is “in line” with Occupy Portland and should be “supported” by the movement.

To aid in the fluidity of the process, various hand gestures (Figure 4, occupydesign.org) were adopted so that participants could express themselves non-verbally. A video by the Occupy Portland Video Collective also clearly lays out the signals. For instance, by twinkling one’s fingers so that they are

pointed up indicates an individual is in favor of what is being said. Conversely, downward twinkles indicate disapproval. Making a “C” shape with one’s hand shows that that individual has a “clarifying question.” To make a “V” shape with two hands is to make a “point of process.” This is often used when deliberation is bordering on excessive and there is a desire to “move on.” By “raising the roof” with both hands participants are telling the speaker they need to speak louder. This was sometimes necessary as the “human microphone” system that was commonly used during large gatherings and at demonstrations was not in use at

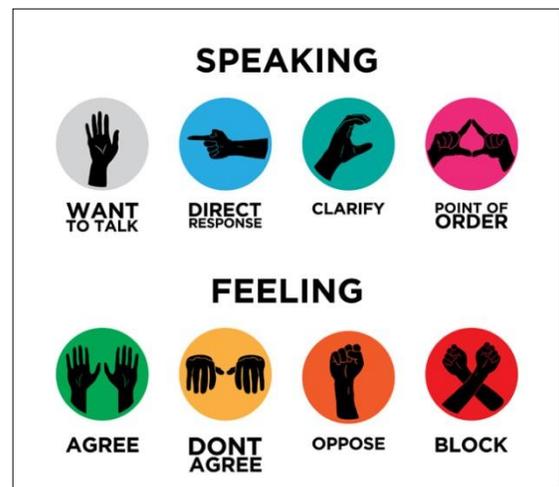


Figure 4: Hand signals used to communicate during Occupy Portland's General Assemblies

this intimate setting. It should be noted that respect was a concept that was emphasized within the meetings, especially respecting another individual by not interrupting. As such, they also had a hand gesture for “direct response,” where each index finger alternately points up and down in the direction of the speaker. In principle this is more respectful and less disrupting to the process.

According to OccupyPortland.org, the general assembly is a space “for us to hear each other, to discover who agrees on what, and who disagrees.” This indicates that Occupy Portland values openness and space for individuals’ voices to be heard. It shows that Occupy Portland has an interest in making democratic decisions. When meetings seek to find “who agrees on what,” they are fostering the building of networks. Having the deliberative aspect of the process function well is paramount to an effective decision making body. As noted by the majority of interviewees, “direct democracy requires an incredible level of patience” and energy to navigate. Many participants were aware of this. Consequently, workshops on how to operate in a direct democracy were organized. However, not everyone involved in the movement had the patience or skills to operate effectively. Emma, though still a prominent activist in the movement, found herself “bored” and unable to attend the General Assemblies (Personal Interview, August, 2012). For her there was too much talking and not enough doing. There were too many “words” and too much “deciding about deciding.” She felt the General Assembly was not necessary for her activist path, which was focused on the library and participating in direct actions.

The intense level of commitment that the General Assembly required turned a lot of individuals off from participation in decisions. (Personal Interview, August, September, February, 2012-13). Also, disagreements with direction and frustration with the pace of the process caused others to drop out. Shawn remembers many of the more radical participants not giving Occupy Portland “enough time and space to grow” (Personal Interview, February, 2012). This exodus of individuals and groups (be they radical, revolutionary, socialist, reformist, or whatever-ist) had a couple of effects on the movement. First, it greatly reduced the level of participation in the decision-making process. General Assemblies at the time of this study often consisted of less than 30 individuals. Contrasted with the hundreds of people at the early General Assemblies, it is clear that Occupy Portland did not have the same level of momentum the fall of 2012 as it did only a year earlier. However, this did allow for the most committed and democratically competent individuals to continue providing direction to the movement. When conversing about the lack of participation at a Spokes Council meeting, it was mentioned that many who dropped out attributed it to feelings of intimidation or lack of being heard, relating to Sarah’s comment that “angry white men” were “terrifying people into not talking” (Personal Interview, September, 2012). One Spokes Council representative noted that since so many people left the General Assemblies that the core group dynamic has drastically changed. As a result there is no longer the oppressive presence of vocal minorities dominating conversation at the meetings; the drop in participation took with it the cacophony of voices.

The second effect has been the formation of many working groups outside of the Occupy Portland umbrella. People who felt marginalized, drowned out, or just wanting to do what they want without going through the General Assembly process sought to form their own groups and organize their own actions. These groups often still utilized the Occupy Portland network, but organized outside of the movements' authority. The Portland Action Lab makes for a prime example of this.

Forming at the November 17, 2011, Spokes Council, the Portland Action Lab started with five people, much like the facilitation team. They saw "potential to do a massive national day of action." They intended to continue the use of consensus decision-making but be more focused than Occupy Portland had been up to that point. "Occupy had been doing a ton of actions, but they were all over the map." They saw a need to be more strategic and be more coordinated. So they began by organizing the Occupy the Banks action. The Portland Action Lab continued to organize outside of Occupy Portland as they did not have a spoke at the Spokes Council. However, they have been a very active part of the "Occupy Universe," utilizing Occupy Portland for networks, resources and dissemination of information about upcoming actions. This exemplifies the decentralized nature of the movement. "All these things that popped up out of the social aperture from the Occupy movement, from that spark, are within the Occupy universe. But they're floating around each other; they're engaged. But they're not directly accountable to each other."

Initially in October and November of 2011, the assemblies were quite large with participants numbering in the hundreds. According to John, a co-founder of the facilitation team, the two assemblies leading up to the October 6, 2011, march consisted of about 300 and then 600 people. Due to the large numbers in attendance, these early assemblies were described as frustrating, “difficult,” “a cluster fuck,” but also “inspiring” and “incredible.” Sarah, an eloquent and accomplished activist that got involved with Occupy in the beginning, fondly remembers the evening saying,

“It was October. So it was relatively chilly and rainy. And there were like 300 people there. It was incredible....the fact that 300 people would show up for a meeting on a Friday night downtown to talk about occupying something. So I went to that and thought, ‘this is important,’ this may be ‘it.’ I thought that this might be the movement for fundamental social change” (Personal Interview, September, 2012).

Sarah was not the only one struck with amazement and inspiration by the movement. The initial march garnered around 10,000 people (Haberman 2011) and the subsequent encampment became the largest in the country with “an ongoing population of 400 to 500” (Heartquist and Rollins 2011) calling it home. In the wake of Occupy Wall Street, the movement had large support and momentum which contributed to the large numbers participating in the general assemblies, demonstrations, marches and the camp.

