Fighting over Meaning:
Occupy Wall Street in American
Mass Media and Occupiers’ Media

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Abstract

In late 2011, Occupy Wall Street (OWS) grabbed the attention of American mass media. Media coverage on the anti-capitalist movement was mixed, some was positive and the majority was negative. Using Robert Entman’s framing theory, this paper provides a framing analysis of the OWS movement from mass media and occupiers’ media. Content analysis of news articles published by three different media platforms demonstrates that media framing of the OWS by both mass and occupiers’ media differs in terms of reporting and news focus. The difference results from the ideological streams of the three media in connection with respective political and socioeconomic interests. Despite the help of the internet that enables social movements to create alternative media for message distribution and follower mobilization, yet they are still lack of loyal fans and legitimacy. Nonetheless, alternative media such as that of the OWS are able to fight over meaning of social movement issues through the creation and dissemination of counter frames and disrupt the hegemonic power of mass media in framing social movements.

Kata kunci/Keywords:
Pembingkaian media, Occupy Wall Street, gerakan social, media massa, media alternatif

Media framing, Occupy Wall Street, social movements, mass media, alternative media

Introduction

Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?

On Sept 17, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street (Writers for the 99%, 2011).

The above advertisement from a Vancouver-based magazine, Adbusters, which was released on 13 July 2011, brought thousands of people to Zuccotti Park in New York City to take part in an anti-capitalist protest called Occupy Wall Street (OWS). The OWS officially took place on 17 September 2011, a movement that was inspired by a revolutionary ‘Tahrir’ protest in Egypt and an austerity ‘May 15’ movement
in Spain (Adi, 2015). In its practice, however, the OWS was quite different from those two movements or any other protest that ‘the occupiers’, the people who join the protest, made encampments and occupied certain places as a base for their actions and place to live. The OWS received mixed reaction from mass media signifying the interdependence of social movements and mass media. While a social movement like the OWS needs mass media coverage for amplifying their voices, mass media need them to create news events for their audiences (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2012). Such mutualism however, is not totally objective as well as without hidden agenda because all mass media are biased, either culturally or ideologically (Wolfsfeld, 2011, p. 47). Given this fact, I consider it is important to analyze how mass media represent and frame the OWS across media platforms during the first three weeks since the movement kicked off. Such an analysis is vital not only for the purpose of comparison but also for examining framing patterns of each media on a movement that is still in its early progress.

A large body of scholarship has been devoted to the studies of the OWS focusing on the use and/or impact of social media (DeLuca, Lawson, & Sun, 2012; Gleason, 2013; Kavada, 2015; Penny & Dadas, 2014; Theoharis, Lowe, Van Deth, & Garcia-Albacete, 2015) and the use of the Internet (Mieleczarek, 2018; Moore, 2017; Romanos, 2016). Other studies focused on media framing of the OWS and how digital technologies were in use during the protest (Cissel, 2012; Costanza-Chock, 2012; Douai & Wu, 2014; Lenzner, 2014; Negus, 2012). While all of these studies contribute significantly to the understanding of the OWS across disciplines in the scope of media and communication research, yet a key feature of the movement has gone unnoticed. Previous research drew too much attention to social media and digital technologies with little emphasis on media framing. Framing analyses of the previous studies were also conducted on a monthly basis (Negus, 2012) as well as neglecting the powerful influence of the occupiers-run media (Cissel, 2012). Using Robert Entman’s framing theory, this paper on the other hand provides a weekly analysis in order to not only examine the framing development of the protest more closely but also contextualize the dynamics of media reporting more broadly. More specifically, this paper demonstrates that media framing of the OWS by both mass and the occupiers’ media differs in terms of reporting and news focus. The difference results from the ideological streams of the two media in connection with respective political and socioeconomic interests. This paper further argues that, despite the help of the internet that enables social movements to create alternative media for message dissemination and follower mobilization, yet they are still lack of loyal fans and legitimacy. This powerful status helps mass media secure its position on the pinnacle of influential message production and dissemination order. Nonetheless, alternative media such as that of the OWS are able to fight over meaning of social movement issues through the creation and dissemination of counter frames and disrupt the hegemonic power of mass media in framing social movements.

