Music and the Movement: Understanding Occupy Wall Street

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Music and the Movement: Understanding Occupy Wall Street

by
Benjamin Scott Holbrook

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Music in Music History
in the School of Music, Jordan College of Fine Arts of Butler University

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Abstract

On September 17, 2011, protestors set up camp in Zuccotti Park in New York’s financial district, initiating a 59-day social and political movement known as Occupy Wall Street. Writing about the protest, James C. McKinley Jr. of the New York Times declared that the movement “lacks a melody” compared with protest movements of the previous century. Despite the common perception that little music accompanied the movement, organizers released *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%*, a collection of songs connected with, written for, or written about the Occupy Wall Street movement.

This thesis investigates the place of Occupy Wall Street in society through its musicking and through *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs or the 99%*. Building upon the sociomusicological work of R. Serge Denisoff and the work of Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, I propose a framework for a categorization of songs through their lyrical content and apply it to the music found on *Occupy This Album*. Then, using this framework, I determine the potential “progressiveness” of Occupy Wall Street through the modernization theory of Talcott Parsons. I contend that *Occupy this Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* shows Occupy Wall Street to be a modernizing movement as indicated through its large output of propaganda songs, showing a commitment to communication of diverse knowledge and ideologies and a generalization of value sets. This analysis and its conclusion situate Occupy Wall Street in society through its musical output rather than through its cultural and political effects.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

On July 13, 2011, founder Kalle Lasn and senior-editor Micah White of *Adbusters*, a Canadian-based anti-consumerist magazine, penned an email to the roughly 70,000 subscribers of their publication.¹ Attached to this email White included a new version of a meme, a ballerina poised atop *Charging Bull* (see Figure 1.0).² This meme had been used in previous emails advocating for large-scale American protests akin to the Arab Spring, specifically Tahrir Square, and other European anti-austerity protests.³ However, while in previous emails this meme was often accompanied with the hashtag #occupywallstreet, in this July email the normal hashtag was replaced with “What is our one demand? Occupy Wall Street. Bring Tent.” and the date, September 17, 2011.⁴ With these simple instructions, the American Occupy Movement was sparked and roughly

² Merriam Webster Online defines “meme” as, “an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media.” In this case, the social media platform was a combination of Adbuster’s email server and Twitter for which the hashtag would be used for tagging and aggregating similar posts utilizing the same hashtag (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meme, accessed April 7, 2017).
³ The Arab Spring or Democracy Spring refers to a series of revolutions and protest movements throughout North Africa and the Middle East that began in Tunisia following the Tunisian Revolution of December 2010 that led to the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011. Following success in Tunisia, Egyptians, numbering at times close to 50,000, began massive protests in Tahrir Square that eventually lead to the Egyptian Revolution and the overthrow of the government of Hosni Mubarak. In an update posted to the Adbuster’s site, a member of the staff rallied readers through invocation of the protests: “So, let’s learn the strategic lessons of Tahrir (nonviolence), Syntagma (tenacity), Puerta del Sol (people’s assemblies) and lay aside adherence to political parties and worn-out lefty dogmas. On September 17, let’s sow the seeds of a new culture of resistance in America that fires up a permanent democratic awakening.” Adbusters Staff, “#Occupywallstreet Update,” *Adbusters*, August 11, 2011, accessed May 31, 2017, http://www.adbusters.org/action/occupywallstreet/occupywallstreet-update/.
2,000 protestors marched, signs in-hand, into Manhattan’s financial district. This action began an occupation of Zuccotti Park that lasted from September 17 until November 15, when the New York City Police Department arrested 200 protestors and, with help from the Department of Sanitation, forced protestors to leave the “unsanitary and hazardous” conditions.

Figure 1.0. Artwork for Occupy Wall Street from AdBusters

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5 Fleming, “Adbusters Sparks Wall Street Protest.”
Analyzing and understanding of the 59-day protest continues to be relevant for organizers, political scientists, and news organizations alike. In an interview with NPR’s Eric Westervelt in 2017, Micah White struggled with the impact of Occupy Wall Street on ground-level activism in the wake of the election of President Donald Trump. Six years after the end of Occupy Wall Street, White suggested that it had been an “instructive failure,” teaching that big street protests do not work in changing political culture. In another interview, White stated, “Occupy Wall Street tested out a grand theory of social change, which was basically, ‘If you can get millions of people into the streets, largely non-violent, and unified behind a central message, then change will have to happen.’ I think we spread to 82 countries. It was amazing. And it didn't work.”

Others looking at the impact of Occupy Wall Street have interpreted it differently, seeing its fingerprint in subsequent social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, and political campaigns, specifically the campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders during the 2016 presidential election. One protestor visiting Zuccotti Park on the five-year anniversary of Occupy claimed its lasting influence was simply being ignored: “People won’t give us

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9 Ibid.
proper credit, they think that we are dead.”¹² These interpretations of Occupy’s successes or failures all look for the movement’s outside influence as a way to situate it within society after the end of the protest. Efforts to interpret Occupy did not begin only after it ended, however. Some of the earliest such efforts focused on what was happening within the movement during its existence, specifically by looking at the sounds and music of Occupy Wall Street.¹³

In this thesis, I explore the place of Occupy Wall Street in society through its musicking and the album *Occupy this Album: 99 Songs or the 99%*. I contend that a lyrical categorization of the songs found on *Occupy this Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* shows that Occupy Wall Street was a modernizing movement as indicated through its large output of propaganda songs, showing a commitment to communication of diverse knowledge and ideologies and a generalization of value sets.

I first situate *Occupy this Album* within the musical culture of Occupy Wall Street. In Chapter II, “Musicking Within the Movement,” I consider the place of musicking within Occupy Wall Street to establish the starting place for the material found on the album. As I show in this chapter, musicking played a significant role within the movement as a fundamental activity with multiple functions, including: fostering group cohesion and identity, creating legitimizing events through appearances and performances by popular musical figures, and serving as a catalyst for discord and altercations both within the group and between the group and the outside world.

After positioning *Occupy this Album* within the musical culture of the movement, I propose a methodology in Chapter III for evaluating the musical byproducts of Occupy Wall Street. Building upon the sociomusicological work of R. Serge Denisoff and the communication theories of propaganda and persuasion of Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, I construct the Holbrook Purpose Model for Sociopolitical Song. Through this purpose model, I suggest ways to categorize songs by the communicative function of their lyrics. In addition, I build upon an analytical framework designed by Denisoff that uses song types to determine a group’s potential to progress through historical materialism. I propose an adapted framework that considers the songs of *Occupy this Album* as a way to determine the movement’s progressiveness in Talcott Parson’s modernization theory.

In the fourth chapter, I apply this framework to the songs on *Occupy this Album: 99 Songs for the 99%*. First, I provide a short summary of the contents of the album to provide context. Then, I analyze six songs from *Occupy this Album* selected to show the variety of song types and artists and the range of popularity and styles present on the album. I then present the results of the analysis of the entire album. These results show a larger percentage of propaganda songs relative to other songs types, indicating that Occupy Wall Street was progressive through the processes of modernization because of the songs’ musical appeal for mutual understanding and generalized sets of values.

