UNDERSTANDING OCCUPY IN AUSTRALIA

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Occupy is a formative social movement that has gained considerable attention in Europe and North America. Beginning circa early May 2011 in Spain ('the Indignants' or '15-M' movement) and growing in response to the domestic effects of the economic crisis sweeping through parts of Europe (Der Spiegel International, 2011), the Movement's ideas and concerns were picked up in the United States, initially via the activist magazine *Adbusters* (Schwartz 2012) under the banner 'Occupy Wall Street' in mid-September. Under the construction of 'Occupy [location]', the social movement spread throughout North America and globally. The style of the Movement has tended to focus on the establishment, where possible, of permanent encampments to act as a base of operations, focus of solidarity and media (making and reporting). The emphasis on the occupation of public space has been attributed to inspiration from the 'Arab Spring' uprisings in the Middle-East (Hall, 2011), as well as reflecting concerns about civic participation and access to sites for democratic expression.

Over time, individual groups and movements that began in different areas, but in response to similar conditions, have tended towards isomorphism through the convergence of demands, strategic repertoire sharing, and a high level of information exchange between the various groups associated with their high level of use of new media. The Movement is increasingly able to be recognised as having a clear political critique of neo-liberal economic policies that have lead to increasing levels of social inequality, the rising impact of corporations on policy making, and concerns about the efficacy of the majority in political decision-making. In the United States, where social inequality has been expanding rapidly since the 1970s (Gudrais, 2008) and the end of the post-war welfare state model, the Movement has generated a number of its most visible rhetorical messages, particularly identifying their opposition to the '1%' or economic elite.

While this convergence is evident within the Movement, there remains considerable inter- and intra-national and regional variation in the nature of the Movement, as well as elite responses to it. Some of these differences reflect local conditions, such as the severity of the economic problems in parts of the European Union, economic subsidisation of religious communities in Israel (Lidman, 2011), central-peripheral relations in Europe (Kyriakidou and Papachristou, 2011), the perceived source of economic woes (financial institutions in the US and England, versus sovereign debt in other polities), or the perceived political impasses in the United States in response to a deepening recession (Weisbrot, 2011). Other variations reflect the extent and manner to which the Movement has had political impacts, with some nations seeing a considerably higher degree of elite accommodation of the concerns of the movement (*e.g.* Spain) than others.

This article examines the Occupy Movement in Australia, based on research undertaken in early November 2011 in Sydney. This part of the Movement emerged in early October 2011, approximately three weeks after the initial occupations in the United States (Butler, 2011). Mobilising in the capital cities, thousands of participants across Australia took part in initial gatherings, with hundreds establishing camps. Unlike the high degree of tolerance initially afforded protesters in the United States, Australian police were quick to respond too many of these camps, arresting participants and removing camping equipment in late October. This sparked some criticisms of police over-reaction, such as would later be seen of the co-ordinated sweeps undertaken in the USA in mid-November (Bloomberg, 2011).

The domestic expression of a transnational social movement provides social scientists, including political economists, with a number of opportunities. Primarily, it allows us to understand the conditions by which new social movements arise and grow: what are the conditions (political, economic, social and ideational) that encourage mobilisation? Secondly, it provides insight into the adaptation of international ideas to local circumstances: the processes of frame alignment. Finally, local case examples have value in of themselves, in documenting the politics of social change. As such, this article forms part of a wider set of loosely co-ordinated research being undertaken by scholars working via the Occupy Research Wiki (*http://occupyresearch.wikispaces.com/*).

Social Movement Dynamics

The study of social movements has a long history in political sociology and political economy. Rather than review the voluminous literature on social movements (see, for example, the volume provided by Della Porta and Diani, 2006), we will outline of the range of areas of interest in social movements that informed the construction of the research instrument employed in this study. Our working definition of a social movement is drawn from Diani (1992) as having: (a) collective identity; (b) a network form of organisation that emphasises the exchange and utilisation of resources between a non-hierarchical set of nodes (actors, groups, and cliques) (Wasserman and Faust, 1994:20); and, (c) an identifiable enemy. At this point in time the Occupy Movement can be considered to have met these three criteria.

