# Deliverable 7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism

**University of Southern Denmark**

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1. Introduction

‘Yes, we are a very diverse group. There are many groups and activists who are hooked on the movement. Some are against the Afghanistan war, others are activists who used to line up with a few banners outside the American Embassy, but there are also business people who are tired of all the ups and downs they are exposed to when speculative bubbles suddenly burst. One of the people I talked to had a small company, (...) and lost a million when the financial crisis suddenly came. He is tired of the endless ups and downs.’ (Tomas Oszlar, Initiator of the first Danish Occupy Wall Street demonstrations in Copenhagen and Odense, October 15th, 2011, Interview reported in the newspaper Information, October 15th, 2011)

The challenge for any social movement is to mobilize and create a common understanding of the problems the movement wants to challenge and resolve. When new movements are established one of the major tasks is to embrace and gather many different identities and create a new common identity. The above quotation indicates that this challenge was also present from the start of the Danish Occupy movement.

The global movement ‘Occupy Wall Street’ started when the Canadian anti-consumerist group Adbusters, inspired by the Arab Spring and Spanish young people’s occupation of Puerta del Sol in Madrid, called for an occupation of Wall Street in New York, September 17th, 2011. A few thousand followed the invitation and camped in the nearby Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan. The camp became an alternative community in the city of New York, until police cleared the park two months later. Despite the largely peaceful demonstrations and activities, the newspaper The Guardian revealed that the state intelligence agency FBI had monitored many of the activists.

The issues addressed by Occupy Wall Street were the increasing social and economic inequality, financial corruption and the influence of corporations on government—particularly from the financial services sector. The Occupy Wall Street slogan, ‘We are the 99 percent’, refers to the wealth distribution in the U.S. between the wealthiest 1 percent and the rest of the population.

The Occupy movement eventually spread at a rapid speed to 100 other US cities and to 25 countries worldwide. In many ways the mobilization pattern in the Danish Occupy movement in Copenhagen developed in parallel with Occupy groups in other cities around the world. October 15th, a demonstration mobilized around 2,000 participants, and a group of about 20 people camped on the Copenhagen city hall square. During the next two months this became
the central meeting place for many of the activists, and some of them were persistent and remained at the square despite of the cold late autumn weather.

Occupy groups were also formed in a few other Danish cities; however, there was considerably less local support for these groups. Therefore, on some occasions, some of the activists organized bus trips from provincial towns to Copenhagen, where most of the events took place. One of these was ‘the spring revolution’ - which tried to regain public attention and further the mobilization of the movement.

A few times the police called on the protesters to leave the Copenhagen camp without success, until the police finally cleared the camp early morning December 21st, 2011.

Besides the Copenhagen city hall square a number of other localities were used for meetings and various arrangements, e.g. Støberiet, Bolsjefabrikken and Christiania. During the research period about 20-30 people were active at group meetings, but with fluctuating levels of involvement. Some of the meetings were organized in various committees and workgroups: a cyber group, an activist group (Occupy the Parliament), a conference group, a research group, a PR group, a facilitator group, and a discussion group.

Much of the communication also took place as online-communication, mainly on Facebook groups. In terms of media attention, there was an explosion of newspaper articles on the Danish and American Occupy movements in late autumn 2011. A count of articles in October 2011 found 263 newspaper articles about the movement, while in March 2012 there were only 20 (Politiken, April 14th, 2012).

Periods with great media attention also generated considerable activity on social media. During the end of the research period the OccupyCPH Facebook group had 1164 members and the Occupy Denmark Facebook page had more than 10,000 likes. However, discussions on Facebook also revealed that there were many different and divergent views on the movement’s objective, purpose and strategy. In the study of the Danish part of the Occupy movement, these debates have been continuously followed, and used information from social media as important background information for the personal face-to-face interviews.

This report explores how activists and former activists experienced the development and disruption of the movement. In particular it pays attention to the question of how ideological diversity and the lack of a shared identity affected the development of the movement. In the following section an introductory snapshot of some of the latest research observations is provided, hereby indicating the challenging issue of staying alive and visible as a social movement. In the second section of the report we outline pertinent theoretical concepts and
frameworks drawing on the literature on collective identity and collective action framing. Data collection and methodology is then described and in the forth section key findings are presented. Finally, the concluding remarks make some suggestions for further research.

1.1 Last observations first

The Copenhagen Global Noise demonstration, October 13th, 2012 was included as part of the final field observations of this study. This demonstration and happening was globally promoted by Occupy groups in a number of cities all over the world. The Danish Facebook group #globalNOISE #13.O - Demonstration mod et korrupt system - København\(^1\) invited about 8,000 Facebook members. About 400 proclaimed that they wanted to attend, however only about 50 people actually showed up this day.

A young man, who had hitchhiked all the way from Aalborg (about 400 kilometers from Copenhagen) to join the Copenhagen Global Noise demonstration, expressed to me during the initial gathering of activists that he was quite disappointed with the poor attendance so far. He also participated in the first large Danish Occupy demonstration one year previously, where at least a few thousand activists attended. Then why did so few apparently attended the demonstration today?

Last year it was just like a starting signal..., that something really big was going to happen - an experience of a worldwide protest. But now it’s like this enthusiastic atmosphere has completely disappeared. Maybe it’s because most Danes basically do not feel the severe economic crisis on their own body. Although unemployment has increased, the general atmosphere here seems much less critical and people are just less rebellious than in the southern parts of Europe like Spain and Greece. It’s boring. But perhaps it is also because of the weather - dull grey skies, and they have promised rain during the day... [laughter] (Field observations: Global Noise Demonstration, 13\(^{th}\), 2012)

When focusing on the banners and posters present, it was clear that people in the crowd had quite different political agendas and interests. Not only the banks and the monetary system were in focus. Also banners condemning cuts in welfare services, and banners promoting the use of narcotic mushrooms, and free cannabis, and more spirituality were present.

As researchers interested in knowing more about the mobilization aspect of these types of actions, some of the other activists were asked what they themselves thought was the reason

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\(^1\)Translates into ‘#globalNOISE #13 – Demonstration against a corrupt system – Copenhagen’.

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for the lack of support? A woman standing by a large banner with the slogan ‘Tax the banks’ and ‘More welfare’ was convinced that the low level of media attention was part of the explanation. ‘News media just don’t want to cover the same kind of events several times, and they just don’t care about the really important problems in society’. This view was also supported by a photographer who was associated with Occupy. He believed that ‘the government and all those in power are trying to suppress all critical voices in society. It’s these kind of powerful institutions (government and the banks), which basically control the media. They are all part of the same system’.

Since there were so relatively few people gathered at the square (Højbro Plads) where the demonstration was supposed to start, it was possible for me to ask and talk with a relatively large proportion of them. The researcher wanted to know whether some of the core activists - the initial promoters of Occupy Denmark - where still active and present? It turned out that a few of them were present, but there were also people who either belonged to small left wing activist groups or showed up as individuals without any former bond to the Occupy movement. Before the demonstration some of them had gathered at Bolsjefabrikken to paint their banners and posters; however the general impression of the gathering was that no real joint coordination and planning took place (Field observations: Global Noise Demonstration, December 13th, 2012).