In sum, this thesis increases knowledge and understanding of Occupy Wall Street through an evaluation of its musical culture and its post-occupation musical output. Whereas others have sought to understand and analyze Occupy through its effects on politics, policy, and social and political movements, I consider Occupy through its
musicking. I conclude that the movement was progressive in terms of Parson’s modernization theory. More broadly, this thesis provides a method for evaluating movements of the 20th and 21st centuries through their musicking and musical output rather than direct political or cultural impact.
Chapter 2
Musicking Within the Movement

Before analyzing *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%*, it is necessary to establish a context in which to place the album. Although it would be completely valid to consider the album with regard to its popularity or the political success of its parent movement, those contexts tell us little about its meaning or place within the movement itself. This chapter explores the position of musical activity within Occupy Wall Street to establish a context for the music on *Occupy This Album* and to focus the discussion of the album on its relation to the movement and its ability to communicate the complexities of the movement to listeners.

From its inception, those planning Occupy Wall Street intended that musical activity be part of the movement. “Bring your Posters & Paints, Trumpets & Drums, Guitars & Gongs, Poetry & People for a free exchange of entertainment, ideas, and info on S17!!” reads the instructions in the “Occupy Wall Street Orientation Guide,” a PDF-flyer made available on multiple websites supporting the efforts of AdBusters. On the first day of the occupation, music and other forms of art, including dance and puppetry, were used as entertainment following the initial protests in Manhattan’s financial district and the march to Zuccotti Park (or as the protestors renamed it, Liberty Plaza). On the

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14 Occupy Wall Street Orientation Guide as found on www.occupywallst.org, accessed May 18, 2017. The PDF was also available for download from www.takethesquare.net/17s, www.nycga.net, and www.usdayofrage.org. The orientation guide provided information concerning the schedule for the first day of the protest, interactions with police, and legal advice if arrested during the protests. Listed among the items deemed appropriate to bring to the occupation include: “Sleeping pad/cardboard, Reusable water bottle, Sleeping bag/blanket, Snacks, Cooler and cold packs, Pillow, Sign/banner/art materials, Folding chair(s), Acoustic Musical Instruments, Umbrella & Tarp.”

second day of protests, one blogger described the park as being “filled…with song, dance, and spontaneous acts of liberation” during a vigil that was held for the “fallen victims of Wall Street.” Accounts like these exist for almost every day of Occupy Wall Street’s 59-day existence.

What these accounts speak to is not music as an object or sound phenomenon but music as an activity that has consequences and creates relationships. The act of creating music liberates and honors, accompanies dance and puppetry, and entertains on its own, thereby adding “cheer across the plaza.” Rather than focusing on music at the protests, these accounts emphasize musicking, to use Christopher Small’s term. In examining Occupy Wall Street, I too focus on musicking in order to discuss the musical environment in Zuccotti Park as encompassing all levels of musical activity: conception, rehearsal, performance, consumption, reaction, and the relationships that form between the actions, the actors, and the sociohistorical context in which they act. In this chapter, I show that musicking played an important role within Occupy Wall Street, serving multiple functions for the movement, including: fostering group cohesion and identity,

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accessed April 2, 2017, http://occupywallst.org/archive/page-188. “Many stayed at One Liberty Plaza, where later in the evening a meal was served and water was distributed. Song, dance, puppetry, and other art added cheer across the plaza.”


17 OccupyWallSt, “First Communiqué: We Occupy Wall Street.”

18 Coined and championed by Christopher Small, the verb musicking strives to take the term music from a noun defining an object or sound phenomenon to a verb defining an activity that creates meaning through its relationships: “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance… or by dancing… The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance… relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world.” Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 9–13.
creating legitimizing events through appearances and performances by popular musical figures, and serving as a catalyst for discord and altercations within the group and between the group and the outside world. Viewing Occupy Wall Street through its musicking creates a more complete conception of the movement and its musical byproducts.

**Getting in the Spirit: Cohesion Through Musicking**

One of the rallying calls and slogans of Occupy Wall Street, “We are the 99%,” articulates both a central belief and a potential problem faced by protestors in Zuccotti Park. Occupy Wall Street was about bringing together the “99%” of the world’s population—whose main connection is that they are not the “1%” that controls the world’s wealth and power—to rally against causes and symptoms of social, economic, and political injustice. In order to bind people from extraordinarily disparate walks of life into a single movement, it was critical to generate a communal spirit: a drive for the common cause. To this end, musicking played an important role in fomenting vigor and group cohesion within Occupy Wall Street.

Reporting on Occupy Wall Street two weeks after the protest began, Marlon Bishop of WNYC, one of New York City’s public radio stations, wrote that while the number of participants in Zuccotti Park was constantly in flux, the presence of music on

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19 Adam Weinstein, “‘We Are the 99 Percent’ Creators Revealed,” *Mother Jones*, October 7, 2011, accessed July 27, 2017, [http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/10/we-are-the-99-percent-creators/](http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/10/we-are-the-99-percent-creators/). The use of “We are the 99%” began shortly before the occupation of Zuccotti Park on August 23, 2011. Activists Chris (last name not given) and Priscilla Grim created and curated a blog on Tumblr.com ([http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com](http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com)) to “Get a bunch of people to submit their pictures with hand-written signs explaining how these harsh financial times have been affecting them, have them identify themselves as the ‘99 percent’ and then write ‘occupywallst.org’ at the end.” While this blog made the term popular, Chris credits the phrase to a flyer used to alert people to an upcoming meeting of the New York General Assembly, the group that would become the administrative council for Occupy Wall Street.
Wall Street had been constant.\textsuperscript{20} As those interviewed by Bishop attested, the continuous musicking became a cohesive force and source of fervor and inspiration among members of the group: “[music] gets people motivated, it gets people spiritually in the mood, it keeps us strong.”\textsuperscript{21} Another protestor, a self-described “radical street band” musician from Vermont, said, “music can keep things positive, but it can also be a wonderful method of critique… protest songs really get people in the spirit.”\textsuperscript{22}

As a nation-wide movement, it was important for the dynamism and union between “occupiers” to extend beyond Manhattan and the limited reach of acoustic instruments.\textsuperscript{23} One possibility for extending the reach of the movement was through the electronic distribution of non-acoustic music. Like other musicians interested in the message of Occupy, the hip-hop duo Rebel Diaz, made up of musicians RodStarz and G1, found ways to participate in the movement even though, as Ted Warren wrote, “Rebel Diaz doesn’t do acoustic guitars.”\textsuperscript{24} Retreating to their home-studio in the South Bronx, they incorporated ideas and samples from the protests in their music. There, the duo recorded and edited tracks such as “We are the 99%” that were then compiled and

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
uploaded as a digital mixtape called #OccupyTheAirwaves.\textsuperscript{25} Yet they wanted to do more than incorporate the protest into their music. They also wanted to incorporate themselves, and others like them, into the broader movement:

‘We wanted to bring hip-hop to the white liberal table,’ RodStarz says. ‘For the first time in a long time, large numbers of young white kids are no longer benefitting from the privileges of capitalism. Maybe they’re feeling what immigrants and poor communities have been feeling for years.’\textsuperscript{26}

As RodStarz says, through the creation of Occupy-related hip-hop, the musicians brought the cultural products of disenfranchised groups into the musicking of Occupy, creating a bond between the sounds of the “white liberal table” and their own Occupy experience.