The first question we examine is the situational explanation for social movement mobilisation: Are social movements simply expressions of relative disadvantage? This explanation focuses on a materialistic model of political sociology: that movements arise in response to local economic conditions and act thermostatically to ensure political elites are indexed to popular opinion (Gurney and Tierney, 1982). While this approach fell out of favour with the rise of interest in 'New Social Movements' in the 1960s, it remains a powerful popular explanatory tool for understanding protest movement activity. Indeed, there is no need to see these two explanations as counter-indicative. In the Australian case, considerable media incredulity as to the legitimacy of the Movement (see below) rests on the assumption that without significant economic crisis the local Movement has neither contemporary political legitimacy nor longevity. Additionally, we can see how precursor movements were less successful in popularising their concerns due to better economic conditions at the time. For example, Boyd's (2002) discussion of the 'Billionaires for Bush' group demonstrates precursor protests to Occupy's specific concerns (inequality and corporate dominance of policy), but which remained marginal at the time.

The second area of interest for Occupy in Australia is understanding the responsiveness of the local movement: How do social movements mobilise politically-relevant resources? This question has a number of elements, focusing on the mobilisation of material resources (people and equipment) as well as the activation of the necessary skills required to

run effective protests. This leads to testable conjectures. If Occupy is an extension of the Global Justice Movement that was particularly active in the 1990s (Smith, J, 2011), then we can explain rapid mobilisation through the presence of pre-existing activist networks and their embedded skills and material resources. This necessitates inquiry into communications technologies as a mechanism in which Occupy exhibits re-activation of latent social movement actors, as well as the mobilisation of new participants. Lievrouw (2011:162-3) has observed the way the Global Justice Movement has had a long historical involvement with the uptake, use and innovation of new media as a tool for mobilisation and self-representation. This form of explanation looks towards a 'cultural turn' in social movement research: seeing resources and knowledge embedded in enduring social relationships sustained in dense networks (Bennett and Toft, 2009:246-8), rather than being held in conventional institutional structures. The construction of cultural artefacts in protest movements (songs, slogans, art, styles of dress, etc.) is therefore not simply a matter of in-group solidarity and framing, but serves as ways in which ideas and repertoires are encoded, communicated and stored over time.

An alternative explanation to mobilisation argues that activation can come from social movement organisation acting as through a vanguard party model (Ghimire, 2011:86). This approach sees protest movements as organisationally-led actions as opposed to collective behaviours through dense network structures. This type of explanation rests upon a different form of political agency: neo-institutional, hierarchical and ideologically-rigid (Roberts, 1998:76) rather than the more diffused form seen in network forms of action.

Media Representation of a Nascent Social Movement

Our research is also concerned with studying the way in which domestic media respond to social movements. While there has been a diversity of coverage of international and domestic Occupy protests in Australia, much reporting has expressed negative judgements about the Movement, its participants, and likelihood of success. This can be illustrated through a number of examples, although we recognise that more systematic study would be needed to generalise these observations.

Nick O'Malley's report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2011:13) is a good example of the negative coverage of the Movement in Australia, expressing criticism of the Movement for its openly democratic practices (a 'trenchantly democratic mob'), rather than having a specific and pre-determined position. This piece also questions the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Movement because of the lesser relative deprivation in Australia when compared with Spain and the United States. Mark Franks in *The Advocate* (2011:20) pointed to a vanguard from within universities, seeing the Movement as the result of '...ageing tenured academics ... attempting to relive their glorious 1960s days by trying to organise an Occupy Sydney demonstration.' Tim Blair in *The Daily Telegraph* (2011:24) described the Sydney protests as 'a sleepover with signs' and pointed to spelling errors as emblematic of the intellectual emptiness of the Movement in Australia.

This type of reporting and media commentary is not a surprise, as international literature has well established a tendency for negative reporting by mass media organisations of protest actions (see, for example, Smith *et al* 2001). This bias tends to stem from a reliance on formal organisational sources of information to explain the event (such as police and political elite sources) and an emphasis on episodic (descriptive) rather than thematic (explanatory) media frames to present reporting of protest actions. In addition, Australian representation of protest action by younger people tends towards discouragement. Crawford (2006:237-40) has identified the hypocritical core of reporting social movement protests in Australia: portraying younger participants as either apathetic and apolitical when invisible, or foolish and naive participants when engaged in visible political actions. A good example of this formulation was Miranda Devine's (2011) column in *The Daily Telegraph* in which she remarked that 'It's hard not to laugh at people tweeting about the death of Steve Jobs on an iPhone while railing against capitalist greed.'