The analysis of this research is important to the understanding of media portrayal of a large-scale social movement. Under the slogan “We are the 99%” (Berrett, 2014), the OWS is undeniably one of the most significant social movements in the US history (Gaby & Caren 2016; Krieg 2016; Leonhardt 2016; Levitin 2015; Milkman et al. 2013) which gained widespread media coverage both from American and international outlets. The relationship between mass and alternative media in framing such a movement is vital to the context of Indonesia due to the widening gap of economic inequality between the rich and the poor (Suryahadi, Al Izzati, & Suryadarma, 2018; Wicaksono, Amir, & Nugroho, 2017; Yusuf, Sumner, & Rum, 2014) the increasing use of media communication technologies and the Internet (We Are Social, 2019), and the domination of oligarchs in Indonesian mass media industry (Tapsell, 2015b, 2015a, 2017). These problems may create a thriving ecosystem for the birth of the same movement1 together with its media framing battle.

Literature Review

Media and Social Movements

Messages, organizations, and leaders who do not have a presence in the media do not exist in the public mind (Castells, 2013, p. 194). What Manuel Castells argues above is neither an exaggeration nor an unfounded argument. It is a truth that the media is a very influential and powerful soft weapon in this 21st century for gathering information, processing it, and delivering it to an audience. While it is true that messages can be spread by mouth, it has to be admitted that the old-fashioned way of disseminating messages is not as effective and far-reaching as the media. The media is more centered, once it is on air a piece of information can enter

millions of minds throughout the world. Such a sophisticated feature is surely missing from the traditional mouth-to-mouth way. Given this fact, it is understandable if many corporations race to control the media because controlling the media is the same as controlling public’s minds.

Media ownership in the U.S is problematic due to fact that mass media are owned by a handful of corporations only (E. M. Noam, 2016, p. 500). There has been a trend in the U.S that giant media corporations merge with small companies for the purpose of controlling the media industry and business expansion. As a result, the market share of the so called ‘the top five’ mass media corporations, according to the data provided by Eli Noam in his book titled Media ownership and concentration in America, rose significantly from only 18% in 1992 to 42% in 2005 (Noam, 2009, p. 5-6). While Eli does not explicitly specify which media belong to the top five, they surely are among the eight big players of news corporations from which the majority of people obtain news and information in the US: Disney, AOL-Time Warner, Viacom, General Electric, News Corporation, Yahoo!, Microsoft, and Google (Shah, 2009). An infographic released by Business Insider in 2012 told the same story that the above media giants plus CBS controlled 90% of what people read, watched, and listened to every day (Lutz, 2012).

Television, newspaper, and radio are all in the hands of few major corporations. In the case of newspaper, while it is true that the newspaper industry saw a decline in circulation and number of readers since 1987, yet the decline did not last long as by 1998 as many as 492 newspapers went online for the first time in history. During this period, there were only few companies that could generate profit from the new trend until the internet changed the game. By moving online the newspaper industry no longer needed to spend money for printing and distribution because the internet provided everything for free (Compaine & Gomery, 2000). This phenomenon paves a wide way, if not becoming a milestone, for the next history of the newspaper industry. And the winners remain to be the big players, such as Time Warner whose monthly readership is 178 million and News Corp that owns three major newspapers worldwide (Lutz, 2012).

Although there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of people listening to the radio in the U.S in the past decade, 75.6 per cent Americans still listened to the radio weekly in 2018 (Statista, 2019). The radio market in the United States in 2004 was 100 per cent dominated by only six companies, namely Clear Channel Communications, Cumulus Media Inc., Disney, Emmis, Entercom Communications, and Viacom (Thinktankdask, 2004). Clear Channel now even owns 1200 stations and in Minot, North Dakota, the company owns every station (Lutz, 2012). For television, the Big Six corporations have a control of 70% in the US cable industry, a total control of 1 out of every 5 hours of television, and a monopoly of 11 U.S. markets including New York City and Chicago (Lutz, 2012). As a result to such a massive control, many have feared that the American media would do more harm than good to the American public, affecting national interest, democracy, global culture, and public opinion (Noam, 2009, p. 9). On this matter, Americans were once warned by Gerald Caplan, the former co-chair Task Force of Canadian Broadcasting Policy, about the detrimental effect of media corporatization.