As Rebel Diaz illustrates, in addition to the acoustic instruments and the sing-along anthems performed \textit{en masse}, musicking and its cohesive effects extended within and beyond the protest site though digital media. On the surface, the use of sampling in online media would not appear to connect the artists with the musicking taking place in Zuccotti Park. There would seem to be a disconnect between the musicking happening in a home studio and the activity of creating, listening to, reacting to, and forming relationships around live music at the protests. However, the pervasiveness of online culture within Occupy suggests that online media and at-home musicking, such as #OccupyTheAirwaves, was an important part of the musical culture of Occupy Wall Street and the broader Occupy movement. This off-location musicking helped to bring together participants in Occupy Wall Street and participants in Occupy-at-large despite cultural, sociopolitical, and geographical differences.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
Legitimation Through the Presence of Popular Musical Figures

In addition to the cohesive effects of musicking, the interaction of popular music figures with Occupy Wall Street helped to legitimize the movement through visits, donations, and performances. Rap artist Wasalu Muhammad Jaco, also known as Lupe Fiasco, visited the protests just two days into the movement on September 19 and was among the first mainstream musicians to join the crowd of protestors. Attracted to the activity in Zuccotti Park and the message of the protestors, Jaco gave an interview with Luke Rudowski of InfoWars, a media site that claims to expose the underlying intentions of major figures in day-to-day world news. In his interview, Jaco discussed a wide range of topics, including 9/11-Truth theories, the new world order, and his own solutions to the problems that led to Occupy Wall Street.

This early interview by a prominent figure in popular music was the beginning of celebrity involvement in Occupy Wall Street. Initially, less established news sources, such as InfoWars, covered early interactions between musicians and Occupy Wall Street. As time went on, more mainstream sources in the news and music media world, such as The New York Daily News and Pitchfork, covered high-profile visits from celebrities such as Russel Simmons and Kanye West. These highly publicized visits generated cultural clout and legitimacy for the young, struggling movement.

28 Description of InfoWars’ purpose as found in “Who is Alex Jones and What is the InfoWars?... and Why Should You Care?” accessed June 17, 2017, https://www.infowars.com/about-alex-jones/.
29 Rudowski, “Occupy Wall Street Interview: Rapper Lupe Fiasco on Building 7.”
A force in the rap and hip-hop industry, Simmons first supported the protestors through a donation of 500 water bottles.\textsuperscript{30} Despite this sign of encouragement, he refused to join in the protest himself, claiming he did not want to “be a leader” for a group that had yet to define its specific views and demands: “I run a bunch of charities, I run a bunch of non-profits, and I want to make sure I go to work for a reason.”\textsuperscript{31} Simmons’ donation was a form of solidarity with the movement forming in Manhattan, but an appearance the following week by Simmons and rap artist Kanye West brought legitimacy to the protest.\textsuperscript{32} Acting as a spokesman for West, Simmons explained that Kanye—and in light of his participation and donations, he too—supported the idea of giving power back to the people and getting money out of politics.\textsuperscript{33} In the same way the music of Rebel Diaz helped build unity between the “white liberal table” and disenfranchised minorities, the presence of prominent figures of the hip-hop industry such as Lupe Fiasco, Russel Simmons, and Kanye West served to legitimate the protest movement for the same groups.\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., “Here, Simmons acts as West's spokesman while ‘He remains tight lipped and looks annoyed. Kanye’s been a big supporter, spiritually for this movement. He’s just here to stand with the people. He’s not-- the politics of it, he doesn't want to make a statement, didn’t want to do any media at all, actually. He’s here, and I guess there’s no way around it,’ Simmons said. ‘He’s here … and he understands this idea about getting the money out of the government and letting the people govern. He wants to give power back to the people. That’s why we’re here.’”

\textsuperscript{34} The majority of those protesting with Occupy Wall Street were white (66.6%), male (54.8%), and had received a college degree (39% having received at least a four-year degree, 40.8% having received a graduate degree in some form, and 21.7% working toward some college degree). Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce, and Penny Lewis, \textit{Changing the Subject: A Bottom-Up Account of Occupy Wall Street in New York City}, (New York: The City University of New York, 2013), 10.
Along with donations and appearances, impromptu concerts also accompanied the visits of celebrity musicians to the protest site. These concerts not only helped to validate the movement but also reinvigorated the fervor of the protestors for their cause. During the first week in October, performances and speeches were given by rapper Talib Kweli and Jeff Mangum, front man of the band Neutral Milk Hotel.  

Following a comedy set by Jamie Kilstein, host of political comedic podcast CitizenRadio, Kweli performed an a cappella set of original works and covers. Throughout his concert, he urged protestors to spread the word and grow the movement. In his performance, Jeff Mangum played hits to the crowd at their request, saying, “I’m here to serve you, what do you want to hear?”

Protestors claimed these appearances and performances, specifically Mangum’s, “injected new vibrancy” into the movement. One witness said, “I’ve been here on and off since day one, and we’re definitely starting to get stressed out… So, it’s like, for someone I’ve wanted to see for ten-plus years to show up—it’s just really good timing.” The protestors also recognized the effects these performances had on those watching the movement from the outside: “It gives us more cachet… we’re sitting on a landslide of talent here. There’s so much magic, so what needs to come, comes.” The landslide of talent, both within the movement and brought to the movement by visiting celebrities, allowed the musicking of Occupy Wall Street to be a beneficial force within the

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35 Battan, “Kanye West, Russell Simmons Visit Occupy Wall Street Protests.”
39 Ibid.
movement. As musicking helped to bind the group together, the appearance of a cohesive group attracted outside support. This influx of celebrity support consequently helped to bring legitimacy to the group and further bind together the protestors, creating a positive feedback loop of cohesion leading to support and legitimacy resulting in further cohesion.

**Dissonance and Disagreement**

Even as the presence of celebrity musicians and concerts helped to legitimize the movement, some forms of musicking, specifically the drum circles in Zuccotti Park, undermined Occupy’s pursuit of validity and created discord both among members and between Occupy and the outside world. In an interview by Marlo Bishop with songwriter Gio Andollo, Andollo said of the drum circles at the occupation:

> For some reason, that’s been what has been getting a lot of media attention... I think it’s because it’s an easy way for them to discredit what we are doing. But if it wasn’t drumming it would be something else. They’d still be calling us hippies and trying to discredit us in any way that they can.

This drumming was heavily covered by media outlets and even made its way into segments of the liberal-leaning comedy program *The Daily Show*, then hosted by Jon Stewart, that compared the protests to the music festival Bonnaroo. Indeed, the presence of the drum circles became a source of polarization for both reporters and protestors alike. Some, like Stewart, linked their presence to the stereotypes of “dirty hippies” from the political and social movements of the 1960s, portraying the circles as a nuisance, whereas others saw the drumming as a vital part of the movement.

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40. Bishop, “Occupying Wall Street.”
41. Ibid., Andollo performs under the stage name Gio Safari.
42. Ibid.
With the presence of the drum circles, musicking at once created cohesion and discord. Among those within the circles, the musicking was an act of cohesion, describing the drumming not as a problem, but as “the heartbeat of [the] movement.”43 For those outside the circle, the drumming created feelings of acrimony toward the tireless drummers. Covering the crisis that emerged between the working group of drummers, called PULSE, and the other occupiers in late October, Alex Klein wrote in *New York Magazine*, “all occupiers are equal—but some occupiers are more equal than others.”44 In response to complaints about the incessant drumming, which sometimes lasted up to ten hours at a time, the New York City General Assembly (NYCGA), the main organizational body for Occupy Wall Street, attempted negotiations with PULSE, limiting the drumming to four hours a day.45 However, the implementation of rules did not sit well with many of the drummers. As one occupier put it, “they’re imposing a