The early general assemblies and the ones to follow the initial march were where much of the structure and processes of Occupy Portland emerged. Feeling frustrated and dismayed by the lack of participatory process at the second general assembly, John saw an opportunity “to participate to make it [Occupy Portland]

what [he] wanted it to be.” After utilizing Facebook and the online forums he got together with a small group of five individuals that were also interested in developing participatory democratic processes in Occupy Portland. This would turn into the beginnings of the facilitation team. It was this team that “became the place in which conversations about structure and process occurred, because there was no structure and process to begin with” (Personal Interview, October, 2012). Three of the interviewees were heavily involved with the facilitation team. Sarah, another player in the facilitation team, recounted that at the second General Assembly “a small committee of 40 had gotten together and tried to figure out the consensus process we wanted to use, and we ended up deciding after two days of debate that we wanted to use 90% consensus,” also called a modified consensus. This model was not favored by everyone. When asked about the modified consensus model, John a co-founder of the facilitation team, said:

“You know, what ended up being the case was that we essentially used a modified consensus process. But I think that wasn’t the intention of the conversations that came out of these processes. In fact I had a debrief with a lot of facilitators earlier on and there was a pretty wide agreement, there was consensus within our group that the processes that emerged during Occupy Portland were not ideal and not functional. Were they the best we could come up with? You could argue that was the case. But certainly they’re not what we’d want to replicate for a future mass movement moment.”

Shaun, also part of the facilitation team, echoed this sentiment stating that he was “very much against modified consensus.” Despite the disagreements, Occupy Portland made a decision about how it would make decisions. The groundwork had been laid and the great “experiment in organization” had begun.

Organizational Problems and the Creation of the Spokes Council

The Spokes Council was fundamentally similar but functionally different from the General Assembly. As time went on it became clear to some that just having a General Assembly was insufficient for the movement's growth. The process was often seen as cumbersome and demanded large amounts of patience. Naturally, not all participants came into the movement with experience in direct democracy. At this time the General Assembly meetings "had just like gotten really gnarly and dangerous," (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). "Some of them got so heated that we just had to kinda move on" (Personal Interview, August, 2012). With large numbers of participants came a cacophony of voices and subsequent difficulty with facilitation. As noted by three of the interviewees, the General Assemblies often recreated societal problems, such as racism and sexism. For instance, "angry white men" (whether purposeful or not) were cited as commonly dominating the arena and in doing so "terrifying people into not talking" (Personal Interview, September 2012, October 2012, & February 2013). This resulted not only in people being silenced or silencing themselves, but also caused people to no longer participate in the General Assemblies. For Shawn, "to experience this in a movement that is supposed to be transformative is very discouraging." Moreover, much of the camp was not involved in the General Assembly. At this time there seemed to be a divide in Occupy Portland between the activist work and those focused on "survival" (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). In light of this, some participants like Sarah instigated the formation of a Spokes Council, modeled after Occupy Wall Street's.

The Spokes Council was to be a space for committees to get together, exchange resources or ideas without being bogged down by the vast numbers of people at the General Assemblies and the discussions that accompanied them. The General Assembly had been primarily focused on camp organization. This resulted in committee work being unaddressed or inadequately addressed at the General Assemblies. So by forming a space specifically for committees to get work done, they created two decision-making bodies that worked to move the movement. Not long before the eviction on November 11, 2011, Occupy Portland made the structural developments in an effort to increase the functionality of Occupy Portland's process. Sarah reminisced that adding the Spokes Council "was an incredible process. It was really contentious and it was also super engaging. It, like, gave life back to the movement." The Spoke's Council was seen as providing "a place where people in the camp feel like they have equal voice to everyone else and in fact more voice because food, safety and info got their own spoke" (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). Additionally, it was designed to "streamline consensus" (Personal Interview, February, 2012) and to have "equal power but [a] different role" (Personal, Interview, September, 2012) from the General Assembly. It "essentially took the committee work out of the assembly and the GA." (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). In doing so the General Assembly became more of a place for endorsement, political and "value discussions." Proposals were now required to have an implementation component. That is to say that if someone comes to the General Assembly with a particular action in mind, they must have an implementation plan. With this development it

became far less likely that individuals would bring proposals to the General Assemblies. Instead, committees were more likely to bring proposals, as they were comprised of multiple individuals with connections to resources and the community. This structural adjustment helped relegate the General Assembly to a “rubberstamping” body. Committee work was now happening at the Spokes Council meetings. There they were able to get together and exchange resources, contacts, run ideas past each other and do so without the aspects of the General Assembly that could and have delayed progress. Shawn reflected on the Spokes Council as a place that provided “clarity on affinities” between groups, which only worked to increase the effectiveness of the movement.

The Spokes Council operates under the same decision making processes as the General Assembly. At each meeting every participating tribe, caucus or committee has one representative to speak for the group. This cuts down on excessive discourse and streamlines the process. Also, in the interest of fairness, the selection of the representative is often done on a rotating basis. Behind the representative are other members of the represented group. At the time of this study, the Spokes Council had decided to hold two meetings a month. The first was focused on “networking and report back from working groups” while the second was focused on “organization and coordination” (OccupyPortland.org). By differentiating the functions of the two meetings, Occupy Portland, at present, creates two different spaces. The first is useful for individuals to reacquaint with what Occupy Portland’s working groups are currently working on. The second allows for more “nuts and bolts” organizing.

In addition to networking, trading resources and finding support, there is a decision-making component to the Spokes Council as well. So long as the decision relates directly to the “inner working of Occupy Portland,” the Spokes Council has authority to make decisions for Occupy Portland. Sarah provides an example:

“For instance, people will bring proposals to the Spokes Council and say ‘hey, we want to organize or a committee is organizing a big May Day action. We want Occupy Portland to sign on, but we’re here at the Spokes Council cause we want all the committees to agree to participate.’ And so, the Spokes Council can agree for Occupy to participate in things, if it’s from within Occupy Portland. So the Spokes Council can say, ‘yes we endorse this action as Occupy Portland and these are the 12 committees that are gonna participate.’”

Giving this power to the Spokes Council effectively streamlines the process. It benefits committees as they are not required to go through the General Assembly. They are already part of Occupy Portland. Conversely, individuals must get the General Assembly endorsement. After which they can utilize the Spokes Council to gather support from the working groups.

Organic Organization and the Occupation of Downtown Portland

After the march, much of the encampment organization rose “organically.” When a need was seen it was then filled by a willing player. When Phil arrived to the camp after the march he noticed many people setting up tents, like the medic and the library. When no one he asked had any knowledge of an Information Tent he took the initiative to set it up. By simply writing “info” on a piece of cardboard and slapping it next to a small plastic table, Phil attracted other

willing participants and initiated the mobilization of the Info Team. Like the rest of the movement at this time, the Info Team quickly grew in scope. With additional participation came increased capacity and resources. Information from General Assemblies and items like walkie talkies, maps and shelves were gathered by the team. As it grew the need for a process and quality control began to emerge. They took on the responsibility of being a conduit for communication and distribution. By having a team of “runners,” the info team could go around the camp to see who needed what, such as food or other supplies. They then would compile a list, distribute information that particular items were needed, and then distribute the items appropriately. Another example of self-organized creation comes from Emma and the establishment of the Occupy Portland Library. After attending the October 6, 2011, march while toting a bike trailer of books and camping gear, she started setting up what she called an “information exchange” tent. With the info tent being set up at the same time, she opted to call it a library to remain consistent with Occupy Wall Street and other Occupies. The idea being to “have Occupy Libraries all over the place and [make it] easier to network.” Much like the info team, her simple act of having a sign that read “library” attracted others who were interested in helping. Books of various sorts started to funnel their way to the library and the collection quickly grew. At its peak she estimated there to be about 2,000 books.

