

2013

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Recommended Citation

Gillham, Patrick F.; Edwards, Bob; and Noakes, John A., "Strategic Incapacitation and the Policing of Occupy Wall Street in New York City, 2011" (2013). *Sociology*. 11.

https://cedar.wwu.edu/sociology_facpubs/11

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Forthcoming 2013: *Policing & Society* 23(1)

Strategic Incapacitation and the Policing of Occupy Wall Street Protests

In New York City, 2011

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Word Count:
Title Page, Acknowledgements 155
Abstract 167
Text, References and Maps ~9,800

Running Title: Strategic Incapacitation and Occupy Wall Street

Key words: police, security, surveillance, protest, Occupy Wall Street, social movement

Acknowledgements: The authors thank David Waddington, Mike King, Gary T. Marx, Jesse Engebretson and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. They also thank the University of Idaho's College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences and Department of Sociology and Anthropology for partially funding this research. James French, Christian Martineau, Shantee Rosodo, and Dustin Hinz provided research assistance in New York City and Nathan Lindstedt constructed maps for the article.

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Abstract

The U.S. national response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks accelerated the adoption and refinement of a new repertoire of protest policing we call ‘strategic incapacitation’ now employed by law enforcement agencies nationwide to police protest demonstrations. The occupation movement in 2011 was the most significant social movement to utilize transgressive protest tactics in the U.S. in the last 40 years and posed a substantial challenge to law enforcement agencies. This research seeks to better understand the implementation of strategic incapacitation tactics through a detailed analysis of the policing of the first two months of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests in New York City. Original data for this study are derived from two week-long field observations made in New York City during the first and second month anniversaries of the OWS occupation in Zuccotti Park. These are supplemented by activist interviews, activist accounts posted on OWS websites, Facebook pages, and Twitter feeds as well as news reports, official police documents, press releases, and interviews with legal observers.

Introduction

The ongoing U.S. occupation movement is the most significant social movement to utilize transgressive protest tactics in the US in the last 40 years. The occupation movement formally began in September 2011 when activists established the first ‘Occupy Wall Street’ encampment in Zuccotti Park, a half-acre site in the financial district of lower Manhattan. Activists had gathered there to protest against many things, including: corporate influence in American politics; the inadequate federal response to issues stemming from the 2008 financial crisis; and the growing income inequality gap. The rapid diffusion of occupation protests over the next two months challenged local police agencies in ways not experienced since the 1970s.

During the 1960s and 1970s authorities utilized a policing strategy called ‘escalated force’ the excesses of which generated enduring public controversy over the process of policing protest (and other) events. Five enduring complaints against police agencies arose in that era and remain controversial to this day. They are: disrespect for protester civil liberties and rights, intolerance of disruptions to public order, excessive use of force, indiscriminant arrests sometimes of bystanders, and ineffective communication with civilians.

Appropriately these long-standing issues have garnered a great deal of media attention and public commentary. Indeed, controversies surrounding these enduring grievances comprise a central theme in ‘old’ and ‘new’ media coverage of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests. Yet, attention to such enduring issues often overlooked three emerging issues arising from the now routine use of a policing repertoire called ‘strategic incapacitation.’ They are conflicts over the use of space both public and private, contentious efforts to control the production and dissemination of information, and unprecedented levels of surveillance.

Repertoires of protest control

The collection of tactics utilized by social movements and protesters have long been conceptualized as repertoires of contention whose contours change over time in response to social, political and cultural factors (Tilly 1978, Della Porta and Reiter 1998, Della Porta and Reiter 2006). Similarly, the collection of police tactics employed at a given point in time can be usefully viewed as *repertoires of protest control*. Like repertoires of contention (Tilly 1978, Tarrow 1995, p. 91), police protest control repertoires reflect what police know how to do, are technically feasible and institutionally sanctioned.

Repertoires predominant prior to 11 September 2001

Changes in repertoires of protest control employed in the U.S. since the end of World War II are well documented (Gillham 2011). Until the 1970s, the predominant police response to protest has been called ‘*escalated force*,’ a repertoire of tactics revolving around the use of arrests, beatings, tear gas, bullets, and other weapons meant to quell protests by inflicting pain and suffering. The tactics of escalated force flowed from the belief by the state that protest was an illegitimate form of political expression. The illegitimacy of protest also attached itself to the purveyors of the tactic. Thus, police generally refused to meet with protest organizers to discuss planned or ongoing demonstrations (McPhail *et al.* 1998). Police reliance on escalated force faded in the

1970s and 1980s, to be replaced by a new repertoire rooted in a different philosophy in which protest was viewed as a legitimate means of political expression and that the role of police was to protect First Amendment rights as it maintained social order.

Under what has been called '*negotiated management*,' the repertoire of protest policing took on a decidedly softer tone, emphasizing the joint planning with protesters of demonstrations, rallies, and even acts of non-violent civil disobedience. The cornerstone of negotiated management was a protest permitting process (McCarthy and McPhail 1998). Required permits facilitated the collection of information about protesters and planned events by the police, opened lines of communication with protest groups, and helped police avoid on and in the job troubles like excessive force, brutality, burnout and high profile investigations of police conduct (PAJ Waddington 1994). It also reduced conflicts between police and protesters by making each better known and more predictable to the other (Noakes *et al.* 2005, Noakes and Gillham 2006, Gillham and Noakes 2007, Gillham 2011).

Strategic Incapacitation

Police use of negotiated management began to erode in the late 1990s and shift toward what scholars call '*strategic incapacitation*' (Noakes and Gillham 2006, Gillham and Noakes 2007, Gillham 2011). Like previous policing repertoires, strategic incapacitation is rooted in a philosophy of social control, in this case in the 'new penology' of the 1980s (Feeley and Simon 1992, Garland 2001), which emphasizes preventing citizens from committing crime through risk management and the spatial redistribution and incapacitation of potential offenders. It is fundamentally different from "penal modernism" which held sway when negotiated management was adopted. The U.S. response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks accelerated the adoption and refinement of strategic incapacitation as the new strategy for policing protest and other 'threats to public order.'