44 Alex Klein, “The Organizers vs. the Organized in Zuccotti Park,” *New York Magazine*, October 20, 2011, accessed October 9, 2016, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2011/10/occupy_animal_farm_the_organiz.html. A working group is a sub-section of the General Assembly, the horizontally-organized administrative council of Occupy Wall Street. Nathan Schneider, writing for *The Nation*, offers this break down: “Assembly has become the de facto decision-making body for the occupation at Liberty Plaza, just a few blocks north of Wall Street… the General Assembly is a horizontal, autonomous, leaderless, modified-consensus-based system with roots in anarchist thought, and it’s akin to the assemblies that have been driving recent social movements around the world, in places like Argentina, Egypt’s Tahrir Square, Madrid’s Puerta del Sol and so on… Working alongside the General Assembly are an ever-growing number of committees and working groups—from Food and Media to Direct Action and Sanitation. Anyone is welcome to join one, and they each do their own thing, working in tacit coordination with the General Assembly as a whole. In the end, the hope is that every individual is empowered to make decisions and act as her or himself, for the good of the group.” Nathan Schneider, “Occupy Wall Street: FAQ,” *The Nation*, September 29, 2011, accessed May 25, 2017, https://www.thenation.com/article/occupy-wall-street-faq/.

structure on the natural flow of music… the [General Assembly] decided to do it… they suppressed people’s opinion.” As another occupier said to reporter Joe Coscarelli, “they are becoming the government we’re trying to protest.” 

Mother Jones writer Josh Harkinson wrote of the tense negotiations between the general assembly and PULSE following a meeting by the Quality of Life Committee of the Manhattan Community Board 1: “the bursts of acrimony on display last night left occupiers and residents alike worried for the future of the movement.”

Despite the displays of bitterness, the members of PULSE agreed to the resolution proposed by NYCGA, and the movement continued on with its many forms of musicking intact. This incident would seem to contradict the earlier argument for musicking as a cohesive force; however, I believe this aberrance from cohesion more accurately captures the extent to which musicking reflected the complexity and multiplicity of ideologies and intentions held by Occupy Wall Street protesters as a group. As these examples have shown, musicking was a critical activity of the protestors involved with Occupy Wall Street and a way for outsiders to interact, both positively and negatively, with the movement. Viewing the movement through the multiple functions of this musicking—creating group cohesion and identity, fostering legitimacy and cultural clout, and being a catalyst for discordance within the group and with the outside world—nuances our understanding of Occupy Wall Street as a movement striving to unite the “99%.”

46 As quoted in Klein, “The Organizers vs. the Organized.”
47 As quoted in Coscarelli, “Drum Circle Debate Shakes Occupy Wall Street.”
Moving Beyond Zuccotti Park: *Occupy This Album* as a Lens

As the protest entered its second and final month, the staying power and impact of the movement came into question. Many speculated as to whether Occupy Wall Street would successfully make the conversion from Wall Street to the national stage. This skepticism did not escape those focused on the musicking of the movement. In his column in *LA Weekly*, written days before the eviction of protestors from their camp, Henry Rollins, author and vocalist for politically-charged bands such as Black Flag and State of Alert, questioned whether the music of Occupy would ever move beyond the infamous drum circles:

I am wondering if there will be a band or bands who will be a musical voice to this rapidly growing gathering of citizens. So far I have heard people playing drums and other percussion instruments but have yet to hear of one band or artist attaching to the Occupy protests on a national level.\(^49\)

Tom Morello, a musician known for his work with Rage Against the Machine who was often referred to as the “musical patron saint of Occupy,” remarked while participating in Occupy Wall Street and Occupy L.A.: “every successful movement has a soundtrack.”\(^50\)

“Perhaps [Morello] is right,” wrote James C. McKinley, Jr. of the *New York Times*, “but the protesters in Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan have yet to find an anthem.”\(^51\)

As Rollins, Morello, and McKinley saw it, when compared to the protests and political movements of the previous century, Occupy Wall Street “[lacked] a melody” or

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\(^{51}\) McKinley, “At the Protests, The Message Lacks a Melody.”
a popular song that captured what it meant to be part of the movement.\textsuperscript{52} However, it was not only Zuccotti Park that McKinley thought was oddly silent given the political climate: “nor is the rest of the country humming songs about hard times. So far, musicians living through the biggest economic disaster since the Great Depression have filled the airwaves with songs about dancing, not the worries of working people.”\textsuperscript{53} As these three writers point out, Americans associate moments of social and political change with popular protest music, usually assuming that the two must go together for either to be successful. Occupy was not the first political protest or political movement of the twenty-first century to be critiqued in this way. Throughout the presidency of George W. Bush (specifically during the years surrounding the initial deployment of American and allied forces into the Middle East, ca. 2002–2004), and again throughout the financial crisis during the presidency of Barack Obama, media outlets released numerous articles asking the same question: “where have all the protest songs gone?”\textsuperscript{54} As Greg Quill wrote for the Toronto Star in 2010:

Protest songs—at least the kind that galvanized thousands at a time during the labour struggles of the 1920s and ’30s, anti-nuclear and civil rights marches in the 1950s, the anti-Vietnam war rallies in the 1960s and the economic upheavals in Britain during the Thatcher years—seem to have disappeared from the landscape.\textsuperscript{55}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{52}{Ibid.}  \\
\footnotetext{53}{Ibid.}  \\
\footnotetext{54}{This question is a direct reference to the Pete Seeger song, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?”}  \\
\end{footnotes}
Christopher Blagg, writing for the *Christian Science Monitor* in 2004, did see a rebirth of protest music, but suggested his colleagues were looking in the wrong places: “Folk music no longer dominates [protest music]. Today, rebellious political rhetoric can be found in hip-hop, punk, country, metal, alt-rock, and everything in between. Not only has protest music diversified, it seems to be rapidly on the rise.”

Ryan Harvey, writing in 2011, concurred with Blagg. He posited that if observers cannot find the protest music, they should look toward or within the actual movement. As demonstrated with the accounts from the beginning of this chapter, Blagg and Harvey’s insights apply to Occupy Wall Street. Protest music and musicking were alive and well during Occupy Wall Street. Although occupiers’ mass sing-alongs, garage- or bedroom-produced mixtapes, and recordings of live concerts never made the Top 40 charts, activists began conceiving plans to continue their musicking shortly after the end of the protests. In 2012, Jason Samel, a musician and member of Occupy Wall Street, registered a 501(c)(3) non-profit named Music for Occupy. As Samel indicates on the website for this group, its purpose is “to inspire and celebrate through music the collective voices, that if sung together can change the world in which we live for the benefit of the 100%.” In other words, Music for Occupy was meant to rectify the lack pointed out by journalists like Quill and McKinley: to fill the airwaves with songs of protest that would create an impact similar to songs of past sociopolitical movements.

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58 Jason Samel, “About,” accessed March 7, 2017, http://musicforoccupy.org/about/. The mission statement continues: “We look to spread the word of truth in music, and amplify the voices that have lost their strength. Music for Occupy will continue to support music projects that inspire its listeners to stand up, volunteer themselves for a greater good, and speak out for what they believe in. We look to invigorate, and
Music for Occupy’s first major project was a compilation album of 99 different artists performing 99 songs, all aimed at uniting “the 99%” through songs connected with, written for, or written about Occupy Wall Street or the Occupy movement in general.\textsuperscript{59} The album, fittingly titled \textit{Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%}, was released on May 15, 2012 and distributed through Razor & Tie, with funds from the sale going toward the funding of future musical events and protests.\textsuperscript{60} As indicated in the most recently updated financial statements, as of 2014 \textit{Occupy This Album} had earned Music for Occupy approximately $8000. With these funds, Music for Occupy held two benefit concerts to support Occupy Sandy (an “Occupy” movement only in name that provided aid after Hurricane Sandy in October 2012). Profits also supported a member of the band Jane’s Addiction with travel in attempts to aid in the Sandy effort and sponsored Seeger Fest, a free, five-day event honoring political activist and folk musician Pete Seeger.\textsuperscript{61} The status of a 2014 planned donation of $2,500 to the Rolling Jubilee—an effort started by Occupy Wall Street to buy back and forgive outstanding debts—is unclear.

