

Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies, Issue 5 'Imperialism, Finance, #Occupy' (2012)
ISSN 2040-8498

Editors

Amin Samman
Nathan Coombs (editor-in-chief for issue 5)
Pepijn van Houwelingen

Editorial advisory board

Dr. Dibyesh Anand	Dr. Faisal Devji	Dr. Larbi Sadiki
Dr. Claudia Aradau	Prof. Costas Douzinas	Prof. Leslie Sklair
Dr. Michael Bacon	Dr. Benjamin Noys	Prof. Manfred Steger
Dr. David Bailey	Dr. Christopher Perkins	Prof. Stephan Stetter
Prof. David Chandler	Prof. Chris Rumford	Dr. Illan rua Wall

Journal affiliations

The *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies* was established with the help of a grant from the Royal Holloway Faculty of History and Social Sciences fund for research activity 2009/10, in conjunction with the Politics and International Relations Departmental Research Committee. The journal is associated with the British International Studies Association working group 'Global and Transnational Politics' and is an affiliate of the Global Studies Association.

Contact

abstracts@criticalglobalisation.com

Address correspondence to:
Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies
62 Carter St
London SE17 3EW
United Kingdom

© Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies, 2012
Thanks to Ana Lee Smith for the cover image (© 2012)

<http://www.criticalglobalisation.com>

Contents

Articles: From Imperialism to Finance

<i>Globalising Resistance against War? A Critical Analysis of a Theoretical Debate in the Context of the British Anti-War Movement</i> , by Tiina Seppälä	5
<i>Lessons from #Occupy in Canada: Contesting Space, Settler Consciousness and Erasures within the 99%</i> , by Konstantin Kilibarda	24
<i>Imperialism and Financialism: A Story of a Nexus</i> , by Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan	42
<i>The Architecture of Investment Climate Surveillance and the Space for Non-Orthodox Policy</i> , by Håvard Haarstad	79

Occupy IR/IPE: A symposium on the global #occupy movement

<i>Introduction: #OCCUPYIRTHEORY?</i> , by Nicholas J. Kiersey	104
<i>Three Thoughts About What ‘#occupyirtheory’ Might Mean</i> , by Patrick Thaddeus Jackson	107
<i>‘Occupy Wall Street’ and IPE: Insights and Implications</i> , by Elizabeth Cobbett and Randall Germain	110
<i>Authoritarian Neoliberalism, the Occupy Movements, and IPE</i> , by Ian Bruff	114
<i>Reconciliation or Bust?</i> , by Elisabeth Chaves	117
<i>Mic Check/Reality Check</i> , by Wanda Vradi	121
<i>Street Politics</i> , by Michael J. Shapiro	127
<i>The Human Chain Is Not About Holding Hands</i> , by Nicole Sunday Hughes	129
<i>Occupy Wall Street: From Representation to Post-Representation</i> , by Simon Tormey	132
<i>#Occupy: Strategic Dilemmas, Lessons Learned?</i> , by David J. Bailey	138
<i>Occupy Wall Street? Position-Blindness in the New Leftist Revolution</i> , by Agnes Gagyi	143
<i>Return to the Real</i> , by Aida A. Hozic	149
<i>#Occupy IR: Exposing the Orthodoxy</i> , by Ivan Manokha and Mona Chalabi	153
<i>Occupy Wall Street as Immanent Critique: Why IR Theory Needs a ‘Mic Check!’</i> , by Nicholas J. Kiersey	157
<i>Riot, why wouldn’t you?</i> , by Colin Wight	161

Reviews

<i>Perspectives on the Global Financial Crisis</i> , by Alex Andrews	167
<i>Globalisation and Democracy</i> , by Louise Gonsalvez	171
<i>Violence, Capitalism, Language and Physical Force</i> , by Charles Barthold	173

Introduction: #OCCUPYIRTHEORY?¹

Nicholas J. Kiersey

The idea for this special commentary forum emerged out of a conversation with a number of friends and colleagues concerning the question of whether or not we were, as scholars of International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE), at all equipped to teach our students about the significance of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movements. During this conversation, the thought emerged that OWS might be taken as a kind of cue for us to check in and think about the relevancy of our work, and our relationships with the world of political activism. In becoming career academics, we had all been guided by the hope that we were doing something good for the world. As we quickly learned, however, this was not an easy or straightforward proposition – academia has its way of letting us know what sort of things we can and can't do if we want to be secure in our positions. As we followed the news about OWS over various networks and, where possible, ventured out to the General Assemblies – from Berlin to Dublin to New York to Columbus, OH – we felt a sense of embarrassment. For while we were busy pursuing our careers, out on the streets there were people – often including our students – who were risking so much to express their indignation.

As many in IR and IPE will attest, we live in a global regime full of particularity and nuance: meanings are constructed, and political power is multi-modal, ever contingent. But the occupiers on the street are finding solidarity in a common language which speaks of shared experience in the face of austerity, collapsed public services, short-term contracts, stagnant wages, anti-union legislation, ridiculous bank bailouts and profiteering, not to mention a host of associated psychological and physical conditions brought on by the stress of this hardship. As scholars, are we immunized against any of these concerns? Universities, our immediate places of work, are under attack. Many who labor in academia enjoy little in the way of job security or benefits. Tuition is increasing, often by stealth. And this all in the context of a low-wage economy that presupposes the enablement of consumption through expansion of debt, and a culture ever more intent on normalizing the risk-oriented mindset of neoliberalism's 'entrepreneur of the self'. In such times, the injunction to maintain the Weberian distinction between teaching and doing politics becomes suspicious to say the least.

Is there a way we can express solidarity with the “99%”? Obviously, as individuals, one of the best ways is to spend time with the occupiers themselves. As scholars, however, other answers to this question also present themselves. We do certain things well, and other things not so well. In this volume we wish to ask, simply, what might it mean to #occupy IR and IPE? The short essays and critical fragments that follow all constitute efforts to answer this question. Some are more theoretical in nature, exploring how OWS imagines world politics, and how its categories relate to our own. Others are more empirical, exploring the movement in terms of its significance for world politics, and its relation to other social movements.

Should #occupyirtheory stop here? Writing close to the end of 2011, with many of the larger occupations now broken up by the police, and colder weather settling in, it is hard to make any predictions as to how the movements will fare in 2012. Yet it is equally hard to imagine that energy dissipating altogether. The rhythm of our own academic calendar will bring many of us to conferences, and put us in conversations with colleagues and friends, new and old. We will discuss issues, ideas, and plan collaborations. Might we not use these occasions as opportunities to give the discipline its very own ‘mic check’?

For some, such conversations might involve thinking about how we should incorporate the challenge of OWS into the textbooks we write for our students. For others, a public lecture or teach-in at one of our major conferences (or, perhaps more powerfully, an invitation to local occupiers to come lecture us) might be in order. Others still may prefer to forgo conferences altogether and use the time to engage in their own locality.

Either way, in the weeks and months ahead, communication will be key. If you are a Twitter user, you might note the existence already of a #occupyirtheory hashtag, and include this in your conference tweets (i.e., #ISA2012) or publication notices. Note too the existence of a ninety-strong Facebook group (search for #occupyirtheory/ipe), where conversations about occupying IR and IPE have been underway already for some months. Finally, there is an open WordPress blog where you can sign up for an account and publish your thoughts more publicly at <http://occupyirtheory.info/>. It is hoped eventually that this site will be the host for a common statement by interested scholars, in solidarity with the occupations. It also features a growing blogroll listing a range of related sites.

As the below list will attest, other academic disciplines are having similar discussions: anthropology, philosophy, economics, and political science. We are not alone. Something has changed. A creative space has been opened. OWS has catalyzed a long overdue conversation about how wealth is created and distributed in the global political economy. If the short pieces that follow help to provoke a greater engagement

with it on our part, then we will think this project a success. On behalf of all the contributors, thank you for reading.

Links to academic sites examining OWS issues

Living Anthropologically:

<http://www.livinganthropologically.com/2011/10/22/anthropology-moral-optimism-capitalism-four-field-manifesto/>

NewPolitics: <http://newpol.org/node/546>

Occupy Philosophy (blog): <http://occupyphil.org/>

Occupy Economics (statement): <http://econ4.org/statement-on-ows>

Occupy History (blog): <http://occupyhistory.tumblr.com/>

Note

¹ This project would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of a number of people, including Wanda Vradi, Lucian Ashworth, Elisabeth Chaves, Asli Calkivik and Anna Agathangelou. A very special thanks to Amin Samman and the team at the *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies* for the offer to publish this collection on such short notice.

Three Thoughts About What ‘#occupyirtheory’ Might Mean

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson

It is a basic principle of a broadly pragmatist approach to theoretically analyzing politics of all kinds that the important innovations emerge *in worldly practice* before they show up in academic writings. Theory – and theorists – follow along behind overt political action, extracting and systematizing insights in such a way that they become more widely available than they would if they simply remained in their original context. In so doing, theory and theorists provide conceptual instruments—including explicit visions of alternate futures that may have been only implicit in worldly practice—that can inform future political practice, albeit in ways that belie or even contradict the abstract, idealized purity of the kinds of theoretically-informed explanations produced by academics.

Theory and theorists must therefore be open to learning from events, because we have to listen before we can speak. What might we theoretically-informed scholars of world politics learn from the #occupy movement, and especially, from #occupywallstreet (or #ows) itself?

1) To occupy in the #ows sense means something like assembling constitutively, and thus calling attention to the contingency of whatever is being occupied. Rousseau captured something of this spirit when he argued that when the people assemble as the sovereign, the jurisdiction of the government ceases; #ows carries something of this primal kind of claim to sovereignty, but its ambit is much greater because *every* social arrangement, and not just the government, is subject to being disclosed as contingent. Contingency here is two-fold: historical contingency (it didn't have to be like this) and contingency on social action (it's only this way because of how we (re-) produce and sustain it). This means, broadly speaking, a radically social constructivist scientific ontology: the world is (to borrow a phrase from Nicholas Onuf) a 'world of our making', a world that we have produced collectively and historically, and a world that we continue to produce and reproduce through our tacit consent, as well as sometimes through our explicit activity. Thus, occupied IR and IPE theory should be neither essentialist nor determinist, but should seek to highlight all the ways that social arrangements stem from ongoing activity

and process—activity that can be disrupted, and process that can be redirected. Probably not through the simple desire to do so, however, which is where a precise and systematic account of how apparent stability and solidity is produced and reproduced in practice can prove particularly useful.

2) #ows occupying Wall Street means embodying the assertion that the organizations of high finance should be accountable to the public, and should not be allowed to make decisions that affect vast numbers of people according to putatively technical or self-interested calculations. Or: that ‘the economy’ is the creation of the people instead of the people’s master, and should as such be treated as a means to an end rather than an end in itself; and that that end, in turn, is a *moral* end, rooted in cultural practices and the experiences they codify rather than in transcendent laws.

Thus, occupied IR and IPE theory should always be evaluated according to the effects it has on people’s lives, and perhaps especially according to the values it enshrines and advances. This means, among other things, that neither IR nor IPE theory should be about the exclusion of scholarly voices, but should be about articulating pluralist standards for scholarship that can fulfill the vital function of forging conceptual tools out of the hurly-burly and ‘blooming, buzzing confusion’ of everyday life.

3) The hashtag is important. Among other things, it indicates an embrace of novel modes of expression (for scholars, beyond the peer-reviewed article and the top-10 academic press book) and novel forms of sociality (for scholars, beyond the academic department and the professional conference, even beyond the bar at the professional conference). Which is not to say that occupied IR and IPE theory involves abandoning scholarship or refusing to engage in traditional academic activities like publishing books and articles or attending conferences, but it is to say that occupied IR and IPE theory should not be confined to those traditional activities. As the practices of everyday life morph and change, the sources for vital theory evolve in surprising and unexpected ways, so the best we can do is to watch where things are heading, and engage as appropriate. Do not fear the hashtag, the tweet, the status update and the blog; rather, use these novel modes of expression in service to the classic scholarly vocation of making sense of the world in ways that might benefit others by providing what Weber once called the ploughshares to loosen the soil of contemplative thought—contemplative thought from which action eventually springs.

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson is Associate Professor of International Relations at the School of International Service in American University, Washington, DC, where he is also Director of General Education. He previously taught at Columbia University and New York University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University in 2001. In 2003-2004, he served as President of the International Studies Association-

Northeast; in 2012-2013, and he will do so again. He is presently the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of International Relations and Development*, and Series Editor of the University of Michigan Press' book series *Configurations: Critical Studies of World Politics*.

‘Occupy Wall Street’ and IPE: Insights and Implications¹

Elizabeth Cobbett and Randall Germain

The academic discipline of International Political Economy (IPE) is a hard-nosed and empirically-oriented field of study. The usual subjects of IPE often include the organization of international trade, global finance, transnational production, national welfare and competitiveness, productivity levels and of course state actions and expenditures. The actions of a handful of protestors such as the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ (OWS) movement rarely attract academic attention. In this case, however, we should take note. In our view, the actions of OWS provide further clues that we are entering an era of significant transformation in the organization and structure of world order. The insights generated by reflecting on this movement suggest that the inter-subjective mentality at the heart of global capitalism is no longer coherent, with the implication that we are at long last about to leave behind a half century of American hegemony.

Where IPE considers developments in the organization and structure of world order, it rarely considers issues associated with subjectivity, or the ideational and inter-subjective core of a world order’s dominant ethos. Yet, it can be argued that absent a consideration of subjectivity, namely the collective production of self-understanding and its role in directing human activity, it is difficult to generate a comprehensive account of the strength or weakness of any given structure of world order (Germain, 2011). OWS reminds us of the need for an ontology able to apprehend the changing inter-subjective dynamics that buttress world orders. The work of Robert W. Cox provides such an ontology. His particular version of historical materialism understands historical structures and human agency to emerge out of historical processes that frame, shape and promote or impede civilizational change (Cox, 2002; cf. Germain, 2011). We can use his framework as a useful vantage point from which to reflect on the significance of the OWS movement.

It is important to note first that the OWS is not simply a North American movement. We can trace its origins to the food riots throughout 2007 and 2008 in Africa, the Indian Sub-continent and East Asia. In Europe, unrest has been simmering and boiling over since 2010, especially in Greece and Spain. OWS also builds on historic movements against capitalism such as the ‘Stop the City’ demonstrations of 1983 and

1984, when the financial district of London was targeted. And of course the Arab Spring began as local reaction in Tunisia early in 2011 but has acquired a solidity that has affected political developments in a number of North African and Middle East states. The common elements of these protests include the pressures being brought to bear on what Fernand Braudel has identified as the arena of 'material life' (Braudel, 1973 [1967]), and the crisis in political representation exemplified by the loss of faith in how political institutions operate to channel and address societal problems. These waves of resistance and confrontation are now lapping at the feet of Wall Street.