“It is useful to remind ourselves that free expression is threatened not just blatantly by authoritarian governments and all those in the private sector who fear public exposure, but also more subtly by the handful of global media conglomerates that have reduced meaningful diversity of expression in much of the globe” (Dalotto, 2010, p. 62).

The huge power of mass media inevitably puts social movements under pressure when it comes to voicing their concerns and opinions. Wolfsfeld argued that social movements needed mass media much more than the reverse, although in fact they both were in need of each other (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). There are three strong factors why social movements need the media: for the purpose of ‘mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement’ (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 116). In every social movement members need to communicate with each other as well as with people outside their circle to attract them in order to join the movement. These two purposes are what Wolfsfeld meant by mobilization and scope enlargement, strengthening inside and reaching outside. To make this process run effectively, but yet not costly, the presence of mass media becomes very important. Social activists of course cannot tell people the same message one by one as it will definitely be a tiring process. Thus, mobilization through mass media becomes unavoidable. Mobilization and scope enlargement through mass media are still important despite the fact that the internet has now allowed social movements to establish alternative media to mobilize members. The reason is that, as argued by Wolfsfeld, most people they wish to influence are ‘part of the mass media gallery’ (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 116).

In attracting people to join their circle, at least there are three ways that social movements’ activists can do as suggested by James M. Jasper: paying them, persuading them, and coercing them (Duyvendak & Jasper, 2015, p. 11). Among these three, the last option is the most feasible as it is unethical and harmful for a movement if its activists choose the other two options. To be successful with the last option activists need the media, given its tremendous power, influence, and loyal audience. It is also crucial for movements to get their true messages received by those outside their circle in order to ‘generate momentum’
(Duyvendak & Jasper, 2015, p. 275). To make this momentum happen protesters need to campaign their voices to as many people as possible in order to grow bigger.

In addition, mass media also play an important part in persuading ‘bystander publics’ – people who do not participate in a social movement but are typically critical about its progress – to join a movement. It is important for social movements to persuade ‘bystander publics’ including educated figures for getting their support. As argued by Noam Chomsky, indoctrinating educated people were very effective through invisible propaganda system, such as media and magazines (Chomsky, 2004, p. 474-475). Well-educated figures are even more important because they usually have numerous fans and followers. Thus, once they make their stance on an issue, it is very probable that their followers will voice the same. Again, to make this happen successfully the role of the media is crucial for collecting the opinions, packaging them, and delivering them to the public. If a movement reported by mass media has the potential to harm the interests of bystander publics, it is highly likely that they will join a movement. On the other hand, if the media frames it as a movement of no importance to public’s interests, the public will be ignorant to it. The problem is it is sometimes the voices of the mass are different from the needs of the media. As a result, social movements’ demands are often ‘marginalized, trivialized, and misrepresented’ (Kavada, 2015).

Furthermore, the purpose of validation is the same as public approval as Wolfsfeld has stated that ‘a demonstration with no media coverage at all is a nonevent’ (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 116). This means mass media have the capacity to legitimate a demonstration turning a protest into official, real, and acceptable in the eyes of the public. The power also allows social movements, in the words of Todd Gitlin, to submit themselves ‘to the implicit rules of the newsmaking’. By this, Gitlin argued that the media had the total control to define an event, a story, and a protest (Gitlin, 2003, p. 3). Liberal media for example, which in principle oppose anti-capitalist activists, have a strategy to perform their mission by quietly invoking reform while at the same time disparaging movements that ‘radically oppose the system that needs reforming’ (Gitlin, 2003, p. 4). As a result to this, those who are active in movements tend to view mass media as non-autonomous and non-neutral actors. In their perception mass media are an integral part and even the agents of the dominant groups they are opposing (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 119).

**Media Frames**

The media are not only powerfully able to gather and deliver information but are also capable of shaping information through what Manuel Castells called ‘image-making’ (Castells, 2013, p. 193). Given the function of the media as a source of information for many people and their capability to reach people worldwide, the image-making process is crucial. The image-making process is undertaken through framing as ‘framing of the public mind is largely performed through processes that take place in the media’ (Castells, 2013, p. 157). Hence, the intention of what image that the media wish to shape in the public mind depends on the frames they have prepared and then use in their news reports. For this reason, as Gitlin puts it, frames determine ‘what exists, what happens, and what matters’ (Gitlin, 2003, p. 6).