Today, the public visibility of the Occupy movement has almost disappeared. Like in many other countries and cities that experienced this movement, the Danish Occupy Copenhagen is no longer present as a key player in the public discourse and critique of the financial system. Although there is still activity on Facebook and small-scale meetings, it has been observed that former occupy activists now are leaving and criticizing the movement for various reasons.

In the following section an outline of relevant theoretical framework and concepts is provided in order to get a deeper understanding of how people make sense of this movement, and how they have experienced their individual and common efforts to challenge the economic and political system.
2. Theoretical approach: Social movement identity

Social movements are ‘collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. They (...) derive their motive power on the one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life and, on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living’ (Blumer [1939] (1969): 99)\(^2\). Like Lofland (1996) social movements are understood here as ‘associations of persons making idealistic and moralistic claims about how human personal or group life ought to be organized’, but caution is needed as to whether or not participants of social movements can be regarded as also ‘marginal to or excluded from mainstream society’ (Lofland 1996: 2f).

One of the key issues in the mobilization literature is about why people choose to engage? Rationalist models have focused on incentives based on material and economic resources, although these in many cases have been difficult to identify as the main drivers of collective action (Olson 1965). The topic ‘collective identity and framing processes in social movements’ represents an alternative or supplementary perspective to some of the more structural and rationalistic theories within social movement studies.\(^3\)

2.1 Collective identity

The identity perspective contributes to the discussion about motivated participation by pointing to the fundamental human need for recognition, and the need for social belonging (Honneth 1995). Identity can be seen as an alternative to material incentives, and furthermore, this perspective considers social and personal interests to be created and developed dynamically by members of social movements (Stryker 1992, 2000).

According to this perspective individuals do not possess one single identity. On the contrary, individuals construct a range of different identities that compete internally for expression. These identities are ordered in a sort of hierarchy. Identity salience is used to describe the likelihood a particular identity will come into play in a variety of situations (Stryker 2000). In this way identities ‘is not simply something one has; it is also something one does’ (Glass 2009).

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\(^3\) Such as functionalistic collective behaviour theory; resource mobilization theory; political opportunity structure theory; and new social movement theory. Collective behavior approaches have seen social movements and protests as indicators of social instability, while mobilization and political process theorists have focused on how structural changes in society give collective actors the resources to act as a social group. Several scholars of social movements have been attracted to collective identity as a response to some of the gaps in dominant resource mobilization and political process models (Poletta and Jasper 2001).
The identity perspective has also been involved in discussions about strategic dispositions in social movements. ‘If people choose to participate because doing so accords with who they are and how they see themselves, then the forms of protests they choose are also influenced by collective identities.’ (Polletta and Jasper 2001).4

Studying collective identity in social movements requires data on individual and shared worldviews and references to behavior and objects. This can be various symbols, clothing styles, artifacts and signifiers of the movement. One of the fundamental questions continuously discussed among social movement scholars is to what degree collective identities are constructed in and through protest rather than preceding it? (Polletta and Jasper 2001:285). Polletta and Jasper (2001) suggest that the role of identity in collective movements can be further explored by looking into four phases of the protest: 1) the emergence and creation of collective claims; 2) recruitment into movements; 3) strategic and tactical decision making; and 4) movement outcomes (ibid 2001:285).

Concerning the emergence and creation of collective claims, political process scholars have used collective identity to explain ‘how structural equality gets translated into subjective discontent’, and new social movement scholars have argued that the efforts to define a collective identity has become particularly important for the new social movements. Snow and Anderson use the concept ‘identity work’ in order to understand some of these mechanisms. Identity work is defined as ‘the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept.’ (Snow and Anderson 1987: 1348). These activities can both be targeted individuals and groups, and they can be carried out individually or collectively (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996: 115). Consequently, identity work can be seen as a way to align individual and collective identities by creating a sense of ‘we-ness’ among the individuals who compose the collective group (Snow and McAdam 2000: 42).

This can happen through two distinct processes: One process is called identity convergence, which refers to ‘the coalescence of a movement and individuals who already identify with it (...) such that the existence of a movement provides an avenue for the individual to act in accordance with his or her personal identity’ (Snow and McAdam 2000: 47). This can come about by identity seeking when individuals actively search for a group that corresponds with their existing identities or through identity appropriation that happens when movement recruitment occurs through preexisting network linkages.

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4 Poletta and Jasper define collective identity as ‘an individual’s cognitive, moral, an emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity.’ (Polletta and Jasper 285).
The second process is *identity construction* that refers to ‘the process through which personal and collective identities are aligned, such that individuals regard engagement in movement activity as consistent with their self-conception and interests’ (Snow & McAdam 2000: 49). This can happen by small changes such as an adjustment in the personal identity salience hierarchy or more dramatically by thoroughgoing change in one’s sense of self.\(^5\)

### 2.2 Collective action framing

Frames constitute a way of making sense of the external reality, and as such leaders of social movements often - more or less strategically – engage in the construction of collective action frames. From a strategic viewpoint action frames can serve as tools for recruiting and mobilizing activists.

The collective action framing perspective can offer some useful conceptual and analytical tools, and thereby increase knowledge of why some movements are more successful than others (especially in terms of recruiting new members and activists, and in terms of gaining public attention), and also why some movements suddenly disintegrate and die out.

Framing theory has a rich history in the research on social movements (Benford and Snow: 2000), and originates primarily from the work of Erving Goffman (1974), who defined individual frames as ‘schemata of interpretation’ (Goffman 1974: 21). However, as pointed out by Gamson (1992), collective action frames are ‘not merely aggregations of individual attitudes and perceptions but also the outcome of negotiated meaning’ (Gamson 1992: 111). In a more recent contribution by Porta and Wagemann a frame is defined as ‘the dominant world views that guide the behaviour of social movement groups’ (della Porta and Wagemann 2012: 14f).

It is argued that framing processes within social movements constitutes the most important mechanism facilitating identity construction processes (Snow and McAdam 2000).

Snow and Benford (1988), suggest that framing in social movements can be seen as a three step process, described as diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks (Snow and Benford 1988).

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\(^5\) Four processes have been identified as identity construction processes. Firstly, *identity amplification* involves the strengthening of an existing identity that is congruent with the specific movement’s collective identity. Secondly, *identity consolidation* refers to a process where two prior identities are combined into a new identity that has a better fit with the collective identity. Thirdly, *identity extension* is the expansion of an individual’s personal identity in terms of situational relevance. Finally, *identity transformation* is a possibility. This happens when the personal identity is so dramatically changed, that one sees oneself as strikingly different than before (McAdam and Snow 2000: 52).
• *The Diagnostic frames* allow for the conversion of a phenomenon into a social problem, potentially the object of collective action (Melucci and Snow et al. 1986). It can typically be ‘seen as a reduction of social complexity’ (della Porta and Diani 2006: 76) as the frame needs to be easily understandable while offering great emotional identification. Several case studies of framing processes also use the concept ‘injustice frames’ (Gamson 1992).