Important research on what we call repertoires of protest control highlighted the differences between escalated force and negotiated management by comparing them on five dimensions of protest policing: respect of First Amendment rights, tolerance for community disruption, communication with demonstrators, and use of arrests and force (McPhail *et al.* 1998). The adoption of strategic incapacitation as an important but not exclusive repertoire of protest control and its widespread diffusion to the policing of protest across the U.S. points to three new dimensions of protest policing beyond the five mentioned above. Gillham (2011) referred to these as controlling space, surveillance, and information sharing. Their widespread use in recent years by law enforcement agencies has raised several significant, but as yet not well understood issues about the exercise of citizen rights to free assembly and speech in a democratic society (Vitale 2005, 2007, Boykoff 2007, Gillham and Noakes 2007, Fernandez 2008, Gillham 2011, Starr *et al.* 2011). These issues stem from ongoing conflicts over the use of both public and private space, contention over efforts to control both the production and dissemination of information, and unprecedented levels of surveillance.

Our aim here is to better understand the emerging social and civic implications of strategic incapacitation by examining the policing of the initial OWS occupation in New York City. In what follows, we describe events occurring in and around Zuccotti Park from the beginning of the OWS occupation there on 17 September 2011 through the first

two months of the occupation. Subsequently, our discussion emphasizes the conflicts between protesters and police over the control of spaces, contention over efforts to control both, the production and dissemination of information, and the widespread use of surveillance.

Data

Our data come from primary and secondary sources. First, we rely on field observations made in New York City 13-18 October, and 15-23 November, 2011 during the first and second month anniversaries of the original occupation that began in Zuccotti Park on 17 September. Large demonstrations marked both anniversaries. The one-month anniversary included two unpermitted marches, a several hour occupation of Times Square, a bank occupation, and a general assembly in Washington Square Park attended by over 1,000 people. The two-month anniversary included an effort to close down Wall Street through mass direct action, an occupation of the NYC subway system, an unpermitted march, a large permitted rally near New York City Hall and march across the Brooklyn Bridge. Field observations provide rich data for analyzing strategic incapacitation and its impact on protesters.

Second, we draw upon interviews with occupy activists and accounts posted on occupation websites, blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter feeds; news reports; official police documents and press releases; and interviews with legal observers. In what follows we focus on police use of strategic incapacitation to control activists during key OWS protest events.

Occupy Wall Street – Zuccotti Park, New York

The Occupy Wall Street movement established its first encampment at Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan on 17 September 2011. Encampments diffused quickly to no fewer than 350 locations across the United States by the end of the second month (Caren and Gaby 2011). In that short span the OWS movement organized many events, from occupations of public and corporate spaces, to large rallies and marches, teach-ins, a general strike and closing of the port of Oakland, and occupations of foreclosed homes. These events often resulted in clashes with police and a strategy designed to incapacitate protesters and close down encampments. Authorities across the US routinely relied upon the repertoire of strategic incapacitation to police occupation movement protests. Analyzing such efforts in multiple locations lies beyond the scope of this research. Rather, in what follows we limit our analysis to key events that occurred in NYC—the movement’s epicenter—from 17 September 2011 until mid-November 2011.

Occupy Wall Street – The first month (17 September – 17 October)

The Zuccotti Park occupation begins (17 September)

On 17 September 2011 700-plus OWS activists held the first New York City General Assembly (NYCGA) in Zuccotti Park just 2 blocks from Wall Street (Kroll 2011, Schneider 2012). Initially, a general assembly (GA) had been planned for Chase Manhattan Plaza (see Map 1), but was prevented by a police enforced *hard-zone*¹ of barricades surrounding the plaza (Schneider 2012). Police were there in force having

¹ *Hard zones* are areas where targets of protest gather and other places police deem off limits to everyone without proper credentials and security clearance (Gillham 2011).

been alerted in advance that activists would attempt to erect tents on Wall Street outside the headquarters of Chase (Vijayan 2011). Police established a ‘protest area’ or *free-speech zone*² next to the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), but activists refused to use it (Moynihan 2011a). Instead, implementing a backup plan, activists selected Zuccotti Park because of its proximity to Wall Street (Kroll 2011), which became their home and self-created free-speech zone until evicted by police in mid-November.

[MAP 1 ABOUT HERE]

The day the occupation started, hundreds of activists marched through the Financial District, and funneled into Zuccotti Park around 3:00 PM. Most activists walked from a gathering spot in Bowling Green Park near the iconic bronze bull, which had been surrounded by a hard zone of police and barricades. Others came through the Day of Rage social network (US Day of Rage 2011) or the Anonymous network's Operation Lighthouse (Anonymous 2011, Operation Lighthouse 2011).

After activists entered Zuccotti Park, police officers clustered at the park's four corners (Schmitt, Taylor and Grief 2011). They barricaded the northern edge of the park earlier in the day, apparently to protect One Liberty Plaza across the street (Liberty Plaza is owned by Brookfield Properties which also owns Zuccotti Park). During a GA held a week earlier, activists agreed to decide to postpone a decision to set up an encampment until they had secured space on or near Wall Street. On the evening of September 17 in the first official NYCGA in Zuccotti Park activists decided to establish an encampment. As a result approximately 200 activists camped in the park that night. The occupation had begun (Democracy Now! 2011b).

The first week (18-26 September)

Over the next several days the numbers of occupiers at any time fluctuated between 50-500 according to activist accounts (Schmitt and Taylor 2011, Taylor and Greif 2011). Working groups met and decisions were made to designate where differing logistical activities would occur within the park. For example, places were designated for a food station, sleeping area, information booth, art and poster space, library, media spokes desk, internet and live streaming stations, and a GA space (Moynihan 2012b). Nightly GAs brought together occupiers, activists not camping at the park, and bystanders. The NYCGA defined itself as ‘an open, participatory and horizontally organized process through which we are building the capacity to constitute ourselves in public as autonomous collective forces within and against the constant crises of our times.’ (NYCGA 2012). Assemblies lasted 2 to 5 hours depending on the agenda and amount of discussion regarding specific proposals.