Our research aims to determine the extent to which these forms of popular representations of the Movement in Australia are accurate, through looking at the characteristics of participants and their practices, as well as the degree of ideational diversity within the Movement.

Approach and Method[1]

The research method for this study involved field interviews at a prominent Occupy event. As the Sydney Occupy protesters had been evicted from their initial camp site in Martin Place, the 5 November 'Rally to Re-occupy Sydney' was identified as an opportunity to collect data from participants in a systematic manner. A short interviewer-administered field interview instrument was developed (see Appendix) as the best tool for data collection.[2] The instrument was administered by a group of nine interviewers,[3] and 180 interviews were collected on the day. Given that the size of the rally has been estimated at between 400 (NSW Police Force, 2011) and 1,500 (Smith, K, 2011) participants, the sample size comprises between 12 and 45 per cent. Sampling was undertaken by soliciting participants before and during the rally and march.

As foreshadowed in the brief literature review, three key research questions drove the research design.

First, the research aimed to determine to what extent the media characterisation of the Occupy movement is an accurate representation of the protesters and their aims. This question focuses on ascertaining the demographic characteristics of the group, placing them within the known distribution of Australians with reference to political affiliation, perceptions of democratic practice and institutions, and determining the range of motivating issues and concerns within the movement's supporters (survey instrument questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

Second, we want to explore which model of social movement organisation appears to best describe the emergence of Occupy in Australia. This requires focus on the nature of participation (expressive versus instrumental), the orientation of the movement within the wider transnational network (domestic versus national focus), and participants' sense of the locus of political change (cultural versus institution). This

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1   The data collected for this study is available via the Australian Social Science Data Archive.

2   Future iterations of this instrument should include: gender, postcode, and employment sector.

3   The interviewers included the authors and undergraduate students from the University of Sydney. Training was undertaken on the morning of the rally.

focus is reflected in the use of both closed and open questions (2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12).

Finally, communication and organisational questions are addressed through looking at the method of mobilisation (question 12). This final question explores the way that contemporary social movements are reflexively heavily mediated, and the way they have adopted new communications technologies to expand their impact and organisational base.

The limitations of the research lie in the single point of data collection and the problem of generalising from this one event, as well as concerns about the use of face-to face data collection and social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993) which reflects the limited scope for contact with participants. The use of the forthcoming Occupy Research standard demographic survey instrument (under development at the time of writing) would help to address some of these limitations in due course.[4]
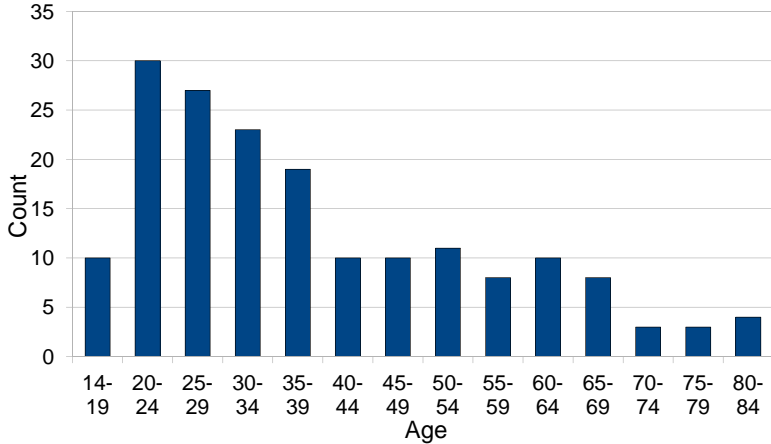
Findings

The research findings give us a clear picture of the participants.

First, age. The average age of participants was 39 years of age, although the median age was 34. The youngest rally participant interviewed was 14 and the oldest was 83. However, as can be seen from Figure 1, there were significant numbers of young people in their 20s, with a long 'tail' out to the oldest at 83. This would suggest a generally youthful group, but mainly post-school age (though a significant number were still in education – most likely tertiary education at university or TAFE). That the general age of participants was both so broad and not solely comprised of 'young people' is at odds with at least some of the media representations, as discussed.