• *The Prognostic frames* entail potential solutions to the stated social problem, or plans of how to deal with the problem. For local groups of political activists, these might involve fairly concrete goals, such as public transportation, health care institutions, schools etc., and for movements with a more global outreach it might involve a new financial system, renewable energy, or global justice.

• Finally, *the Motivational frames* aims at producing motivations and incentives needed for mobilization of social movement participants. This can be done by generalizing the social problem and showing ‘connections with other events or with the condition of other social groups; and also demonstrate the relevance of a given problem to individual life experiences’.

It is obvious that framing processes are closely related to the construction of a collective identity, and the final point here is that engaging theories of collective identity and collective action frames can help us explore some of the social processes taking place in the Occupy Wall Street movements (see e.g. Lofland 1996, Lichterman 2002, Snow and Trom 2002).

### 3. Data collection and methods

Data was collected through observations of meetings and field studies of public events and demonstrations arranged by the Occupy groups in Odense and Copenhagen. In addition, the rich communication on the various Occupy Denmark Facebook groups and pages was followed on a daily basis during the period September 2012-February 2013, including external communications, internal communications, administrator page discussions, and key members’ wall postings.

The larger cities in Denmark experienced local groups of young Occupy activists engaged in meetings and demonstrations at central places. After two weeks of observations on the Facebook group and participation in public meetings, it decided to limit the study to the Occupy-groups in Odense and Copenhagen. Odense was a location of some of other MYPLACE-field studies; however, during field observations it turned out that most Occupy activities in Denmark were taking place in Copenhagen.
Based on information from Facebook and participant observations, some of the core activists were contacted for personal interviews, and by snow-balling these core members were used to get in touch with other members of the Occupy group. Furthermore some appointments for face-to-face interviews were made by first hand contact, when observing some of the activities.

In total, 10 in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted, with durations of between 50 minutes and three hours. These interviews took place at public venues, mostly at cafés, and some in private homes. The semi-structured approach was found to be useful in studies like this where the goals are exploration, discovery, and interpretation of social events and processes and when combined with participant observation and/or documentary methods. Besides the personal interviews the researchers also participated in five Occupy meetings, joint bus transportation for a demonstration and two demonstrations. Some meetings included demonstration planning activities, and strategic discussions, and some were arranged for the purpose of evaluating the outcome of past activities. Field observations were registered in a diary.

The ethnographic research was conducted inline with the ethical procedures agreed upon and specified in the MYPLACE ethics application form. No informants were placed under any coercion to participate and they were made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage in the research process. All participants were given information about the project in order to allow them to make an informed decision as to whether or not to participate.

The researchers experienced great kindness and openness from most of those who participated in the research. All interviewees were informed about the project’s overall objectives and how their participation could help to generate valuable knowledge in the field of social movement studies. However, some of the respondents were slightly hesitant because of fear of contributing knowledge that could be used to politically suppress grassroots political activism. In these cases, respondents were reassured that this was not the purpose of the research, and that as researchers there was an obligation to ensure that this could not happen.

All subjects were given pseudonyms to protect their identity, and all information that potentially can reveal respondents identities has been omitted from the analysis. Table 1 describes the basic social and demographic characteristics of the subjects interviewed. In order to capture diverse identities that may affect participation in this social movement, the sample is relatively broad in terms of age and affiliation with the movement. We have interviewed core

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members, as well as ex-associated members. Regarding age we must admit that we only interviewed two persons below the age of 25 years. The age span reflects the age span among those activists who continuously joined the various Occupy activities – in fact there were relatively few activists below 20 years of age.

The main topics in the qualitative interviews were the activist’s personal backgrounds, their attraction to the activist scene, their recruitment to the movement, their own conceptualization of diagnostic and prognostic frames, their experience of the organization and culture of the Occupy movement, and the various types of political activities used.

**Table 1: Interview respondents**

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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Association</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ove</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Core member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktor</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Ex-core member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Core member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasse</td>
<td>International Socialists</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferdinand</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Ex-associated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorbjørn</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Provincial city</td>
<td>Ex-associated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thea</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Provincial city</td>
<td>Associated (ex-core member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Occupy/Zeitgeist</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH suburb</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NN</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Core member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fie</td>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>Member</td>
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It should be noted that it can be difficult to classify the subjects in terms of association. The Danish Occupy movement is not a formal organization and do not have list of members, neither do they collect membership fees. In developing a classification meeting attendance rate, online presence and their own feeling of membership have been used as primary indicators.
4. Key Findings

This section summarizes some of the key findings of the research. First it portrays five people who have all been active in the Occupy movement. It then focuses on participant’s experiences of entering the movement and their individual motivation for protesting. To give an impression of the movement’s way of working, also include are observations from some of the meetings. Then the activist’s perceptions of the movement goals and visions are analyzed in order to assess the levels of diagnostic and prognostic framing.

In this study, it has been found that the Occupy movement in its relatively successful start-up-phase used a wide-ranging diagnostic frame – blaming the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process, and thereby creating one of greatest recessions in generations. The diagnostic frame, however, included a vast array of diagnostic sub-frames.

The new social media has played a major role in the dissemination of the Occupy movement’s criticism and ideas. However, it’s very inclusive approach also has some disadvantages, as it is extremely difficult to find consensus around political statements when there are so many differing views represented. Likewise, it becomes more difficult to establish unifying statements and visions for the movement.

After following the internet debates of the Danish Occupy movement, and interviewing some of its core activists, it was also found that it became increasingly difficult to create an effective prognostic frame, since many of the activists obviously held very different ideas of what kinds of solutions that would be the best answers to not only the economic problems but also the huge amount of other problems identified during the demonstrations and the following ‘open microphone’ meetings. It seems the diagnostic frame was too fussy and all-encompassing to allow the Occupy members to sketch out a common prognostic frame.

4.1 Personal background of interview respondents

Our respondents seem to share a number of personal characteristics; however they also appear to be quite different from the average young Danes. Several of them have a family background that may be characterized as relatively unstable, and they typically do not intend to follow a fixed track with education, work and family. Several of them have had a variety of non-permanent jobs and travelled around the world. They have mostly been living what one might call a non-materialistic life-style. Friendships and social relations are very important to their experience of well-being and a meaningful life. Some of them can be characterized as spiritually...
minded people, and people having experience from various other movements and groups, such as the Zeitgeist Movement.

Many of the activists also explicitly express a lack of trust in authorities. First and foremost this is based in what they see as an unholy alliance between powerful people representing the political system, the financial (economic) system and the media. In some cases politicians are also seen as marionettes led by cynical capitalists. Besides that, some respondents also have their own personal reasons for distrusting ‘the system’, such as financial debt or negative experiences from confrontations with public authorities (e.g. the police, social workers and public officials).