We see the relevance of OWS to be twofold: (1) it is a manifestation of the declining legitimacy of the institutions most clearly linked to the current organization of world order; and (2) it is occurring at the core of global financial power, where the fit between ideology and practice should be tightest. OWS is both the expression of this disconnect and a catalyst for making it authentic and organic. As Cox reminds us, it is the agency associated with already structured patterns of social relations that produce the world we live in. Yet this agency is always in a condition of development, and is open to new conceptions or interpretations of existing circumstances.

As a physical statement of a disconnect between the financial practices of an elite sector of the global political economy and the living standards of the majority population, OWS's activities represent an attempt to shift an established inter-subjective (or popular) view about capitalism's (dys-) functionality by reconfiguring the social world through assembly and speech. It brings a material practice – occupation – to bear on our collective 'consciousness', which is in part how we understand our social 'being' to develop. Occupations are about bodies; bodies 'being' and bodies staying and claiming space and change. Self and collective selves are the site for protest; bodies create the material happening of public protest as a means to bring forward some kind of desired transformation. At this very material level, then, we can agree with Judith Butler (2011) that OWS might be viewed as a struggle for creating a public space for occupation. This continual struggle for and claim over public space is accompanied by a struggle 'over those basic ways in which we are, as bodies, supported in the world – a struggle against disenfranchisement, effacement, and abandonment' (Butler, 2011). The body is political and it is guided by changing ideas and a consciousness about self and the world and 'our' place in this world. The 'occupation' of a limited number of spaces/bodies is changing our collective conversation about how we understand capitalism to work.

"1% of the population owns 60 percent of the wealth ... there is no sense in trying to live the American dream" (OWS, 2011). The very clear realization that 'the people are oppressed' became the front line of shaping the meaning of OWS as it spread to ever widening audiences. The press tried to contain this extension through condescension: "What did these foolish, ignorant youth (and a few elderly women) know about the economy? Did they have any positive program? Were they 'disciplined'?"

(Wallerstein, 2011). One blogger on the OWS site points to this counter effort to discredit the movement: “I was listening to WOR 710 am this morning and one of the issues that keeps surfacing making us look like kooks is that there is no realistic message and plan to facilitate implementing the message” (OWS 2011, 9th comment).

But this lack of a ‘realistic message’ is seen as mirroring the true nature of finance: “OWS is being portrayed as incoherent and Wall Street as coherent; there is nothing coherent about Wall Street since the firms of finance are often in conflict and have interests that are in conflict with each other” (Facebook post 1, 2011). “An important element of the protests for me is that they are repeatedly saying the impossible, demanding the impossible. The dominant paradigm says capitalism is good and it’s the only system that works. Anything else is impossible. Occupy is reflecting it back: capitalism is impossible” (Facebook post 2, 2011). This play of ‘possible’ and ‘impossible’ and ‘coherence’ as opposed to the ‘incoherent’ demands of the occupiers unsettles the rationalities used to justify finance and the political structures that underpin it. We might reflect that the power of OWS lies in part in its incoherence, in its spontaneous reactions to a declining legitimacy of the present order’s key institutions. Here its importance does not lie in measuring the singular coherence of its *own* acts, but rather in the generalizability of the *thought processes* that lie behind the acts (Germain, 2011).

This is the point that links subjectivity to world order: the current “system has lost its self-evidence, its automatic legitimacy, and now the field is open” (Žižek, 2011). This loss of automatic legitimacy can be seen to represent a significant corrosion of the current world order’s dominant inter-subjective ethos, and it is being enacted through the occupation of a symbolic space at the center of global capitalism. It might be seen to constitute one important element of civilizational change of the kind suggested by Cox, although not of course the only one. The implication of this insight for IPE is that we need to focus on understanding what motivates historical agents to undertake actions that so starkly reflect a disconnect between what leading institutions (economic, political, social) promise, and what they deliver. It is these actions – conceived of as the logical end points of definite and concrete thought processes – which can shed light on the formation (and dissolution) of inter-subjective formulations that stand at the heart of structures of world order. OWS is telling us something important about the current formulation of this ethos and its future. We would be remiss if we failed to listen.

Note

¹ Special thanks to Jacques Labonté, Sarah Martin and Ajay Parasram who contributed their thoughts and ideas for the first draft.

References

- Braudel, F., 1973 [1967]. *Capitalism and Material Life: 1400-1800*, Trans. M. Kochan. New York: Harper & Row.
- Butler, J., 2011. Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street [Internet]. Available at <<http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>>. Accessed on 21 November 2011.
- Cox, R. W., 2002. *The Political Economy of a Plural World: Critical Reflections on Power, Morals and Civilization*. Intro. Michael G. Schechter. London: Routledge.
- Germain, R., 2011. New Marxism and the Problem of Subjectivity: Towards a Critical and Historical International Political Economy. In Stuart Shields, Ian Bruff and Huw Macartney (eds.), *Critical International Political Economy: Dialogue, Debate and Dissensus*. New York: Palgrave.
- Occupy Wall Street. 2011. Right Here All Over [Internet]. Available at <<http://occupywallst.org/article/right-here-all-over/>> Accessed on 23 November 2011.
- Wallerstein, I., 2011. The Fantastic Success of Occupy Wall Street [Internet]. Available at <<http://www.iwallerstein.com/fantastic-success-occupy-wall-street/>> Accessed on 23 November 2011.
- Žižek, S., 2011. Slavoj Žižek: Capitalism with Asian Values. *AlJazeera* [Video]. Available at <<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2011/10/2011102813360731764.html%29>> Accessed on 23 November 2011.

Elizabeth Cobbett is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Her research explores the different ways in which global finance seeks profitable opportunities within localized social structures.

Randall Germain is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Carleton University, Canada. His most recent book is *Global Politics and Financial Governance* (Palgrave, 2010).

Authoritarian Neoliberalism, the Occupy Movements, and IPE

Ian Bruff

In the absence of any kind of hegemonic aura, neoliberal practices have proved increasingly unable to garner the consent, or even the reluctant acquiescence, necessary for more 'normal' modes of governance. Of particular importance in the post-2007 crisis has been the growing frequency with which constitutional and legal changes, in the name of economic 'necessity', are seeking to reshape the purpose of the state and associated institutions. This attempted reconfiguration is three-fold: (1) the more immediate appeal to material circumstances as a reason for the state being unable, despite 'the best will in the world', to reverse processes such as greater socioeconomic inequality and dislocation; (2) the deeper and longer-term recalibration of what kind of activity is feasible and appropriate for 'non-market' institutions to engage in, diminishing expectations in the process; and (3) the reconceptualisation of the state as increasingly non-democratic through its subordination to constitutional and legal rules that are 'necessary' for prosperity to be achieved.

This process, of states reconfiguring themselves in increasingly non-democratic ways in response to profound capitalist crisis, is what I view as the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism. Authoritarian neoliberalism does not represent a wholesale 'break' from earlier neoliberal practices, yet it is qualitatively distinctive due to way in which dominant social groups are less interested in neutralising resistance and dissent via concessions and forms of compromise that maintain their hegemony, favouring instead the explicit exclusion and marginalisation of such groups. However, the global crisis has intensified the crisis of legitimisation *already* confronting various capitalist states – for instance, declining voter turnout and party membership, greater electoral volatility, growing mistrust of the political elite – meaning that authoritarian neoliberalism is simultaneously strengthening *and* weakening the state as the latter reconfigures into a less open and therefore more fragile polity. As a result, the attempted 'authoritarian fix' is potentially a sticking plaster rather than anything more epochal.

The question, therefore, is whether the contradictions inherent to authoritarian neoliberalism – especially with regard to the strengthening/weakening of

the state – will create the conditions in which a more progressive and radical politics can begin to reverse the tide of the last three decades. As things stand, the crisis has ambiguous implications for radical/progressive politics of the Left, not least because radical politics is often being practised most successfully by radical Right movements and parties. This is the case if one considers the rise of xenophobia and racism in Europe, the Tea Party in the US, or indeed the more general ‘anti-party’ dominance of charismatic figureheads such as Putin in various countries. However, the occupy movements have proved to be a welcome corrective to the pessimism that the above observations encourage (regarding Putin, too, as we have seen in recent weeks). In particular, they have forced onto the agenda a fundamental challenge to the dominant narratives of the crisis, which – combined with the decline of mass political parties and the imbrication of all main parties with a system in crisis – has made the state an increasingly direct target of a range of popular struggles, demands and discontent.

This is crucial, because the state and its associated institutions have often been viewed as somehow inherently more progressive and democratic than the ‘market’. As a result, ‘Left’ politics has frequently been guilty of taking the law to be somehow neutral, ignoring in the process how ‘non-market’ social forms have been *central* to the rise of neoliberalism and thus the growing inequalities of power which characterise the world in which we live. This was expressed vividly in the clearing of Zuccotti Park in New York, which not only displayed clearly (despite the attempts to herd journalists into one part of the park) the brute coercive capacities of state power, but also the denial of the constitutional right to expressive protest in the name of ‘democracy’. However, it is not an isolated case, with justifications of police violence and the mobilisation of juridical power against the occupy and other movements being a routine part of events across the globe (see for example the rather different response, compared to several months earlier, by the Egyptian security apparatuses to the occupation of Tahrir Square in late 2011). In consequence, the occupy movements have exposed the authoritarian neoliberal state to protest and struggle, and its continued delegitimation, from a radical/progressive perspective that *continues* to affirm the values embodied in notions of solidarity, equality and cooperation. This alerts us in a more expansive way to how inequalities of power are produced and reproduced in capitalist societies, enabling us to consider how other, more emancipatory and progressive, worlds are possible.

So what of IPE? As with many aspects of the broader discipline of Political Science, IPE has been comfortable with dividing our world into distinct spheres, each with their own ‘intrinsic’ properties and norms. Therefore, now would be the time to overcome these artificial dichotomies and reinvigorate the study of the international political economy; even if the scholar in question is not interested in emancipatory issues, then surely the need for more adequate, holistic analyses is now necessary as well as desirable. Apparently not: journals and conferences continue to talk of ‘the market’ *over*

here and 'the state' *over there*, 'interests' *over here* and 'values' *over there*, 'economic crisis' *over here* and 'political responses' *over there*, 'democracy' *over here* and 'authoritarianism' *over there*. I could go on... As things stand, IPE asks interesting questions about the world, but it is increasingly unfit for the purpose of exploring these questions.

Ian Bruff is Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics, History and International Relations at Loughborough University. He has been Chair of the Critical Political Economy Research Network of the European Sociological Association since 2009, and a member of the Steering Committee for the Standing Group on International Relations of the European Consortium for Political Research since 2010. He recently joined the editorial team for the Routledge/RIPE Series in Global Political Economy, and from 2012-14 will be the Chair of the Book Prize panel of judges for the International Political Economy working group of the British International Studies Association.

Reconciliation or Bust?

Elisabeth Chaves

Mainstream economics posits the economy as a disembedded sphere generally governed by its own rules and principles. In reality, the economy is comprised of social relations, and conflicting interests configure those relationships. As a result, our *political* economy is the outcome of that conflict, a reconciliation between democracy and capitalism, variously termed democratic capitalism, embedded liberalism, or the welfare state.

Any reconciliation though is temporary, and democratic capitalism, as it has existed since World War II, has managed a number of attempts to resolve conflicts between labor and capital.¹ Wolfgang Streeck (2011, p. 7), in his recent *New Left Review* article, describes democratic capitalism

...as a political economy ruled by two conflicting principles, or regimes, of resource allocation: one operating according to marginal productivity, or what is revealed as merit by a 'free play of market forces', and the other based on social need or entitlement, as certified by the collective choices of democratic politics. Under democratic capitalism, governments are theoretically required to honour both principles simultaneously, although substantively the two almost never align.

This ongoing tension is what Streeck calls the 'normal condition' of democratic capitalism. More importantly, crises are the byproducts of these reconciliation efforts. Therefore, crises are also the 'normal condition' of capitalism.

A brief and simplified outline of past resolutions is helpful, and what follows is borrowed from Streeck. The organized working classes first accepted capitalist markets and property rights *in exchange for* political democracy that included social security and a rising standard of living in the growth period following World War II. The welfare state provided labor with the right to collectively bargain, allowing them to negotiate a higher wage. By also guaranteeing full employment, in keeping with the Keynesian model then adopted, the state leveraged labor's bargaining power. As growth began to stall, the government continued to protect employment, with rising inflation as a byproduct. Inflation and stalled growth resulted in the stagflation of the 1970s. The Reagan

administration targeted inflation by sharply raising interest rates. Increasing unemployment resulted and was made more feasible politically by breaking union power. However, inflation and unemployment put more demands on the state to provide social benefits, including fulfilling the promises (social entitlements) made in previous negotiations with labor, that had exchanged wage moderation for unemployment insurance, social security, and the like. Public debt was the byproduct this time. As that too became untenable, for political and economic reasons, the proposed solution was the deregulation of financial markets.² This led to an increase in private debt as financial firms found ever new ways to offer credit. They amplified the money supply for this credit through complicated processes of securitization. However, deregulation accompanied by an ever-riskier use of securitization and derivatives resulted in the financial crisis of 2008 and its accompanying fallout. To prevent another Great Depression, states spent money, once again contributing to a large public deficit.

As Streeck notes, every compromise lasts only so long. In fact, Streeck goes so far as to argue that any “lasting reconciliation between social and economic stability in capitalist democracies is a utopian project” (2011, p. 24). In periods of stability, the anomaly rather than the rule, reconciliation appears feasible and lasting. That is why each crisis comes as such a shock. Despite the regular and increasing appearance of crises, theorists, whether economists, political scientists, or sociologists, continue to argue that reconciliation is possible. Those that ignore the tension between capitalism and democracy are even more in the dark. Gabriel Almond, a former president of the American Political Science Association, believed in reconciliation. In an interesting lecture that reviewed the relationship between capitalism and democracy, asking whether one supported or subverted the other, Almond pointed to evidence that democracy supported capitalism through the very tension that needed resolving. He argued that social demands on the market economy produced a form of democratic welfare capitalism that prevented capitalism’s demise. Other theorists, usually of a more Marxist persuasion, have made similar arguments. In essence, capitalism is reformed by adopting and adapting to its critique. Almond (1991, p. 474) claimed that

[d]emocratic welfare capitalism produces that reconciliation of opposing and complementary elements which makes possible the survival, even enhancements of both of these sets of institutions. It is not a static accommodation, but rather one which fluctuates over time, with capitalism being compromised by the tax-transfer-regulatory action of the state at one point, and then correcting in the direction of the reduction of the intervention of the state at another point, and with a learning process over time that may reduce the amplitude of the curves.