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4   http://occupyresearch.wikispaces.com/surveys#Surveys-
       Draft%20OccupyResearch%20General%20Survey

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Occupy Sydney Rally Participants (n=180)

If we consider a time-of-life scenario, as might be considered by organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and group the protesters by age-group we find the profile mirrored, but in a particular way. Breaking the age of rally participants into these age-groups provides a useful profile against which to then measure employment, schooling and political affiliations, as these age brackets may correspond to events within people's lives, for instance, being of working age, being at university, retirement, having a mortgage, being engaged in protest activity. That said, obviously other factors will influence the decisions that individuals make.

Table 1: Occupy protesters by Age groupings (n = 180)

Age Groupings			
14-30	31-45	46-60	61-83
41%	27%	17%	15%

The next obvious aspect of the Occupy protesters to examine is their political affiliations. Due to the nature of the survey, people were not asked if they were a member of a party, but which party they 'most strongly identified with, if any'. Although it might be expected that some

would be members of a party, the interest lay in protesters' political identifications. Table 2 summarises the results of this question.

Table 2: Occupy protesters by Party identification (n=180)

Party Identification				
Green	None	Socialist/Communist	ALP	Other
37%	35%	17%	9%	2%

That the largest group of rally attendees identifies with the Greens may not be such a surprise, given that party's previous identification with a range of protests and causes. However, in this instance there was no official presence of the party at the rally, nor anyone speaking on behalf of the party. While a number of Greens MPs have in the past supported similar rallies and questioned the nature of police actions in breaking up the initial occupation of Martin Place, the lack of official presence was interesting. However, perhaps more importantly in this instance was the number of respondents who specifically elected not identifying with any party (at 35%). This is interesting in the Australian context of compulsory enrolment and attendance in elections. Australia has historically had a high identification rate with either of the two major parties (McAllister, 2011:40), although membership rates have not been as significant as in a number of European countries. This high level of support for 'no party' identification may indicate that rally attendees include a significant number of people alienated from the formal electoral process.

Significant numbers of attendees also identified with the Australian Labour Party (9%) and the various socialist and communist parties (17%). While the latter might be expected, given the anti-capitalist/anti-corporate flavour of the movement, that almost 1 in 10 identified with the ALP, the current party in national government, suggests that even those protesters who support the current governing party are uncomfortable with existing political arrangements.

Political and Workplace Activity

Rally participants were next asked if they had engaged in a range of actions normally associated with social movement or political activity. While most had signed a petition, which might be expected from a

relatively motivated group such as rally participants, some 30% had engaged in strike or industrial activity in the past, suggesting that participants are more inclined to be militant than is the general population (8% in the last 2 years estimated in 2003; Bean, 2005:134). The type of jobs may be one explanatory factor , given that industrial activity varies significantly between industries. However, participants were not asked what their occupation was (only if they were employed or not), but there were a number of unions present,[5] as identified by their flags and banners, covering occupation areas that have a long history of industrial action (teachers, maritime workers, construction workers, and such). As might be expected, participation in a boycott, signing a petition and contacting politicians/officials all showed significant higher activity levels compared to the general population (see AES 2010; World Values Survey 2005).

Table 3: Previous Participation in Social/Political Activity (n=180)

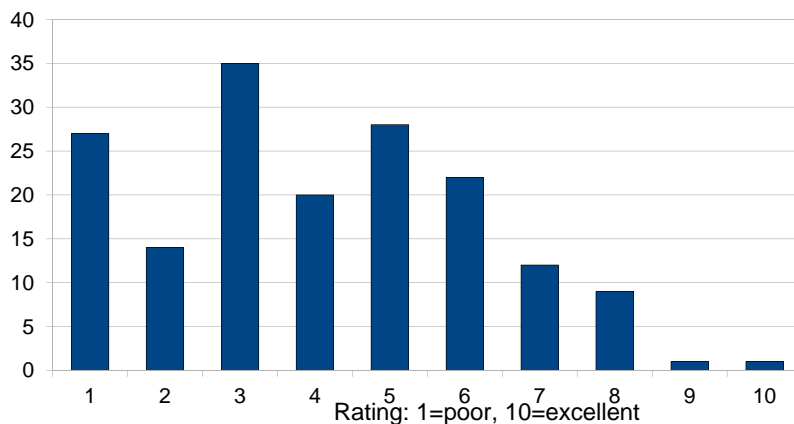| Party Identification					
	In the past year	In the more distant past	No, but might consider	No, would not consider	n
Signed a petition	85%	8%	6%	1%	179
Boycott	69%	7%	18%	6%	179
Contact politician / official	51%	13%	22%	14%	176
Contact / appeared inthe media	38%	16%	30%	16%	178
Strike / industrial action	30%	19%	42%	7%	176