During the first days of the occupation police created a perimeter of metal barricades around the park. Barricades placed at the curb prevented movement from the sidewalk into the street except at intersections. Police clustered at the intersections and deployed along a thin blue line encircling the park's perimeter, but inside the metal fencing. Barricades provided visual and physical barriers marking what police recognized as a free-speech zone, although they implemented this after protesters entered the park, not pre-emptively. Surveillance at the park was both visible and less visible. Visible

² *Free-speech zones* are areas where police decide in advance to allow legal protest to occur, and are increasingly located far away from the targets of protest like a political convention (Gillham 2011).

surveillance included a 25-foot mobile ‘Watch Tower’ with a 2-person observation booth equipped with darkened windows, flood lights, video cameras, a permanent closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera positioned near the park, and a mobile surveillance vehicle with a camera affixed to a 20-foot boom. All cameras were directed at the park (Turse 2011). There were also the eyes and ears of uniformed police stationed around the park and Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU) officers responsible for gathering intelligence and documenting protester/police interactions, especially when confrontations or arrests were likely. The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has the largest intelligence department in the country (NYPD Intelligence Division and Counter-Terrorism Bureau 2012) and a reputation for routinely infiltrating social movements and spying on citizens (New York Times n.d., Associated Press 2012), thus less visible surveillance likely occurred, with undercover police making surreptitious observations during working group and GA gatherings openly held by the activists.

Where police consolidated the mass of information gathered remains undisclosed. We speculate that information gathered from the mobile units and TARU officers was routed through a mobile communications vehicle parked one block east of the encampment. Possibly the intelligence video gathered were routed to the NYPD Intelligence Division and Counter-Terrorism Bureau headquarters or perhaps to the NYPD Joint-Operation Center located at One Police Plaza. It might have been directed to all these places. Given the proximity of the encampment to the financial district, it is likely that information was downloaded to the Lower Manhattan Security Coordination Center located a few blocks South of Wall Street (Greenemeier 2011, Martens 2011).

Modeled in part on London’s ‘Ring of Steel’ the \$150 million center relies on a security apparatus stretching across the financial district (Buckley 2007, Pelley 2011). The center, constructed partially with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funds protects the financial district and receives the real time information gathered from over 2,000 CCTV cameras which reportedly track every square-foot of public space in the financial district (Greenemeier 2011). Intelligence analysts watch the footage on a wall of large computer monitors, filtered through a multi-million dollar computer running artificial intelligence software. The computer is able to analyze real time information, such as how long a group of people have remained stationary on a street corner, and warns analysts of the situation. Analysts can tell the computer what they want it to identify out of the tremendous amount of video data being collected in real time or they can ask the computer to reconstruct scenarios using archived video data (Pelley 2011, Greenemeier 2011). Analysts involved in the center come from the NYPD, security specialists employed by banks in the Financial District, and on occasion the FBI (Buckley 2007, Pelley 2011).

During the first week of the encampment the NYCGA made several decisions significant for the authorities, including that activists would stay in the park indefinitely, that they would engage in direct actions and other activities without seeking permits from police, that they would not liaison with police, and that they would defend the park from eviction (NYGCA 2011b). The direct action working group scheduled a daily ritual of unpermitted marches (NYGCA 2011b), and police also initiated a daily ritual entering the park to make random arrests or take down tents or tarps erected the previous night (Schneider 2011b).

Marching to Union Square (24 September, Saturday)

Several hundred activists celebrated the occupation's one-week anniversary by marching without a permit from the Zuccotti encampment north towards Union Square (Schneider 2011a) where a large contingent of police confronted them at Fifth Avenue and 14th Street. In preparation for making mass arrests, police surrounded with orange netting groups of protesters and a few reporters covering the event (Schneider 2011a). One senior officer was videoed pepper spraying two women activists contained in the netting (Goldstein 2011). Over 80 people were arrested in the vicinity. Some of those arrested were reportedly on the sidewalk and unaware that they had broken any laws. Marchers able to avoid being detained made their way into Union Square, then marched back to Zuccotti Park where they found it surrounded by scores of police.

Mass arrest on the Brooklyn Bridge (1 October, Saturday)

By 1 October mainstream and alternative media attention on the protests had increased substantially. Until then, most of the information disseminated about the occupation and related protests came directly from movement blogging and Twitter activity. This began to change after the protests and harsh policing events of 24 September garnered front page reporting in local papers and dramatic broadcast coverage on local TV news. In addition, 'Live Streams' was running 24/7 at Zuccotti Park and during protest marches beyond the park. Labor unions began endorsing the occupation, enough money was flowing into the NYCGA that the financial working group set up an account with a local credit union, and over 26 occupations had emerged nation-wide (NYCGA 2011c). The publicity apparently had an impact as the number of people visiting the park and participating in the nightly GAs began to swell. On Saturday 1 October, another large march was organized to mark the second-week anniversary of the occupation, this time across the Brooklyn Bridge. Approximately 2,000 activists left Zuccotti Park around 3 PM marching north towards the bridge. They carried handmade signs denouncing Wall Street and demanding jobs, and silk-screened flags saying 'We are the 99%' (Lennard 2011, NYCGA 2011c). At the entrance to the bridge, a few activists moved into the roadway. News reports indicate that some of those who left the sidewalk had been chanting 'off the sidewalks, into the streets' and 'Whose bridge? Our bridge!' (Lennard 2011). No barriers prevented access from the sidewalk and some activists thought police were leading them along the road. Once the small group of activists entered the roadway, hundreds of others did the same. The majority of marchers however remained on the walkway.

Traffic came to a halt because of the people on the roadway and the police blocked both ends of the march on the road using police lines and orange netting. Over the course of the next several hours, activists who had not deviated from the original march route watched on as police arrested more than 700 protesters (Baker, Moynihan, Nir 2011). The event was covered with live streaming and multiple activist videos that were quickly posted on the OWS website and on the websites of occupation protests in other localities (Occupy Wall Street 2011a).