Almond’s portrayal of democratic capitalism’s reconciliation is akin to mainstream

economist's description of the business cycle. There are fluctuations, growth spurts and recessions, but the cycle, as our policy tools improve, can be managed and smoothed out.

Barry Eichengreen makes a similar claim for a lasting reconciliation in his analysis of the international monetary system. In his book, *Globalizing Capital*, he asks whether Karl Polanyi's (2001) basic thesis stands the test of time:

Can the international monetary history of the second half of the twentieth century be understood as the further unfolding of Polanyian dynamics, in which democratization again came into conflict with economic liberalization in the form of free capital mobility and fixed exchange rates? Or do recent trends toward floating rates and monetary unification point to ways of reconciling freedom and stability in the two domains? (Eichengreen, 2008, p. 3)

Eichengreen concludes that the flexibility and stability of floating exchange rates and monetary unification as seen in the Eurozone may feasibly offer such a reconciliation. The recent crisis and its magnitude, not to mention the potential implosion of the Eurozone, highlight the naiveté of such arguments.

However, our attempts to respond to the current crisis demonstrate the continued faith in reconciliation. Many believe that this crisis, which they name a financial crisis, can be wholly blamed on the greed of Wall Street and financial liberalization.³ They then believe that it can be resolved through greater financial regulation. But how lasting will this reconciliation be, even if it is politically feasible? As Streeck argues, the arenas of distributional conflict have become more remote from popular politics as more and more political power appears 'privatized'. Movements like Occupy Wall Street are an understandable response to the resulting democratic deficits. The necessary question becomes whether sufficient political power can be returned to the public within today's capitalist economy.

Notes

¹ These competing tensions predate World War II and are fruitfully explored in Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (2001).

² What makes public debt untenable, or when is public debt too large, is a contentious question. Those economists and politicians who try to simplify it by calling for balanced budgets may mask certain interests served by such claims. The better question to ask then is who gains and who loses when public debt grows.

³ As Chris Harman wrote, "[m]ajor economic crises almost invariably involve crashes of

banks and other financial institutions as well as the bankruptcy of productive firms and rising unemployment for workers. It is easy then for people to misunderstand what is happening and to blame finance, the banks or money for the crisis, rather than the capitalist basis of production” (2010, p. 67). These simple conclusions, Harman argued, produce simple solutions, i.e., that the way to prevent future crises is through greater regulation of finance.

References

- Almond, G., 1991. Capitalism and Democracy. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, September, 467-474.
- Eichengreen, B., 2008. *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Harman, C., 2010. *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Polanyi, K., 2001. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Streeck, W., 2011. The Crises of Democratic Capitalism. *New Left Review*, 71, 5-29.

Elisabeth Chaves is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Government and International Affairs in Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs. Her research focuses on the literary political economy of scholarly communication, and the nexus of political theory and writing practices.

Mic Check/Reality Check

Wanda Vrasti

Over the past couple of months history has been unfolding with dizzying speed. The #occupy model of leaderless, demandless direct action, which in the beginning no one with only a slim understanding of how capitalism works thought could become anything more than a facile if charming jab at anti-corporate activism, has gone viral. Every morning we wake up to new reports about 'occupying X', where X can be anything from cities, campuses, boardrooms, buildings, highways, and public events, all the way to academic disciplines. What originally seemed like a romantic fantasy about temporary autonomous zones now feels like history. And no one likes to find themselves on the wrong side of history, especially not intellectuals, let alone intellectuals in the business of explaining global politics.

To IR professionals the #occupy movement feels a bit like the fall of the Berlin Wall or like what the 2008 financial crisis must have felt to economists, both watershed events these experts were supposedly trained to predict or at least explain. The somewhat facetious answer LSE economists gave Queen Elizabeth when asked about this very problem is correct: 'It was a collective failure of imagination'. But that does not make matters any less embarrassing. It is precisely because IR scholars cannot explain, understand or even imagine radical change, despite our professional training and despite the noble ambitions that have inspired many of us to go into academia (and stay there against all odds), that we are now acting like temporarily embarrassed intellectuals trying to do something of a 'reality check' about what it is that #occupy can teach us about our work and our impact in the world.

The nagging feeling that academics have lost the ability to contribute to real life struggles and that the university is no longer the birth place of radical thought and action is not something endemic to IR. It plagues all social sciences and humanities and dates back to the rise of post-68 critical theory and the corporatization of higher education, two events which are strangely linked to one another. The goal of the university has always been to train workers for the changing needs of capital. But at least during the Golden Age of embedded liberalism, a fortuitous mix of steady economic growth, cheap housing, and abundant cultural funding, all of which were indirectly sustained through worker repression at home and imperial interventions abroad, allowed intellectuals to exist on the fringes of the university and of capitalist economy in general. People like Herbert Marcuse, C. Wright Mills, Antonio Negri, Jean-Paul Sartre, Guy Debord, all of whom

were instrumental in channeling the democratic excess of the 1960s into revolutionary action against the oppression and alienation of the military-industrial complex, had more in common with the bohemia than with the professional managerial class. The neoliberal counter-revolution to follow would make this kind of collaboration nearly impossible.

Post-68 continental theory, the kind that travelled from France into the US only to become dogma in all respectable social science and humanities departments (IR included) across the Western world, has been both uninterested and unable to forge an intimate relation between Left intellectuals and revolutionary struggle. For all its youthful enthusiasm and situationist flair May '68 left a sour aftertaste. The de-Stalinization of Russia under Khrushchev, the 'historic compromise' between French and Italian Communist Parties and reformist bourgeois regimes, and the growing gulf between workers determined to secure the comforts of consumer capitalism and students dismissive of this acquiescent gesture suggested that finding a veritable alternative to capitalism had become utopian in the worst sense of the word. The response was a mass exodus from revolutionary struggle into the high plains of theoretical mysticism, from bodies in politics into a politics of aesthetics and representations, from the streets into the university. What small gesture of opposition remained was limited to making impossible demands upon an institution the revolutionary Left never trusted in the first place: the welfare state (Žižek, 2011).

From within the university, French continental theory has been very skilled at unpacking the self-evident nature of what 68ers referred to as the 'system'. Theory can serve a similar function for the #occupy movement today, which at times is too quick to attribute the present crisis of capital to some conspiratorial ploy about the 1% controlling the 99% or a morality play about financial markets having lost touch with the real economy. These images might work well on banners, but as analytical approaches they are factually flawed and politically futile. Both markets and the financial and managerial elites running them are socially embedded institutions that could not exist without ideological and institutional support, without having in place well-seated conventions, norms and social relations that reduce all human values to market value (Cahill, 2011). Neoliberalism would never have survived so many rounds of crisis had it not been for the fact that we are all perpetrators and beneficiaries of capitalism, 'even those fighting against the system tooth and nail – we all consume, we all work, many of us employ or manage, we all participate in hierarchies of race, class gender and privilege. No one is a pure victim in this economic system, though almost everyone is ultimately a loser' (Haiven, 2011a).

This is precisely what critical theory teaches us when it insists that social reality is constructed, power is everywhere, and emancipation is complicated. But this critical lucidity can also serve as a sophisticated cover for the political nihilism, cynicism even, plaguing post-68 theory. All Revolutionary thought is haunted by the terror of repetition, the fear that revolutionary action will not be able to make a clear break with the past but

will end up restoring the logic and structure of the ancient régime (Starr, 1995). ‘The most fearsome enemy of the politics of emancipation is not the repression by the established order. It is the interiority of nihilism’ (Badiou cited in Žižek, 2011). This is in fact the same nihilism occupying us all, the hopelessness that every act of resistance will be recuperated or will reproduce more of the same, that we are not doing enough to change things or we are doing the wrong things, that we are living in a mess of contradictions or have no meaning to live for at all (Haiven, 2011a). While this nihilism may be justified, we need to understand that in killing the radical imagination we are doing the work of capital, which has a lot of resources invested in having this ‘machine of hopelessness’ prevent us from imagining alternative worlds (Graeber, 2011a).

There used to be a time when we could still take comfort in the ‘marginal’ position of critical theory, as if marginality were a guarantee for radicalism. But this is no longer a tenable position. In doing ‘the work that the university-as-Edu-Factory has forgotten how to do’ (Haiven, 2011b), #occupy is making clear that critical theory is neither as dangerous nor as innocent as we would like to think; the expansion and corporatization of higher education since the 1970s has turned critical theories on race, gender and sexuality into ‘brands of profitable resistance’. If they are still kept on the fringes of academia it is because every discipline needs its margin to inject the university with public legitimacy (Nickel, 2009; Jacoby, 1987). At the same time, funding cuts, tuition increases, and the overall professionalization of higher education have made the university into a laboratory for new forms of exploiting and monetizing living labor. There is no better way of keeping people away from politics, especially the time-consuming, face-to-face kind of politics practiced in #occupy assemblies, than work. And work is what both students and faculty do most of. For students it means working part-time jobs, doing free internships, learning foreign languages, participating in campus clubs and sports teams, volunteering and travelling, which together produce the ‘disinterested’ student professors like to complain about. For academics work implies researching, publishing, attracting funding, basically spending endless hours alone in front of the computer, which inevitably reproduce the cliché of the ‘aloof’ academic. Critical theory lends itself well to this production model because, having written off the possibility of radical change as naïve or illusory, it can devote more energy to winning arcane theoretical debates in academic journals than to establishing a relation with the social world we share in common. The #occupy model does exactly the opposite: it takes radical theory out onto the streets to show us what the university could have, ought to and maybe some day will be again (Haiven, 2011b).

Trying to come to terms with the #occupy movement is probably more painful for International Relations scholars than for most, not because it somehow reveals the irrelevancy and anachronism of our professional concerns, but because it shows just how conservative our theories are in allowing us to appreciate or encourage political change.

Critical IR, with its relentless critique of the hypocrisies and transgressions of sovereign power, something which is a direct influence of post-68 continental theory on the discipline, seems to have been particularly well-poised to help an anarchist movement such as this off the ground but has failed to do so for the reasons related to the nihilism of critical theory and the corporatization of the university discussed above. I am not suggesting that IR should have somehow predicted or prefigured this movement. This is not the role academia is supposed to play. But it is disappointing, to say the least, that a body of scholarship that has dedicated so much attention to debunking the imperial, militaristic and domineering nature of state power has missed out on the nefarious relationship between sovereign police and parliamentary capitalism that drives this 'year of rage'.

One possible reason for this neglect is the discipline's self-chosen insularity from other social areas, like economics, history, domestic politics and culture. Another more damning explanation, not unrelated to the first one, is that IR, even critical scholarship, has internalized the liberal separation between politics and economics, where the former is as a socially negotiated realm of domination and contestation, while the latter is a supposedly self-governing field of production and distribution. According to liberal economic theories, what makes capitalism superior to feudalism is precisely this separation because it allows for surplus extraction to happen *independently of* sovereign power. Even when markets require governmental support, be it in terms of supply-side policies or more subtle biopolitical strategies, for capitalism to function sovereign power has to govern through rights and freedoms, not coercion and force. Taken to its extreme this logic implies that every time sovereign power abuses its legal prerogatives, like in the War on Terror or the surveillance, detention, and mass incarceration of suspect populations, it actually hinders capital accumulation because capitalism functions best under democracy. This is clearly the work of ideology.

An overaccumulated capitalist system like ours can no longer generate profits through the production and consumption of mass goods because it has reached certain economic and ecological limits of growth. Instead, it has to extract value through what David Harvey (2003) calls 'accumulation through dispossession', which means that capital must increasingly rely on sheer force to reproduce itself. What home foreclosures, bank bailouts, debt bondage, austerity measures, financial technocrats replacing elected politicians, military urbanism, imperial wars, and countless other acts of sovereign exception demonstrate is that capital accumulation is being sustained through an ever more intimate alliance between police and profits. So contrary to the lament about the erosion of sovereign power in times of economic globalization, the state is back in full force, not the state as democratic representative of the people but the state as police. This is not to say that capital does not also operate on the more subtle and complex terrain of identities, social relations and institutions, but that the means through which this work of social reproduction is accomplished has become a blatant contradiction of even the most

basic principles of liberal democracy, let alone our more substantial democratic aspirations for universal inclusion and social justice.

Indeed, we have come to 'such a pass that anarchists, pagan priestesses, and tree-sitters are about the only Americans left still holding out for the idea that a genuinely democratic society might be possible' (Graeber, 2011b). This might sound ridiculous to many 'critical' ears who view occupiers as romantic hippies, at best, or trust fund babies, at worst. But one reason why so many people have caught the bug of prefigurative politics is because the protesters are enjoying themselves to the chagrin of the observers, and in so doing, they are reclaiming something that has been either banned from the private sphere or forgotten entirely: living in common.

References

- Cahill, D., 2011. Beyond Neoliberalism? Crisis and the Prospects for Progressive Alternatives. *New Political Science*, 33(4): pp. 479-92.
- Graeber, D., 2011a. Hope in Common. *Revolutions in Reverse: Essays on Politics, Violence, Art, and Imagination*. London: Minor Compositions, pp. 31-40.
- , 2011b. On Playing by the Rules: The Strange Success of OccupyWallStreet. *Naked Capitalism* [Internet], 19 October. Available at <<http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2011/10/david-graeber-on-playing-by-the-rules-%E2%80%93-the-strange-success-of-occupy-wall-street.html>>
- Harvey, D., 2003. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haiven, M., 2011a. From NYC: 'Occupy Wall Street Has No Agenda' Is an Alibi for Apathy. Halifax Media Co-op [Online], 13 October. Available at <<http://www.mediacoop.ca/blog/max-haiven/8378>>
- , 2011b. From NYC: Oct 15 - Massive Marches, The University in the Streets, and Overcoming the Arrogance of the Left. Halifax Media Co-op [Online], 15 October. Available at <<http://halifax.mediacoop.ca/blog/max-haiven/8418>>
- Jacoby, R., 1987. *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nickel, P. M., 2009. Public Intellectuality: Academies of Exhibition and the New Disciplinary Secession. *Theory & Event*, 12(4).
- Starr, P., 1995. *Logics of Failed Revolt: French Theory after May '68*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Žižek, S., 2011. Only Communism Can Save Liberal Democracy. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* [Online], 3 October. Available at <<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/10/03/3331164.htm>>

Wanda Vradi is Humboldt post-doctoral fellow at Humboldt University in Berlin. Her current research, a book examining the intersection between governmentality and cognitive capitalism through an ethnography of volunteer tourism in the Global South, is currently under contract with Routledge. Her previous work has been published in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *Review of International Studies*, and *Theory & Event*.

Street Politics

Michael J. Shapiro

I write from Prague, where, unlike in most urban formations, the main city street plays an iconic role; it references a history of political protest. However, before elaborating on the protest iconography of the Prague street, *Vaclavske nam*, I want to locate the ways in which the design of urban space is actualized in everyday life in the cities of the world. Three functions stand out; the first involves dwelling, the second seeing, and the third moving.