A further question that asked attendees to rate how well democracy operated within Australia allows us to see how alienation with the existing political democratic arrangements is felt by rally attendees. Given the political party affiliations of almost half the rally attendees, the expectation of this question is that many would consider that democracy worked moderately well, although with some misgivings. This would be predicated on the notion that, with the current makeup of the federal

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5   Maritime Union of Australia, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, National Tertiary Education Union, and NSW Teachers Federation.

parliament (a hung parliament with the cross benches being filled by representatives of two different parties and three Independents), the possibility of negotiated government exists.

Table 4 shows the results from this question about Australian democracy, on a 10 point scale. While the mean of 4.07 suggests overall dissatisfaction, it might also be considered to show at least some level of empathy with the operation of parliament. However, with only 27% of respondents ranking Australian democracy at 6 or above, there is clearly a significant level of concern being expressed. 24% of rally attendees scored Australian democracy at 1 or 2 – clearly stating their view that the system is dysfunctional.

Figure 2: Responses to the Question: 'How Well Does Democracy Work In Australia Today?' (n=180)

Mean value = 4.07

This result can be compared to the rest of the Australian population, of whom 73% indicated that they were 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied with Australian democracy (AES 2010; see also Norris 2001). Considering that only 27% of rally participants rated Australian democracy at 6 or above (that is, more satisfied than dissatisfied), rally participants evidently felt far more negatively about the nature of Australian democracy.

Issue Focus

What are the principal issues with which Occupy participants are concerned? As might be expected, rally participants expressed recurrent concerns with wealth inequality, the operations of capitalism and corporate influence on public life. These three areas were each spontaneously reported (free text response)[6] by over 20% of participants. While other issues of concern that might be seen as part of the inclusive nature of Occupy were raised (such as Northern Territory Aboriginal Intervention, war/peace, etc), they were more marginal and reported far less frequently.

Table 4: Responses to the Question 'Why Are You Here (Issues, Concerns, What Are You Hoping To Achieve)?' (Free Text Response) (n = 180)

		Reported
Stated concern	Unequal Wealth	31%
	Corporate control / influence	24%
	Reform capitalism	19%
	Anti-capitalism	9%
	Capitalism (combined)	*28%*

Table 4 summarises the principal responses of the rally participants. Not surprisingly, many protesters had multiple issues of concern. However, issues around corporate influence and wealth distribution were most pervasive. Some of this area of concern would derive from broad based ideological positions, with those identifying with socialist or communist parties, most often reporting being 'anti-capitalist' as opposed to seeing capitalism as a system needing reform or more regulation. However, current inquiries before the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (McClymont 2011) and proposals for reforming political donations laws nationally suggest that issues of corporate influence are 'live' issues within the general public.

A similar concern might also be said to be reflected in the strong focus on wealth distribution. While Australia did not suffer as severely as a

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6   Free text responses were captured from respondents and subject to classification into categories created *post-hoc*.

number of nations (notably European nations and the USA) in the first Global Financial Crisis, concerns about inequality in the incidence of economic fallout is evident locally. One illustration is the lengths to which QANTAS has had to go to calm both shareholder and public disquiet over the huge salary of the company's CEO (reported as in excess of A$5 million) while also arguing for cost savings within the company through staff redundancies (Sandilands, 2011).

While the issues listed above (in Table 4) appeared to be the core issues for many rally participants, coding of the concerns of participants covered 19 different fields, including environmental concerns, anti-racism, refugee rights, industrial issues, police repression and failure of government services. The broad collection of issues indicates that the rally was able to attract a diverse range of people and still include them within the broad umbrella of 'Occupy'. Eventually because the movement has been inclusionary, in the sense of 'including' many issues and concerns, the ongoing identification of multiple issues by participants can be expected to be particularly important to its effectiveness.