The different personalities and interests of the respondents are expressed in the following brief portraits of five respondents:

**Charles**

Charles had experienced globalism in its multifaceted fashions. At the age of 12 his father invested in a restaurant with a group of Vietnamese men. They, however, soon left the country with all of the money, leaving his father in great debt. In order not to burden his mother with the debt, the father suggested a divorce. Then Charles and his sister moved to a new city with their mother. At the age of 18, ‘It all fell apart for my father, and he moved to Tanzania’ to live and work. Later on he passed away.

As an adult Charles himself has been laid off from various jobs because the employer went bankrupt or moved to other locations. He moved around to seek new challenges and new jobs, in Denmark and abroad, before finally marrying a woman who herself immigrated to Denmark.

The personal obstacles when trying hard to establish a new business operating in clean-tech sparked his initial interest in societal problems. Here he experienced that Danish regulations and bureaucracy were barriers to his new venture. This frustrated him; particularly as he saw the necessity for green energy to become a larger part of Danish and global power supply.

His true call to activism was quite abrupt. A friend brought him one of the Zeitgeist movies (movies that many other Occupy activists describe as important to their process of ‘awakening’) explaining: ‘Every single problem the world faces can be addressed with this’. The Zeitgeist movie taught him ‘How money controls everything and how Africa starves. The last hour [of the film], it showed how our technology could save the world. We need to recycle and use the technology in the best thinkable way. We already have the right solutions, but fictive money prevents us. Only the rich can use them.’
For him, Zeitgeist provided not only a diagnosis of a sick world, but contrary to Occupy also gave answers, gave the prognosis. He reflects upon this himself, when he talks about joining the Occupy movement: ‘[Occupy] encompasses a broad selection of people – a real grass roots movement. For me a grass root movement is one, where people can shout about all the problems of our world, but you should not expect them to have the answers. It is the first phase of awakening, when you discover the problems.’ (Interview: Charles)

Thea

A few of the activists grew up with parents that also had the experience of being involved in political activism. One of these is 17-year-old Thea. She joined the movement at a turbulent time in her life, as she had left her family home. During the first day of the occupation she passed the town hall square in Copenhagen and noticed the camp and all the tents, and she ‘never left again’, as she put it. Here was a chance to become one of those rebels that she had always admired: ‘Here they were. They sat there with their strange food, and looked like the kind of people I had wanted to talk to, but never had been old enough or cool enough to be a part of. (...) The kind of people who write the story of their own lives.’

For Thea attending the Occupy movement seemed to be a lot about personal development, and she felt she had ‘to do something spontaneous and radically new in her life’, so she joined. Thea also had a quite romantic vision of the movement. She saw it as a sort of modern fairy-tale, where brave soldiers fought against a common foe, receiving good tidings from their brothers in arms across the sea (i.e. other Occupy camps). It produced a very special feeling for her to suddenly be part of this epic tale. When asked about the overall vision for the Occupy movement, she said it was ‘to get rid of capitalism’ and to find new ways of living. She had lots of enthusiasm, and thoroughly enjoyed the social life within the movement. After the camp was cleared by the police, she went travelling to visit other Occupy camps abroad. Now she is back in Denmark, but does not live in Copenhagen as with most of the other members. She still has many ties to many of the core members and still frequents Occupy events from time to time. (Interview: Thea)

Peter

Peter, 30 years old, comes from a Copenhagen suburb. He tells that he has been ‘a little in and out of universities’ and realized that the education system was not for him. He did not like the massive workload and the high levels of competition.
It was quite by chance that he connected with the Occupy movement. He was heading home from a night out when ‘the universe pulled me towards the town hall square’. Here he met ‘an Icelandic drunk, who is the loveliest person alive. At this time of day, however, he has been drinking several bottles of vodka and then he starts being a jerk. So I left after a couple of minutes’. A few days later he felt compelled to return: ‘the universe sometimes does strange stuff to you. It was like somebody physically took me by the collar and pulled me back (...) and I never left.’

The very open atmosphere in Occupy particularly attracted Peter. According to him this was quite different from the atmosphere in political parties and groups, because, as he said ‘they are always busy “classifying people”’. He likes that Occupy is a kind of ‘loose organization (...) there are no leaders, but everyone can take the initiative’. Peter describes the first day at the town hall square as personally enriching. There were a lot of things going on, without anything pre-planned: ‘We shared things (...), and then someone just took some pallets and began to build a small house for us.’

Peter speaks of peace and freedom, and he appreciates the open atmosphere at the meetings in the Occupy groups.

We like that everyone can come and tell what they are thinking, because usually they are not allowed to do this elsewhere – there are no other places where people want to listen to your thoughts and opinions. Most other activist groups, you know, they always have a clear goal or direction. They are either oriented towards the left or the right wing. (Interview: Peter)

Viktor

Viktor joined Danish Occupy from the very beginning of the movement. He is one of the experienced protesters, and also a person who is not afraid to ‘speak up’. He says that he always challenges the public authorities, whenever he experiences unjust systems and behavior. Viktor has been unemployed for long periods, and therefore receives social benefits. In return, he is obliged to participate in various activation and training programmes for unemployed people. This is often very tedious work, and he describes several cases where he has quarreled with his public employer. Viktor shows – like many other activists – a clear disdain for authorities. It becomes especially clear when he tells about how he started something like a personal battle between himself and a job consultant employed in the municipality where he lived. He came to take pride in annoying the man that he describes as a ‘bailiff’ sort of person and mobilized the other unemployed in the municipality to do activities
that somehow hindered their efforts to activate them. He also demonstrates a lack of faith in politicians: ‘That accession through the system, it corrupts you. You rot, lose your humanity and the touch with society outside of parliament’.

Even though he is not ideologically engaged in politics (neither leftist nor right wing oriented), he has been engaged in various political issues. His interest in Occupy started when he realized that something interesting was going on in the US. He learned about this from fellow internet bloggers who reported from Zuccotti Park. He noticed that the Danish press did not report on the Occupy Wall Street movement, and therefore he began to produce his own videos on the movement and posted them on Facebook. Quite suddenly a lot of Danes ‘liked’ the group and the posts with all the new information about the upcoming movement, and then everything moved very fast: Interviews on national television and the big demonstration at the city hall square October 15th. ‘I was very active those days, journalists called me constantly’. However, Viktor did not participate in establishing the camp at the city hall square, and he expresses some irritation at many of the groups who suddenly gathered around the camp. He would have liked to see Occupy Copenhagen as a kind of umbrella organization: ‘the only thing I wanted was to find common ground’, but soon there was such a big jumble of different people, groups and views that he lost spirit. (Interview: Victor).

_Lasse_

Lasse is a relatively new member of Occupy. He stumbled across the movement as he was traveling with his company in the US. He is 31 years of age and lives near the centre of Copenhagen with his girlfriend who is a student at the university. Lasse holds a master in science, and since his university days he has been working at a successful high tech company.