With respect to the first function – dwelling – the design partitions and coordinates residential, commercial and leisure functions. At times these are organized to segregate different classes (Robert Moses' redesign of much of New York stands out with respect to the segregation function). With respect to the second function – seeing – the design of urban space is allegiance-inspiring; it involves sightlines that afford urban dwellers and visitors views of iconic buildings and statues, which reference key founding moments in the past and/or authoritative political functions in the present (Here, L'Enfants design for Washington DC stands out as exemplary. Its manifest intention was to make the buildings housing executive, legislative and judicial functions visible from many vantage points). Rarely are the streets themselves iconic. Their dominant role is involved with the effectuation of movement.

As for this third function: As Lewis Mumford famously points out, streets were once part of an asterisk design, radiating out from an exemplary, often spiritual center. In modern times, though, the streets are designed in a grid-like form in order facilitate the finding of addresses, and to create the efficient circulation required to move labor forces and consumers in ways that enable commerce. As a result, most of the time spent dwelling, seeing, and moving in urban space involves the rearticulation of those proprieties that constitute its proprietary, allegiant and commercial functions.

It follows, then, that to violate the everyday phenomenology in which these three functions are being rearticulated is to engage in an exemplary act of politicization. The political force of the Occupy Wall Street sit-in is clearly derived in part from its disruption of the familiar phenomenology of the street. We could render the effect in the terms Jacques Rancière suggests. Such political acts involve a 'repartitioning', or a change in the way that political is portioned-off from the non-political. However, unless some unusual markers are left behind to reference the event of the protest, that repartitioning is unlikely to endure. It is for this reason that I evoke the Czech experience.

Returning from a visit in the Czech countryside, I left the Prague train station on foot and tried to orient myself on the city map in order to find my way back to my hotel. In a short period of wandering, I was able to find my way because of the visibility of the Wenceslas statue at the top of the long city street, Vaclavske nam (mentioned above). However, while the statue of a Czech saint, associated with allegiance to an early founding period, commands respect for an early period in the historical consolidation of the people, the street also references and valorizes protest. When Soviet tanks invaded on August 21, 1968, to quell a national uprising, the bullets fired from the tanks left pockmarks in the national museum just above the Wenceslas statue. The Czechs have purposely left those pockmarks on the building to commemorate the street protests. On November 17, 1989, that same street was again a site of protest, part of the 'Velvet Revolution' that freed Czechoslovakia from Soviet domination. To mark that episode, flowers are frequently laid at the foot of the Wenceslas statue. Hence, in the Czech case, the phenomenology of the street includes enduring markers of the politics of the street.

Michael J Shapiro is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i. Among his recent publications are *Cinematic Geopolitics* (Routledge, 2009) and *The Time of the City: Politics, Philosophy and Genre* (Routledge, 2010).

The Human Chain Is Not About Holding Hands

Nicole Sunday Hughes

As the celebratory mood of global interconnectedness wears thinner and thinner, the compression of space-time makes more apparent that we share across the planet an increasing exclusion from the official political and economic decision-making processes that have jurisdiction over our lives. At the same time, the temporal compression of the global and local is forging alternative collectivities that are often overlooked by those in the business of explaining and predicting political outcomes. Arjun Appadurai makes note of these relationships in his work on grassroots activism and the research imagination, reminding us that debates within the academy “still set the standard of value for the global professoriate” (2000, p. 2). Following this sentiment, recent events around the world should impress upon us that academic research influences policy debates over issues such as climate change, global trade relations, labor migration, and terrorism, which in turn shape the politics that inform the daily lives of both those who have access to these debates and those who do not.

For academics committed to deep pluralism, how can we creatively translate the tactics of the Occupy movement so as to bring its concerns to bear upon global studies and the discipline of International Relations? One particularly visible and historically resilient strategy used by protestors is the human chain, which has been employed as more than a mere display of political solidarity from the Civil Rights Movement to the Baltic Way, and recently in Tahrir Square where Christians and Muslims formed circles to protect one another while praying during demonstrations. The gripping of hands and arms does not simply make up a line of interlinked individuals. Gastón Gordillo’s (2011) insightful essay on Occupy’s use of the human chain against the striation of state space illustrates how this bodily assemblage “materializes the multitude as a physically interlocked entity made up of multiplicities”. In other words, the individuals in the chain become a whole with properties that are not reducible to the sum of its parts.

The tactic is meant to disrupt what on the surface appears to be the flawless

functioning of state-corporate spaces by blocking intersections, access to buildings, slowing down the flow of arrests – but perhaps most importantly, by politicizing consumer spaces and showing how apparent public space is regularly appropriated by the state for corporate means. The deployment of the human chain is “not non-violent,” an apt description (although not for the reasons he thinks) used by UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau. The chain is neither violent nor non-violent; it is ‘not non-violent’ in the sense that non-violence has been reduced in contemporary politics to a placeholder for ‘well-behaved’ discontent. Unlike the well-rehearsed picket lines of protest politics, the human chain is an obstinate refusal to accept the given order. Rather than go along ‘peacefully,’ the dead weight of linked people makes perceptible the systemic violence that allows for the smooth functioning of the neoliberal alliance between states and markets by disrupting the spaces in which the alliance operates. That is, the chain invites police to follow through on what their training and armaments were designed for: the violent dispersal and control of bodies behaving badly. Municipal governments declared war on public space long before the Occupy movement. More than a decade before the NYPD used LRAD sound canons on peaceful activists, cities partitioned public benches to deny the homeless a place to sleep, passed laws against camping on public land, and required hard-to-obtain permits for public protests, all so as not to obstruct the byways of commerce and tourism.

Similar to the ways in which public space has been taken over by states and corporations, we might consider how the intellectual spaces of social science have been colonized by particular methodologies and dominant forms of knowledge that eschew ethical sensibilities as peripheral to rigorous scholarship. Method wars are never just battles over methodology, they represent a fight over what can be seen, said and heard. Years of aspiring to a climate of tolerance within the field of IR has done little more than sustain a thin sense of inclusion and superficial diversity within a space that is still dominated by militaristic and economized ways of knowing and seeing the world that obscure the political stakes of our research. To borrow a phrase from Michel Foucault, we need “a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental” (1990, p. 328), and these include those set standards of value in the social sciences that are hostile to the work of critical scholars.

One question the Occupy movement should inspire is that of where we can come together to disrupt these spaces of knowledge production, and how we can restructure accepted methodologies to enable new visions for the scientific study of politics. However, rather than protest the arbiters of knowledge, we should try to foment an affirmative movement that sees politics and ethics as their goal rather than as a symptom of biased or polemical research. To be clear, it is not a movement toward inclusion. Years before the Occupy movement, William Connolly (2002) presciently insisted that a truly democratic politics would increasingly require an ethos of agonistic engagement. Such an ethos can inform the way we envisage our own movement as one

that embraces a heterogeneity that finds resonances and affinities *because* of its productive differences and antagonisms, rather than *in spite* of these differences. Where this will lead I don't know, as this is only one tactic conceptualized in its initial stages. However, what is all too clear is the insufficiency of inclusion and tolerance, and the need for further reflection on how we might insist that scholarship be responsible for the politics and ethical commitments that underwrite its legitimacy. We should stop insisting on just getting along as if it were simply a difference of opinion or perspective. The human chain is not about holding hands.

References

- Appadurai, A., 2000. Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination. *Public Culture*, 12(1), pp. 1-19.
- Connolly, W. E., 2002. *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Gordillo, G., 2011. The Human Chain as a Non-Violent Weapon. *Space and Politics*. Available at: <http://spaceandpolitics.blogspot.com/2011/11/weapon-of-occupy-movement_23.html>. Accessed on 28 November 2011.
- Kritzman, L. ed., 1990. *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*. New York: Routledge.

Nicole Sunday Hughes is a doctoral student in International Relations at Johns Hopkins University. Her work focuses on popular politics and the materiality of organization and resistance in Egypt and the Gulf states.

Occupy Wall Street: From Representation to Post-Representation

Simon Tormey

Trying to assess something as recent and dynamic as Occupy Wall Street (OWS) presents problems for political analysts. There is always a danger that by the time one has written in judgement the event-movement will have morphed into something quite different. For this reason alone we need to be careful about offering too definitive a judgment on what it represents, about what we think is new in the phenomenon as well as what we think presents linkages to the past. On the one hand, OWS is still in the process of becoming-*something*. On the other hand, though, we can see the outline of more or less familiar characteristics that might help orientate us towards something that is being greeted as a new departure.

OWS is, it seems, a 'non-affiliated', non-programmatic, 'disorganised' set of protests, interconnected virtually through a variety of social media, drawing attention to gross inequalities of wealth and power ('we are the 99%').

The first half of the description should give us the clues we need to trace the lineage and ancestry of the initiative. In particular it tells us what OWS is *not*, namely a political party or a single issue social movement with a neat hierarchy and formal structure, or a published manifesto outlining clear aims and objectives that will address inequities and injustices. It's an odd stance at first glance – to define oneself by what one isn't, as opposed to what one is. How do we make sense of the gesture?

Firstly, history is littered with disaffiliated, non-programmatic groups who wanted to contest inequality in quite general terms. Groups such as the Ranters and Levellers, which sprang up during the English Civil War in 1600s, display many such characteristics. Some of them such as Gerrard Winstanley's True Levellers even occupied space in ways that resonate with OWS – that is, through occupation as a political 'act' whose intention was to draw attention to inequalities of wealth and income (Hill 1975, pp.132-9). Many of the early resistances to the enclosure of the commons, to clearance of land for 'improvement', and to capitalism more broadly, had this quality to them, and not just in Britain. However, with the emergence of 'organised' politics over the course of the nineteenth century – in the form of political parties, elections, the 'free press' and the rest of the paraphernalia of liberal-democracy – direct action as a *style* of politics receded (even if it didn't disappear entirely).

Representation thus became paradigmatic of 'the political', even when that

politics was oppositional or counter-hegemonic. Political parties came to represent classes, needs, interests. Governments represented nations, the People. Representation thus consecrated what Hardt and Negri (2004, p. 241) term a 'disjunctive synthesis': the creation of aggregate entities through a process of separation – a separation of elites from masses, of governors from the governed, of those with power from those without power. Politics became bureaucratized, normal, serious, rational. For mainstream politics, this meant putting clear water between the wayward emotions of the mob and the wisdom of the political class. For counter-hegemonic politics, the party guaranteed that those with the 'correct' analysis of the 'line of march' would keep the 'trade union' or reformist instincts of the masses in check. Politics thus became the preserve of the few, the oligarchs.

Organised politics of this kind dominated the period of social democracy, the birth of the welfare state, and of 'cradle to grave' entitlements. Political docility mirrored domestic docility, all built on a cosy compact between citizen and state ('you let us govern and we'll guarantee jobs and prosperity'). Yet just as economic wealth underpinned the consolidation of organised politics, so too did economic uncertainty, unrest and crisis fuel more grassroots and disorganised forms of politics.

1968, the year of disorganised revolts and insurrections, is an important way marker for change in the nature of the political. It marked the first step in the decline of the representational paradigm, and the re-emergence of non- or 'post-representative' political repertoires: direct action, squatting, affinity groups, protests, carnivals. Many of these initiatives are sparked by a self-conscious rejection of 'normal' or mainstream political processes. They turn their face on parties, elections, and manifestos in favour of the immediacy of action, of doing, in the here and now – not saving our energies for some scripted 'crisis of capitalism'.

The 1970s and 1980s were periods when much of this kind of activity was subsumed within what became known as 'new social movements', which included movements against war, the nuclear bomb, environmental degradation, race and identity discrimination. They were immediate, direct, and 'dis'-organised in the sense of not being tied to a permanent bureaucracy or set of offices. Often leaderless, acephelous, sometimes spontaneous, unruly and difficult to predict. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 22) famously coined the term 'rhizomatic' to describe 'subterranean' underground initiatives of this kind. The rhizome makes us distinguish between the liminal and the subliminal, between what 'expert' commentary sees above, and what lurks beneath the surface. Even when 'nothing seems to be happening', rhizome-networks can be growing, developing, readying themselves for the next opportunity to push through the surface and emerge in unpredictable ways. Such has become the pattern of post-representative, disorganised politics over the past four decades.

So in the current conjuncture the representative paradigm reigns, just about. And we still have periods where nothing seems to be happening outside of the mainstream political process, voting, elections and politicians. It is at this point when it becomes easy for commentary to lament the 'apathy' and 'boredom' of the young, our disengagement from the political process, reluctance to participate etc. Then, 'suddenly', there will be an eruption from below, from the subterranean stratum, that reminds us that politics is not just about politicians. Sometimes this kind of politics has an immediate and radical impact. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe looked much like this. The 'Arab Spring' has a similar epoch-making aspect to it. Sometimes such politics is easy to write off as 'ineffectual' or 'gestural' as in the Seattle Protests, the protests against the G8, Reclaim the Streets, the World Social Forum, the Clandestine Insurrectionary Revolutionary Clown Army (CIRCA). Sometimes we can wait for months or years before knowing what kind of resonance or longer-term impact an initiative will have. How much impact has the Zapatista insurrection had, or the Narmada Dam protests, or the uprising in Nandigram, or the rise of the *Indignados*? Difficult to tell.

OWS is part of this story. It offers further evidence that the paradigm of representative politics, the politics of political parties, elections and voting is on the wane. Participants in OWS proclaim that they not programmatic, that it has no answers, even that it is not 'politically affiliated'. It contrasts itself with the style and manner of forms of representation that by contrast proclaim an analysis, an ideology, a programme, an organisation representing distinct interests, viewpoints and actors. OWS challenges this paradigm, directly. It tells us that no form of representative politics, no political party, can change the basic coordinates of the liberal-democratic capitalist system. In this horizon only a 'disorganised' repertoire of direct and immediate political actions enables people to be 'heard' as opposed to being subsumed within the machinic meta-mobilism of 'normal' politics. 'Not in my Name' is an emblematic expression of this winding back of the representative paradigm. It says that I will not be annexed for a larger purpose. I must myself speak to and embody the changes we need in order to address inequality.

This however is the easy part, for a paradoxical feature of post-representative politics is that it does not, as the post- prefix reminds us, escape the *pragmatics* of representation; it brings it into question. 'We are the 99%' is after all a quintessential *representative* claim ('We are you', a slogan borrowed from the Zapatistas, is another equally direct example). Here we see also a potential immobilising quality of OWS, one that infects all post-representative initiatives. If it cannot *but* represent, then how to do this without becoming itself a symptom of the politics it so sets its face against – i.e. representative politics (Saward 2010)? How does OWS escape the trap of opposing representative modes of political engagement in a non-representative way? How to escape the apparently futile and self-denying gesture of 'post-representative' representation?