Over the years, there have been some definitions of framing offered by different scholars, from Erving Goffman in 1974 to Robert Entman in 2004 (Entman, 2004; Goffman, 1974). While the former called it ‘schemata interpretation’ that it is used ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences (Goffman, 1974, p. 21), the definition given by Entman is quite similar. Both Goffman and Entman agreed that framing was a means of ‘packaging’ information. According to Entman:

> “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 2004: 52).

Entman further elaborated his framing concept by explaining about what he meant by problem definition, which according to him was ‘to determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits’, causal interpretation was ‘to identify forces creating the problem’, moral evaluation was ‘to evaluate causal agents and their effects’, and treatment recommendation was ‘to offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects’ (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Problem definition can be interpreted that an event can mean differently for news reporters depending on plus and minus factors. Causal interpretation is for determining the actors causing the event and what motivates the event to occur. Moral evaluation is to justify or to argue to the problem definition, and treatment recommendation is to offer solutions to the problem defined.

Media framing as argued by Castells was done ‘by the structure and form of the narrative and by the selective use of sounds and images’ (Castells, 2013, p. 156). The uses of sounds and images are intended to raise humans’ emotions due to the fact that people love audio and visual. This emotion-arousing technique, as argued by Entman, had the strongest probability to give a lasting impact because images and words were easy to remember and understand. Hence, it is understandable why news on television and in mass media assign stories to prime pages and repeat or use symbols that are familiar to the audience (Chang, 2009, p. 13). They do so to influence au-
diences’ minds so that they have particular, media-manufactured opinions about the stories being delivered. Framing is actually a negotiation over meaning as both media and movements are trying to interpret events (Gamson & Wolfsof, 1993, p. 117). They are racing against each other to create their own versions of the events to be conveyed to the public. Such an effort has to be made because events are unable to talk and have to be reported, making framing unavoidable as it allows journalists to process huge amounts of information instantly and routinely (Gitlin, 2003, p. 7).

Research Method
This research is a qualitative study using content analysis to analyse news coverage of American mass media and occupiers’ media on the OWS movement. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal represented American mass media while OccupyWallSt.org was chosen for the occupiers’ media. The three media platforms were selected given their status as representations of the contested groups or the 1% vs the 99%. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal are two of the biggest news media in the United States in terms of Mondays to Fridays’ circulation. The New York Times has a total circulation of 1,586,757 while The Wall Street Journal has 2,118,315 (Negus, 2012, p. 5). Meanwhile, OccupyWallSt.org is an independently-run website used by the Occupy Wall Street activists to voice their concerns. The website claims itself as ‘the oldest and most trusted online resource for the Occupy Movement’ (OccupyWallStreet, 2011), signifying the fact that other resources are less trusted and new comers. The time frame for the research is the first three weeks of the OWS from 17 September 2011 to 7 October 2011. The Google's Advanced Search feature and Factiva were used to derive news articles using keywords ‘Occupy Wall Street’.

Results
The results of the research are divided into three sections. The first section is a framing analysis of news articles published by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and OccupyWallSt.org in the first week of the OWS. The second section provides an analysis of each media’s framing of the movement in its second week. Finally, the third section is a final framing analysis of the third week of the movement.

Week 1
News on the OWS from the three sources, OccupyWallSt.org, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal written on the 17 September 2011 could not be traced both on Google search and Factiva. In the first week of this movement, there were only two news pieces available, they were from The New York Times under the title of Wall Street Protests Continue, With at Least 6 Ar-
tice with farmers who disguised as Indians to attack agents and landlords in the past history of America. Unlike The New York Times that included motives of the protest, though insignificantly, this article of The Wall Street Journal totally focused on criminalizing the demonstrators. The only exception was the phrase ‘the protest against U.S. banking institution’ which gave a glimpse of what the protest was all about.

Week 2

Week two was the first week that news from OccupyWallSt.org could be accessed. In this week the frames of the occupiers-run website were police brutality, the growing number of protesters, non-violent demonstration, group solidarity, and empowering the demonstrators with brain supplements.