Although working in a successful business company, Lasse was critical towards the capitalist system. Like many of the occupiers he also expressed a lack of faith in authorities. Much of his professional frustrations could stem from the fact that others can control much of how and in what ways he works: ‘It quickly became an experience of how somebody else came and dictated how your life must be’. This also becomes clear when he himself is asked to characterize an occupier: ‘You are interested in society. You like to discuss, you like to research stuff. You have little faith in authorities, and don’t like people telling you what to do. You are ambitious and want to achieve something.’ (Interview: Lasse)
4.2 Entering the movement

Motivation for participating was especially significant for many of those who already had the experience of participating in other demonstrations. Also, it played a great role that everyone could follow the movement’s development - in Denmark and in other countries around the world - on various Facebook sites. This gave the feeling of being part of a truly global movement.

Among the respondents, there were three different ways to enter the Occupy movement. The first way into the movement is through other social or political networks. In particular, several of the activists refer to the Zeitgeist movement as their primary experience before entering the Occupy movement. Some of the activists were also engaged in left-wing organizations. The second way in was literally by following close friends or partners; and the third way was more individual - typically because they heard about the movement, found information - first on the web (Facebook group), and then engaged themselves by showing up at events and demonstrations.

Common to all were processes of identity construction. Joining the Occupy movement meant a change in identity salience hierarchy or for some the creation of a new identity all together. Three different processes can be found among the members.

Viktor, Lasse and Peter joined as part of an *identity extension*. They had already created a diagnostic framing akin to the one promoted by Occupy. The movement gave them a chance to extend their identity from society critics to society critical activists.

Viktor had in ‘the last five years uploaded videos to YouTube. It is videos where I talk about the big political issues, human rights and that sort of stuff.’ Through these videos Viktor had made a lot of online friends among fellow bloggers who shared many of his ideas. It was these people who told him about the occupation of Zuccotti Park. This made him join the Danish branch: ‘Their policy was very similar to mine, that’s why I started.’

For Victor activism is more about the protest. What really motivates him seems to be ‘the battle’: ‘I don’t like [it when it gets too political] I want to be on the barricades to fight, that’s what I like to do’ (Interview: Viktor). He does not show signs of being able to compromise. On the contrary he explains how he is unable to be a part of a political party – simply because nobody completely agrees with him.

Lasse joined the movement later, but the process was somewhat similar. He stumbled across the movement on a business trip to Boston. Meeting likeminded people inspired him to take the leap and become an active part of the movement: ‘I had really spent a lot of time researching these things during the winter. It is a rare thing to find somebody, who has thought...
about the same kind of things. That was nice. (...) It is very liberating to walk the streets with signs saying that society is pissing on the earth, right.’

The social dimension means a lot to many of the members. Lasse believes that many may have felt a bit ‘isolated’ before becoming part of the movement. He also tells that he has been trapped ‘in a blind alley several times... You can easily feel more isolated, when you are critical towards the system’. (Interview: Lasse)

Peter went through a transformative process four years before he joined the Occupy movement: ‘In 2007 I had my awakening and then for four years I walked around, almost alone, with these thoughts. I really alienated a lot of people. A lot.’ The ‘awakening’ made him quit his job and creates a new identity as society critic – an identity transformation. This was followed by a long, frustrated period were Peter searched for a way to express his new identity. A chance that came along, when Peter came across the city hall square:

(...) then I ended up joining Occupy. That was definitely the right place for me to go. (...) We do not think in terms of boxes. We are more like: let’s see what we have. We have a giant planet with a vast amount of resources. We have plenty for everybody; we do not have to fear a thing. (Interview: Peter)

For Thea joining the movement was a more radical process. Her identity transformation came about when she joined the movement. She was looking for a new identity after abruptly moving away from her maternal home: ‘Something had to happen, something was brewing, and that’s how I had felt for the last couple of months. I couldn’t just like ... It’s like when I am at a place, where I’m done being there, this restlessness comes along. It’s like I am about to fly off any second.’ Finally, Thea had the chance to become someone who does not do ‘what you usually do’. The Occupy members were ‘experts’ in making their own life choices, and she wanted to be a part of them (Interview: Thea).

Charles followed a different pattern. He had already found a diagnostic and prognostic frame to subscribe to within the Zeitgeist movement. When Occupy emerged he saw a chance to use identity amplification to strengthen the identity he had been developing within Zeitgeist. Here he felt he had learned the answers to a lot of the questions the protestors were raising. He saw a chance to play a key role in the new movement:

Then the Occupy demonstration comes along (...) a bunch of people think it [the same questions] is interesting. (...) The exciting part was that we were dealing with a movement that was asking a lot of questions, but did not have the answers. (...) I had like skipped the first phase and found the solutions beforehand. (Interview: Charles)
It does not seem that Charles joined because he wanted Zeitgeist to infiltrate the Occupy movement. He rather thought that he could use his own knowledge to help Occupy grow: ‘It was decided that Zeitgeist would not join as a name, but should just be present. Occupy was not supposed to share the attitudes of Zeitgeist’. Zeitgeist Denmark is like Occupy Copenhagen a movement consisting of ‘something like 20’ key activists. According to Charles, only a few from Zeitgeist joined Occupy: ‘The people in Zeitgeist are not the types who want to sit freezing at the City Hall square; they just don’t believe that’s the right way to spread the message’.

Charles’ motivation for joining the movement is similar to many other activists. He simply wants to create a better world for the coming generations:

But the whole motivation is for the sake of my children, it should be everyone’s duty to ensure that the society you leave for your children is better than the one you are born in. It should be a duty that you have to fight for a better world for the next generation. (Interview: Charles).

This way of explaining motivation is also reflected by many of the other activists, especially by those who are also concerned about environmental issues and climate problems.

4.3 The meetings
Contrary to many other political movements, developing some kind of hierarchy, and representative principle in its decision taking, many of the meetings in the Occupy movement were supposedly guided by the principle of a leaderless horizontal participatory democracy where no one has more power or authority than others, and where all can be heard, or their views and feelings expressed through different hand signals. These kinds of meetings are oriented towards consensus and decisions are not to be based on voting. Here the ambition is to reach a decision by a joint effort by all those who participate in the meeting. The idea also reflects a belief that consensus democracy is a kind of shared creative process, which stimulates the development of common ideas. Much of the inspiration for these ideas and alternative ways of organizing came from the Occupy Wall Street in New York, and the basic principles were distributed in a small pamphlet by one of the activists:

We address a problem, ask for participants’ enthusiasm, ideas and concerns about it and compose a proposal that best serves everyone’s vision. We carefully listen to everyone’s opinions and weave them into a whole – this is a living proof that each of us is important. But to get consensus to function, we must also be flexible, and sometimes be willing to let go. Consensus means that your opinion is heard, but that does not necessarily mean that you will get your will. When everyone is involved in drafting of an
action, we all have a sense of commitment and responsibility. Unity is not unanimous, and in consensus democracy there is room for disagreement, for objections, reservations, for people to step aside and not participate. (Occupy CPH, May12, pamphlet by Jacob Garde⁷)