Attitude to Government

One noticeable area of discontent amongst Occupy protesters is in their attitude to government. Responding to statements such as 'Government is for big interests' and 'People in government usually look after themselves', there was overwhelming agreement (92% and 87% respectively stating 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'). Rally participants clearly indicated a deep mistrust in the current manifestation of government in Australia (77% 'Disagreed' or 'Strongly Disagreed' that we could trust government most of the time). Table 5 shows the findings, comparing these against the Australian population (as reported in the Australian Electoral Study; AES 2010; Brenton 2008; Norris 2001). As can be seen, critical views about government and politicians are pervasive, but the much more strongly critical views held by the Occupy rally participants makes the latter group stand apart.

In Table 5 it is also notable that, while 69% of rally participants disagreed with the proposition that politicians knew what ordinary people thought, this compares with 76% of the general population. This difference needs exploration. On the one hand, it could imply that rally

participants are less accommodating of the social institution of 'government' as opposed to the politicians themselves.

Table 5: Responses to Questions about Government and Politicians (n=180)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Government is mostly run for big interests				
Rally	57%	35%	5%	3%	0%
Australia	9%	33%	44%	13%	1%
	People in government usually look after themselves				
Rally	39%	48%	7%	5%	1%
Australia [a]	36%	25%	-	30%	9%
	Most time we can trust government				
Rally	2%	9%	12%	33%	44%
Australia [ab]	4%	39%	-	48%	9%
	Federal politicians know what ordinary people think				
Rally	1%	14%	16%	37%	32%
Australia	3%	12%	19%	37%	29%

Source for Australia data in the Australian Electoral Study 2010.
[a] AES measured on a 4 point scale.
[b] Question: 'Confidence in the federal government in Canberra'.

This interpretation would acknowledge that, while they may distrust the group and institutional arrangements of authority, they do not consider all

individuals within the parliament to be self-serving. On the other hand, if we compare this back the responses shown in Table 3 on the operation of Australian democracy, it is more likely to imply a profound cynicism among respondents: *i.e.* politicians are carrying out policies against the public interest not because they are poorly informed but irrespective of popular opinion. This has implications, therefore, for the likelihood of rapprochement between the movement and formal political institutions.

Apathy or Efficacy?

While the findings presented in Table 5 may lead to the view of the Occupy Movement as a generally cynical group, this is not necessarily a correct inference. Indeed, the data reveals a profound lack of confidence in the capacity of established institutional political processes to deliver democratic political outcomes, but the Movement participants also exhibit a strongly positive view of the impact of their membership in the Movement. Far from being a nihilistic set of protesters, participants reveal a generally optimistic viewpoint in relation to the Movement creating change. Table 6 shows the pattern revealed by the survey instrument at the Sydney rally. Responding to the statement 'the Occupy Movement will create real change', about two thirds agreed, only 11% disagreed, with the other 22% being 'on the fence'.

Table 6: Attitudes to Movement's Potential to Create Change (n=180)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	The occupy movement will create real change				
Rally participants	15%	52%	22%	8%	3%

In addition, Occupy participants show a high level willingness to engage in political dialogue across the political divide. Based on Noelle-Neumann's (1984) public opinion instruments, we asked if participants would be willing to engage in a public discussion with a stranger who

holds a very different political opinion than the respondent over a prolonged period in a confined environment (question 10, based on the 'stranger on a train' scenario). In response to this question, interviewees were overwhelmingly prepared to engage with the stranger in the scenario, even if they themselves espoused a clearly different point of view.

Table 7: Responses to Engagement Scenario (n=180)

Consider this scenario: 'You are taking a five-hour train trip and there is a person sitting in your compartment who thinks capitalism is the best system of economic organisation.' Would you:

Talk to this person to get to know their point of view	84%
You wouldn't think it worth your while	16%

The connection between these attitudes and party identification is potentially significant. Although no variable produces any significant statistical result, political identification reveals that ALP identifiers are least likely to engage in discussion, and those identifying as socialist/communist most likely. This perhaps fits better with Matthes *et al* (2010) 'hardcore individuals' who express strong conviction in their attitudes, although the reluctance of the ALP identifiers may yet be an expression of the 'spiral of silence' hypothesis of Noelle-Neumann (1984). This hypothesis proposes that social pressure and negative sentiments towards groups in society (*e.g.* political party members in this instance) may produce a silencing effect as individuals can both sense general community attitudes and attempt to avoid social sanction when they feel their political position is a minority one. The spiral of silence is powerful because it is both reinforcing and can lead to rapid shifts in public opinion when latent voices become emboldened (*e.g.* through social, political, or economic events).