Not an easy question, which is why, as many commentators have argued,

immobilism and inefficacy seem at one level built into OWS; this point has even been raised by those who are sympathetic to the movement. Think of Slavoj Žižek's appeal to OWS to repeat Lenin's question: 'What is to be Done?' (Žižek 2011). However, this is to look at OWS through the lens of those whose logic is itself queried by the OWS initiative – those who see politics as a 'sovereign' activity in which power is deployed to achieve ends in a narrow, instrumental and exclusionary way. How to escape the cul-de-sac? Several possibilities present themselves to those who valorise OWS and wish to see it develop as a style and form of politics:

1. Accept the very *event-ness* of the event-movement. As McKenzie Wark (2011) reminds us, the Situationists urged us to think of politics not in linear terms, but in terms of *intensities* for the participants as well as for the bystander. Those who take part in the event of OWS will never be the same again: they are changed, angered, energised, despondent, angry, alienated, joyous. Those who encounter OWS may display complete indifference, or they may be affected. Somehow. Something might resonate. They may ask themselves a David Byrne type question: 'How did I get here?' Mini-micro political gestures. But sometimes large-scale change comes from micro-gestures – the first step on a long journey, to paraphrase Gandhi.
2. Accept the positioning of OWS as one amongst a series of resonances and gestures that collectively add up to something more than a gesture-less politics. As my comments above indicate, OWS is *one kind* of resistance that 'represents' in its *post-representativity* the response of those at the margin of wealthy countries of the metropolitan centre; the Zapatista insurrection (to take a contrasting example) is another kind of resistance, one characteristic of the needs and resources of groups at the global periphery. They are both concerned with the same issue: the monopolisation of power and wealth in the hands of the few. They are both pertinent to the contexts and capacities of people on the ground in a particular time and space. They resonate in different ways, they have different effects, but their concerns are very similar.
3. Accept that OWS is a stance of what Hardt and Negri would no doubt label 'refusal', as opposed to affirmation. This is not to say that it cannot prefigure or point at alternative forms of organisation, and being-together. It self-consciously positions itself as a puzzle, as a 'no' without a 'yes'. Lest it be forgotten, refusal can be just as potent a means of change as affirmation. Gandhi saw this, Havel saw it, and so have the millions of campaigners who have collectively refused colonial, racist or exclusionary policies and practices, and who have therefore become agents delegitimizing them. It might strike us as odd to see 'weapons of the weak' (to mobilise James Scott) being exerted under mature democratic conditions (Scott, 1985). We are perhaps unused to the idea of the vote-wielding citizen

as 'weak', as 'dispossessed', and as having to call upon similar tactics to those at the global periphery who live in non- or sub-democratic conditions.

But then here is the larger issue. Liberal-democracy is being hollowed out by the growth of often-unaccountable global institutions and processes, such as the IMF, the World Bank and most recently the bond markets. In this sense, OWS is not just a gesture in opposition to representation. It is a gesture marking the slow yet seemingly inexorable collapse of representative democratic governance as a practice and as the paradigmatic 'end of history'. Representative governance is, on the contrary, increasingly seen as complicit in *the emptying out* of democracy, and in the perpetuation of gross inequalities. OWS is part of the generalised revolt against representation. It asks to re-imagine democracy as an instrument of the 99% as opposed to something that operates as the handmaiden of global capitalism, and the 1%.

As my comments above indicate, such a gesture should not be seen as in itself novel or radically different to the demands of myriad individuals and groups throughout modernity. What *is* perhaps novel is the globality, the speed, and resonant effects of such a gesture. It is now evident that it is not just global financial transactions that travel at the speed of light, but the righteous indignation of the many millions subject to the capricious, over-arching power of the plutocrats and those lined up to represent them and their interests.

References

- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: Continuum.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A., 2004. *Multitude*. New York: Penguin.
- Hill, C., 1975. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Saward, M., 2010. *The Representative Claim*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Scott, J., 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wark, M., 2011. This Shit is Fucked up and Bullshit. *Theory & Event* [Online], 14(4). Available at <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v014/14.4S.wark.html> Accessed on 12 December 2011.
- Žižek, S., 2011. Occupy First, Demands Come Later. *The Guardian* [Online], 26 October. Available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/26/occupy-protesters-bill-clinton>> Accessed on 12 December 2011.

Simon Tormey is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Sydney. He is the author of numerous books and articles, including most recently, *Agnes Heller: Socialism, Autonomy and the Postmodern* (Manchester University Press, 2001), *Anti-Capitalism* (Oneworld, 2004) and *Key Thinkers from Critical Theory to Post-Marxism* (Sage, 2006, with Jules Townshend). He is currently working on a monograph tentatively entitled *Not in My Name: The Crisis of Representation and What it Means for Democracy*.

#Occupy: Strategic Dilemmas, Lessons Learned?

David J. Bailey

What is #Occupy? For William Connolly, it is 'better described' as 'the 99% movement' (Connolly, 2011). But even this is potentially too narrow as it refers only to those explicitly adopting the 99% slogan. In the UK, the 'Uncut' movement has arguably gained more traction. Outside of the Anglo-sphere, we witness the Spanish *indignados*, and the General Strikes in Greece, along with related demonstrations in Syntagma Square. There is, then, on the one hand a narrowly-defined #Occupy movement, and on the other hand a more broadly defined movement seeking to challenge – through popular mobilisation, direct action, and/or civil disobedience – the austerity measures that are being introduced in the wake of the post-2007 global economic crisis. In each case, we witness the strategy of occupation as a means of highlighting popular dissatisfaction; of presenting an illustration of the disruptive potential of the dissatisfied; and of prefiguring modes of social organisation preferable to those being opposed. If we focus too narrowly on the #Occupy movement as *the* form of mobilised, extra-parliamentary, resistance to the current restructuring of advanced industrial democracies, then there is a risk that we lose sight of the broader movement of which this is a part.

The (more broadly defined) extra-parliamentary movement purports to highlight, mobilise against, and offer potential alternatives to, the global systemic inequality that produced the latest iniquitous crisis. We've been here before! We might expect, then, that the extent to which we 'fail better' (Žižek, 2009) this time around will reflect the ability of the extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement to navigate three strategic dilemmas that have typically plagued preceding emancipatory movements with similar aims.

Dilemma 1: Between Marginalisation and Co-optation

At the heart of the debates that exercised the Second International was the dilemmatic choice between, on the one hand, ideological purity and the risk of marginalisation, and, on the other hand, the making of compromises considered necessary to engage with (and

change) the institutions that formed the status quo, with a related risk of co-optation. Whilst revisionist socialists (grouped around Jaures and Bernstein) sought ministerial posts that would allow them to manage capitalism in the interests of their working class voters, more orthodox socialists (under the influence of Guesde and Bebel) repeatedly refused to agree to what they feared would amount to a capitulation to, complicity in, and therefore co-optation by, the institutions of social domination (Berman, 2006, pp. 54-7).

A similar dilemma faces the contemporary extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement. On the one hand, outright opposition to any austerity measures risks the appearance of being out of touch with both popular sentiment and economic 'necessity'; whilst a more 'reasoned' approach – that might set out a feasible and affordable budget to limit austerity measures – risks the discovery that advanced industrial democracies might *not* be affordable. If advanced industrial democracies are to compete with a globally-integrated Chinese economy that has less regulated, less well paid, and a more intensively and extensively exploited labour force, then it is not entirely clear that workers in advanced industrial democracies *can* maintain existing labour market regulations or (social) wages. Unless, of course, the structure of the global socio-economic itself can be altered.

The Occupy movement has been noted (and criticised) for straddling this dilemma through the absence of any concrete demands or proposals. In the words of Jules Lobel (2011), it presents 'a Narrative, World View or Declaration – not specific demands'. In the UK, in contrast, the Uncut movement has adopted a slightly different response, setting out both opposition to austerity measures *and* highlighting the alternative option of funding public spending through a firmer enforcement of corporate taxation (particularly focusing on high-profile cases of unpenalised tax avoidance). Indeed, the merits of the UK Uncut strategy lie in its ability to enable activists to at once rebut any charge of utopian ideological purity, whilst at the same time making demands that are sufficiently unlikely to be met, thereby (so far) avoiding the potential for co-optation.

Dilemma 2: Between Vanguardist Organisation and Disorganised Decentralisation

Perhaps the strategic debate most replayed amongst the extra-parliamentary left in recent years is that between (supposedly vanguardist) centralised organisation and (arguably disorganised) decentralisation – a debate which also has its roots in earlier movements. The First International split between Marxists claiming that any revolutionary movement required "authority and centralization" (Engels, cited in Carter, 2011, p. 246); and anarchists grouped around Bakunin, who feared that centralised authority had too great a potential for abuse, and thus preferred social unity in the form of a free association of autonomous groups. (see Brauntal, 1966, p. 183). Likewise, Paris 1968 ended with

accusations targeted at orthodox communist parties for their role in managing/stifling the mobilising potential of the people. In the words of the Cohn-Bendit brothers,

... it is true to say that Communists, and also Trotskyists, Maoists and the rest, no less than the capitalist State, all look upon the proletariat as a mass that needs to be directed from above. As a result, democracy degenerates into the ratification at the bottom of decisions taken at the top, and the class struggle is forgotten while the leaders jockey for power within the political hierarchy. (Cohn-Bendit and Cohn-Bendit, 1968)

#Occupy, and the wider extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement, have generally adopted principles of decentralisation, direct democracy and autonomous struggle. These follow in the tradition of horizontalism and grassroots mobilisation, with roots in the alter-globalization movement. Yet, (so far) the problems predicted by those advocating more centralised and coordinated activity don't appear to have emerged. This, in part, reflects the scale (nascent?) and purpose (symbolic?) of activity thus far evinced, but also reflects what is arguably becoming a consensus, that 'leaderless politics' is the appropriate mode of extra-parliamentary mobilisation. Whilst much focus is placed on the (doubtless) increased capacity for decentralised mobilisation that results from the emergence of social media and so on, we might also recognise the more mundane effect of historical learning. No-one appears to be repeating the German environmentalist Petra Kelly's call for an 'anti-party party'. Likewise, the enthusiasm for another long march through the institutions is markedly absent. The question, obviously, is the extent to which the contemporary extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement can continue to mobilise without a clear and centralised leadership. The answer to which is probably that it depends on what the movement is hoping to achieve, which raises a third dilemma.

Dilemma 3: Between Domination-challenging Direct Action and Opinion-shaping Delayed-action

The first wave of feminism witnessed the suffragette movement attempt 'to force the nation to accept that ordinary life could not continue until suffrage had been granted' (Smith, 2010, p. 51). In contrast, the second wave of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s focused on consciousness-raising and the need to study, identify and explicate patriarchy prior to engaging in action against it. These divergent strategies reflect the commonly noted dilemma: to undertake domination-challenging direct action or opinion-shaping delayed action? A war of manoeuvre or war of position? This is perhaps the defining question for the extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement, with a clear attempt at present to position itself between the two. Occupation as a means of both raising awareness of the injustices associated with austerity, and as a means of prefiguring

alternative modes of social organisation. This has enabled the movement to produce something of an underlying 'media hum', that routinely disrupts any aspiring 'there is no alternative' (to austerity measures, to private property and a privatised existence, to representative democracy, to whatever) logic that otherwise seeks a hegemonic position within the public debate.

It is probably in this sense that the extra-parliamentary anti-austerity movement has been most effective – forcing an anti-austerity agenda into public debate through an organisational form that prefigures (and in doing so highlights the possibility of) 'horizontal' social formations. This, in turn, permits a (hopefully mutual) cross-fertilisation and legitimisation of ideas and practices in more established (and more 'vertical') institutions that also have the potential for resistance (trade unions, NGOs, community and civil rights groups, maybe even some welfare and public service institutions). Whilst the (broadly-defined) occupation movement is obviously not yet ready to function independently of more established social institutions, likewise, existing 'progressive' institutions are too engrained in the structure of advanced industrial democracies to offer an effective standalone response to the current round of global socio-economic restructuring. The task, for now at least, is to seek some kind of alliance between the two forms of (potential) resistance, in a way that both avoids co-optation *and* contains the potential to generate future possibilities for more substantive emancipation. If this all sounds a bit 'dual power', then let's hope we've learned enough for it to fail better this time around!

References

- Berman, S., 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Braunthal, J., 1966. *History of the International, Volume 1: 1864-1914*. London: Nelson.
- Carter, A., 2011. Anarchism: Some Theoretical Foundations. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16(3).
- Connolly, W.E., 2011. What is to be done? *Theory and Event*, 14(4), Supplement.
- Cohn-Bendit, D. and Cohn-Bendit, G., 1968. It is for Yourself that You Make the Revolution. In Robert Graham (ed.) 2009. *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism, 1939-1977*. Montréal: Black Rose Books.
- Lobel, J., 2011. Birthing a New Society: The Future of the Occupy Movement. *Counterpunch* [Online]. Available at <<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/12/06/the-future-of-the-occupy-movement/>>
- Smith, H.L., 2010. *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928*. London,

Pearson.

Žižek, S., 2009. *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*. London: Verso.

David J. Bailey is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham. His research and teaching focuses on left parties and protest movements, comparative political economy, and the governance of the European Union. He has recently published articles in the *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, and *Journal of European Social Policy*.

Occupy Wall Street? Position-Blindness in the New Leftist Revolution

Agnes Gagyi

The following I write as an Eastern European sociologist and activist, departing from the basic question of how local movements in my region might connect with Occupy Wall Street (OWS). By this time, it is evident that OWS has made an indelible mark on present-day discussions on globalisation and world order. Immanuel Wallerstein (2011), for example, has spoken directly of an ongoing transformation in world economy, asking whether the present crisis in the dominant model of capitalism-cum-democracy will be resolved through a shift towards a less democratic and more unequal system, or whether global social movements might help bring about a more equal and democratic social order. Keeping in sight the controversial lessons of the alter-globalism movement in Eastern Europe, I will argue that certain characteristics of the OWS movement themselves pose an obstacle to the development of a truly global social movement. By this I do not seek to blame OWS activists for failing to represent the whole globe, but instead wish to add a voice from the semi-periphery to this new and much needed debate over global equality.

The hegemony of 1968

OWS mobilised a general support that transcends the ranks of its actual organisers. Nonetheless, the organisers of OWS do not represent the '99%' of the *global* population (Cordero-Guzman, 2011; Shoen, 2011). They are a highly educated and politically active social group, with an exceptional influence upon framing the movement. Moreover, these frames – which have tended to prioritise participation over concrete demands – reach back through the rich soil of alter-globalism to 1968.