The narratives of the news released by OccupyWallSt.org clearly revealed the message they wished to deliver to the world with phrases, such as ‘from 99 percent’ or a sentence reading ‘We live in a world where only 1 percent of us are protected and served’. In reporting police brutality the website included provocative images and videos portraying how some demonstrators were ruthlessly penned, detained, and tackled by blue-collar and white-collar police officers. Interestingly, the demand of the protesters were not only to urge Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly to resign but also to invite other officers to join the protest as they, according to the protesters, belonged to the 99 per cent group.

While confidently admitting that the change they proposed was in progress with a growing number of people joining the OWS movement, yet the protesters were still open for criticism. When a writer for The International Business Times wrote that the movement should have specific demands and actions from important people in the Wall Street, the protesters’ website soon invited all of its members to identify who should speak on their behalf. The protesters also included Martin Luther King Junior’s six words on non-violent protest. The inclusion together with the making of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi as role models implied a message that they were protesting the same tyranny as the two great leaders. Therefore, they had a high chance to accomplish their mission successfully. By doing this, the protesters hoped their message could travel more widely and influence more people to support their movement. Moreover, to expand their coverage, the protesters had an initiative to create a newsletter. The newsletter, as described on the website, was important to inform the public and for recruitment. By doing so, the website has functioned well as a base for not only mobilization but also scope enlargement.

In the second week of the protest, The New York Times still focused its news frames on issues that were aimed to criminalize the protesters. In its 7 news articles released during this week, the frames were focused on protesters’ lack of permit to occupy the Union Square, the frustrated protesters, and pepper spraying against the protesters. The New York Times insisted that while the protesters looked harmless, they still broke the law and could potentially cause a serious problem to the police. The paper also accused that those involving in the protest were ‘uninformed’ and ‘seem unorganized’ thus arresting them could be justifiable. Such a technique of news reporting aimed to direct readers’ attention from the main issue. Moreover, pepper spraying undertaken by a police officer named Inspector Bologna was implicitly defended by the paper saying it was for the safety of officers. This statement was misleading as the protest was non-violent and the protesters did not bring weapons with them.

In addition, The New York Times accused the protest being not a serious demonstration owing to the fact that some of the people joining the movement came for no clear reasons. Furthermore, The New York Times was also trying to build an argument that the protesters were in fact a group of hypocrites; being anti-corporate while at the same time using products made by the corporations they protest. Such framing was made because some of the protesters used Apple computers during the protest. In fact, what they protested was not corporations, but the way they were run and the huge power they possessed. This strategy was adopted to abuse the protesters’ dignity in voicing their concerns in the movement, and for this case The New York Times has done a great job. Furthermore, The New York Times clearly stood by the one percent population discourse that, by quoting Mayor Bloomberg, the protesters should be thankful to the banks as they deserved to have respect from protesters like Vietnam War veterans did.

The Wall Street Journal released two news articles for this week two, one of which was about pepper-spraying by Inspector Bologna and the other was about the occupation of Lower Manhattan Park by the occupiers. The case of The Wall Street Journal for this week was unique that the two news articles spoke for different sides. The news on pepper-spraying concluded that Bologna’s decision in using the pepper spray was justifiable for the safety of the officers. The people joining the OWS remained to be seen negatively by The Wall Street Journal, describing them with inappropriate framing, such as marching ‘without permit’ and ‘filling streets and blocking traffic’ to corrupt their legitimacy. Furthermore, The Wall Street Journal was also still hiding the true ‘anti-capitalist’ message of the OWS by focusing its reporting on pepper spray that was in use by Bologna during the protest. The other article on the other hand, provided a sympathetic reporting of the movement by voicing their concerns on what they considered the unfair system of American capitalism. Yet the article did not use strong words to support the movement but
rather a more general, non-inflammatory style of reporting. Furthermore, the article also implicitly emphasized the illegal aspect of the movement and how the movement has had clashes with the police.