The origin story of the library and Info Team are prime examples of how mobilization and structures can emerge out of horizontal organization. It illustrates that key components of social movements, like the distribution of

information, does not require a centralized authority to function. Rather it was co-creation that fueled the emergence of these pieces. Many of the interviewees, Jake, Emma, Sarah, John and Phil, demonstrated this in their role in the erection and or maintenance of various key components of Occupy Portland, such as the Facilitation Team, Library, PR Team and Info Team. They all identified a need, took initiative to fill that need, and in the process mobilized others; in effect stimulating momentum and creating direction. The movement's loose structure allowed participants like Jake to "continue to shift roles" and go where they are needed.

It is important to emphasize that the General Assembly meetings of the early stages of Occupy Portland had a very different atmosphere and impact than those during the time of this study. The early days of Occupy Portland provided a lot of opportunities for individuals to network. It acted as a space for people to gather, trade ideas, resources, and mobilize into action. For the initially skeptical Jake, it was conversations within this space that helped him gain more interest in participation in the movement. Given the encampment, the early days also demanded high amounts of energy. The organization of the camp took precedence at the General Assemblies. (Personal Interviews, August 2012, September 2012).

Life in the encampment was tiring and stressful (Personal Interview, August, 2012). Occupy Portland had "an ongoing population of 400 to 500" (Heartquist and Rollins 2011). Among the Occupiers was "a very large collection of houseless people in the community" (Personal Interview, November, 2012). Accordingly, Occupiers were regularly grappling with how to get care to the

homeless and at-risk populations. Simultaneously, they were also learning how to “deal with the police or constant threats of eviction.” Occupy Portland was unsuccessful in securing new and additional portable bathrooms. They received letters from the city claiming the encampment was destroying the park, and the media often placed a lot of attention on that supposed destruction as well as the homeless presence. Lauren recalls local news media KOIN as being particularly critical of Occupy Portland. Combined with a demanding decision-making process that can be seemingly and actually ineffective, many participants began to get “burnt out.” (Personal Interviews August, September, October, November 2012, February 2013). People began dropping out of the process for many reasons. Alienation from or frustration with the process, feeling the movement was not productive, or feeling drowned out by a vocal minority, were cited across the interviews. Lauren, co-founder of the web team, info team and camp resident for 39 days, wished that the workshops on direct democracy happened earlier and were mandatory. Many of the new people entering the movement did not know the process and had a learning curve to overcome. Consequently, there was a lot of redundancy at the meetings.

On November 11, 2011, the city of Portland evicted the encampment. When the clock hit midnight many Occupiers left. But many stayed and held a line against periodic surges by the police. It was estimated that the eviction drew at least 3000 people (The Oregonian, November 12, 2011). The night ended with 51 arrests (Jung 2012). One of those arrested was given to the police by the

Occupiers. Having thrown fireworks at the police, the individual was not participating in non-violence. For Occupy Portland, the use of violence, especially during a time with such a heavy police presence, was anathema to the commitment to peaceful protest and a liability. “Any one that is engaging in violent resistance is doing so in direct contradiction to the values outlined by the Portland General Assembly, and in doing so is by definition not representing Occupy Portland” (OccupyPortland.org, November, 11, 2011)

The next morning a General Assembly was held in the park with considerably less people than the meetings had had. The police then arrested and forcibly moved the participants out of the park and across Main Street. Being televised over the LiveStream, witnessed by myself, it was not long before a crowd flocked to the site. Not wanting to miss out, I quickly went downtown to see what would happen. Given the eviction the night before and the heavy handed arresting of General Assembly participants, tensions were high. Not knowing what to do, a General Assembly formed on the corner of 4th Ave and Main. People yelled for “mic checks” and began discussing what to do. Some wanted to stand their ground. Others wanted to move the assembly. After everyone had spoken and concerns were raised, they decided to move the assembly. This marked the final moments of the Chapman and Lownsdale Square occupation.

After Occupy Portland lost its physical presence, it further evolved into “an umbrella that encompasses a million activists desiring some level of social change.” Since the October 6, 2011, march numerous outgrowths of Occupy

Portland have emerged including: “Occupy Beaverton, Occupy Gresham and Occupy St. Johns. There is Portland Action Lab , Community Supported Everything, Culture Mend, Rumorz Coffee, People’s Budget Committee, The City Hall Vigil, Bike Swarm and The Portland Occupier” (OccupyPortland.org, retrieved March 14, 2013). The dismantling of the camp allowed the General Assembly to refocus. The camp operations took up a lot of the General Assembly’s time. Now that it was gone there were no daily operations to organize. “Occupy was the camps and movements surrounding the camps. After the camps broke up and until now, Occupy is an umbrella that encompasses a million activists desiring some level of social change.”

Chapter IV Conclusion:

In response to the first research question, Occupy Portland evidences a horizontal organization that is a product of a *cultural logic of networking*. I have illustrated this through their use of consensus based decision-making, the General Assembly and Spokes Councils, which have acted as a means for organizing participants and providing direction for the movement. I have suggested that Occupy Portland’s use of a participatory democratic structure is a product of the values expressed by the participants. Just like the societal problems of racism and sexism cited by the interviewees, individuals also brought their values and *cultural dispositions* into Occupy Portland. This then works to direct and influence the structure and organizational methods of the movement. Participatory democracy is in line with this *cultural logic*. The General Assemblies and Spokes

Council meetings operate under a modified consensus. Decisions made there are a collaborative product. By arriving to decisions democratically, Occupy Portland is creating a decentralization of authority where no one individual is in charge. Instead the decision-making power is distributed throughout the group. It seems that the structure of Occupy Portland, in light of the values discussed, could not be anything *but* horizontal. To organize vertically with a top-down decision making model would be in direct conflict with the core principles of the movement and those individuals most involved. Likewise, the form leadership takes in Occupy Portland is influenced and directed by this structure. In the following chapter I will examine how the structure of the movement, as outlined above, influences the leadership of Occupy Portland.

CHAPTER V: LEADERLESS OR LEADER-FULL? THE STATE OF LEADERSHIP IN OCCUPY PORTLAND

This chapter addresses the last three research questions: Are there leaders in the movement? What do those leaders look like and how does Occupy Portland's structure affect leadership? As the previous chapter states, much of Occupy Portland's structure grew from a cultural logic of networking. Subsequently, as will be discussed, the type of leadership and the roles leaders took were directly influenced by the structure. There were certainly leaders within Occupy Portland. Interviewees like Sarah, John and Emma, for example, demonstrated leadership through their instrumental role in the development of structures and processes used by Occupy Portland. Every interviewee except one began their involvement at the earliest stages; participating in the initial General Assembly and planning meetings leading up to the October 6, 2011, march. As leaders, these individuals and their experiences with other leaders inform this chapter. In explanation of my findings I will first point to Occupy Portland's lack of centralized authority and charismatic leadership. I then explore how Occupy Portland's participants and structure (i.e. participatory democracy, consensus decision-making) discourages charismatic leadership while encouraging the emergence and development of multiple task-oriented leaders (Amizade et al. 2001).