Despite its meager earnings as a popular album and having effectively fallen short of Samel’s hope to “re-invent protest music,” \textit{Occupy This Album} directly reflects the range of ideologies and goals found within the Occupy movement through its inclusion of an equally wide range of topics and genres. Songs on this album that demonstrate the eclectic nature of Occupy Wall Street include: songs clamoring for collective action against repressive forces (“Something’s Got to Give” by Matt Pless, “People have the

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Financial statements found on http://musicforoccupy.org/finance/, accessed March 7, 2017.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
Power” by Patti Smith), songs recounting the plight of returned service-people from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (“Hey Can I Sleep on Your Futon?” by Richard Barone), songs reacting to the 2008 financial crisis and its consequences (“Saving Up to Go Bankrupt” by Rimbaud), and songs defending freedom of speech and expression (“Freedom of Speech” by Carter).

An important reason that *Occupy This Album* serves as a fitting musical representation of Occupy is that some reviewers questioned the ideological and musical cohesion of the album in the same ways they questioned the cohesiveness of the movement: “Like Zuccotti Park last fall, with its mashup of sometimes discordant messages, the wide mix of sounds on *Occupy This Album* can sometimes make your head spin,” wrote Josh Harkinson. 62 Harkinsson also suggested that no one, not even the occupiers, seemed to know what exactly they wanted to achieve or protest. Identifying a single banner or platform for Occupy Wall Street was a struggle. As Ezra Klein wrote in *The Washington Post* in October of 2011, “there is not, in other words, all that much you can say with confidence about what Occupy Wall Street is or isn’t. At the moment, it’s different things to different people.” 63 Indeed, the “unofficial” list of demands posted on the Occupy Forum website—which included calls for everything from single-payer healthcare to a trillion-dollar ecological restoration project and from racial and gender equality to the free association of workers to form unions—prefigures the eclecticism of

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*Occupy This Album*. Many of the group’s demands seem to indicate an ultra-left alignment, but these demands coexisted with the goals of anarchists and moderates who also found themselves occupying Wall Street. Charles C. W. Cooke, writing for the *National Review*, described this hodgepodge of demands and ideals as inchoate and incoherent: not a movement with identity, but a general protest of an “*Indignez-vous!* mentality”; that is, non-violent and indignant, but with no discernable direction.

Although many analysts identified the multi-layered, multi-dimensional nature of Occupy Wall Street as a sign of confusion and disorder, Emily Welty, Matthew Bolton, and Nick Zukowski saw opportunity for structure. In their essay for *Occupy Political Science*, a collection of critical essays by New York-based scholars who interacted directly with Occupy Wall Street, the researchers suggested that literary artefacts can provide a model for understanding the movement: “We suggest that Occupy Wall Street can be understood as a palimpsest—a scroll on which multiple layers of text might be written, scraped off, and rewritten…one can either read the single narrative of one layer,

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65 Klein, “A Tipping Point.”

66 Charles C. W. Cooke, “Can Occupy Wall Street Make Sense of Itself?” *National Review*, October 17, 2011, accessed April 1, 2017, http://www.nationalreview.com/article/280277/can-occupy-wall-street-make-sense-itself-charles-c-w-cooke. Here Cooke insinuates that Occupy is inspired by the writings of Stéphane Hessel, who published *Indignez-vous!* in 2010. Translated into English by Marion Duvert under the title *Time for Outrage: Indignez-vous!*, the essay calls for a non-violent, indignation-fueled resistance to the hyper-capitalist policies of Western society in an effort to reclaim the climate of social progress that swept Europe following the end of World War II. Stéphane Hessel, *Indignés-vous!*, trans. Marion Duvert (New York: Twelve, 2011). In an interview about Occupy Wall Street, Hessel said the following about OWS: “That is why I am so happy about what happens these days in Wall Street, because they’re indeed very peaceful. They are not throwing any bombs or any stones, but they’re determined to see that their values are to be respected.” Interview with Juan González from “Stephanie Hessel on Occupy Wall Street: Find the time for Outrage When Your Values Are Not Respected,” Democracy Now, October 10, 2011, accessed July 27, 2017, https://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/10/stphane_hessel_on_occupy_wall_street_find_the_time_for_outrage_when_your_values_are_not_respected.
or observe its intertextual interactions.”67 Conceptualizing Occupy Wall Street as a palimpsest instead of a singular narrative makes it possible to begin to make sense of the different aims and demands bound together in Occupy Wall Street.

Building on Welty, Bolton, and Zukowski’s framework, I view *Occupy This Album* as a representative manuscript of Occupy Wall Street. The eclectic collection of songs provides the many layers of a palimpsest through which to explore and examine the movement in an effort to grasp its complex ideological and political leanings. In this way, *Occupy This Album* is similar to song collections of older political groups and movements, including International Workers of the World’s “Little Red Song Book” or the publication *Broadside* for the folk revival and People’s Movement. Occupy Wall Street, then, may have lacked presence on the national airwaves, but it did not lack a melody.

In the following chapters, I outline a methodology and present an analysis of *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* that considers the songs as the texts of a palimpsest. Reading relationships among these texts and the ideas they espouse makes it possible to relate this album to the musicking outlined in this chapter and to form a better understanding of the place of Occupy Wall Street in society. This brings a sharper picture of Occupy Wall Street into focus as the movement’s beliefs and demands are demonstrated through its music.

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Chapter 3  
Methodology: A Framework for the Analysis of Sociopolitical Songs

In his work *Sing a Song of Social Significance*, a collection of previously published essays on the sociology of music in leftist political movements, R. Serge Denisoff asks a question he views as fundamental to his field: “What is [music] saying and to whom?” In this chapter, I outline a methodology to answer this question in respect to Occupy Wall Street: what are the songs on *Occupy This Album: 99 Song for the 99%* saying, to the outside listener and to those present in the movement?

Building upon an analytical framework designed by Denisoff that evaluates the songs of different sociopolitical movements to determine each movement’s level of class consciousness, I propose a new framework that considers the songs of Occupy Wall Street as a way to determine the movement’s progress through modernization theory. By answering the initial question asked by Denisoff in respect to the content and the function of the message, the music found on *Occupy This Album* is able to serve as a guidebook to the beliefs of Occupy Wall Street and how the movement communicated those messages. This lyrical analysis of songs gives further insight into the place and function of Occupy in society, clarifying a movement whose place and impact on society is still up for debate among scholars and journalists. This sociomusicological approach makes it possible to understand Occupy Wall Street through its musical products rather than through its overall effectiveness in creating societal change, thus allowing it to be considered apart

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69 Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce and Penny Lewis, “Occupy After Occupy,” *Jacobin*, June 1, 2014, accessed April 8, 2017. As the authors point out, the success of Occupy Wall Street seems to shift from year to year: from the *New York Times* claiming it was dead and had failed, to *Business Insider* claiming a year later it was in fact a “delayed success.” Eric Westervelt, “Message to ‘Resistors’ From Occupy Co-Creator: Stop Protesting. Run for Office.”
from political leanings or social stigmas. It is first important to establish terms and
definitions for conducting an analysis of the communicative function of lyrical content.