Organisers and star-interpreters of the alter-globalist movement support OWS shoulder-to-shoulder with the soixante-huitards who raised the alter-globalist generation. This permanence of the post-'68 tradition among the movement's ranks makes it easy to treat the movement as a vindication or justification of theories springing from the same tree: as 'multitude', 'biopolitics of citizens' bodies', etc. Indeed, main clichés of the alter-

globalist movement – such as the role of the internet and the efficacy the ‘swarm’ – are presented as new movement logics, just as they were ten years ago.

Even without a detailed analysis of the OWS’ links to the post-’68 tradition, it is clear that its basic vision and repertoires follow from this tradition rather than the present situation of crisis-stricken America. For the future of the movement, however, the crucial question is how this tradition will enable activists to address and influence the actual structures of the present.

Class-blindness and the ‘99%’

More pointedly, the question is that of how a movement initiated by an educated and politically active base might relate to other social groups in less favourable positions. This was a challenge faced by the alter-globalists and the *soixante-huitards* before them, and it remains an unanswered one for OWS.

As a contemporary of ’68, Pierre Bourdieu argued that the demands of ’68 were defined by the class ethos of the “new bourgeoisie” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 187-194). Reflecting their social position, this ethos dismissed existing social hierarchies, and promoted the ideal of the autonomous creative personality. But by contemplating the social world through the prism of the creative personality, the new bourgeoisie interpreted all according to the dialectics of fun vs. complexes; it personalised the political, and made the personal political. It had a taste for everything that escaped social categories – it favored the illusion of social flying, or the defiance of social positions and their gravitational pull. One of the reasons why revolutionary students of ’68 did not get more allies from the working class was that they formulated their political program in the language of this ethos, which did not resonate well in a working class context.

Building on the ’68 tradition, new anarchist and autonomist movements went on to produce complex repertoires of basic democratic procedures, centered on the value of personal freedom. It is these techniques that the OWS carries on, and fixes as a condition for joining the revolution. But these techniques do not acknowledge that the development of individual opinions are formed through education and social practice, and thus are shaped by the social positions of the individuals in question.

To define individual opinion as a baseline for participating in a revolution for equality is to effectively to universalise intellectuals’ relationship to politics – *i.e.* that of a small set group who govern their own means of opinion production, and who have no reason to delegate to others this power to produce opinion. Moreover, the positioned ethos of ‘creativity’, ‘biopolitics’, or ‘personal freedom’ might exclude those who come from other social contexts, who don’t face limits to creativity as a daily problem, and who are less capable of elevating themselves to the disinterested stance required by the ethos of social flying. Hence, by translating the structural conflict of the ‘99%’ into this ethos,

there is a risk that the OWS movement might become a movement reliant on the emotional enthusiasm and preferences of a small group, thereby reflecting a field structured and bounded by social positions, but remaining incapable of responding to them.

'World revolution' without a global program

While OWS gave out a call for world revolution, and identifies the Arab Spring, the Spanish indignados, the London rioters as its predecessors, it makes no admission of the underlying differences between the geopolitical positioning of these various movements. Regarding the Tahrir square demonstrations, there is no significant reflection upon the First World's role in the Arab Spring. Meanwhile, international 'occupy' demonstrations are added up as 'global', while even on the movement's own maps, these demonstrations overwhelmingly take place in North America and Western Europe. A more fundamental problem, then, is that the OWS does not formulate its themes within the framework of a global context.

Only a few of the various lists of demands and grievances of the OWS relate to problems outside of the USA. These are: war for profit, protection of the planet, outsourcing, immigration and debt – or, as it is sometimes put: colonisation 'within and outside' of American borders. Some of these demands claim to preserve the USA's position within world economy. They want China 'and other trading partners' to end currency manipulation. They want to change immigration law, so 'the world's brightest People to stay and work in our industries and schools'. Other demands are framed as problems common to Americans and the rest of the world. Environmental problems, war, debt, colonisation – once these are fixed, they argue, there would be no significant structural relationship between the USA and the people of the world. This idea, of course, does not acknowledge how these very issues relate to the position of the USA within global power structures.

Thus, none of these demands touch upon the fact that the losses which fuel the indignation at the base of OWS are positioned within a geopolitical structure of power relations, and as such, are not in every respect universal. In the context of a transforming world system, sinking living standards in the USA do not only have to do with local capitalism and democracy. With the Euro-Atlantic centre losing its dominant position, and other players, especially China, gaining power, a process of leveling among enormously unequal living standards began. And however far yet from the world remains from a state of equality, this leveling process is already impacting upon the population of the First World in painful ways. In the case of the OWS, though, it is at least awkward that it poses as the voice of global indignation against inequality, but does not address the question of how its demands to raise living standards in the US would affect other regions

in the world. It does not make any reference to the fact that so far, it was the dominant position of the US that could guarantee that its living standards remain comparably high in relation to other regions. There are no signs of a global program that would point beneath the universalised demands of its own base. Thus, when viewed from another position – such as that of Eastern European – it would seem that OWS has been speaking *in* our name, but not necessarily for us.

How do we come into the picture?

On the one hand, the Occupy movement has played a role in criticising the crisis management of global capitalism applied in Eastern Europe. Addressing a suffering public in the First World, it succeeded in mobilising support beyond its base. On the other hand, though, the movement is dominated by a specific ideology and set of norms, based on a culture of taste and political opinion-production that might prove inaccessible for those who are not in possession of the requisite cultural capital. Furthermore, it lacks a global program, and it does not pay adequate attention to important differences in the global positions of various actors.

In Eastern Europe, the Occupy movement was taken up by small groups that were aware of the '68 tradition, that paid attention to news of OWS, and that understood its language. In Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, Bucharest, Budapest, Belgrade and Sofia, a few hundred people reacted to the call to world revolution, and dissipated afterwards. In Hungary, a civil movement against current right-wing government, called *Milla*, that brought more than 80,000 people to the street on 23 October 2011, made mention of OWS, and mutual declarations of solidarity were issued. *Milla* resembles the OWS in that it does not wish to enter party politics, but aims to enhance civil engagement. Ironically, though, many of the movement's organisers come from a network of liberal intellectuals who never spoke up against the neoliberalisation of socialist infrastructures after 1989, and who occupied key positions all through those years while the bulk of 'grassroots civil activity' was undertaken by right-wing movements.

The last time a global revolution for equality reached Eastern Europe, it was in the form of the Eastern enlargement programs of the alter-globalist movement, a decade ago. Back then, Eastern Europeans invited into the horizontal process of the alter-globalist movement could not even raise the topic of 'really-existing' socialism to the level of a real dialogue within the European movement. This left Eastern European activists alone with leftist slogans of anti-globalism in post-socialist countries where the same slogans resonated differently than in Western countries. Despite this, however, Eastern European activists were motivated to stick with the global agenda because it promised them an equal position within the movement, unlike the mainstream hierarchical discourse of post-socialist transition, which framed any local social problem as a shameful mark of Eastern inferiority.

Crucially, though, this 'global' escape route from the hierarchy of 'post-communist transition' clashed with the peripheral position of the region within the alter-globalisation movement itself. In the context of Eastern European alter-globalism, 'autonomy' became a daily practice of dealing with the movement's detachment from the local context, and of proving to be part of a movement that barely had any infrastructure locally. This largely determined the nature and dynamic of 'horizontal' contacts with the Western core. Differences became so suppressed that in 2008, when Western activists invited Romanian groups to organise a NATO counter summit, none of the parties even considered adapting counter summit models to the Romanian context, leading to a severe defeat. Unable to feed back on local conditions, alter-globalism remained the imaginary movement of a small activist elite, while the anti-globalist anger of the population got channeled by the extreme right. A tight loop of self-reflection between intellectual commentators quoting Western trends and movement groups acting out those trends contributed to the almost total neglect of this bifurcation.

In Eastern Europe, to join the OWS project in its present form could only mean that an elite group of activists establish a small local example of it, while abolishing their own society in a double way: by speaking a language they do not speak, and by joining a cause that is not defined in their own interest. For us, to join a global revolution requires that we do the work of occupying our position, instead of abolishing it, and add our voice to the global debate from here.

References

- Bourdieu, P., 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cordero-Guzman, H. R., 2011. Mainstream support for a mainstream movement. *Occupywallst.org*, 10 October. Available at: <http://occupywallst.org/media/pdf/OWS-profile1-10-18-11-sent-v2-HRCG.pdf>, Accessed on 30 November 2011.
- Shoen, D., 2011. Polling the Occupy Wall Street crowd. *Wall Street Journal* [Online], 18 October. Available at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204479504576637082965745362.html>, Accessed on 30 November 2011.
- Wallerstein, I., 2011. 'Upsurge in Movements Around the Globe: 1968 Redux?' *Iwallerstein.org* [Online], 3 November. Available at: <http://www.iwallerstein.com/upsurge-movements-globe-19'68-redux/>, Accessed on 30 November 2011.

Agnes Gagyi is External Lecturer at Corvinus University Budapest and Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design Budapest, where she teaches on the sociology of communication and social movements. She was active in the Romanian and Hungarian alter-globalist movements between 2003-2008, and is currently preparing a book on the topic. She can be contacted at agnesgagyi@gmail.com.

Return to the Real

Aida A. Hozic

If there is a message in the #occupy movement for IR and IPE scholars in the United States, it is the warning that the last two decades of academic political abstinence are no longer sustainable. There is no way around it. Co-opted by liberal triumphalism of the post-Cold War era (Barder and Levine, 2011), US academia has not only failed to raise its voice loudly and clearly against the increased militarization of a Wall Street-led casino capitalism, whose violence which has been embedded deep in the fabric of everyday American life; it has also basked in its benefits.

Until the financial crisis of 2008, elite American universities were reaping unprecedented increases in their endowments, facilitating the sale of their classrooms to corporate interests, leading the charge for globalization and democratization (which masked conditions of perpetual warfare both inside and outside of the United States), and willingly, as David Harvey (2011) notes, participating in the production of an Orwellian ‘new-speak’ which transformed all political/economic questions into cultural/ideational/identity ones.

A series of new programs by the Department of Defense – from the Human Terrain System and Minerva (Der Derian, 2008; Gusterson, 2008, 2010; Ilieva, 2011; and Forte, 2011) to the more recently written-up Grand Strategy Programs (Horn and Ruff, 2011) – has brought social scientists back to the National Security State and mended the rift between the Pentagon/U.S. alphabet agencies and the academic community created by the Vietnam War.

The simultaneous attraction of American IR scholars to European critical theory and continental philosophy has hardly generated a viable political opposition to America’s economic and military adventures. Despite persistent Republican attacks on universities as the bastions of ‘liberal intellectualism’ and ‘anti-Americanism’, American campuses remained eerily quiet through a series of American military interventions – from Grenada to Libya. While the most serious and vocal critics of American foreign policy were either traditional Leftists – like Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn – or rather conservative realists like Chalmers Johnson, Andrew Bacevich, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, constructivist and critical IR theorists satisfied themselves with expressions of indignation at always-well-populated panels in much-too-small rooms at annual conventions of the International Studies Association. Some even advised the U.S. military while still viewing themselves as card-carrying critical IR theorists. As Italian

philosopher (and openly-gay mayor of Venice in the 1990s), Gianni Vattimo (1989), noted years ago, after a visit to the United States during the First Gulf War:

While we in Italy discuss pacifism in abstract terms, young Americans have to come to terms with the imminence of new wars. And yet, confronting the pressures of these objective problems, stands an intellectual radicalism completely devoid of any concrete politics, subversive theoretical constructs which ultimately confirm traditional roles, and – as could be expected – an avant-garde so pure and rigid that it ends up looking like sheer decoration.

Thus, as police violence arrives on the few U.S. campuses where students have dared to organize, the #occupy movement punctures the favorite fantasies of the salaried professoriate; that our Disney-fied universities are the sites of critical thinking; that teaching is more than disciplining students for a capitalist labor market (including the academic one); that pursuit of truth(s) rather than careerism governs our inquiries; that courage displayed in classroom discussions or conference presentations about torture, exploitation of *others*, or willful killing of those who are deemed non-human, are all acceptable substitutes for political action.

I remember a colleague, who considered himself a radical, telling me a few years ago that politics would never again be about bodies in the streets. Politics, my colleague argued, was about bits and digits, images and representations, not material and/or distributive questions. It no longer required physical aspects of power in movement. I remember another colleague telling me that she had never thought that the issue of rape in warfare could be different from the issue of rape in warfare *as seen* on American TV screens. I remember a post-colonial scholar making a powerful claim that voting was an irrelevant act in the United States. I remember a well-known human-rights constructivist telling a group of young, female graduate students that they had to understand that they would never be able to have it all in the academe – she, for instance, had not been able to make it to the gym for weeks. I remember myself believing that for as long as I was a non-citizen, I did not bear responsibility for U.S. foreign policy – and then continuing to believe so even after I got the right to vote in 2004, on the very day when Donald Rumsfeld was testifying in Congress about Abu Ghraib.

It used to be easy to entertain such beliefs for as long as one could forget that real political power still mobilized resources, occupied territories *and* (democratic) institutions, moved armed bodies and machines around the world, produced inequalities and thrived on particular material conditions. It used to be easy to believe this, so long as the grounds on which academe itself was standing did not begin to shift, and so long as the bodies did not appear in our streets.

There is thus a dirty little secret amidst academic fascination with the #occupy movement: it speaks to our current plight. The battle is no longer about the ethnic

character of new wars, Islamic fundamentalism, women's rights in Afghanistan, the rise of China or methodological underpinnings of IR scholarship. It is about *our* mortgages, *our* status as (public) employees, employment opportunities of *our* students and *our* children, *our* tenures. The apparatus that the IR scholarship has so willingly sustained by turning away from the issues of economic inequality and material power has come back to haunt us. Even if gainfully employed and privileged by all measures of the current crisis, we are as powerless vis-à-vis the 1% and the ruling power as the rest of the 99%.

I cannot at this point speculate what the #occupy movement is to become, how long will it last, what political effects it might have. Perhaps the most fascinating aspects of the movement are precisely its Situationist roots; its amorphous, malleable nature; its anarchist trust in diffusion and dissolution of power; its carnivalesque features – a lived experience of space and time that could be otherwise; its belief in process rather than outcomes; its embodiment of non-instrumental action; its promise of politics as *poiesis*. But I also cannot see it in any other terms than as a wake up call to those of us who have surrendered our dreams about alternatives to the comforts of complacency. The time to hibernate has run out. As one of the first #occupy posters said – *this revolution will not be televised*. It most certainly will not take place in our classrooms, at academic conferences or within associations where we dutifully pay our membership fees. The #occupy movement calls upon the salaried professoriate to step out into the streets, be counted and confront the Real. We owe it to the 99% that we have helped to create. The movement may not deliver but is that a reason to stay on the sidelines? Ask the people of the Tahrir Square. Or better – ask the ghosts of the Blair Mountain in West Virginia where corporate thugs and the US Army crushed the coal miners' attempt to unionize in 1921 and where union folks and environmentalists, to this day, fight to protect the mountain from further exploitation.