OWS first month anniversary (15 October, Saturday)

15 October was a big day. Several events had been planned to celebrate the one-month anniversary of the occupation and to participate in a related International Day of

Action. That morning, thousands of people buzzed around the park making signs, sharing food, and preparing to march. One march of approximately 400 people left around noon and proceeded to Washington Square Park near NYU where a GA was held to discuss whether to establish a second NYC occupation site there. Another group of activists marched to a nearby Citibank branch where they occupied the bank lobby as some activists attempted to close their accounts. A contingent of more than 20 police quickly arrived and arrested 25 activists. Some of those arrested reported having been pushed or pulled into the bank by police, causing them to involuntarily violate the law.

Later that night thousands of people occupied Times Square. Police were prepared having set up a phalanx of barricades along the length of the square. The barricades created a corridor on Broadway Street that crossed and closed side streets. Police lined the length of the barricades on the street side, separating themselves from the protesters that were amassing on the sidewalk and in the intersections of the closed side streets. For two hours activist enthusiastically chanted slogans like ‘all day, all year, occupy everywhere!’ Later still, activists marched from Time Square back to Washington Square Park holding the second GA of the day with over 1,000 participants. After several-hours the GA was broken up by police threats to arrest anyone in the park after the midnight curfew went into effect.

OWS eviction and second month anniversary (11-17 November)

U.S. mayors confer over OWS (11 November, Friday)

As its two month anniversary approached, the occupy movement had spread across the country. Activists carried out many disruptive events most notably a general strike in Oakland that closed the port and resulted in a violent response by police (Wollan 2011). In each occupation site, activists had created free-speech zones of their choosing, rather than where police might have done so had permits been requested. Occupation sites served as free spaces for discussion, deliberation, planning and as a staging ground for disruptive direct actions; but, on the morning of 11 November mayors from at least 18 cities (including NYC, Oakland, Portland, and Philadelphia) conducted a conference call to discuss how to handle the OWS movement (Cherkis 2012).

When asked what was discussed, the mayors provided contradictory explanations. Some also reluctantly admitted that police chiefs and other law enforcement personnel had participated (Cherkis 2012). The conflicting information provided and the secrecy around who was involved and what was said, makes reconstructing the conversation impossible. However, it is clear that just days after the conference call authorities across the country began evicting activists from encampments, in some cases violently.

NYPD prepares to evict OWS activists by incapacitating the press (14 November, Tuesday)

The eviction from Zuccotti Park of occupation participants by the NYPD proceeded in several phases beginning late in the afternoon of November 14 when the police apparently notified nearby vendors. Activists reported realizing that something was going to happen when street vendors operating adjacent to the park closed for the day and left all at once (Democracy Now! 2011a). An eviction notice distributed sometime after dark made clear the police intent to reclaim the space and regain control of the park. The notice ordered activists to remove their possessions from the park or

those items would be confiscated and taken to a sanitation department warehouse to be reclaimed at a later date. Thus, the police would be converting Zuccotti Park from an activists' proclaimed free-speech zone that police had reluctantly respected into a hard-zone off-limits to unauthorized personnel.

As reporters stood on the sidewalk looking at the police and peering into the park, police requested to see press passes. Members of the press, including AP were then rounded up, escorted to a location several blocks away and out of sight of the park, and detained until after the eviction was completed and arrested activists were taken to jail. The next day during a press conference Mayor Bloomberg stated that restrictions were put on the reporters 'to prevent a situation from getting worse and to protect members of the press' (Stelter and Baker 2011). His remarks were probably accurate on the first point. Had media been allowed to report live on the eviction, hundreds if not thousands of sympathizers might have rushed to Zuccotti Park to help defend it, creating a chaotic and more difficult situation for police to control. However, removing the media also ensured that only competing police and the protester versions of what had happen would be made public.

Police evict OWS activists (15 November, Tuesday 1:00 AM)

Shortly after midnight on 15 November approximately 1,000 NYPD officers, many in riot gear, surrounded Zuccotti Park. Available video footage and news reports indicate a chaotic scene ensued and the details of what happened over the next few hours are sketchy.

Our reconstruction of the event indicates the eviction began in earnest following the removal and detention of the media. Darkness vanished when police activated bright lights from the top of the mobile watchtower and other booms, before announcing through bullhorns that activists would be evicted from the park immediately. The activist-operated live stream video from inside the park shows some occupiers anxiously waiting for the police to move in, while others are busy trying to remove personal items from inside their tents. Some of the activists voluntarily left the encampment before police raided those remaining in park. All this was visible for approximately 20 minutes in real time coverage from the live stream camera moving around the camp. Activists not clearing out their items used the People's Mic to speak together (Ruby 2012) repeating the words of a young man encouraging everyone to remain calm and peaceful. Immediately after entering the park, police moved toward the live stream camera in an apparent effort to confiscate the camera and complete their control of media coverage. Activists set up a skirmish line around the live streaming camera as they tried to make sure that the whole world could see what was transpiring. But police quickly broke through the line and incapacitated the live stream camera.

Elsewhere in the park police tore down tarps and tents, including the field kitchen and medic station. Some activists were terrified, others defiant, all were vulnerable against the body armored, trenchant wielding officers. Police pushed activists to the ground with clubs and shields and incapacitated those who resisted with pepper spray. Police cuffed in zip ties any activist unable to escape from the park. Over 200 people were arrested, removed from the park, placed in vans and transit buses, and taken to 100 Center Street for processing.