**Establishing Terms for Social and Political Songs**

In the pursuit of usable terms, it may be helpful to revisit the question: where have all the protest songs gone? Before it can be said where they have gone, it is imperative to know what constitutes a protest song. As Deena Weinstein argues, not all music that has been popularly labeled protest music fits into this category of song, this mislabeling due largely to the fetishizing of the political movements of the 1960s and their accompanying music. For this reason, popular ideas about what constitutes protest song are inconsistent and distorted. It is important, then, to strip away cultural biases and stereotypes and to establish and adhere to a definition of this song type, trying songs against that standard.

In this effort for clarity, it is important to first find a term that allows for songs concerning social and political movements to be addressed in a general sense. The first term that might be considered is “protest song.” Although the term “protest song” continues to serve colloquially as a catch-all for any song consisting of political or social commentary, the term refers specifically to a song that presents itself in opposition to an event, an injustice (real or perceived), or an ideology. By using this strict definition, the catch-all function of the protest song is removed, as are popular associations regarding

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70 See footnotes 53 and 54.
the standard for musical content within a protest song, such as a presumption of folk or rock material as Weinstein discusses.\footnote{Weinstein, 3.}

Another term, however, must be considered for use as an umbrella under which we may discuss songs in general. One term that has been proposed for this purpose is “topical song.” As Ron Olesko writes:

‘Topical’ describes an object that is particular to a certain location. ‘Topical’ can also describe a collection of objects that are related to a particular subject. ‘Topical’ can also relate to contemporary events. With music, a ‘topical song’ can relate to all three definitions. They are songs that deal with contemporary issues—telling stories, sharing information, protesting, and inspiring others to join the fight. Topical songs are not a new phenomenon.\footnote{Ron Olesko, “History, Broadsides & Topical Songs,” Sing Out! November 1, 2006, accessed April 13, 2017, https://singout.org/2006/11/01/history-broadides-topical-song.}

As shown in this definition, “topical songs” carries a weight of specificity for time, space, and context, limiting the ability of this term to address protest songs or other songs dealing with social and political issues in a general sense. For this reason, still another term must be considered.

To further reinforce the distinction from the popular understanding of “protest song,” I propose the term “sociopolitical songs” as a replacement for this catch-all understanding, defining sociopolitical songs as: any communication mediated through song, performed by a person or group associated with a political group, social movement, or ideological group that transmits information regarding events, ideologies, or plans of action related to those groups. By using this term, it is possible to discuss the songs of a group or movement broadly and without regard for the specific functions or content of each song. This term further removes unnecessary connotations like that of conflict when using the term “protest song” or the contextual strain created by terms like “topical
song.” For these reasons, I will use the term “sociopolitical song” when describing the music of Occupy Wall Street and other social movements in a general sense.

**Defining Sociopolitical Songs via Communicative Functions**

The communication of information through music is fundamental to sociopolitical songs. It is through specific types of communication that songs types can be differentiated within the umbrella of sociopolitical song. Denisoff’s outlines two categories of sociopolitical songs in his work: “songs of persuasion” or “magnetic songs,” and “propaganda songs” or “rhetorical songs.”

Specifically for Denisoff, these two types of song occur and function most strongly in the “folk idiom,” largely discounting the effectiveness of other genres, especially popular music. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison attempt to “find middle ground between grand theory and abstract empiricism” when discussing the music of social and political movements and take issue with Denisoff’s demand for the supremacy of folk music, arguing instead for the effectiveness of music to be based on ideas of tradition and simplicity. While discussions of the effectiveness of the types of song are important and valid, they are beyond the scope of this paper, which provides a strict analysis of the songs through their lyrics and does not examine effectiveness. Therefore, I take Denisoff’s definitions of

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75 Denisoff, 1-6. For clarity in this paper, persuasive/magnetic songs will be referred to only as songs of persuasion; likewise, propaganda/rhetorical songs will be referred to as propaganda songs.

76 Ibid., ix. According to Denisoff, as the folk-song style music of early leftist political movements gained broader public appeal, the music underwent changes. “In the process, the harsh lyrics became softer and smoother tempered by additional guitars, drums, and even symphonic string sections. ‘folk-pop’ and ‘folk-rock,’ both hybrids, incorporated intellectually stimulating ideas with emotionally appealing musical arrangements. This mix did not always work nor did it appeal to those dedicated to the creation of political consciousness and the advent of social change.” See Denisoff’s chapter “Protest Songs: Those on the AM and Those on the Streets,” 149-167.

propaganda songs, songs of persuasion, and protest songs outside of his folk idiom context, and considered them as categories without genre-specific boundaries and without reliance on perceptions or effectiveness. I will return to Denisoff’s definitions of songs of persuasion or propaganda in order to first establish what “propaganda” and “persuasion” mean more generally as aspects of communication before considering their meaning in the mediated communication of song.

In Propaganda and Persuasion, Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell explore propaganda and persuasive rhetoric through a lens of neutrality, defining and discussing each area separately and in relation to the other without the common moral judgements associated with the terms.78 “Propaganda,” O’Donnell writes, “in the most neutral sense, means to disseminate or promote particular ideas.”79 Addressing the differences between propaganda and persuasion in communication between two parties, the author suggests that although propaganda is often considered “mass persuasion” by other scholars, the two terms represent two separate, though connected, forms of communication.80 As shown in Figure 3.1, a reproduction of the Jowett-O’Donnell Purpose Model of Propaganda, the authors define the two terms through both their purpose and process.

In the Purpose Model of Propaganda, communication occurring between sender A and receiver B can take two paths: information or persuasion.81 In an informational process of communication, the sender promotes mutual understanding through the exchange of ideas, explanation, or instruction. Defined as “a communicative process to

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79 Ibid., 2. In contrast to her definition, O’Donnell points out: “Words frequently used as synonyms for propaganda are lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, psychological warfare, and brainwashing.”
80 Ibid., 17.
81 Ibid., 18.
influence others,” persuasion, then, is a transactional process in which the parties promote mutual fulfillment of needs through response shaping, reinforcing, and changing. This mutual fulfillment arises through the need for the sender to benefit from the outcome of convincing the receiver to shape, change, or continue repeating a behavior. For the persuasion to be effective, the receiver must believe the outcome of the persuasion is favorable to them, and thus worth adopting, conforming to, or continuing.

Figure 3.1. A reproduction of the Jowett-O’Donnell Purpose Model of Propaganda.

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82 Ibid., 21.
83 Ibid., 21-22.
84 Ibid., 18. Figure 3.1 is a reproduction of The Jowett-O’Donnell Purpose Model of Propaganda presented in their book as Figure 1.5.
Propaganda, then, arises through a combination of the informational and persuasive processes. When the sender communicates with the receiver with the intent to control the flow of information, manage opinion of themselves, or manipulate behavior patterns of the receiver in a way that does not necessarily benefit both parties, the sender is engaging in propaganda.\textsuperscript{85} I will return to this purpose model and its definitions to help create a functional model of socio-political song.