Rally Communication Methods

Generating knowledge about how movement participants become informed of protest activities is an important factor in understanding organisational characteristics and the responsiveness of new movements to events and opportunities. Looking internationally at movements over the last two years, such as those in Iran, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain and the

USA, we know that electronic communions played a considerable role in the mobilisations, particularly amongst young people. This was replicated within the UK student rallies and actions in 2010/11 (Lewis *et al* 2010).

When Occupy Sydney protesters were asked how they came to find out about the rally, a similar communication pattern emerges (see Table 8). For young people aged between 14 and 30, new media was the principal engagement tool. For older participants, more traditional forms of media played a significant role in learning about Occupy. Party membership played less of a role, except when participants mentioned they had been contacted through a group.

Table 8: Responses to the Question 'How Did You Hear About The Rally' (Self Reported) (n=180)

Medium	Heard
Interpersonal communication	31%
Internet social networking service (SNS)	30%
Group / organisational contact	26%
Mass media	24%
Internet website	21%
Poster / flyer / street	12%
Select media	4%
Event	2%

Nb. As individual participants could suggest a variety of methods, the total exceeds 100%.

Given the network mode of organisation, it is not surprising that the key medium by which rally participants heard about the rally was interpersonal communication – contact within personal networks – and that this may also have been from several sources. This was closely followed by Internet SNS services, including Twitter and Facebook, again suggesting that personal networks, whether meeting face to face or via social network tools, played the biggest party in bringing people together for the rally. The next largest mechanism for informing people, however, was via a group, whether political, union or other, which in turn suggests that the nature of much of the contact for participants is restricted to already existing groups and networks. That such a high level of communication occurs via groups also suggests that the Occupy movement in Sydney has not broken out of an 'enclave' within existing political, union or societal pressure groups. This is particularly striking

when examining the nature of the group contacts and whether this was restricted to more political individuals.

The cross tabulation in Table 9 shows the very high number of ALP supporters receiving information from within a group. In this instance, this is likely due to the large number of trade unionists present at the rally, as noted at footnote 5. Perhaps less surprising was that socialist/communist group sympathisers heard via their group. However, given that the Greens were not known to be actively supporting the rally (although many within the party would have supported the rally in principle), the high number (24%) of Greens hearing about the rally from a 'group' would tend to indicate either their own broader local networks or, potentially, activity at a local level within the party.

Table 9: How Participants Heard about the Rally, According to Political Identification

Political Identification	Heard via Group
Greens	24%
None	10%
Socialist/Communist	42%
ALP	69%
Other	0%

Table 10: Importance of Internet SNS as a Source of Information

Age	Heard via SNS
14-30	53%
31-45	32%
46-60	9%
61-83	6%

A second factor affecting information flows to rally participants is the different media forms. A further question in our survey sought to explore

this, with the results shown in Table 10. Over 50% of young people reported hearing of the rally via social media, as well as via flyers and leaflets. This is perhaps also suggestive of the places of contact for younger people (university, street) and the nature of the contact (groups, friends, previous contact) for information dissemination.

Inferences from Researching the Occupy Movement

Because the scope of this research is modest, we must be careful about drawing excessive generalisations based upon it. The advantage of earlyresearch, however, is that it gives an understanding of the formative character of social movements and allows a better view of their origins than *post-hoc* and historical case development. Further research is required on the Movement in other cities and over time as Occupy in Australia changes in response to local circumstances, economic conditions and the actions of political elites and police.