The details of what happened next are also hazy, but it appears that police and city workers tore down all occupation structures and piled activists' possessions around the perimeter of the park. The debris was then placed in dumpsters and garbage trucks and transported away (Democracy Now! 2011a). Almost everything was disposed of including tents, cell phones, sleeping bags, laptops, books, clothing, medicine, and eye glasses. Next, city workers moved in with pressure washers and cleaned the park before erecting a second line of barricades surrounding the park, but inside the curbside barricades in place since the early days of the occupation. The concentric barricades created a corridor along the sidewalk, but turned Zuccotti Park itself into an exclusionary hard zone. Only police officers and private security personnel hired by Brookfield Properties, the owner of Zuccotti Park, were allowed access to the park. Police actions infuriated the evicted activists and those who had come to the park to show support for the movement. Tensions were high. A few hundred police remained on duty standing within the park and along both sides of the sidewalk with their backs against the metal barricades lining the park boundary and the curb.

Zuccotti Park reopens with controlled access (15 November, Tuesday early afternoon)

After keeping activists out of the park until early afternoon, police allowed slow reentry through two egress points. Those entering the park had to surrender backpacks, tents, blankets, sleeping bags, or anything else useful for comfortable reclining and sleeping, as well as books, protest literature, and any items that might be used as 'weapons.' By letting people back into the park they converted the hard zone into a *soft-zone*³ where confrontations were more likely to happen in the park now closely monitored by police and private security personnel.

Word got out that the park was reopened and more activists converged and entered the secured space. Police demanded that people keep moving both outside and inside the park. Groups of activists walked together talking and often yelling about *their* park. Throughout the afternoon, police strictly controlled access to the park and the area around it. In addition, the location of egress points were shifted or closed for a period of time. Several private security guards dressed in bright yellow shirts and jackets worked with the police to search activists for items now prohibited in the park.

As the sun set behind a row of skyscrapers near where the World Trade Center once stood, approximately 100 activists started to march together around the park chanting 'Whose park? Our park!' An hour later large numbers of activists entered the park to hold their first GA since being evicted from in the place they could no longer call home. After the meeting was adjourned many activists left in order to ready themselves for a direct action scheduled to occur 36 hours later. A small group of activists circulated throughout the park that night. Whenever they tried to lie down, security guards would ask them to move and police escorted those outside who refused to listen to the security guards.

OWS second month anniversary – a three course meal (17 November, Thursday)

A call to action circulated for days before the second month anniversary of OWS called for three main events using the metaphor of a three course meal (Occupy Wall

³ *Soft zones* are public spaces usually adjacent to hard zones where First Amendment rights are temporarily curtailed (Gillham 2011).

Street 2011b). For ‘*breakfast*,’ many hundreds of activists converged on Wall Street to participate in a well-planned N17 direct action meant to delay the opening of the NYSE, banking and related business by preventing Wall Street employees from getting to work. Activists intended to set up blockades at five entry points into the financial hub (see Map 2). At approximately 7:00 AM about 500 activists gathered in front of the Marine Midland Building at 140 Broadway across the street from Zuccotti Park. Also, three marches with 50 to 100 people in each converged at 140 Broadway shortly after 7:00. Those waiting there joined a march and quickly proceeded to streets that intersected Wall Street. One group marched down Broadway where they tried to establish a nonviolent blockade at the main entrance to Wall Street. They were met by a contingent of 50 or more police standing in front of barricades with news reporters, cameras and studio lights propped on stage, providing an excellent view from behind the barricades looking over the heads of police and facing out at the approaching march.

[MAP 2 ABOUT HERE]

At this location, police used shields and batons to push the marchers further south where they ran into another group of police blocking the entrance to Exchange Place, home to the NYSE. From there activists fled south past the heavily fortified bull and then turned left onto Beaver Street where they tried to reach their blockade points by doubling back north at Broad, Williams and Water Streets which all intersect Wall Street. But police were ready there as well having created a 12-block hard zone around the heart of the financial center that extended south of the area where activists hoped to set up their blockades. Realizing that they could not pierce the barricades and police lines stacked in front and behind the barricades, activists split into smaller groups and ran back and forth to the differing access points blocked by police. Dramatic exchanges happened between police and protesters in these soft-zones of contention. Police tackled activists running past them or broke up blockades of protesters sitting with their arms linked, pulling away one person at time. Once activists had been detained, officers carried or dragged them behind police lines where they were cuffed in zip ties and placed in a van.

As activists intentionally ran or were pushed from one place to another by police, there were short breaks in the action. During these breaks police let Wall Street workers with proper credentials enter the secured zone. Nobody else was allowed in. Similar clashes happened to the north and east of Wall Street when marchers from the other two groups, and activists acting independently of the marches tried to set up blockades at other entrance points to the hard zone. Activists took copious video footage of their interactions with police in these soft zones and shamed officers every time they laid hands on protesters. Around 11:00 AM, the protests began to break up as activists realized that police were adequately prepared to keep them from establishing blockades anywhere near Wall Street. Fortunately for activists, the day had only just begun; they still had lunch and dinner to look forward to. In all, police arrested over 150 people during the breakfast direct action (Newman 2011).

‘*Lunch*’ started at 3 PM and entailed occupying subway cars and 16 subway hubs where those ‘hardest-hit’ by the recession used the People’s Mic to tell their stories to passersby. News media reported the events were boisterous, but sparsely attended. At about the same time, several hundred activists, many of them students, gathered for an unpermitted rally at Union Square. From there they marched south towards Foley Square where ‘*dinner*’ would be served.

The dinner menu included a permitted rally by thousands of unionists and occupiers followed by a march across the Brooklyn Bridge to hold a GA uniting former occupiers of Zuccotti Park with activists from the Brooklyn Occupation. Police followed marchers from Union Square in cars, on scooters and in helicopters. Most of the marchers successfully made it to Foley Square in time for the union sponsored rally at 5 PM where they were received a hero's welcome from a large crowd as they entered Foley Square led by a brass band and drummers. To researchers at the rally the police appeared to use barricades to direct people to enter only from the Northwest corner of the square. Rally goers explained that the barricaded route extended their walk by many blocks and forced them to stand waiting as narrowing barricades created choke points that slowed entrance to the rally. Because of the extended walk, many people arrived at the rally already tired.