**Week 3**

The main frames of OccupyWallSt.org in week three were still the same as the previous week that they condemned greed and inequality around the world. The so called 1%, in their opinion, has stolen the American dream as exemplified by the case of General Electric. Although General Electric made record profit in the previous year, the company did not pay federal tax and did not create jobs in the US. The website also convinced people of other nations that they too were under exploitation and oppression. Thus, they needed to voice supports for the OWS. Other frames of the week were about protesters’ demand for the $20 minimum wage, tax exemption on student loans, and taking advantage of water cannon.

_The New York Times_ produced a considerable amount of news on the OWS in week 3. Interestingly, most frames of the news were empathetically positive for the occupiers, such as the insistence that the protest was too big to ignore, reform on the banks was needed, the overreaction of the police, and issues on inequality. Nevertheless, in some of its reports the paper still argued that the protest was still with no clear agenda. Similarly, _The Wall Street Journal_ also used the same strategy in its news coverage. Some of the news voiced support for the protesters, whereas some others still framed the protesters as disruptors who came over to the Zuccotti Park merely for having fun. Yet, the way the paper packaged some of the positive news was still indirect by putting more emphasis on subjects outside protest, such as news reporting about the filmmaker Mateo Gil and Radiohead hoax show news. The more amounts of coverage and positive reporting made by the seemingly-liberal _The New York Times_ and _The Wall Street Journal_ are admittedly a rare phenomenon even for an OWS Press Team, Mark Bray. In his twelve-year political organizing experience such a reporting is ‘unprecedented’ (Bray, 2012, p. 6), proving the waning power of mass media in dominating news frames and agenda and the growing influence of ‘alternative’ media such as the _OccupyWallSt.org_ in voicing protesters’ demands.

**Discussion**

**Fighting over Meaning**

Both mass and the occupiers’ media are fighting over meaning of the OWS. Each camp is struggling to interpret the phenomenon and voice their interpretations to win public support. Such roles are crucial not only for merely conveying what is happening to the public but also for frame building, and for the long term turning the built frames into a dominant force. Dominant frames are accepted frames that are considered the true pictures of an event. For the case of the OWS, frame building between mass and the occupiers’ media occurred since the very beginning of the movement. As demonstrated in the previous analysis, _The New York Times_ and _The Wall Street Journal_ built security frames that aimed to denigrate the movement. The true messages of the OWS protesters are blurred and aspects that equate them with criminals are amplified. One should not be confused of such a framing strategy because it has become a tradition in the American mass media to ‘marginalize for social change and reinforce the status quo rather than questioning it’ (Rauch et al., 2007, p. 132) when reporting social movements. Furthermore, such a reporting is also a consequence of an extra ‘careful’ journalism style utilized by American journalists. The OWS’s targeted institutions such as the police and government officials are news sources. Given their great importance, receiving supports from and maintaining contacts with them are crucial for the success of the journalists’ press duties (Negus, 2012, p. 7). For all these reasons, it is understandable if the overall coverage of the OWS in American mass media is ‘the laziness, the knee-jerk preconceptions’, focusing stories on outcasts, framing the protest as a crime story, and doubting the protesters’ legitimacy (Tenore, 2011).

It is becoming even more difficult to demand an unbiased, positive reporting of the OWS from American mass media given their business nature. _The New York Times_ and _The Wall Street Journal_ for example, are in the list of what Noam Chomsky called American ‘top tier of media companies’ whose control is in the hands of very wealthy people (Herman & Chomsky, 2010, p. 5). The two media companies also have common interests with big businesses, government and banks (Herman & Chomsky, 2010, p. 14), institutions at which the OWS protesters aimed their protest. The very same nature not only influences news values and framing, but they also corrupt messages voiced by the OWS activists. Nonethless, the OWS protesters are highly aware of the status quo and of the significance of a media platform for their movement. The awareness gains its momentum with the advent of the internet allowing the creation of sources of information as a counter-framing platform against mass media. The free, far-reaching nature of the cyber world enables the OWS to establish their own media platforms such as www.OccupyWallSt.org, www.occupywallstreet.net, and www.occupywallstreet.org to mobilize followers and enlarge their messages. Through these independently-operated sites message production and dissemination do not necessarily need to go through sharp constraints that are usually set by mass media companies. As a result, news focus is concentrated on internal concerns.
Messages delivered by the occupants’ media are unavoidably in a direct competition with that of American mass media resulting in a difficulty of winning audience’s attention. Thus, the only possible way for American mass media corporations to delegitimize the OWS protesters is through negative framing. As demonstrated in the previous section, the protesters were portrayed as criminals by The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal to create an image that they were public enemies and thus strong measures had to be taken to confront them. Such destructive framing is an ambitious project with a purpose to turn it into existing frames, frames that are popular, accepted and adopted by other journalists, media corporations, and everyone. When the criminal image of the protesters has become an existing frame, contradictory information about them will be either ignored or rejected (Wolfsfeld, 1997, p. 35). For the very same reason, mass media were selective in choosing people to be interviewed regarding the dynamics of the protest. Mark Bray once described how a national nightly news broadcast producer asked him to find some ‘respectable-looking’ young men for interviews (Bray, 2012, p. 5). These young, men, and respectable looking criteria are not for no reasons. The producer, without a doubt, wanted to deliver news preferred by his audience as he had told Mark that he did not want to “turn off” his elderly viewers. More importantly, the criteria selection aims to keep the good image of the news company so it looks respectable in the eyes of its audience. In addition, the selection of ‘dirty hippies’ by journalists for interviews (Tenore, 2011) rather than more mainstream occupants has a similar motive. The selection is made to emphasize an image that the people taking part in the OWS are sluggish and drug addicts. For this reason, the protest should not be taken seriously.