**Combining Frameworks: A functional model of socio-political song**

Denisoff defines the propaganda song as one in which ideological concepts or total ideologies are communicated to the listener.\textsuperscript{86} Denisoff’s song of persuasion refers to a song with “the purposes of opinion and behavior formation.”\textsuperscript{87} These two types of songs, when employed by a movement, can serve to achieve one or more of six primary goals:

1) Solicits and arouses outside support and sympathy  
2) Reinforces the value structure of individuals who are active supporters  
3) Creates and promotes cohesion, solidarity, and high morale  
4) Attempts to recruit individuals  
5) Invokes solutions to real or imagined social phenomena in terms of action to achieve a desired goal.  
6) Points to some problem or discontent in the society, usually in emotional terms.\textsuperscript{88}

The song of persuasion is one that achieves goals one through four; it “appeals to the listener and attracts him to a specific movement or ideology… by creating solidarity.”\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{86} Denisoff, 2.  
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 1.  
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 2. Variations in the wording of these functions appear later on p. 60; however, the meaning of the functions does not change.  
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 60.
The propaganda song most explicitly achieves the sixth goal, but may be useful in creating cohesion within a group through the recounting of a story or social condition that emotionally impacts the members of the group or an outside listener—goal three. Most importantly, the propaganda song offers no solutions, ideological or organizational, to the problems addressed, thus leaving the fifth goal to be fulfilled by another type of song: the protest song (Table 3.1 shows these song types with their functions as described by Denisoff).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Type</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Song</td>
<td>Solicits and arouses outside support and sympathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reinforces the value structure of individuals who are active supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates and promotes cohesion, solidarity, and high morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempts to recruit individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda Song</td>
<td>Points to some problem or discontent in the society, usually in emotional terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest Song</td>
<td>Invokes solutions to real or imagined social phenomena in terms of action to achieve a desired goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1. Proposed terms with their functions as described by Denisoff.91

The protest song, the third type of sociopolitical song, can be viewed as a hybrid of the persuasive and propaganda songs. Drawing from the propaganda song, a protest song points out a condition or problem that the sender wants addressed. Then, it seeks to change, through persuasion, the opinions or actions of the listener in hopes that this will impact the situation or problem in a way that is beneficial to the singer, or group, but not

90 Ibid., 61.
91 Ibid., 2.
necessarily beneficial to the listener. In this way, the protest song defined by Denisoff is a functional match to the propaganda communication outlined by O’Donnell.

As shown below in Figure 3.2, I have adapted the Jowett-O’Donnell Purpose Model of Propaganda to fit the definitions and functions of sociopolitical songs as outlined by Denisoff. In the new model, the Holbrook Purpose Model of Sociopolitical Song, the song is a form of mediated communication between the sender, A, and the receiver, B, where C represents the song. These songs can take two basic forms, propaganda songs and persuasion songs, depending on their function. As in informational communication, the purpose of a propaganda song is that A and B gain mutual understanding on the topics presented in C. Accordingly, as in persuasive communication, a persuasive song is one in which A and B mutually benefit from C’s effect on B. However, in place of propaganda communication, in which the effect on B is not necessarily self-beneficial, there is now the protest song, which combines aspects of propaganda and persuasive song. This model streamlines the terminology and processes of sociopolitical songs, clarifying the function of each type of song.
Applying the Framework for Analysis

Now that a framework has been established to define songs through their communicative function, it is possible to answer Denisoff’s original question: “what is music saying, and to whom?” The propaganda song speaks to societal and political ills; the song of persuasion generally attempts to create cohesion and solidarity through behavior and opinion modification; and the protest song presents information and advocates for specific action that is favorable to the singer. However, just as important as “what” and “to whom” is the additional question: “and what does it mean?” Keeping the semantic question within the scope of sociomusicology and this paper, it can be
rephrased: what can be said about a group that produces an abundance of a particular type of music versus one that produces another?

Denisoff tackles this question, too, in his analysis of sociopolitical songs in the United States from four movements of the twentieth century that produced large outputs of musical material: The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), from 1905–1915; the period of 1935–1943, during which the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the American left-wing thrived; The People’s Song Inc. movement, 1944–1950; and the “so-called folk song revival,” 1957–1964.\(^\text{92}\) To consider the meaning of the distribution of specific song types within these movements, Denisoff uses the songs as a way to situate the movements along a spectrum of progress or regression. To this end, Denisoff posits that the reinforcing, cohesive effect of persuasive songs is a catalyst for political or class consciousness within a movement: “The [song of persuasion] contains the three elements of class consciousness, that is, an awareness of class position, differentiation from others, as indicated in the content of the songs, and further, a desire or willingness to join a movement.”\(^\text{93}\) With this understanding, Denisoff infers that a movement with an increased amount of persuasive songs is one with higher class consciousness, or a feeling of a “class for itself.”\(^\text{94}\)

The notion of class consciousness coalescing into a feeling of a “class for itself” reveals Denisoff’s reliance on Marxist theories of historical materialism.\(^\text{95}\) As Ron Eyerman describes, the progress of a movement as viewed through historical materialism

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\(^\text{92}\) Ibid., 61.
\(^\text{93}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{94}\) Ibid., 60.
\(^\text{95}\) Ibid., 60-64.
is based on the relation of labor to production. In this theoretical system, the progress of history exists on a linear scale, where on one end of the spectrum, the labor class—the proletariat—is entirely oppressed by the capitalist class—the bourgeoisie. To progress forward, the proletariat class must become conscious of their class position, their interests, and must possess a willingness to assert their interests over the interests of other classes.

Through his analysis, which is summarized in Table 3.2, Denisoff traces a decrease in class or political consciousness over the course of 1905–1964. This analytical framework is appropriate for the first two periods Denisoff analyses; the songs from these eras are selections from the IWW and CIO, two major groups dealing directly with labor relations. However, while the remaining two movements can be assumed to deal with laborers and common people—members of the proletariat—it cannot be assumed that the musical output of these groups were committed solely to labor relations. It is no surprise, then, that Denisoff’s analysis of these periods shows a decline in songs of persuasion, and thus a decline in class consciousness.

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97 Ibid., 72.
98 Ibid., and Denisoff, 60.
99 Denisoff, 78-79.
The tendency for social and political movements after The Great Depression and WWII to protest for more abstract concepts than labor relations decreases historical materialism’s relevance in analyzing the progressive or regressive nature of the movements. This departure from the traditional labor-capital dichotomy has continued into songs of twenty-first century movements. Writing in 2003, Dan Epstein contributed to the many voices asking, “where have all the protest songs gone?”:

Where are the new protest songs? Over a million Americans have already taken to the streets to protest President Bush's insane war on Iraq, so there's clearly an audience for musical dissent. It's not like there's a lack of other pressing issues to write about, either, with our civil liberties getting rolled back in the name of preserving freedom, and Bush and John Ashcroft attempting to return America to the God-fearing values of the '50s—the 1650s, that is. The environment, affirmative action and Roe v. Wade are all under direct assault from the Bush administration; the economy stinks; millions of Americans have fallen below the poverty line; and the Enron and WorldCom scandals are still unresolved. You'd think that a substantial number of our prominent recording artists might be pissed off enough to pen a song or two about any of the above, right?\(^{101}\)

\(^{100}\) Ibid., 76.

\(^{101}\) Dan Epstein, “Sing Now, or Forever Hold Your Peace,” \textit{L.A. Weekly}, February 13, 2003, accessed November 30, 2016, http://www.laweekly.com/music/sing-now-or-forever-hold-your-peace-2135963. While the left seemed to be struggling to string together a few words, in Epstein’s opinion, he recognized the ability of the right to turn their views into songs: “In the year and a half since the World Trade Center attacks, there's been no shortage of jingoistic, flag-waving songs. But disappointingly few ‘name artists have wrestled on wax with the deeper implications of the post-9/11 world.”
Epstein’s writing calls into question the seeming lack of sociopolitical songs on the airwaves. Nevertheless, it also demonstrates the multifaceted demands from which social and political movements of the twenty-first century may choose. Whereas complaints such as “the economy stinks” deal directly with the labor-capital dichotomy, the formation of group or class consciousness to address the rights of the proletariat no longer serves as the sole driving force behind many of the causes listed above, such as war, civil liberties, reproductive rights, and challenges facing the environment.