Police set up an equally challenging series of barricades leading south out of Foley Plaza defining the march route to the Brooklyn Bridge. In essence, police used the barricade system to create free speech zones—the places between the barricades where activists were able to congregate—and turned other public space into hard zones where they could not travel. In some instances groups of protesters frustrated by the constraining barricades pushed hard against them or tried to dismantle them, resulting in shoving matches with scores of officers located on the opposite side of the barricades.

Shortly after 6:00 PM the rally-goers started marching south towards the Brooklyn Bridge. At the front of the march about 60 union activists were arrested for stepping into the roadway near the entrance to the bridge. Barricades forced the large crowd to march in just half of the street. This constrained and slowed the crowd, forcing the marchers to stand still in the street for long periods.

At a point about one hour's walk from the rally location, which normally would have taken just a few minutes had there been no police barricades and choke chutes, police set up a large arena of barricades with exit points. This provided marchers the first opportunity in hours to exit the free-speech zone without risking arrest by climbing over a barricade. By that point many, cold and exhausted, took the chance to leave before entering another barricaded "free-speech" route leading to the Brooklyn Bridge. Thousands walked across the bridge and rallied for the GA, although clearly not as many people as had participated in the earlier rally. The GA concluded the official events of the day.

Discussion

By choosing not to pre-plan and pre-negotiate protest events with the authorities, the occupation movement posed a new and substantial challenge to police agencies. In rising to meet that challenge, police agencies have more fully utilized the repertoire of strategic incapacitation and thus made its emerging implications for American society more apparent. We focus on three of those here: conflicts over the use of space for political protest, over the now extensive police use of surveillance, and over the production and dissemination of potentially 'undesirable' information.

Spatial containment

Because police now seldom negotiate in advance with protesters about when and where protest events will take place, police exert far more energy and effort to control space by pre-determining where citizens can protest and from where media can observe

those protests. As the descriptive analysis above indicates the police extensively utilized the repertoire of strategic incapacitation in their efforts to control where demonstrations and protests would take place by dividing public and private spaces into four types of securitized zones. Typically such decisions are made without advance communication with protest organizers beyond the issuance of police directives.

Hard zones

From day one of the occupation, NYPD created hard zones to prevent activists from accessing and disrupting the target of their grievances. The chief example of this is depicted in Map 2 which shows the perimeter of a twelve square block hard zone surrounding the core financial district of Lower Manhattan on 17 November. Similarly, two months earlier when activists sought to set up an encampment at Chase Manhattan Plaza, police encircled the plaza with steel barricades and a line of officers. After protesters had established the encampment in Zuccotti Park, officers routinely erected barricades in and around Wall Street, particularly at major intersections and cross streets leading onto Wall Street. Even the iconic bronze bull, long a symbol of finance capitalism was protected against symbolic repurposing, vandalism or worse by barricades and a 24-hour security detail. Hard zone borders are frequently sites of contention (Noakes, Klocke and Gillham 2005), yet controlling them is a key tactic in police efforts to exert spatial control over public protest.

Free-speech zones

Besides attempting to prevent protester usage of public spaces for political expression through the establishment of hard zones, the NYPD also created *free-speech zones* or areas where protest was allowed to legally occur. OWS activists generally elected not to limit their actions to free-speech zones, choosing instead to engage in transgressive and sometimes illegal actions. For example, on 17 September, after police had successfully repelled activist efforts to enter Wall Street they tried to direct protesters into a free-speech zone surrounded by barricades near Exchange Place and Broadway. OWS protesters declined and instead went to Zuccotti Park where they began their two-month occupation. By rejecting the police delimited free-speech zone, the protesters converted Zuccotti Park to one of their own making. The NYPD allowed Zuccotti Park to remain a free-speech zone until the mid-November eviction. At that time they cleared Zuccotti Park converting it temporarily into a hard zone before re-opening it the next day as a soft zone. The also created free-speech zones in the areas between barricades such as the large permitted rally near City Hall and march across the Brooklyn Bridge on 17 November. When police create free-speech zones with constraining barriers and long approaches that raise the costs of protest by making it uncomfortable and exhausting, they actively deter citizens from democratic and legally sanctioned activities.

Soft zones

Adjacent to hard zones, the NYPD also created *soft zones* in which they suspend First Amendment rights and where most direct clashes with protesters occurred. If hard zones are strategic incapacitation's vinegar, then soft zones are its honey. Any individual, whether a bystander or a journalist, who enters a soft zone effectively, even if unwittingly, declares themselves to be a transgressive protester. One's presence outside the designated free-speech zone and inside a soft zone provides police with sufficient

rationale to suspend their rights to voice dissent and to assemble. Police incapacitated activists in these soft zones by arresting them or by using force (usually with “less lethal” weapons). This incapacitation tactic was used frequently. For example, on October 17 during the Times Square occupation, at a location near the southern end of the hard-zone created on Broadway, police clashed with several protesters pushing up against the barricades. After pepper spraying the activists, police quickly arrested them for disorderly conduct. Later that same night police in squad formation literally pushed activists out of Washington Square Park and then continued to push the crowd several blocks away from the park, even though they were on the public sidewalk. Those who refused to move along were pushed violently by police at the front of the squad. Twenty minutes of unrelenting pushing by the police eventually dispersed the activists.

Free press zones

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we identified the utilization by police of a fourth type of zone. *Free press zones* are locations preselected by the police into which they direct or forcefully relocate reporters away from the other zones. This incapacitation tactic severely constrains or prevents reporters from freely and directly covering police actions or protest events. Police use of this tactic was most vivid the night OWS protesters were evicted from Zuccotti Park. NYPD actively rounded up members of the press, escorted them to a pre-determined location removed from the park, and detained them there until the eviction was completed. The free-speech zone appears to have been used that night to facilitate police efforts to forcefully incapacitate protesters and actively manage public perceptions of the event, though the official explanation for the forced relocation was to ensure the safety of the press corps.⁴ The establishment of this fourth type of zone is a significant extension of the strategic incapacitation repertoire of protest control, and one that merits closer examination because it directly affects the broader citizenry’s access to information and capacity to make informed decisions in a democratic society.