“We don't have any of those.” Looking for Leaders in Occupy Portland

Within Occupy Portland there has been a strong apprehension towards leaders in general. Just the word “leaders” implies a hierarchy which, according to interviewees and many official Occupy documents, is exactly what the group did not want to create; for to have a hierarchy introduces a power structure that participants seemed to be very uncomfortable with. At a Spokes Council meeting when discussing the Occupy Portland mission one representative voiced discomfort with the word “coordinating,” saying it seemed too hierarchal. One interviewee recognized that people were taking on leadership roles; she included, but was uneasy about using the word “leader,” opting instead for “super-organizers” (Personal Interview, August, 2012). This apprehension was further evidenced by what Jake recalled as a “very intentional disruption” of the process that leads to centralized and charismatic leadership, stating that the organizational processes of Occupy Portland were “supposed to defeat that centralized authority.” However, it would be incorrect to assume that potential charismatic leaders did not seek positions of influence.

Charisma is a concept that Weber describes as “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated with supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber 1978 as cited by Carlton-Ford 1992). These charismatic individuals, in order to be leaders, must have followers. Without a following they lead nothing; they’re just charismatic. Charismatic leaders, being figure heads, attract a lot of attention and suggest a degree of ego. In the early stages of Occupy Portland “there was a lot of ego” (Personal Interview, September, 2012). There was a great

deal of momentum in the beginning, and mobilization to build the camp and increase participation was high. With this rise in organization there were many activists who saw this as their opportunity to shine (Personal Interview, September, 2012). The individuals attempting to claim a place in the spotlight were not well-received by many of the Occupy Portland participants. “There was a tendency to criticize, like reject that kind of leadership. It looked like someone trying to be the capital “L” kind of leader” (Personal Interview, October, 2012). Echoing this sentiment Sarah said, “charismatic, rise to the top kind of leaders are really judged harshly. I think they were just seen as trying to be a leader, which in and of itself was like not a thing you were supposed to do” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). These statements help illustrate a norm and a value within the movement that potential charismatic leaders were bumping up against. It was expected that people shouldn’t be “trying to be leaders,” in the sense that they were seeking some sort of authority or a satisfaction of their ego. It was also reported that this anti-charismatic sentiment in the movement also encouraged other potential leaders to hold back from participating to the degree they may have otherwise wanted because “the hammer came down on the people who did that” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). Eventually the rush of people looking to lead “fizzled out” as “no one was interested” (Personal Interview, September, 2012). Through the actions of its participants, and the overt rejection or sanctioning of individuals who attempted to secure visible leadership roles, Occupy Portland made its position on leadership clear.

It was also reported that people who maintained a presence in the public eye were met with resistance. For example, when asked about spokespeople in the movement John recalled that the “spokesperson, to the extent that role exists, it should be a rotating role or something. And I think there was definitely some tension around the people that were doing the PR, media work that had a really high profile in the press early on that wasn’t rotating at all.” With a lack of visible leadership the media was often left to their own devices to identify individuals as leaders or spokespersons (Gitlin 1980) to speak for the movement, resulting in some of the same individuals being repeatedly interviewed. They were not necessarily trying to be leaders, but became sort of de facto spokespersons. This further illustrates the general discomfort the movement had with not only leaders but also anyone who appeared to be occupying a role in which they were deemed to have some sort of authority or voice on behalf of the movement. Occupy Portland sought “to be inclusive” (Field Notes, February, 2013) and give space for voices to be heard equally. As such, those who appeared to be speaking for the movement, and by default other participants, were not paying proper tribute to the shared values of participants.

By utilizing the frame that hierarchies are inherently bad, the movement stagnated conversation about “healthy” hierarchy. Ron saw this perspective on leadership and hierarchy as “ill framed.” It created a situation in which some felt they were unable “to talk about it or recognize it” but still having a “need to have that leader stuff happening” (Personal Interview, October, 2012). Even within those identified as leaders there was hesitation to the word, such as Emma’s

preference for the term “super-organizers.” This is directly related to the values that laid the foundation for the movement. As mentioned earlier, the Occupy movement carried with it a strong feeling that the political and economic systems are failing; that the 1% is exerting its power to the disadvantage of the 99%. Dissatisfaction with these systems and a need for change was cited across the interviews as impetus for involvement. There was a distrust and discontent with hierarchal structures and were viewed as “dominator hierarch[ies]” (Personal Interview, October, 2012).

Occupy Portland is different from many other social movements in that it is organized horizontally. Inherent to a horizontal structure is a lack of centralized authority. There is no individual on top. Like Emma stated, “intrinsically in Occupy Portland...there was no hierarchy” (Personal Interview, August, 2012). Participants are committed to causes, ideologies, and groups rather than individuals. Occupy Portland was attempting to form a leaderless movement. So to attempt to be a leader was in conflict to the values of equality. As mentioned earlier, these values are symbolized in the General Assembly. Open forums like this demonstrate the desire for equality of voice. By intentionally forming a leaderless structure, they are in effect attempting to provide for that equality. Eliminating central authority frees decision-making up for the masses. This was a very purposeful direction of the movement.

It would seem that this form of organization disrupts the emergence of centralized leadership. Unlike in a top-down charismatically led social movement, there is no individual at the top to have a personalized relationship with.

Charismatic leaders exhibit a personalized relationship with social movement participants (Howell and Shamir 2005) and are committed to the individual leaders. They would exist in what Eichler (1977) calls a closed access movement, which involves a central figure having sole access to legitimacy. As demonstrated, many participants had little patience for or interest in entertaining notions of leadership. So whatever leaders in Occupy Portland were, they were likely not the charismatic leaders that much of social movement literature has focused on (Herda-Rapp 1998, Howell and Shamir 2005, Eichler 1977). In contrast, Occupy Portland's participants, through their rejection of this leadership and the valuation of non-hierarchical organizing, suggest they are committed to goals or groups, exhibiting what Howell and Shamir (2005) would refer to as a socialized relationship and Eichler would call an open-access movement.

Leadership Found: Uncovering Horizontal Leadership

So if Occupy Portland's participants discouraged charismatic leaders through their actions and its structure eliminated space for centralized authority, what did leadership in Occupy Portland look like? Almost every interviewee acknowledged the presence of leaders in Occupy Portland stating that, "there are leaders in Occupy Portland... acknowledged or not" (Personal, Interview, September, 2012) and that it is a "distributed leadership" as opposed to a centralized one (Personal Interview, October, 2012). Specific segments of the movement like the facilitation team and media groups were repeatedly cited as being "well organized" and that "there are leaders in it" (Personal Interview,

September, 2012). Additionally, every interviewee recognized that Occupy Portland was suspect of a leadership structure. Shawn, one of the youngest interviewed and definitely a leader himself, stated “I think the movement doesn’t want to think there’s leaders” (Personal Interview, February, 2013). As suggested earlier, Occupy Portland had a desire to minimize or eliminate top-down leadership, and in constructing a movement of shared power and participatory decision-making, they have, in some ways done just that. But can leadership really be non-existent? Leadership is about more than having central authority. Demonstrations still need to be organized, participants need to be mobilized, ideas need to be created and actions need to be executed. Among other things, leadership is responsibility and doing one’s part, such as taking on actions when able like aiding in the organization of demonstrations or forming working groups. It is taking initiative to fill the needs of the movement or to form working groups. It is mobilizing participation and directing growth, such as developing evolutionary structures like the Spokes Council. It can also refer to, in the case of the encampment, securing external resources, setting up services or access to information, or leading workshops or panels. Leadership can, and often is, a very diffuse series of tasks or responsibilities. In essence, Occupy Portland, while rejecting centralized, hierarchical forms of leadership, actually embraced a range of other types of leadership.