The researchers attended some of these meetings as part of the fieldwork, and it was interesting to observe that participants were very conscious of following and living out these principles. At least in the beginning everyone tried to be open and to listen to each other. It was noticed that there was a sense of mutual understanding and tolerance of different views and interests. On the other hand it was apparent that a few key members were far more vocal than the rest. Also, it was the same prominent members who most actively used the Occupy hand signals to influence the meetings. It seemed an informal hierarchy were established among the members and became visible during the meetings. Something a former member commented:

What the Occupy movement does is not to recognize the need for appropriate structures. Because of that they get shadow structures. They are very, very powerful, like an informal network of agreements and mutual understanding among key players, who control everything. (Interview: Thorbjørn)

Often some of these meetings also lasted for a very long time, and had no clear progression towards a joint decision. Some experienced these meetings as true deliberation (in the Habermasian sense), while others eventually became frustrated because there was not always a transparent agenda, and because it became ‘too academic’. Furthermore, when no one - formally - had the authority to conclude, it became difficult to make final decisions. Another major problem, according to some of the respondents, was the lack of continuity in terms of who participated in the meetings.

It was striking that the members shared the idea that having these sorts of meetings was something that required practice. All lot of energy was used explaining the system to new members turning up for their first meeting. A point of controversy during the meetings was time and time again the role of the moderator. At one meeting Peter, doing the role, was accused of being too involved in the discussion and sidetracking the agenda, when he was speaking (Field observations: Occupy meeting, Bolsjefabrikken, December 13th, 2012). Later on, how he experienced this critic was also discussed:

⁷ See http://foraarsrevolution.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/occupymagasin_maj12.pdf)
(... at the meeting where you were present and I was moderator. That is exactly what happened there. Where John commented on me commenting too much. I hadn’t even considered it. In that regard we are good at being critical towards each other. I wrote him a mail, when I got home: cool you did it, man. (Interview: Peter)

At a later, and bigger, meeting Peter was once again performing the role of moderator. At this meeting a lot of new members had turned up. Many of the new participants did nothing to stick to the speaker’s list. When Peter tried to enforce it he was met by accusations of being manipulative, taking control of the agenda and, by one young guy, of being part of the secret Illuminati order that according to him had infiltrated the Occupy movement. Here it became apparent that there was a clash between the promise of hierarchy-free meetings made to the new members and the wish from the more experienced members to get the agenda flowing and having a more focused meeting.

4.4 What is the problem? Collective and individual diagnoses

The Occupy Wall Street slogan ‘we are the 99 per cent’ was effective because it was easy to understand and provided a sharp indictment of an unjust society. It made a great impact because it quickly spread across countries and cities. The slogan supported a diagnostic frame, which emphasized the fundamentally skewed distribution of wealth, and at the same time it also contains support for a prognostic frame because it implied that there was an overwhelming majority that by joint force had the power to ‘occupy’ and change the ruling system. The American part of the movement was also relatively focused when it came to the diagnosis of causes of the problem, namely the financial industry and its abuse of power.

When it is considered how the Danish Occupy movement developed, it appears that the very broad outreach also became a challenge in terms of creating and maintaining a shared identity and a shared goal. It was also noticeable how much activists and people on the Danish Facebook groups tried to describe Occupy as a broad, nonpolitical movement that could encompass the entire 99 percent. This was a challenge because at the same time many participants saw the greatest allies in the revolutionary left-wing movements (Socialist Youth Front and International Socialists), and some also plead for accepting and tolerating right wing nationalists and people belonging to less well-known movements such as the Zeitgeist movement. The only difference seemed to be that Occupy did not talk in ‘isms’ although they agreed of criticizing the financial system.

In this regard a variety of sub-frames seem to have developed within the movement; an observation that several of the members themselves pointed towards in the interviews.
Thorbjørn was part of the first demonstration and the following meetings at the city hall square. He decided not to get actively involved, however, as he found many of the sub-frames to be out of touch with reality:

> When you take a closer look, there are all of these subcultures that forge sort of an unholy alliance from a bunch of different concerns. From this you get a mish-mash of ideas, many simply loony. (Interview: Thorbjørn)

Thea participated in the occupation and stayed in the camp until the end. She also points to the diversity in terms of world views:

> (...) Some said that Occupy was leftist. I would say that it would be a very imprecise description. (Thea laughs) There were simply way too many forms of ideas and ideologies. (Interview: Thea)

During the observations ongoing online discussions among the site administrators of the Occupy Denmark Facebook page were also followed. This page was used to link to and comment on various news articles that pointed towards problems in society. Here the disagreements about what constituted ‘Occupy-related problems’ were constantly present and the discussions tended to become rather emotional and, from time to time, personal.

### 4.5 Prognostic framing – solutions for a better world

As mentioned in the theoretical section movements’ prognostic frames indicate possible solutions to societal problems, or plans of how to deal with the problem. It has been indicated that the diversity of the movement also implies a range of challenges concerning the main objectives of the movement. Among the respondents quite different world views have been identified, and also a certain diversity when it comes to their own diagnoses of the problems. Some of the respondents have still not connected their ideas into a coherent picture:

> Resource based economy is really awesome… [later in same interview] I don’t exactly know what resource based economy is. I can’t get into specific details, because I’m not really that much into the subject. I have just heard… (Interview: Fie)

Another striking feature was the extent to which Occupy for many of the participants became a project connected to spiritual enlightenment and personal development. The spiritually minded looked for ways not only to criticize the current state of order but also to develop ideas about a better world. Some of them took ideas from various schools of thought and weaved them into their own patchwork of thoughts and ideas:
It opens up an entirely new universe, with concepts like reincarnation, where we are all natural and connected to all life in the universe in a cosmic dance, and materialism itself is a blind alley ... This would have effects everywhere in society. (Interview: Peter)

Our respondents point to the need to develop a society where greater attention is being paid to the environment and natural resources. Some of them emphasize repeatedly the need to develop environmentally friendly technologies. They feel the need for a sustainable and resource-based economy. As already mentioned, the main obstacle is both the political and the economic system. When the two systems are mentioned at the same time, it is because (according to several respondents) that these systems are closely linked. Therefore, there are also several who say that the systems should be broken down, however without making specific suggestions as to what should replace them.