Surveillance

The cessation of pre-event negotiations formerly conducted through the permitting process has left police agencies knowing less about protesters and their plans. To compensate police agencies have greatly increased their use of surveillance both during protest events and between them. Surveillance entails the collection of real time and static data which is subsequently ‘mined’ for actionable ‘intelligence.’ Recent technological innovations expanded real-time surveillance capabilities exponentially enabling the collection of an almost unlimited number of images and sounds not filtered through the officer in the field (Marx 2002). Closed circuit TV cameras are deployed outside police designated hard zones and legally sanctioned free-speech zones. Authorities routinely align protest routes with preexisting CCTV infrastructure and supplement CCTV with police videographers on rooftops, behind barricades, on scaffolding and in cherry pickers adjacent to protest sites. Real-time images sent to a

⁴ Major media outlets including the New York Times have since jointly filed a formal complaint with the NYPD Deputy Commissioner, the official who issues press credentials, stating that the relocation of reporters and photographers to the “press pen” and related activities were “more hostile to the press than any other event in recent memory” and clearly violated NYPD’s own policies concerning the press (See <http://www.nypressclub.org/docs/2011-11-21-DCPI-Letter.pdf>).

central command center inform real time deployment officers in the field and are subsequently 'data mined' to neutralize or incapacitate future unruly protesters (Fernandez 2008, Gillham 2011).

Occupation activists were under high-tech police surveillance around the clock from the mobile Watch Tower located at one end of Zuccotti Park. Protesters were also observed by cameras attached to the boom of a mobile unmanned surveillance vehicle parked at the end of the park opposite the Watch Tower as well as by NYPD fixed surveillance cameras located around the park. In addition, police monitored the area by accessing privately owned security cameras directed into public spaces. Activists reported that uniformed police officers stationed outside the park routinely queried them for identification and sometimes frisking them or looking through their backpacks or bags. TARU officers filmed activists entering and leaving the park, during GAs, and occasionally walked inside the park to record conversations occurring between activists.

Of particular interest is the Watch Tower which melds video cameras and the keen eye of officers posted in the tower cabin observing the park from a 25-foot perch. Manufacturer specifications of the mobile tower (ICx 2012) indicate its cameras have advanced thermal imaging capabilities, allowing police to see at night and to observe inside tents and sleeping bags. Finally, activists likely were constantly monitored by the extensive CCTV network in Lower Manhattan and possibly by a partially constructed one in Mid-Town. The array of surveillance methods deployed to incapacitate OWS protesters recalls the well-known arguments of Foucault and Bentham about the way self-control can be internalized among those who do not know whether or not they are being observed. This impressive repertoire of surveillance methods also helps police control the dissemination of information, discussed below.

Information management

A final facet of strategic incapacitation involved a variety of activities by NYPD intended to manage information dissemination and production. Police collected substantial amounts of information about OWS protesters through a vast array of surveillance technologies and police officers discussed above. We do not know where this information was consolidated though the Lower Manhattan Security Coordination Center and the Central Intelligence Office at One Police Plaza are plausible contenders. Once intelligence data was compiled, analyzed and evaluated the NYPD could prevent both protester and public access to it while easily sharing relevant material internally and with other law enforcement agencies through the network of local, state and national police agencies linked by DHS sponsored "fusion centers" in each state (Newkirk 2010, Gillham 2011).

City officials and police also sought to manage the production of information about activists and about themselves relying on public relations techniques. The NYPD actively shaped the production of information by the press and other commentators by framing OWS protesters as potential or actual threats to American society and national security. At various times between the start of the occupation and the forcible eviction of protesters from Zuccotti Park, public officials and NYPD spokespersons referred to occupiers as 'outsiders' and sometimes as 'violent' towards police. Moreover, OWS grievances were frequently characterized as unrealistic, incoherent, overly simplistic, part of a 'blame game,' job destroying, and harmful to those 'struggling to make ends meet.'

The Zuccotti encampment was referred to as a den of criminal activity including sex crimes, drug use, and gang-related activity as well as a dumping ground for the chronically homeless, mentally ill, and unemployed ‘who just needed to get a job’ According to officials with the health department and fire department the park had also become an overcrowded, unsanitary and dangerous and fire hazards (For partial list of health and safety complaints filed by city officials see Newman and Goodman 2011). In short, the OWS protesters were portrayed to the press and the public as the very embodiment of just about every negative stereotype known to inspire public antipathy. By contrast, authorities portrayed themselves in a universally positive light. The Mayor was portrayed as a First Amendment champion and proud supporter of capitalism and the financial district. Police portrayed themselves as unbiased defenders of activists’ civil liberties and as protecting the public with professionalism and restraint from the undesirable, disruptive and potentially dangerous occupiers.

It is worth re-emphasizing here that the establishment of a ‘free press zone’ not only limited the production and dissemination of news by a third party, but also enabled police to frame the events of that night uncontested by competing or impartial voices. In so doing the police did not so much censor the press by banning or prohibiting the dissemination of certain, objectionable content. Rather, they constrained the ability of the press to produce such information in the first place by denying them access to the events in question. Thus, post-eviction portrayals of the eviction tended to come from either the protesters or the police with no ‘neutral’ or ‘objective’ press portrayals to help adjudicate questions in the public mind.

Conclusion

National response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks accelerated the adoption and refinement of a new repertoire of protest control called ‘strategic incapacitation’ which scholars contend has become an increasingly common repertoire of protest control employed by law enforcement agencies nationwide. As a result police-protester relations have become more adversarial with greatly diminished trust, cooperation and communication. The full contours of strategic incapacitation have yet to be mapped and are currently not well understood in part because of its relative newness and emergent character, but also because until OWS police had not confronted sustained transgressive protests. Through its first two months the occupation movement utilized transgressive tactics to an extent unprecedented in the US since the 1970s.