In the case of Occupy Sydney it is possible to see that the Movement has a more coherent core set of concerns than mainstream media tends to credit it. It would appear that the Movement is more unified in its identification of social and political problems (inequality and corporate influence) than the causes of these problems. This clearly has implications for the ability of the Movement to develop and articulate clear policy responses (in terms of strategy or policy as means-end expressions of causal theory; Nagel, 2001). While the diagnosis of social ills generates an economic focus for the Movement's protest, the Movement's ability to negotiate between its moderate and radical critique of the contemporary political economy places pressure on its direct democratic decision-making culture. This is because the resolution of issues is fundamental to determining future strategic directions for the Movement, but this may be difficult given its predilection for consensus decision making.

This divergence within the Movement is one fracture line that may weaken its coherence over time. However, it is not clear that it creates pressure in the near term. The Movement's orientation makes it unlikely to shift towards the direct engagement with political elites over policy changes. Internationally, the Movement has endorsed very few specific policies (the Tobin or 'Robin Hood' tax being a rare exception; Wynhausen, 2011). Our research into the political expressiveness and efficacy of Movement participants tends to point to a fundamental orientation towards message distribution and mobilisation rather than the

formulation and articulation of specific demands. This is clear in the disregard participants tend to have of established democratic practices, institutions, and actors; yet, that disregard is not matched by any disengagement nor a sense of personal impotence.

This appears to sit at the core of the problem the Movement has with mainstream media in Australia. Aside from confirming the generally pejorative way in which protests and protesters are presented in the media, the lack of a clear focus on policy change from political elites makes the Movement unusual in the Australian political context. As a nation with a strong historical orientation towards institutional responses to social inequality which stems from our colonial establishment (Macintyre, 1999), there remains a strong expectation that protests will be oriented towards the 'elite indexing' explanation of protest movement mobilisation. This explains 'deviant' behaviour like protests with regards to the political logic of the Australian environment, and has clearly become an institutionalised frame for the communication of protest action in parts of the Australian media.

The tendency for the Movement to focus on popular education and mobilisation puts it at odds with these media frames. The Movement is characterised strongly in Australia by its use of alternative communications networks and explicit self-representation through the use of digital media (particularly extensive use of blogs, twitter and online video). In this way we could argue that Occupy in Australia is clearly aimed at the development of 'monitory citizens'. These types of citizens employ a range of information sources to scan and monitor the political environment to ensure that the performance of elites is consistent with their concerns (Schudson, 1999:311). The mobilisation of large numbers of individuals to regulate the behaviour of (inherently untrustworthy) political elites explains the comparative disinterest in institutional politics and willingness to engage in direct action (building occupations) and highlight areas of perceived elite failure (solidarity actions with workers, such as the QANTAS AGM protests, and actions supporting cleaners).

This appears to lead the Movement more clearly towards temporary alignments with organised labour in Australia (as has been seen in the Canadian context by Smith, J, 2011). This may serve to break the Movement out of the comparatively small social networks that it currently draws upon for the majority of its support base. Given the

somewhat sceptical nature of participants towards established political institutions, it is unclear if this development would be seen as favourable to the initial core of participants.

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Appendix: Survey Instrument

1. Employment status:　　*F/T　P/T　Casual　　Student　　Unemploy　　Ret.*

2. Holding a sign/banner　*Yes | No*　3. Organising group member?　　*Yes | No | Don't know*

4. Firm decision to participate:　*Today　Days ago　　Weeks ago　Months ago　　Forget*

5. Which political party would most strongly identify with (if any)?　　　　Age:

6. Have you:	In past year	More distant past	No, but might	No, never would
Signed a petition				
Boycot/bought spec. product				
Contact politician / official				
Contact / appeared in media				
Strike or industrial action				

7. How well does democracy work in Australia today? (0 is very poorly and 10 is very well)

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*

8. Consider this statement:	Strong agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strong disagree
Most time we can trust ppl in govt. todo right					
Fed politicians know wht ordinary ppl think					
Ppl in govern. usually look after themselves					
Government is mostly run for big interests					
The occupy mvt will create real change					

9. Consider this scenario: "You are taking a five-hour train trip and there is a person sitting in your compartment who thinks that capitalism is the best system of economic organisation." Would you:

　　　　　Talk to this person to get to know their point of view better, or;

　　　　　You wouldn't think it worth your while.

10. Why are you here (issues, concerns, what achieve)?

11. How did you come to be here (find out, communications method, news focus)?