Well, I see a world for me where we begin to take some responsibility (...), and together we create a sustainable world. And we cannot do that with the monetary system we have now. I dream of a resource-based economy, where we produce enough for everyone and everything because we have the technology and we have the resources to do so. The only way I see it, the only reason we do not have it right now, is because there are some who just think profit. (Interview: Ove)

It is not unusual, to find different goals and visions - and different ways of expressing them in social movements. Likewise, it is not unusual that it may be difficult for some of its members to articulate clear and straightforward goals. It can be argued, however, that it is striking that the research established that a great deal of resentment about the lack of a unifying vision among the activists. This is particularly evident among some of the former members of the movement:

If you actually ask the Occupy movement – or at least parts of it – the narcissistic and childish part of the movement, what they really want? Then they will not tell you. They like to shout and scream at the Queen and all the politicians – and destroy all institutions and make a world revolution, but in fact they don’t know what they want – and what should replace it. (Interview: Thorbjørn)

The view is also supported by current key members who understand the criticism of the group not moving beyond the diagnostic framing. For him it is natural and understandable, because the members need time to move beyond all of the hopelessness and disappointment the current system has given them:
[The Occupy members] keep discussing in the same way. It becomes a group of complainers. As Martin (...) puts it: it’s fucking circle jerk. I agree to a very large extent. It is one big round of circle jerk and it can seem completely pointless and stupid. And I understand that. Because there are so many frustrations. There are so many things to be annoyed about and we have all taken severe [emotional] beatings. (Interview: Peter)

4.6 Dissolution of the movement

As suggested at the beginning of this report the research also wanted to explore how the Danish Occupy movement evolved and finally dissolved. The question of dissolution, is however not a trivial question. Partly contrary to any start up phase of a movement, the dissolution or the end of a movement is in many ways harder to describe and explain. Firstly, there is the question of how to establish the criteria used: Is it the number of activities; is it the number of sympathizers? One can of course look at the movement's visibility and presence in the public media. Evidence suggests that there is some correlation between media attention and popular support and commitment.

After quite some time without any serious media attention, something unexpected happened for the Danish Occupy movement. The biggest bank in Denmark, Danske Bank, launched a promotional campaign for their new strategy called ‘New Normal - New Standards’. In its effort to give a more dynamic and responsive image of the bank, its campaign video presented pictures of public demonstrations, including Occupy protesters. This however triggered a reaction: some of the most notable activists were outraged that the Occupy movement involuntarily was used in a commercial video, and publicly raised heavy criticism of the bank. The bank tried responded by inviting Occupy to a meeting with official representatives of the bank in order to comply with their own new strategy. The managing director of the bank apologized for using images from the Occupy movement’s protests against the financial industry.

Almost immediately after the meeting with Danske Bank, December 19th a few of the core Occupy activists gave interviews, referring to the bank in positive terms. They proclaimed that the bank now had given a number of important concessions and promised to implement three initiatives in order to reduce the impact of the debt and financial crises. These included reimbursing the state for the bailouts it received, as well as phasing out all derivatives that speculate on, and destabilize food prices. However, the information launched by the Occupy activists turned out to be deliberately untrue, forcing the bank to make a public retraction of the (false) concessions. Later the activists admitted that the statement had been made up.
This campaign generated a lot of visibility to the general public, and possibly this episode also contributed to greater and broader recognition of Occupy’s efforts to raise the public awareness about banks and their involvement in many of the operations leading to the financial crisis. However, as the Occupy movement again dissolved from the public media agenda, there were also fewer and fewer people who spontaneously engaged in the movement’s activities. Fewer people joined the meetings and fewer turned up for the demonstrations. In addition, of course, the physical manifestation, namely the camp on the town hall square, was no longer present as a meeting place and symbolic manifestation of the movement.

In one of the interviews Ove expressed his quiet frustration about the disintegration of the movement:

We have a core of 10-15 people that are the ones who are really active and besides that there are really a lot of people. A lot ... and, eh, well we’ve been a little flighty lately because we all went out to find ourselves ... I went on working while some others were like ... out of it. They were on their travels. And so I tried to be the one who helped keeping the threads together. Now let’s do these things, let’s get on ....! But no one did anything, so we’re just about 4-5 people coming to the meetings ... , and only two of us who did something real. During the last few months in the movement, there has been a bit [pause] quiet. We also have a website that is too messy and not very clear.

(Interview: Ove).

Ove still sympathizes with the movement; however he also expresses a certain sadness of the loss of the collective enthusiasm. This feeling also corresponds with other respondents, who realize that it has become very difficult to motivate and mobilize people. There still seems to be some kind of interest – at least there are still active discussions going on in the Facebook groups, but it is increasingly difficult to mobilize people off-line.

However, not all of the activists were quiet about their frustrations with the movement. One of the key activists and a former administrator of the Occupy Denmark website, Filip Stadler, openly announced that he has chosen to leave the movement. In an interview given to the Danish leftist news site Modkraft.dk he stated that the Occupy movement in Denmark was ‘mentally paralyzed and has started to isolate itself from the 99 percent of the population it claims to represent’. According to Filip, the reason is that an increasing number of the movement’s core activists seem to be more concerned with issues like the ‘truth’ about the 9-11 terrorist attack in New York, free marijuana, messages from the Zeitgeist movement, and Chemtrails - the notion that the trails left by airplanes consist of airborne chemical material used to control the consciousness of the population - than the current political and economic
situation. As a consequence the Danish part of the Occupy movement is about to ‘eat itself up in conspiracy theories’ (Filip Stadler in Modkraft, February 18th, 2013).

‘The split and the chaos have shown that the most decent thing we can do is to recommend activists to engage in more focused and defined projects that are not quite as spacious because otherwise they will simply be taken over by people who see reptiles and shape shifters all over, and therefore remove the focus from the other issues.’ (Filip Stadler in Modkraft.dk, February 18th, 2013)

Members also expressed that Occupy meetings gradually became more and more unproductive. One of the problems were meetings with apparently very open agendas, which allowed people, as witnessed during the fieldwork, to express themselves about various dubious theories about conspiracies and spiritual and religious subjects:

We had really exciting meetings, but the problem was that it quickly became a bit too intellectual and vague instead of talking about solutions ... The meetings became very slow and lasted for hours, which caused many to leave the movement. The stubborn ones who kept showing up were all the loonies. All of these conspiracy people... People talking about Chemtrails, New World Order and Illuminati and I could keep going... (Interview: Charles).

Based on participation in meetings and demonstrations, and qualitative interviews with current and former activists, it seems that these very different cultures and interests have been latent in Occupy from the very beginning of the movement. In other words, for better or worse, the very pluralistic culture in the Danish Occupy made it difficult to create and maintain a common identity of the movement. In the view of the researchers, this also meant that it became increasingly difficult to recruit and assemble activists around a common ‘diagnosis’ of the problems in society.

Today, there is still a Facebook page for the Danish Occupy movement, but it is clear that there is a quite large amount of comments dealing with issues far beyond political, economic and financial problems in society. Perhaps it is also symptomatic of the movement’s development that its symbolic signature today is a human head with contours of the brain, and the slogan ‘Occupy your mind - the revolution begins from within.’
5. Conclusion

This report has explored activist’s and former activist’s experiences of the development and dissolution of the Danish Occupy movement. It concludes that the Occupy movement’s high degree of diversity in terms of its overall goals have prevented the construction of a shared movement identity. One of the report’s observations has been that it became increasingly difficult to recruit and mobilize new participants. The variety of approaches to the movement’s goals and strategies are reflected in on-line discussions on social media like Facebook, but also expressed at the off-line meetings.