The following examination and description of Occupy Portland’s leaders is based not only on the characteristics, roles and actions of those interviewed but also as those interviewed described leadership. As interviews were collected and

the data reviewed, various themes emerged around the roles and characteristics of those identified as leaders. Leaders were commonly seen as more active than the average participant and had more capacity to complete actions through social capital or networks. Additionally, those interviewed were commonly found to have a history of activism, took initiative in organizing actions or groups, took on roles of facilitation, and often exhibited a task-oriented leadership (Amizade et al. 2001). The following sections will distinguish three distinct roles of the task-oriented leaders; leaders of process, leaders of construction, and leaders of mobilization and action, and relate them to the structure of the movement.

“Super-Organizers:” Leaders of Process, Construction and Mobilization

What makes people leaders in Occupy Portland is not their level of authority but their actions. Every interviewee saw leaders of Occupy Portland as those “who were consistently taking on action items” (Personal Interview, August, 2012), who could “move people,” and “get a lot done.” This description resembles what Amizade, Goldstone and Perry (2001) would refer to as task-oriented leadership, which is primarily “concerned with assembling the resources and executing the actions needed to accomplish a particular goal” (2001:129-130). This stands in contrast to people-oriented leadership, also known as charismatic, which aims to “evoke emotions that create a community of feelings, revoke emotions by creating affective dissidence that leads followers to rethink their worldviews, and reframe emotions by introducing new structures that reshape their followers’ interpretations of the world,” (2001:130). Those

displaying this task-oriented leadership were not necessarily just a leader of process or only a leader of construction. These terms are used to describe the role that leadership in Occupy Portland inhabited. They are not isolated from each other, yet they remain distinct in their purpose.

Ron, a well spoken and analytical organizer, makes a quality example of a task-oriented leader and, more specifically, a leader of construction. Standing out from the majority of the interviews, he is older and has had less activist experience than many of the younger leaders interviewed. When he started his involvement he didn't see himself as the activist on the frontline getting arrested; his role was to be more strategic. He sought to get involved in conversations about "how to organize" and frame the movement. Through a series of phone calls with Occupiers around the United States, he and about twenty individuals co-created interoccupy.net. This was to act as a means of communication for Occupies around the globe, with the hope that this channel would be utilized as a space to exchange resources, network and organize on a larger more interconnected scale. Ron was successful in constructing a structure that the movement has access to and could utilize. His efforts have added potential capacity to the movement and increased connectivity. Though he lacked an activist background, he did have extensive experience working for what he called "generative change" and "how to have positive change happen." As someone involved in community planning both in the public and private sector, Ron's work consisted of "collaboration, cooperation," "bridging political and ideological divides" and "being able to see a whole system." Like his work before Occupy

Portland, his activism is taking on a role that facilitates cooperation and system design. With the openness of Occupy Portland came many opportunities for individuals to use their skills and take on a leadership role. This also illustrates how pre-movement activity has worked to allow someone with capacity to “get stuff done,” to “plug in” where they are needed.

However, just spearheading actions is only part of the picture. Though charismatic leadership was disrupted by the movement’s structure and participants, having charisma and or people skills helped leaders to mobilize participants. Leaders of this sort can be characterized as leaders of mobilization and action. For Sarah, “you can’t be a leader unless you can move people,” and being able to move people is much easier for someone with an idea that resonates and some charisma. The individuals described were still task driven but were utilizing their people skills to better mobilize participants and develop networks. (Personal Interview, September, October, 2012). These individuals “were loved by most people and had high capacity for getting things done” (Personal Interview, August, 2012). In regard to leaders’ interpersonal skills, Sarah remarked that “once you have spent a lot of time building these relationships,” you then “have a lot of capacity to mold the direction of the movement.”

For those interviewed, no one diminished the role of networking in what makes a leader a leader. Social aptitude was repeatedly seen as a necessity for effective leadership. Not only must these individuals have an action or proposal that resonates with the participants of Occupy Portland, but they must also have

relationships. It was reported that sometimes individuals would organize an action only to find that they are disappointed in the turnout. The idea may have resonated with other participants but “in reality they just didn’t have relationships with people” to effectively build mobilization and execute the action. The personalized relationship suggests that charismatic leaders tend to have loyal followers that trust the leader in their decisions. The leaders in these situations are idolized. Paralleling Eichler’s (1977) characterization of closed-access movements, the leader that has a personalized relationship with participants acts as the only access point to legitimacy; they alone are the source of good guidance and movement direction. In Occupy Portland this is not the case. Leaders must build trust and in order to do this they must build relationships.

“It’s not like people trust you and you get to go do what you want and people blindly follow you. People got held accountable like constantly for decisions they were making. And that looks like either you have to make a really good case...or you have to build your ability to drive direction. That means you have to get other people on board.

“Almost all power you can claim within the Occupy movement comes based on relationships. And that if you don’t have relationships with people, you have no power in that environment at all. And then the people who are able to take on various kind of leadership positions and like move things along are because they have a combination of like really good deep serious relationships.”

It is this need for relationship building that seemed to better position some participants to be leaders over others. By having a history with the participants one is able to “activate that personal network right away” (Personal Interview, September, 2012). Moreover, having a history of activism or community engagement helped those interviewed network and build community. Food

security, anti-war protests, the environmental movement, social justice, anti-corporate globalization, the WTO, bioregional awareness and forest defense groups were among the causes championed by leaders prior to engagement in Occupy Portland.

The ability to facilitate or moderate a group of people is integral to the workings of a consensus based decision making body. Many facilitators possessed this skill and are great examples of how activist experience helped contribute to the taking on of a leadership role. The facilitators in particular can be viewed as leaders of process. To an extent they became leaders by default. Insofar as they were responsible for guiding discourse of the planning meetings and General Assemblies, they played a key role in framing the conversation that Occupy Portland had. They had the ability to define debates, rules of discourse and silence problematic voices “to empower others” (Personal Interview, September, 2012). Facilitators had to regularly “have a larger view of what’s going on” to “help make organizing happen” and to “make sure inclusion and involvement is optimized” (Personal Interview, October, 2012).