References

- Barder, A. and Levine, D., 2011. 'The World is Too Much With Us': Reification and the Depoliticizing of Constructivist IR. Paper presented at the 40th Annual Millennium Conference entitled *Out Of The Ivory Tower: Weaving the Theories and Practice of International Relations*. London School of Economics, 22-23 October.
- Der Derian, J., 2008. The Desert of the Real and the Simulacrum of War. *International Affairs*, 84 (5): pp. 931-948
- Forte, M. C., 2011. The Human Terrain System and Anthropology: A Review of Ongoing Public Debate. *American Anthropologist*, 113 (1): pp. 149-153
- Gusterson, H., 2008. Unveiling Minerva. *The Social Science Research Council Website*, 9 October. Available at

- <http://essays.ssrc.org/minerva/2008/10/09/gusterson/>
----- . 2010. Do Professional Ethics Matter in War? *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* [Online], 4 March. Available at: <http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/hugh-gusterson/do-professional-ethics-matter-war>
- Harvey, D., 2011. The Party of Wall Street Meets its Nemesis. *Verso Blogs* [Internet], 28 October. Available at: <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/777>
- Horn, S. and Ruff, A., 2011. Defunct War Strategy Program May Still Overshadow University of Wisconsin-Madison's History of Dissent. *Truthout* [Online], 29 November. Available at: <http://www.truth-out.org/defunct-war-strategy-program-may-still-overshadow-uw-madisons-history-dissent/1321653274>
- Ilieva, E., 2011. Courage, Fearless Speech, and the 'Scholar-Soldier' of the Human Terrain System. Paper presented at the 40th Annual Millennium Conference entitled *Out Of The Ivory Tower: Weaving the Theories and Practice of International Relations*. London School of Economics, 22-23 October.
- Vattimo, G., 1989. I Filosofi Negli USA. *L'Espresso* (translation in text by author).

Aida A. Hozic is Associate Professor of International Relations in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida. She is the author of *Hollyworld: Space, Power and Fantasy in the American Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2002). Her current work focuses on the relationship between states and crimes in the Balkans.

#Occupy IR: Exposing the Orthodoxy

Ivan Manokha and Mona Chalabi

The #occupy IR/IPE initiative was created in response to the #occupy movement, whose own roots can be traced back to the latest crisis of global finance. In this contribution, we link #occupy and the crisis in a different way. We argue that we must occupy IR/IPE because of the discipline's failure to apprehend and acknowledge the crisis itself, just as the Occupy movement is calling for their overarching authorities to notice and help address the social and economic inequalities produced by this crisis. More precisely, we argue that the dominant academic orthodoxy, via a series of continuously reproduced dichotomies, has rendered IR/IPE incapable of dealing with a phenomenon as complex as the financial crisis.

IR textbooks tend to construct the historical development of the discipline as having gone through so-called 'great debates' which have constituted key turning points for some, and even paradigm shifts for others (cf. Burchill et al., 2005; Griffiths, O'Gallaghan and Roach, 2007; and Brown, 2005). Presented in this way, the history of the discipline gives the impression of a profound pluralism in terms of epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions that various protagonists have advanced in the course of the discipline's development. This, however, is far from the case. Despite the efforts of the post-positivist critics, whose challenge to mainstream IR theories is commonly seen as being at the heart of the 'third great debate', the discipline is still characterised by a dominant orthodoxy which conditions the manner in which international relations are studied. The orthodoxy continues to structure the discipline around the analysis of *political* relations among *state* actors, totally separating them out from economic relations, and treating the international in a near clinical isolation from the domestic. As John Maclean (2000, pp. 29-30) argues, disputes

... between the idealists and the realists, between the traditionalists and the scientists or, recently, between all these and the post-positivists, present the orthodoxy as though it is a domain of continuous debate or heterodoxy. This tends to conceal the necessary contribution these disputes make to the very confirmation of the boundaries [of IR] as given.

This is not to say that the contribution of post-modernists, feminists or constructivists

has had no impact whatsoever. Rather, it is to suggest that the state – the key unit of analysis that the orthodoxy has identified – continues to be taken for granted and treated as a unitary actor, with an exclusive focus on its external behaviour, which in turn is examined in terms of its political, military, legal or ethical aspects, at the expense of economic issues. Following on in the spirit of Kenneth Waltz – who once observed that states, despite their divergent internal constitution, have behaved similarly externally – the orthodoxy sees no need to open up the State and to ask questions about whose interests it was brought into being to serve, about what kinds of antagonisms it seeks to remedy, or about how state institutions are related to the social relations of economic production. As a result, IR renders itself incapable from the outset to explain foreign policies of states, except on the basis of dubious claims about the selfishness of human nature or international anarchy. By emptying the state of its social content, IR is incapable of understanding why certain policies are chosen over others in any given case. Furthermore, by categorically separating the domestic from the international and by privileging the latter, IR is equally incapable of understanding how the two realms constantly affect each other.

So what of IPE, a discipline born from attempts to explain and reverse the divorce between Politics and Economics? IPE scholars have made important progress in terms of incorporating the economic into their analyses. However, they have often continued to focus on external behaviour, leaving the ‘black box’ state relatively unscathed and IR’s dichotomies largely intact. Most importantly, politics and economics remain two notionally separate fields, which do not constitute one social totality, but instead only occasionally interact. The relationship is not seen as one of mutually reinforcing causality, or organic unity, but one of externality and randomness, whereby a relation can be observed and said to exist at one time, but then become unobservable and thus apparently non-existent at another. Furthermore, IPE is increasingly developing its own tradition, rooted in Economics and mirroring established neo-classical orthodoxy. As Wade observes, “to the extent that ‘normal science’ in international political economy (IPE) has come to be rooted in the liberal paradigm, in statistical techniques, and in mathematical models, it has come to resemble neoclassical economics” (2009, p. 106). This conception of science biases conclusions towards the following: the virtues and prevalence of self-adjusting systems; an anodyne notion of power; and functionalist explanations. In this manner, the orthodoxy diverts attention from inequalities of income and wealth, and structural forms of power.

The inadequacies inherent in IR and IPE’s orthodoxy have been exposed by the current financial crisis. While the crisis hit the world economy with a credit crunch tsunami (Greenspan, 2008), it has barely attracted the attention of IR scholars. It would seem that the orthodoxy of IR renders the discipline incapable of joining the dots between the bubble in the real estate sector in the US (itself connected to the massive income inequalities among American citizens), and the development of global

imbalances resulting from a new global structure of production and distribution. It simply cannot see how serious the implications of this are for its key objects of study – the state and the international system. Indeed, the last comparable crisis – the Great Depression and the mass unemployment, political upheaval and protectionist policies that it resulted in – were followed by the bloodiest conflict in human history. Given this fact, it would be legitimate to expect IR scholars to show some interest in the crisis, at the very least to enquire about its potentially destabilising impact on international relations. However, the majority of IR academics have continued business as usual; after all, they might say, no international political conflict has erupted, so why expend analytical energy? Without examining the domestic and the economic, they are incapable of seeing the triggering of processes which could be detrimental to international stability, which is, after all, what they define as their legitimate object of study.

It is therefore urgent for critical IR scholars to liberate the discipline from this ontological straightjacket. It is only by overcoming the dichotomies that have developed within the discipline (state/non-state, politics/economics, domestic/international, theory/practice, subject/object, etc.) that a holistic and truly explanatory analysis can be developed. Critical IR has to move from the margins of the discipline to its centre and offer a real alternative to the mainstream. The financial crisis is not only a golden opportunity to do so but, indeed, as the #Occupy movements grab centre stage with their formidable critique of global power relations, it is an increasingly urgent one if the discipline is to remain relevant.

References

- Brown, C., 2005. *Understanding International Relations*, Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Burchill, S. et al., 2005. *Theories of International Relations*, Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Greenspan, A., 2008. Financial crisis 'like a tsunami'. BBC News [Online], 23 October. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7687101.stm>
- Griffiths, M., O'Callaghan, T. and Roach, S., 2007. *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, New York: Routledge.
- Maclean, J., 2000. Philosophical Roots of Globalization: Philosophical Routes to Globalization. In R. Germain (ed.) *Globalization and Its Critics: Perspectives from Political Economy*, Hampshire: Macmillan.
- Wade, R., 2009. Beware What You Wish For: Lessons For International Political Economy from the Transformation of Economics. *Review of International Political Economy*, 16 (1): pp. 106–121.

Ivan Manokha is Vice-Dean of the Graduate School of Sciences Po, Paris and is an associate research fellow at CERI. He has taught at the University of Sussex (2000-2003), at the ESSEC Business School (2004-2005), at the London School of Economics (2005-2006) and has been teaching at Sciences Po since 2006. Ivan holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Sussex.

Mona Chalabi is currently developing Transparency International's Government Defence Integrity Index. She has worked on a range of human, political and economic security issues at the International Organization for Migration, the Economist Intelligence Unit and Al Jazeera. Mona completed her Masters in International Security at Sciences Po, Paris in 2011.

Occupy Wall Street as Immanent Critique: Why IR Theory Needs a 'Mic Check!'

Nicholas J. Kiersey

The recent movements that have emerged across the world to 'occupy' various public spaces present an immanent critique of the contemporary arrangements of global politics – one that theorists of International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE) should reflect on with some urgency. Emerging from a complex intertext including, but by no means limited to, anarchist and neo-Marxist frameworks, the movement has called for a recognition and appraisal of the 'communism of everyday life'. Resonating with arguments made in Hardt and Negri's *Commonwealth* (2009), as well as David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5000 Years* (2011), the movements appear to wish to draw attention to a dominant capitalist ontology which denies the highly distributed and social nature of the way in which real value production takes place today. In this context, they argue, the burden of debt that the 99% must endure merely to maintain a dignified standard of living bespeaks the erosion of any semblance of democracy in the allocation of social wealth.

The premium that Occupy Wall Street (OWS) places on ontological engagement is revealed clearly in their strategy of social intervention. However, this proposition is significant not simply in its relation to the struggle of OWS to engage the power of speculative capital and high finance. It is significant, too, for IR theory and IPE, two closely related disciplines that historically have tended to engage with the world in a manner both compatible and complicit with the global capitalist imaginary. In these short comments, I have two simple goals. My first is simply to give the most basic outline of this ontology, and some of the reasoning behind it, insofar as it highlights a certain narrowness on the part of IR and IPE. My second goal, however, is to suggest that this implicit ontology also has something important to teach about the production of energetic solidarities – an area of research where IR and IPE scholarship has yet to tread in any meaningful way.

Of course, if the strategies of OWS reveal anything at all it is that the "99%"

have a far more sophisticated understanding of contemporary social relations than do most IR and IPE theorists. To pick just one axis of this understanding, the identification of the state and the market as two somehow essentially discrete agents or forces in social life has long been the subject of social criticism (Marx, 1992). Despite this, as Ian Bruff has recently argued, by assigning “different normative properties” to each of these categories, mainstream IR and IPE continue to work within this framework (Bruff, 2011, p. 83).

The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement rests on two strategic imperatives which, together, evince its critique of the social relations that comprise both the contemporary market and state. The occupation movements have eschewed making political demands as traditionally understood but, rather, through the occupation of public spaces in a celebratory and radically democratic organizational form, their interventions have had as their objective a disruption of the socio-imaginative fabric which they believe has occasioned the financial crisis in the first place. In this sense, on the one hand, they have displayed a characteristic understanding of the state. As Theda Skocpol (1979) famously argued, theories of revolution tend to focus on the state as a site of political change without considering the conditioning influence of the prior regime over its basic mode of operation. Thus, even with the best of intentions, revolutionary success in seizing the machineries of state power can also end up reproducing characteristic aspects of the prior regime’s state.

By making no demands of the state then, the occupy movements try to evade this risk by refusing to engage the category of the state as the essential space where politics should take place. Instead, they have identified the apparatus of the state as merely one of a number of technologies of power which both discipline individuals and solicit socio-cultural energies from populations in the context of contemporary capitalism. That this linkage between the state and wider social relations is in fact so obvious and foundational to the movement attests mightily to its relevancy for students of world politics as they struggle both for concepts to assess the nature of the crisis, and for ways to re-imagine and remake their worlds.

But this is not to say that OWS makes no demands at all. As Adbusters (2011) wrote in the early build up to the occupations, “we zero in on what our one demand will be, a demand that awakens the imagination and, if achieved, would propel us toward the radical democracy of the future.” The basic ontology of OWS is thus one that takes seriously the radical transformations of social life wrought by contemporary capitalism: the emergence of a new, global financial class (the 1%) that has largely displaced the traditional bourgeoisie as the party on behalf of which the governmentalizing powers of the state are set to work; the expansion of the domain of the market to encompass, and discipline, forms of human activity that were previously considered out of bounds (that is, forms of activity associated with language and caring, the bases of so-called ‘immaterial labour’); and, moreover, the emergence of a “99%”, or a multitude, of people around the

world who have been dispossessed and left submerged in debt by the conditions of increasing precarity in which they find themselves under neoliberalism's global 'shock therapy' regime.

As an 'immanent critique' however, OWS is an intervention within the object of its own analysis not simply at the level of its formal theorising but also within the practices and habits that sustain that object in the first place. No less should be obvious from the fact that the initial meetings from which OWS emerged were organised by self-avowed 'culture jammers' (Yardley, 2011). But what might have started simply as an ironic advertising campaign has evolved into something much more powerful quite precisely because of the radically democratic or 'horizontal' manner in which the OWS camps have structured themselves. Commentators have identified this horizontality in characteristic OWS innovations such as the 'open mic' (Kimmelman, 2011). For some, this is a "multitude form" of social organizing (Hardt and Negri, 2011). For others the term "communitarian anarchism" is apt (Barber, 2011).

In their commitment to such practices, the occupiers demonstrate not only their disdain for the corrupt simulacrum of democracy that the present order offers up but, more interestingly, they inspire hope that, indeed, 'another world is possible'. But the emancipatory potential of OWS is not limited simply to its declarations of alternative rationalities of solidarity and democracy. For Protevi (2011), one of the great political obstacles of our time is the enduring sense of shame and personal failure with which today's subjects of neoliberal responsibility are saddled. Following Deleuze and Guattari however, Protevi notes that neoliberal shame is not ideological in nature. Sentiments of shame affect groups of neoliberal subjects not as sets of thinking individuals but, rather, as aggregations of feeling. Shame, in this sense, is a sort of collective mood or rhythm.