The occupation movement’s sustained use of transgressive tactics has magnified this dynamic hastening the evolution and diffusion of strategic incapacitation and raising new and controversial questions about civil liberties and the legitimacy of protest policing tactics. As reflected in our description of events, activists and police were very aware of the other’s actions and their back-and-forth interaction clearly shaped the evolution of events. The sustained use of transgressive tactics by OWS protesters drove the NYPD to further refine and extend their utilization of strategic incapacitation. Just as surely activists will devise new ways to resist and mitigate police efforts to incapacitate them. This iterative and interactive process in which police and protesters alike adapt to one another by updating old tactics and creating new ones intended to resist and mitigate those of their opponents should be the focus of subsequent research. Further, additional research is warranted into the ways strategic incapacitation actually undermines 1st

Amendment activity even for those who engage in the permitting process meant to ensure they are in compliance with the law. When extensive ‘free-speech’ corridors exhaust, rather than invigorate those engaging in political behavior, and when excessive surveillance and concerns about how information might be used stifles public protest, researchers must ask how police can possibly balance their joint obligation to help maintain public order *and* protect democracy from the police themselves.

The issues are not limited to the United States. Police and protest tactics at large international events since the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle have diffused interactively and transnationally (della Porta and Tarrow 2012). On the police side, authorities across the globe actively share information about control tactics perceived to be effective against the innovative tactical repertoire of a “new breed” of protester. Della Porta and Tarrow (2012) have documented the widespread use of tactics central to strategic incapacitation—such as massive police presence, the use of barriers, preventive arrests, and the use of less lethal weapons—in nearly all mass transnational events between 1999-2003, regardless of the nation in which they were held. Moreover, studies of protest policing of more local events have identified the use of parts of the strategic incapacitation policing repertoire in nations such as Sweden (Wahlstrom 2010) and Scotland (Gorringer, *et al.* 2011). Similarly, elements of strategic incapacitation appear to be diffusing into the policing of non-protest events like large motorcycle festivals and various celebratory gatherings in university towns. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which strategic incapacitation tactics have diffused to other democratic nations as well as to the routine policing of large, non-political gatherings within the United States.

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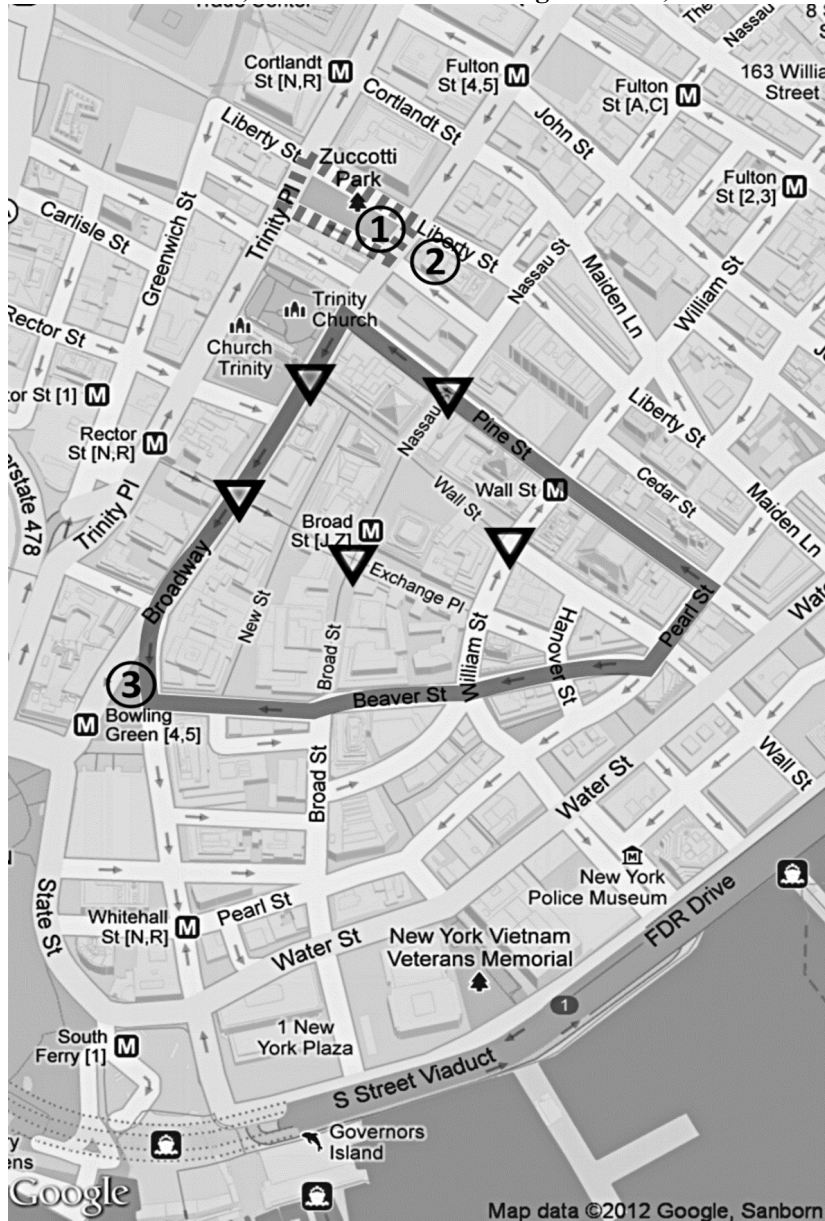
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Map 1: Locations of Major Occupy Wall Street Protest Events



Legend	
1 = Zuccotti Park	7 = Brooklyn Bridge
2 = Bull at Bowling Green Park	8 = Washington Square Park
3 = Wall Street	9 = Times Square
4 = Chase Manhattan Plaza	10 = Foley Square
5 = 5 th Ave & East 14 th Street	11 = City Hall
6 = Union Square	

Map 2. Location of Occupy Wall Street Planned Blockades, Police Hard Zone, and Other Places of Significance, N17



Legend	
1	= Zuccotti Park
2	= 140 Broadway
3	= Bull
▽	= Proposed & Actual Direct Action Blockades
█	= Police Hard-Zone