“Most of the power is in a very narrow sense” but it was this early discourse that Occupy Portland was built from. Those who excelled at facilitation were “able to take lots of different points of view and...find the common ground” and “how they fit together” (Personal Interview, October, 2012). The early General Assemblies especially were often very intense and “riotous” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). With this sometimes chaotic atmosphere came a

need for effective facilitation. Though the facilitators didn't necessarily want to run against the leaderless structure of the movement, they were by nature of their work leading. For example, facilitators were often "activists with long-time experience" and worked to get others trained into the process, which also acted as a form of leadership (Personal Interview, November, 2012). Effective facilitation was integral to the movement. Many participants were new to activism and had no experience with direct democracy. They were not as prepared for the level of commitment that this form of organization demands. So by having facilitators who were well-versed in the processes, the movement exhibited a group of individuals who organically rose into a position of importance and influence. They were the initial teachers of the process and lead participants to a place where the movement could attempt to operate from the principles of participatory democracy.

Ron's role in the creation of interoccupy.net is another example of pre-occupy community engagement working to drive participation in Occupy Portland. Like others interviewed, he saw Occupy Portland as addressing an issue he recognized, got involved and fulfilled a need that was well suited to his skills. Being committed to collaboration, he used his skills of facilitation and cooperation to build a space where Occupies can collaborate together. Though he lacked a history of activism, his work towards "generative change" contributed to his capacity to function within the Occupy Portland movement, take on leadership roles and develop a communication channel that has the capacity to facilitate the connecting of Occupies on a national and global scale. This kind of work with

Occupy Portland helps create avenues for growth and direction. It is not simply protesting a particular grievance like corporate personhood (as important as demonstrating is), but goes a step further in that it creates structure and networks, an essential component to a decentralized movement.

Occupy Portland as a Training Ground

With all the energy and organic growth Occupy Portland became a space with many opportunities for people to get engaged in activism. For some it was their introduction to activism. For many others, and the majority of those interviewed, it was a space to continue or shift their activism. Regardless of one's level of activist experience, Occupy Portland acted as an opportunity for engagement. It was a "space to learn about organizing and direct democracy" (Personal Interview, February, 2012). Participatory democratic processes, through the processes of collective decision-making and direct democracy, have the capacity to foster democratically competent individuals (Polletta 2002). Shawn reported gaining "access to a lot of resources" and a "ton of skills" that were "applicable mostly in the activist circuit." As a result he found it allowed him "to plug into that circuit" and "helped [him] think about social change differently" (Personal Interview, February, 2012).

By organizing and or linking participants to numerous lectures and workshops, Occupy Portland has placed a lot of energy into actions that work to create a more socially efficacious population. Facilitation, strategic campaigning, mediation, legal training, alternatives to capitalism and housing rights are just

some of the many topics that Occupy Portland has gotten behind, led workshops and trainings on. When combining the provision of skill-building workshops, the resources of the Occupy Portland networks, and an opportunity rich environment a social movement with fewer restrictions on participation emerges. It is not every day that a fresh activist can participate in a movement and find themselves, in a relatively short amount of time, occupying a leadership role. Or that an activist can go to a General Assembly of 300 individuals, pitch an idea and mobilize support. But with such a plethora of decentralized working groups working on a myriad of actions, there are that many more opportunities for individuals to find where they can plug in. As repeatedly stated by the interviewees, as long as people were willing to put in the work and gather support through the Occupy Portland networks, then anyone could play a role.

Having been engaged in activism on varying levels before participation in Occupy Portland, those interviewed and those they described as leaders were better equipped to enter the space and function immediately. They are politically cognizant, motivated individuals with a history of activism and a capacity to organize and mobilize individuals. Considering the degree of patience, time and energy required to operate within a consensus-based decision-making model, it reasons that those with prior experience in the activist world could operate more effectively. Sarah expressed this sentiment saying, those “who are keeping Occupy alive at this point, and for the whole time really, are incredibly organized and have an incredible level of skill.”

Chapter V Conclusion:

In response to the final three research questions, it would appear that there are leaders in Occupy Portland, that they are occupying any of three task-oriented leadership roles, and that their emergence was directly influenced by the structure of the movement and the values of its participants. Given the diversity of opportunity and causes, many individuals were able to find space in which to be leaders. It seems this diversity contributed to many different ways in which leaders can demonstrate leadership. Moreover, it would seem that the type of leaders seen to emerge from Occupy Portland are numerous and largely task-oriented. But within that characterization there appears to be three main roles being played. For instance, the facilitators, by training incoming participants, providing democratic facilitation of the General Assemblies and managing a space in which structure was discussed, were leaders of process. They were largely responsible for laying the foundation of Occupy Portland, the environment of democracy, which enabled the movement to move. Participatory democracy requires patience, energy, time and familiarity with the process. Additionally, before the movement's loss of momentum, the General Assemblies could get very heated. Without anyone there to continually bring new participants up to speed or facilitate discussion to "make sure inclusion and involvement is optimized," (Personal Interview, October, 2012) it seems the movement would have been less efficient. If the movement was to complete actions or form working groups that gave the movement direction, then individuals were going to have to step in and drive that process through taking on these roles.

Leaders of construction, such as those that formed working groups, were fulfilling Occupy Portland's need to grow through the building of structures. The Spokes Council, facilitation team, the library, kitchen, info team, web team, PR team, interoccupy and other groups that emerged were integral to the functioning of Occupy Portland. Those taking on these roles and spearheading initiatives may have also played a role in the development of process, especially in regards to the facilitation team, but through the act of formation they were being leaders of construction. Fixtures of the movement like the Spokes Council were vital organs of the movement. It brought efficiency to committee work and gave more voice to those within the camp. The info team, web team and PR team built a media machine for Occupy Portland to communicate through, distribute information and connect participants and groups. For a decentralized movement communication between nodes of activity is essential.

Lastly, the role of organizing and executing actions seemed to be roles taken up by the leaders of Occupy Portland. These appeared to be leaders of action and mobilization. By coming up with ideas for actions like marches or demonstrations such as Occupy the Pearl and Occupy the Banks, they planted the seeds of an action. However, the effectiveness of these leaders seems to be related to their capacity to activate networks or relationships within and outside of Occupy Portland. Having these relationships was seen as a benefit. For instance, Trevor reported that his mobilization of Occupy the Pearl was met with a fair amount of resistance within the movement, but with the help of his networks he was able to get it passed by the General Assembly. This and other actions worked

to mobilize individuals and provide momentum for the movement. Without taking actions the movement produces no outcomes and fades into obscurity.

Some of the examples given also illustrate the relation between these roles. Emma's erection of the library and Phil's creation of the info team exemplify both leadership of construction and mobilization. The very creation of these fixtures of Occupy Portland not only helped build the movement but also sparked participation from fellow Occupiers. Those that formed the Portland Action Lab were leaders of construction and through the organizational efforts of the group, like Occupy the Banks, were leaders of mobilization and action. What this suggests is that these roles work together. Processes must be understood so that structures can be created and actions can be mobilized. The roles are distinguishable but do not exist in a vacuum, they are interrelated.