What sort of political strategy can best address these sorts of affective structures? For Protevi, the advantage of the OWS camps is that they bring people out to 'show their face', to be among like-minded others. The protestors were forced to adopt their 'open mic' technique when the police banned their bullhorns. But the knock on effect has been the achievement of an "intermodal resonance" between the identity of the 99%, their democratic practices, and their joyful, shameless disposition (Protevi, 2011).

This is not to say that the struggle takes place solely on an emotional plane. For IR and IPE, however, the upshot is that OWS is not simply a superior theoretical account of what is and what is not legitimately on the table as 'world politics'. Rather, in becoming the household name that it now is, OWS has demonstrated a competency in provoking a very different feeling about this account among those who share it. A feeling that they are not alone, that they are energized, and that they might be able to change things.

References

- Adbusters, 2011. #OCCUPYWALLSTREET. *Adbusters* [Online], 13 July 2011. Available at: <http://www.adbusters.org/blogs/adbusters-blog/occupywallstreet.html>, Accessed on 1 August 2011.
- Barber, B., 2011. Occupy Wall Street: "We Are What Democracy Looks Like!" *Logos* [Online], 10. Available at: http://logosjournal.com/2011/fall_barber Accessed on 1 December 2011.
- Bruff, I., 2011. Overcoming the State/Market Dichotomy. In Stuart Shields, Ian Bruff and Huw Macartney (eds.), *Critical International Political Economy: Dialogue, Debate and Dissensus*. New York: Palgrave.
- Graeber, D., 2011. *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A., 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Harvard.
- . 2011. The Fight for 'Real Democracy' at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street. *Foreign Affairs* [Online], 11 October. Available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/98542?page=show> Accessed on 17 October 2011.
- Kimmelman, M., 2011. In Protest, the Power of Place. *New York Times* [Online], 15 October. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/sunday-review/wall-street-protest-shows-power-of-place.html> Accessed on 5 December 2011.
- Marx, K., 1992. Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of State. In Livingstone R. and Benton, G. (eds.) *Karl Marx: Early Writings*. London: Karl Marx: Early Writings.
- Protevi, J., 2011. Semantic, Pragmatic, and Affective Enactment at OWS. *Theory & Event* [Online], 14. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v014/14.4S.protevi.html, Accessed on 4 December 2011.
- Skocpol, T., 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Yardley, W., 2011. The Branding of the Occupy Movement. *New York Times* [Online], 27 November. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/business/media/the-branding-of-the-occupy-movement.html?pagewanted=all>, Accessed on 5 December 2011.

Nicholas J. Kiersey is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Ohio University-Chillicothe. He has published research on 'world state' theory; scale and biopolitics in the War on Terror; and the politics of the ongoing financial crisis. His current research focuses on discourses of neoliberal capitalist subjectivity, and the 'debate about empire' in IR theory.

Riot, why wouldn't you?

Colin Wight

Christine Lagarde: And I clearly remember telling Hank [Paulson]: 'We are watching this tsunami coming, and you're just proposing that we ask: "which swimming costume we're going to put on."' (*Inside Job*, 2011)

All systems have their own logics. One logic of capitalism is exploitation. Let us be clear about this: Marx's labour theory of value might have its problems but the essence of the theory is sound. Capitalism is a system in which small groups of people (the 1%) systematically exploit large groups of people (the 99%). We all know this, and we are all aware of the consequences, yet we seem unable to do anything to change it. Perhaps the Occupy Movement is the beginning of the beginning when the 99% say enough is enough. Of course, it is far too early to say whether we are entering a new stage of political activism, or perhaps a new form of politics itself. But what we do know is that levels of public disenchantment with politics are high. We can see this disenchantment spreading like a virus, engendering open protest and revolt in the Middle East, riots in Greece, looting and disorder in London and major cities in the UK, student protests in Chile, and producing peaceful protest under the banner of the Occupy Movement across the globe. Something is happening, the question is what?

What does it all mean, and where will it all end? Are we witnessing the beginning of the end for the capitalist system? Or, do these various forms of protest merely represent the final and tragic last vestiges of resistance against a system that is finally and relentlessly squeezing the life out of its constituent elements? Glass half empty or glass half full? Pessimist or Optimist? It may be misguided of me, but optimism is surely the only option that one can sensibly choose, otherwise nihilism beckons. One thing is clear, irrespective of how it will all end, the Arab Spring, looting in London, riots in Greece, wars across the Middle East and beyond, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), and the Occupy Movement are all connected in some way. What connects them is a corrupt, degenerative, immoral, sexist, and racist global capitalist political-economic system. And one does not have to be a Marxist to see that this is the case. Stand up anyone prepared to argue that the current structure of the global economic and political system produces outcomes that are equitable! Exactly.

Moreover, the GFC of 2008 was simply the most visible manifestation of a system in crisis. But crisis for the system is not always something to be concerned about. Most pundits today accept the argument that what we are witnessing in the Eurozone in 2011 is not the beginnings of a new crisis. No, there is simply one crisis, and 2011 is a continuation of 2008. Although better than the two-crisis model this analysis is still incomplete. It is incomplete because crisis is one of the contradictions of capitalism. Crisis is both a constant threat to the system, but also one of the mechanisms through which the system exercises control. Crisis is simply the language of the system through which fear, acquiescence, subordination and compliance are produced. In capitalism, crisis is permanent.

Robert Gnaizda: Addressing Obama and, quote, "regulatory reform" - my response, if it was one word, would be 'ha!' There's very little reform... It's a Wall Street government'. (*Inside Job*, 2011)

Currently head of the IMF, Christina Lagarde's pithy comment on Hank Paulson's complacency is telling. Those at the heart of the system could afford to be complacent, they really had nothing to lose, and they already knew that even if they did there was no chance of them losing it. As the logic of capitalism had inexorably unfolded throughout the 20th century, politics and markets became fused – as, of course, Marx had always insisted was the case. Anyone who has seen Charles Ferguson's brilliant the *Inside Job* can attest to the symbiotic and incestuous relationship between Wall Street and government. In fact, that is the wrong way of putting it, and the 'and' is redundant in this context. It really is Wallstreetgov.com, and given the interconnected nature of the global economy, it is a form of governance that exercises control beyond that of national governments.

Nothing illustrates this better than the takeover of failing governments in the Eurozone by technocrats. Here democracy has truly ended, we have just not realised it yet. What, after the GFC, possessed anyone to put bankers and economists in control of anything, let alone governments in Greece and Italy; have they not heard the old joke about the fox in the henhouse? New Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti was EU commissioner for the Internal Market, Financial Services and Financial Integration, Customs, and Taxation; hardly sectors that come with a ringing endorsement after the GFC, and Lucas Papademos, the new Prime Minister of Greece was a former Vice President of the European Central Bank. They may as well have offered both jobs to former Lehman's CEO Richard, S. Fuld Jr.

When former Greek Prime Minister George Papandreu attempted to take the EU bailout plan to a referendum, the consequences, we were told, would be disastrous. However, Iceland has done it twice now, its public rejecting the pleas of its politicians for Icelandic citizens to shoulder the losses of a private bank. Obviously, we do

not know what the long term consequences will be for Iceland having taken such a stance, but they can hardly be much worse than those that emerged as a result of the GFC. More to the point, at least the people of Iceland have been allowed a say in the decision.

Moreover, it is not only the fact that no one has faced charges for their wrongdoing in the run up to 2008, but that the major players were simply reshuffled into different positions in the Obama government that really demonstrates that this is Wallstreetgov.com. Larry Summers, Ben Bernanke, and Timothy Geithner all argued against increased regulation of financial markets; yet all would go on to play pivotal roles in the Obama administration. And again, let us also be clear about this; the optimism that followed Obama's election helps explain the current wave of protests sweeping the globe. I am not blaming Obama here, he is as much a product of the system as any of us, but the 'audacity of hope' that followed his election was as misguided as the belief that the banking system would finally be subject to tighter regulatory control by governments. When did turkeys last vote for Christmas? Of course, Wallstreetgov.com was not going to place controls on Wallstreetgov.com. Hence the 'audacity of hope' was misguided because it failed to see how Obama was already embedded within a structural context that severely limited how much change could be produced. Often described as the most powerful man on the planet, the US president confronts the global capitalist system nonetheless.

This does not mean that optimism is always necessarily naïve, or even wrong. But it does mean that optimism without power allied to a more comprehensive explanation of the nature of capitalism will always lead to more of the same. And in this context, 'the same' means massive bonuses and pay offs for abject failure. It is not a problem if you get it wrong, governments will pick up the bill and pass the invoice on to the public.

George Soros: Chuck Prince of Citibank famously said: 'That we have to dance until the music stops.' Actually, the music had stopped already when he said that. (*Inside Job*, 2011)

The band plays on and Chuck (Charles) Prince is still waltzing his way around Wall Street. He is currently a Senior Counsellor to *Albright Stonebridge Group* and serves in the influential trade group the *Financial Services Forum*, as well as being a member of the *Council of Foreign Relations*, and the *Business Roundtable*. Prince, who left his post as CEO of Citigroup after saying the bank would need an additional \$8 billion to \$11 billion in subprime-mortgage-related write-downs, left with a pension, stock awards and stock options worth a total of \$29.5 million. He was also entitled to a year-end bonus valued at about \$12 million. Oh, and just in case you are tempted to feel sorry for him, he also got an office, a car and a driver for five years. Of course, Chuck Prince is hardly the

worst in this respect, and Stanley O'Neal 'retired' from Merrill Lynch with a \$160 million pay check. Richard Grasso, head of the New York Stock Exchange, took \$140 million in deferred compensation. Stephen Fuld Jnr, Lehman's CEO, took \$485 million and the CEO of the AIG, \$315 million. Did they not realise that when Michael Douglas (Gordon Gekko) said 'greed is good' in the film *Wall Street*, he was acting? Yet, of course, in a system that makes possible, even encourages, such greed, why wouldn't one take advantage? But that surely applies to riots as well. If the message that is being sent is 'when you can take advantage, do so!' then one can hardly blame the looters in London for acquiring a new plasma TV if the opportunity arises.

Michael Capuano: You come to us today telling us "We're sorry. We won't do it again. Trust us". Well I have some people in my constituency that actually robbed some of your banks, and they say the same thing. (*Inside Job*, 2011)

One of the most common criticisms of the Occupy Movement is the lack of a coherent set of demands or a political programme around which the movement might converge. This criticism is misguided. It seems to me that the movement has a very clear idea of what it wants even if this can't be articulated as a particular political programme with a clear end goal. Moreover, why would anyone expect a coherent political programme from the protesters? Are they expected to do everything? We are constantly being told that most of these protesters are anarchists, so it would be rather foolish to expect groups of anarchists to come up with a political programme that had embedded within it a well-structured account of how politics should be administered. Equally, what the protesters want is abundantly clear; more equality, a more just distribution of resources, greater control over banking and financial sectors, more say for publics in decision-making, and perhaps one or two of those complicit in the production of the financial crisis being subject to punishment of some or other kind. After all, when did it become the case that the greater the crime the less chance there was of being held to account for it?

I would throw in a few extra suggestions. First, if publics are expected to shoulder the burden of the banks profligacy then they may as well be in public ownership in the first place. Why are shareholders allowed to gain from banking profits in the good times if publics pick up the tab when it all goes wrong? Second, bring the ratings agencies under IMF, World Bank, or UN control. Yes they'd lose some independence from political interference, but since by their own admission they only provide opinions not guides for investors, what would we lose anyway?

And whilst on the subject of crime: It might be tempting to view the Occupy Movement as a legitimate form of protest and the riots that took place in London and other cities in the UK as simply being criminal activity. Let us separate 'good' protest from 'bad' protest. Indeed this was the common interpretation at the time of the riots. The London riots, so the story goes, were not embedded in political dissatisfaction, but

represented blatant opportunist criminal activity. Images of burning cars, devastated shopkeepers and rampant feral hooded youths all combined to produce the impression that this was nothing other than young hooligans running amok. Even Slavoj Žižek (2011) has suggested that this was the case.

Yet poverty was clearly a factor (Younge, 2011). Figures from the UK government suggest that almost two-thirds (64%) of the rioters lived in the poorest areas. Moreover, youth unemployment in Britain is currently at 21.9% (Allen, 2011). But much like the Occupy Movement, the absence of any demands, organisation, or even slogans, meant that the politics of the riots was difficult to discern. But this does not mean that they were devoid of a politics. When placed within the context of rising unemployment in the UK, government cutbacks, rising student fees, MPs expenses scandals, bankers bonuses, public bailout of banks, the looting makes perfect sense. Looting is opportunistic, but then so is insider trading, and the greed that accompanies the acceptance of extravagant severance payouts. Let's be honest with ourselves here; who wouldn't take a multi-million dollar bonus if offered it?

In the context of all this and a rampant capitalist system, the looters had perfect role models. If bankers can cook the books and MPs take cash for questions, and can fiddle their expenses, what could this underclass of youth do to further their own interests? How could they get their noses in the trough? What options did they have? In the context of everyone already opportunistically abusing the system to serve their own ends, the question/slogan should have been; 'Riot, why wouldn't you?' I am not suggesting that the Occupy protests should follow the example of the London rioters, but it may well be the case that the violence produced by the global economic system on the 99% may well only be overturned by more direct and overt forms of action. Protest needs a voice and riots are a class phenomenon that expresses that voice. As long as the 1% can continue to dance the night away they won't listen to anything but the music. Indeed: riot, why wouldn't you?

References

- Allen, K., 2011. Youth Unemployment Hits 1 Million. *The Guardian*, [Internet] 16 November. Available at :
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/nov/16/youth-unemployment-hits-1m-uk>, Accessed on 23 November 2011.
- Inside Job*. 2011. Written and Directed by Charles Ferguson, Sony Pictures Classics.
- Younge, G., 2011, Indifferent Elites, Poverty and Police Brutality: All Reasons to Riot in the UK. *The Guardian on Facebook*, [Internet] 5 December. Available at:
<http://apps.facebook.com/theguardian/commentisfree/2011/dec/05/reasons-riot-uk-protest-study>, Accessed on 5 December 2011.

Žižek, S., 2011. Talk to Al Jazeera: Slavoj Žižek, *YouTube*, [Internet] 29 October.
Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Qhk8az8K-Y>, Accessed on
5 December 2011.

Colin Wight is a Professor of International Relations at the University of Sydney. His research focuses on the philosophy of social science, social theory and international relations theory. Selected publications include *Scientific Realism and International Relations* (co-edited with Jonathan Joseph, Routledge, 2010), *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge, 2006) and *Realism, Philosophy and Social Science* (co-authored with Kathryn Dean, John Roberts and Jonathan Joseph, Palgrave, 2006). He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the *European Journal of International Relations*.