Based on the interviews, it appears that most of the respondents experienced a great deal of enthusiasm in the fall of 2011. However, already from the start of the movement participants had very diverse opinions concerning the goals and strategies of the movement. Gradually the optimistic mood was replaced by skepticism and internal criticism. Some of the former core activists became frustrated because other movements and groups apparently were using the Occupy movement as a base. This frustration also mirrored the different views concerning the question of who ‘we’ are. For some of the activists the slogan ‘we are the 99 per cent’ meant that no one or no voices - by principle - should be excluded from participating. However in order to comply with this inclusive strategy, it was also necessary to stay focused on the criticism of the financial system, and avoid too many other political agendas. This dilemma somewhat resembled the classic question of how to tolerate the intolerant. In the Occupy movement this certainly became a challenge when politically left wing sympathizers criticized the ‘conspiracy thinkers’ like the people with roots in the Zeitgeist movement.

We stated initially, that social movements ‘derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life and, on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living’ (Blumer [1939] 1969). In seems that Occupy succeeded in deriving an enormous amount of motivation and widespread motivation from their overarching diagnostic frame. This caused a great number of people to invest much energy and will in the occupation of the city hall square. The movement became the vehicle of change that many society critics had for long hoped to find and join. Through identity construction the members extended, amplified or transformed their identity into occupiers.

In the long run the diversity of the members obstructed the aim to create a common wish and hope for a new system of living. Rather, the movement became a jungle of different ideas and paradigms. This left many members alienated and disappointed.
We do not claim that it is possible to provide a complete and thorough explanation of why the movement was relatively short-lived. This would not only require more extensive analyses of the movement inflow of various resources, and the relationships with Occupy groups in other cities around the world; but also studies of the extent to which media and political institutions have limited and perhaps even prevented the movement from mobilizing and gaining attention in the wider public. With regard to the latter perspective, it should however be noted that the Danish case study describes a movement that operates within the framework of a relatively open and non-repressive political system.

6. Future analysis

Based on the findings in this report, it is recommended to give more attention to the importance of the diversity of groups and agendas have had on the development of the movement. An interesting theme relates to the pluralistic and perhaps anarchist culture in the movement, and its impact on recruitment and mobilization of members and activists.

The Occupy movement must be characterized as a global movement, in the sense that, at its inception, it was based on a thorough critique of the financial world’s power and abuse thereof. The global perspective is also supported by the fact that Occupy groups from different cities all around the globe, were inspired by each other and learned from each other. The issue of mutual transnational inspiration is obvious to explore in relation to the Myplace project.

Since the case study – the Occupy movement - mainly is based on studies in Copenhagen, and not in the WP4 and WP5 research sites in Odense, the most promising direction for further analysis will be cross-case studies which compare Occupy with left-wing political organizations. It may be especially interesting to study possible similarities and differences with regard to the activists’ perceptions of societal transformation, including their views on revolutions. So far it has been noted that activists in these different organizations differ with regard to their ways of legitimating activities that challenge and undermine the existing political system. Furthermore, their views on which political means to be taken are also interesting to explore.
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Information, October 15th, 2011 [http://www.information.dk/282220](http://www.information.dk/282220)

Key web pages:
- [https://www.facebook.com/RealDemocracyNowDenmark](https://www.facebook.com/RealDemocracyNowDenmark)
- [https://www.facebook.com/OccupyDenmark](https://www.facebook.com/OccupyDenmark)
- [https://www.facebook.com/groups/OccupyDenmark/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/OccupyDenmark/)
Appendix

Event history – critical junctures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 17th, 2011</td>
<td>Demonstrations in New York, camp in Zucotti park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15th, 2011</td>
<td>Demonstrations in Copenhagen, Odense and Aarhus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15th, 2011</td>
<td>Setting up camp in the City Hall Square of Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 21st, 2011</td>
<td>Third and final clearing of the camp by police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12th, 2012</td>
<td>‘The Spring Revolution’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19th, 2012</td>
<td>Debate with Danish Bank – media rebirth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 27th, 2012</td>
<td>September 27th, Christianshavns Beboerhus, Copenhagen, Preparation meeting with the ‘October 2nd Initiative’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2nd, 2012</td>
<td>Activists common bus transport from Odense to the demo in Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2nd, 2012</td>
<td>Demonstration for Welfare and Social Security, City Hall Square and Christiansborg Slotsplads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10th, 2012</td>
<td>Follow-up meeting with the October 2nd Initiative, Christianshavns beboerhus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13th, 2012</td>
<td>The Copenhagen Global Noise demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 13th, 2012</td>
<td>Occupy meeting, Bolsjefabrikken, Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 9th, 2013</td>
<td>Occupy meeting, private home, Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6th, 2013</td>
<td>Occupy meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Occupy Interviewing Schedule (personal face-to-face interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Question(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal background/bio</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upbringing/background</td>
<td>Please, tell me about yourself and your background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction/recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you become attracted to this movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How were you recruited?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What events have meant much for your commitment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are your parents and family aware of your engagement in the movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is their attitude towards your involvement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>What are the biggest problems in society, as you see it today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you give examples of how these problems are reflected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probe: When did these things become a problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How was society before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prognostic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think should be done about these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational</td>
<td>What do you think motivates activists to engage?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Movement organisation | Entering  | How did you become part of the movement?  
| | | Probe: What attracted you?  
| Development/changes |  | Please describe for me, how did the movement develop?  
| Organisation and structure |  | How is the movement organised?  
| Members |  | How many members of the Danish part of the movement?  
| | | Probe: Who, where do they come from?  
| | | How did the group change over time?  
| Meetings |  | Can you please describe how a particularly good meeting works in your movement?  
| Challenges |  | What kind of challenges do you see for the movement?  
| Hierarki |  | Is some kind of hierarchy inside the inside the movement, in spite of its apparently flat structure?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>What do you see as the movements’ main purpose and goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has the movement’s values changed during the period of its existence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Please describe some of the specific cases which you have spent much time discussing among the group of activists?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have there been any turning points during the existence of the movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please describe some of the great successes you’ve had in the movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitmen</td>
<td>Are there cases in which there has been disagreement in your movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you disseminate/propagate the movement's major messages to the surrounding world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you recruit new members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the main obstacles when recruiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and motivation</td>
<td>How do you motivate and train new activists?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponents</td>
<td>Who do you think are the movement’s main opponents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation / culture</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How would you describe your relationship with the other activists in the movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditions and rituals (affirming)</strong></td>
<td>Do you have any traditions or rituals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion</strong></td>
<td>Is there anything that can lead to exclusion of the movement (acts, values)? Probe: How and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Types of activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What types of activities are used in the movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is your experience with different types of activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Internet</strong></td>
<td>What impact has the Internet had for your movement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence</strong></td>
<td>Do any of you participate in violent conflicts with other groups? Leftist or right-wing activists? The police?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state</td>
<td>How do you see the role of police in today’s society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks (national and international)</td>
<td>Which allies does the movement have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probe: National and international allies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>