It would seem that to form a leaderless movement is futile, at least in the case of Occupy Portland. The roles of leadership, with the exception of centralized decision-making, were still required and were fulfilled accordingly. As this case suggests, leadership and hierarchy are not always intrinsically connected to each other. Can leadership be completely eradicated from a social movement? Perhaps, but that is not evidenced in Occupy Portland. In fact, leadership as seen in the movement indicates that not only is it hard to erase, but that it is also necessary to function.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

This study sought to answer four questions: What is the organizational structure of Occupy Portland? Are there leaders in the movement? What do those leaders look like? And how does Occupy Portland's structure affect leadership? The answer was that Occupy Portland is a social movement whose participants' values and cultural dispositions produced a horizontal structure that used consensus-based decision-making, through which, hierarchy was eliminated and consequently promoted the emergence of a distributed form of leadership.

The Organizational Structure of Occupy Portland and the Role of Values

Staying true with Juris' (2008) notion of the cultural logic of networking, the values of Occupy Portland's participants guided the way in which it was organized. Occupy Portland very much acted like a subculture. The formation of collective identity around shared values and cultural dispositions, along with the congregation of these individuals in response to a cultural problem that is time specific, are often main tenants of subcultures. As such, the values are integral to the subsequent structuring of the group. There appeared to be four main values that played out as influential to OPDX, the roots of which can be seen in anarchistic principles (Graeber 2011) and Occupy Wall Street, the model that Occupy Portland followed. The rejection of political institutions, opposition of corporate corruption, democracy and non-hierarchal organization all played a role in how Occupy Portland organized and what it organized its activism around. In

particular the shared values of democracy and anti-hierarchy were very influential to the structure and, subsequently, the leadership of Occupy Portland. The valuation of non-hierarchical organizing and democracy directly affected the structure by manifesting a consensus decision-making process. In its use of consensus, the General Assembly represented what Occupy Portland was to be, “ultimate democracy” (Personal, Interview, September, 2012). Likewise the Spokes Council was also erected in the interest of democracy and fairness. Through it Occupy Portland sought to give more voice to marginalized groups and create greater efficiency. These bodies are a product a participatory democratic structure which is a product of its participant’s values, or cultural dispositions as Juris (2008) refers to them. Through them centralized authority was eliminated. In contrast to vertical organizations, these values produced an open access, horizontally structured movement that utilized the participatory democratic processes of consensus decision-making and lacked a hierarchy of leadership.

Are There Leaders in Occupy Portland? How Structure Defeated Hierarchy

So how did this structure impact leadership? First off it created a structure that didn’t allow for hierarchy. There was no one at the top. Consequently, no central figure implies an open access movement and a socialized relationship, meaning they have a strong commitment to the collective or ideology rather than an individual. This was clearly seen in Occupy Portland’s attitude toward

leadership or hierarchy. As such, the amount of power and control an individual can exert on the decisions and direction of the movement is minimized; top-down leadership was not possible within the horizontal structure. Secondly, Occupy Portland sought to be a leaderless movement. So aside from structurally eliminating authority they framed hierarchy, and consequently leaders, as bad. Leader and hierarchy were often viewed as inseparable. It is then clear why highly vocal or charismatic individuals who appeared as “trying to be leaders” were repeatedly met with resistance. These discourse-dominating individuals did not appear to share the same values as the larger Occupy Portland movement and were often ignored by participants or silenced by facilitators in an effort to let other voices be heard. As stated by Jake, there had “been a very intentional disruption” of the process that leads to charismatic leaders and that Occupy Portland’s organization was “supposed to defeat that centralized authority.” However, despite their best efforts leaders were not completely erasable. Leaders did emerge; they just did not resemble those of top-down organizations.

What Leaders Looked Like and the Role of Structure

The decentralized nature of the activism contributed to a plethora of opportunities. The host of affinity groups meant that various work was been done on various issues. Meanwhile the consensus process diminished an individual’s capacity to exert control on the decision-making of the movement. These coalesced to influence the distributed leadership that emerged. Need for

leadership had not gone away with the hierarchal structure. The opportunity-rich space provided spaces for individuals to rise up where needed and take on leadership roles. Additionally, the active disruption of the “capital ‘L’ kind of leader[s]” (Personal Interview, October, 2012) prevented more charismatic leadership and made task-oriented leadership more applicable to the social environment.

These task-oriented leaders that were dispersed throughout the movement exemplify three leadership roles that were occupied by participants: leaders of process, leaders of construction, and leaders of action and mobilization. Leaders of process were those who played a pivotal role in the formation or teaching of the processes that Occupy Portland utilized. Leaders of construction were those that, through the creation of groups or structures, increased capacity or effectiveness of the movement. Leaders of action and mobilization were those that got people organized or sparked participation. Each type played a role in the organization of the movement and was often overlapping. Processes had to be understood so that structures could be created and actions could be mobilized in accordance with the shared values of the movement.

These leaders were often those that were well-connected to the community and had the capacity to function in a democratic process that demands high levels of patience and skill to navigate effectively. Having a history of activism prepared these individuals for participation and having people skills aided the progress of their endeavors. Every interviewee was involved Occupy Portland in its infancy. The structure of Occupy Portland originated in the decisions reached at the early

General Assemblies. Those involved at this stage took on key roles in its formation. As such these individuals led the charge of Occupy Portland. As co-creators they forged the direction that Occupy Portland would take. These leaders were responsible for the formation of many essential and important components of Occupy Portland, such as the facilitation team, info team, web team, the PR team and the Spokes Council. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the facilitation team was where a lot of conversations about structure emerged. The PR team, the only segment of Occupy Portland that had General Assembly approved autonomy (Personal, Interview, November, 2012), was an essential component of communication for the movement. The Spokes Council was a turning point in the movement's evolution by streamlining the consensus process and compartmentalizing decision-making bodies. For Emma leaders in Occupy Portland were "anybody who took an action item at the end of the [initial General Assemblies]." These were those people; the architects of Occupy Portland's foundation.

Different forms of organization demand different forms of leadership. Occupy Portland attempted to make a leaderless movement. However, it would seem this has not eliminated leadership, only centralized authority. Instead what emerged was a decentralized or "distributed leadership" (Personal Interview, October, 2012), in which many stepped into leadership roles. They just lacked unilateral decision-making power. The movement intended to be leaderless, but ended up being "leader-full." If one views leaders as strictly those with central authority, then indeed leaders were absent from the movement. There was no

central authority; it was modified consensus. However, this is a reductionist view of what leadership is. Leadership is more than simply power or authority. Central authority was eliminated from the structure but the roles that leaders occupied did not remain unfulfilled; spearheading actions, mobilizing participants, building collectives and creating momentum were necessary roles that leaders often played. Occupy Portland was no exception.

Implications

What is suggested by the case of Occupy Portland is that forming a leaderless organization may not eliminate all leadership. Centralized leadership can be eliminated by using a consensus-based decision-making process, but decentralized or distributed leadership can then emerge and fulfill functions of leadership. By organizing horizontally and removing centralized decision-making, power is distributed across the participants. Participants then took on these non-authoritative leadership roles. Leaders of process, leaders of construction, and leaders of action and mobilization appeared to be the main roles being occupied.