Despite having tried hard to frame the OWS negatively, it is clear that, American mass media, as shown by the attitudes of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal no longer have the unchallenged authority of framing social movements like they did before the era of the internet. The online media environment makes every piece of information available for credibility screening and alternative coverage is not something difficult to obtain. This new ecosystem limited the capability of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal in establishing a single, dominating news agenda. Furthermore, the success of the OWS occupants’ media in exerting its influence on the mass is a proof that the digital world has transformed the maps of message production and dissemination quite dramatically. The OWS protesters were able to amplify their voices, mobilize members, and enlarge their size through a media platform of which they had a total control. This development makes Wolfsfeld’s argument on social movement activists’ highly dependence on mass media look outdated. Nevertheless, despite the inclination of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal to give some positive coverage on the OWS, the motivation however does not originate from sincere support but rather economic opportunities. The OWS has grown uncontrollably in number of participants joining including from the bystander segment (Strauss, 2018) and their activities were widely expressed across social media platforms. This means the public is well-informed about what is going on with the protest. The OWS has also penetrated beyond the US border evidenced in the same movements taking place globally (The Guardian, 2011). For this reason, demands on news on the OWS were on the rise and The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal surely did not want to miss the momentum. Thus, covering the protest with more ‘balance’ reporting is a good strategy to not only win the clicks of online news consumers, but also keep the trustworthiness of the two large media corporations. Despite so, for a larger, nationwide American audience The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal remain to be more influential than OccupyWallSt.org owing to the fact that the former have become trusted news sources for the American publics for a long time. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal’s huge readership is also an irrefutable proof as to how these two media giants do still have a large number of loyal fans. Therefore, despite a growing support for the movement from the general Americans, the disapproving percentage of the way the protests were being conducted was higher in November 2011 (31%) than the previous month (20%) (Gallup, 2011). With this downward trend, it is clear that The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal are successful in their framing strategy to delegitimize the OWS.

Conclusion
This paper has demonstrated that the OWS was framed and represented differently by both American mass media and the occupants’ media. While the occupants’ media shows consistency in the contents of its news stories, it was found that during the first and two weeks of the OWS, American mass media were apparently biased in covering news on the OWS. They oftentimes covered stories with information that was not in line with the interests of the occupiers and even criminalized the protesters. However, there was a slight change in their reporting during the third week of the protest as the issue was becoming increasingly more popular. The change was triggered by an economic momentum of the movement and a commitment to retain the media’s credibility. The OWS shows us that social movements and the media are in need of each other, and it is clear that the hegemony of mass media in news framing has been successfully countered by an alternative media. With the help of the Internet, the OWS activists are able to establish their own media for internal mobilization and influencing people outside their circle to join. Yet, the alternative media are unable to exert influence as widely as mass media due to the lacking of loyal fans and legitimacy. Therefore, for a larger audience, it cannot be denied that the influence of mass media is still considerably stronger than that of alternative media.