With the numerous participants taking on lead roles, Occupy Portland gained the capacity to complete actions and organize various groups committed to causes that expanded the “Occupy Universe.” Furthermore, those that left the movement did not necessarily leave activism. The formation of various groups outside of the Occupy brand name suggests that Occupy Portland acted as a sort of training ground for activists to gain skills and build networks. This falls in line with Polletta’s (2002) notion that participatory democracies foster democratically

competent individuals. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that this training in democracy creates not only effective democratic players but also people capable of taking on leadership roles. The numerous leadership opportunities and the training that Occupy Portland provided created an environment that promoted the emergence and training of many leaders.

Much of social movement literature has focused on leadership in movements with a centralized authority structure. Additionally, the relationships between leader and structure have been under theorized (Morris and Staggenborg 2004). Work to move beyond concepts of charismatic leadership has provided a basis with which to examine leadership in a horizontal structure (Eichler 1977, Howell and Shamir 2005, Amizade et al. 2001). The emergence of recent horizontally organized social movements, like Occupy, provides an opportunity to explore this under-examined section of social movement literature. This study aims to explore leadership in one of these movements. It would seem that the leadership discovered in Occupy Portland does run contrary to the works of the aforementioned theorists who have worked to expand conceptualizations of leadership. All of their concepts of leadership typology are reflected in the three roles identified in this study. In the case of Amizade et al. (2001) the concept of task-oriented leadership was expanded.

It is my hope that this study stands to help in the future organization of social movements. Future movements can look to this case, or other movements like Occupy Portland, and see the impact of values on structure and leadership. Staying consistent with Juris (2008), this study has demonstrated how values can

be predictive of structure. Consequently, it would seem that future movements that also exhibit a cultural logic of networking will also exhibit a horizontal structure like Occupy Portland. This structure, in turn, can be predictive of leadership. Future movements that seek to be leaderless should consider that leadership is not so easily erased, nor is it inherently bad. In the case of Occupy Portland, this intent along with the purposeful disruption of charismatic leadership resulted in a task-oriented “distributed leadership.” Instead of going extinct, leaders took a form better suited for horizontality. “Distributed” leadership allowed numerous people to take on different leadership roles, helping the movement spread out and cover wider ground. These three types of leaders: leaders of process, leaders of construction, and leaders of action and mobilization can be used by future social movements as an expectation of what emerges from a non-hierarchical organization. They can use the case of Occupy Portland to guide them away or towards particular organizational forms and better prepare themselves for dealing with potential types of leadership. It is evidenced by this study that leadership should not be feared but embraced. Occupy Portland has demonstrated that hierarchy can be eliminated, but leadership will remain. Additionally, by framing leadership as bad Occupy Portland hindered potential useful conversations about how leadership may otherwise be utilized to the benefit of the movement. After all, it would appear that the formation of leaders persists. This suggests that future horizontal movements should consider the inevitable rise of some form of leadership, embrace it and use to their advantage.

To ignore this seemingly fated emergence would be at the detriment of the movement.

Despite the failure to fully recognize and utilize leadership, Occupy Portland is a great social experiment in human organization and demonstrates the capacity of like-minded individuals to organically mobilize, self-organize without hierarchy, and organically develop a community. Moreover, Occupy Portland and the Occupiers across the globe have demonstrated humanity's capacity to self-organize without vertical hierarchies and centralized decision-making. This is the kind of prefiguration that Occupy Portland had sought to demonstrate. However, like any other form of human organization, it has its problems and receives its fair share of criticism. But despite the flaws and divisions, Occupy Portland precipitated a lot of action and worked to empower many individuals to take on leadership roles within their community. It suggests that the Occupy Movement, despite all its criticisms as unfocused and misdirected, has a great deal of benefit for its participants and society insofar as it trains participants to be better activists and citizens.

Occupy Portland's form of organization is not new, but it has been growing and does not appear to be going anywhere anytime soon. This presents more opportunity to explore these organizational forms and to further examine leadership within these forms. Social movements help the world move forward. Much is possible when people work collectively to address social inequities. Social movements are always changing and evolving. As sociologists participating in a field that grew out of addressing social problems, it is our duty

to maintain a fixed eye on the very processes that project society in this direction or that. Occupy may or may not disappear. But it seems unlikely that activism against social inequality or corporate corruption would go away with it. It existed before Occupy Wall Street and, so long as there are individuals willing to organize, it will exist after.

LIMITATIONS

Occupy Portland was just one of the thousands of Occupy movements across the globe. Though they may stand in solidarity with one another at one time or another, each Occupy is its own body, independent from the broader Occupy movement. Considering this, what is found in Occupy Portland cannot be assumed to be found in other Occupies. A couple factors in particular make Occupy Portland stand out from other Occupies. For one it had the largest encampment population in the United States. Perhaps Occupations with only 100 participating individuals would show a very different leadership structure. It is not clear whether or not the size of Occupy Portland had an effect on who took on leadership. Related to that, large portions of the encampment were homeless people who sought out the camp as a space for shelter and services. Not every city that had an Occupation had the same experience with homelessness that Occupy Portland had. The camp provided a lot of care for this population and it stands to reason that that diverted attention and energy from other issues or actions. However, despite the uniqueness of Occupy Portland, it can be reasoned that movements which model after one another and utilize similar or identical organizational processes like consensus based decision-making will likely exhibit

similar characteristics. Given the role values played into the structure and form of leadership, it seems possible that another Occupy, perhaps consisting of a population with different cultural dispositions, will produce structure or leaders that differ from those seen in Occupy Portland. As demonstrated by Morris and Staggenborg (2004) the relationship between structure and leadership in social movements has been under examined. This is only one study seeking to address this issue. The emergence of movements like the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street are creating a field full of opportunities for research. More examination of how and why leadership emerges from horizontal movements is needed.

This study had ten interview participants. When asked who to interview next, interviewees repeatedly mentioned the same individuals, suggesting that those interviewed had been heavily involved enough to warrant being regularly seen as leaders by those I identified as leaders. This indeed contributed to securing interviews with what many viewed as the most prominent organizers. However, it is important to note that at the time of this study the vast majority of the momentum Occupy Portland gathered during the fall of 2011 had considerably faded. Those interviewed were involved with Occupy Portland at the earliest stages and most, by the time of the interviews, had distanced themselves from Occupy Portland and were pursuing other actions. This implies a bias among my interviewees. Considering their participation had dropped off, their perspective is only applicable to the time of their heaviest involvement, the fall and winter of 2011-2012. Other people were still involved and continuing to

propel the movement forward. This study only examines leadership during the encampment and the period immediately following the eviction. All my interviewees were most active in this time. I did not see any shift in leadership post-eviction. As illustrated by the interviews, leadership was happening inside and outside the camp. The eviction eliminated leadership in the camp, but decentralized leadership among the many affinity groups had started well before the eviction. That being said, it is quite possible that a shift in the predominant types of leaders happened. However, my interviews did not evidence any shift in leadership during the period of examination. Given this, more research could be done on Occupy Portland's current form. Participation has dropped off considerably. It stands to reason that this drop would have an impact on the dynamics of the working groups and the functioning of the consensus process. A more longitudinal perspective on the movement can act to further inform the conceptualization and theorization of leadership emergence in horizontally organized social movements.

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