Eyerman, discussing the complications of using historical materialism to comprehend the concerns and demands of modern movements writes, “[The demands] appear outside the capital-labor dichotomy and, to be analyzed and correctly understood [within historical materialism], they must be related back to it.”\(^{102}\) While the sociologist or political scientist may be able to draw connections from abstract goals back to labor relations, Denisoff’s theory does not allow for such flexibility. However, Denisoff’s analytical framework can be adapted to fit other social theories by connecting the functions of each kind of sociopolitical song with the aims or processes of the theories.

One such theory that allows for an analysis of progress and regression without specific dependence like labor relations, focusing instead on the social functions and dysfunctions of a group is the Modernization Theory championed by Talcott Parsons.\(^{103}\)

\(^{102}\) Eyerman, 73.

\(^{103}\) Modernization Theory is used to explain the process of societal transition from pre-modern society to modern and to post-modern society. This theory follows the evolution not only of economics, but of social issues as well (from focus on traditional or religious communities as the center of society to the secular individual being the center). This theory’s characterization of modern society as “progressive” invites criticism from those who champion a diverse, globalized view of humanity. To privilege Euro-American societies as “modern” or “advanced” is to imply that non-Western, non-industrialized societies are “pre-modern” and “behind.” In short, those who favor Modernization Theory would argue that societies differ by degrees of progress, whereas its critics would argue that societies differ not in degree but in kind, with one not being more advanced or valuable than another.
Parsons (1902–1979), was an American sociologist who is most remembered for his contributions to structural functionalism, a sociological framework that views society as a complex system in which separate parts work together to create cohesion and stability.\textsuperscript{104} In explaining Parsonian Modernization Theory, Ron Eyerman outlines four processes through which a society’s evolution can be gauged or assessed through modernization theory, of which three are appropriate to this discussion:

1. A process of increasing differentiation and the development of autonomous ‘action units’ or systems within a society
2. The amount, measured quantitatively not qualitatively, of inclusion of citizens in a society’s political processes
3. The degree of ‘value generalization’ in a society.\textsuperscript{105}

In this thesis, I consider Occupy Wall Street through Modernization Theory as a movement whose goal is to continue the process of moving toward a secular, post-industrial, citizen-centric society. The aim of remaking society to privilege the “99%” over the “1%” is one that looks to break down social and economic structures that privilege the few over the many. Following this thinking, when all are able to succeed or thrive in society, the more freedom each person has to act as an individual.

It is possible to establish musical parallels for these three processes of modernization in a manner similar to Denisoff’s adaptation of musical types to historical materialism. Concerning the first process, the increased differentiation of “action units,” Eyerman gives the example of the separation of church and state, a differentiation


between two units of society. A group or movement considered progressive in this process, one that moves toward modernization, would be one that advocates for or against a range of topics or changes to many units of society. The music that may indicate this process in a group could take the form of either propaganda songs, which increase knowledge of various topics, or protests songs, which advocate for further differentiation in society for the benefit of the group.

The second process, the inclusion of citizens in the political process, may be musically indicated by an increase in genre types present in the body of musical literature for a group and by an increase in propaganda songs, which seek to increase knowledge and mutual understanding between the sender and receiver. Whereas Denisoff viewed folk music as the most effective form of sociopolitical song, in a group focused on bringing in as many people as possible, the use of multiple genres may prove more effective at swelling the ranks, regardless of the genres’ effectiveness at influencing or changing the sociopolitical landscape. Diversification of genre coupled with a wide range of causes would theoretically increase the amount and diversity of citizens’ engagement.

Finally, the third process outlines the generalization of value sets amongst society or a group that allows for a freer range of action. In a social group, the adoption of many causes or sub-groups would indicate this process of modernization. This process is essentially achieving homogeny through heterogeneity. In my sociopolitical song model (Fig. 3.2), only the propaganda song can allow for the dissemination of knowledge about multiple causes or actions while abstaining from directly advocating specific action. An

106 Ibid. Eyerman also cites the separation of management and labor as a division in this process.
abundance of propaganda song, then, would be indicative of a group that appeals to a broad interpretation of information or to a generalized set of values.

Using the framework outlined above, in the next chapter I test the music found on the *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* against the hypothesis that an increased amount of propaganda song and a diversification of genre are indicative of a progressive movement in Parsonian Modernization Theory as described by Eyerman. This analysis draws meaning from the music of Occupy Wall Street, increasing understanding of the music’s place in society; in this case, music’s place in progressing the modernization of twenty-first century, American society.
Chapter 4
Analysis: *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%

In the preceding chapter, I outlined a framework for the analysis of sociopolitical song that uses a song’s lyrics to determine its communicative function, separating each song into one of three categories: propaganda songs, songs of persuasion, or protest songs. The results of this categorization through lyrical analysis, applied to a body of work by a particular movement, can be used to understand the movement’s place or function in society. For R. Serge Denisoff, this type of analysis determined the level of class consciousness within a particular group, and thus predicted the group’s progression along the right-to-left spectrum of historical materialism. In a similar manner, I apply the Holbrook Purpose Model for Sociopolitical Song (see Figure 3.2 in the previous chapter) to the songs from *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%,* determining the type of each song found on the album. Using the result of this analysis, I infer Occupy Wall Street’s place in society as a modernizing movement.

In this chapter, I first provide a short summary of the contents of the album to provide context for individual songs. Then, I demonstrate my typological analysis on a selection of six songs from *Occupy This Album*—chosen to show a variety of song types and artists and a range of popularity and styles— including: “Hey Can I Sleep on Your Futon” by Richard Barone, “The Young Idealist” by Lloyd Cole, “Which Side Are You On?” covered by Ani DiFranco, “Rebellion Politik” by Junkyard Empire, “Crashed It, Stashed It” by the Occubilly Brothers, and “If There Ever Was a Time” by Third Eye Blind. In each analysis, I determine the song’s type by matching the lyrics’ communicative function, as outlined in the Holbrook Purpose Mode for Sociopolitical Song described in Chapter III, with one of the three song types: persuasion, propaganda,
or protest. After demonstrating this process, I present the results of the analysis of the entire album. These results show a larger percentage of propaganda songs to other songs types, which indicates a movement that was progressive in terms of the processes of modernization through its musical appeal for mutual understanding and generalized sets of values.

**Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%**

As discussed in Chapter II, *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* was released by Music for Occupy on May 15, 2012. On this compilation album, 99 different artists signed on to perform 99 different songs, written for or about Occupy Wall Street, or written about causes and beliefs represented in the Occupy movement generally. The 99 artists presented on this four-disc album range in terms of popularity and style, with music that could be considered rock, folk, blues, rap, electronic, among others. Popular artists and celebrities presented on this album include Yoko Ono, documentarian Michael Moore, Patti Smith, Loudon Wainwright III, Anti-Flag, Girls Against Boys, Willie Nelson, Arlo Guthrie, David Crosby, and Graham Nash. Along with lesser known artists and bands, this album also features a recording of the PULSE drum circle accompanied by spoken word performed by Paul Spitz.

In connection with the variety of performers and styles, *Occupy This Album* also features a wide variety of causes and ideologies. In the following case studies, I present analyses of songs that are representative of the diversity of genre, content, and artist popularity present on this album. These analyses reinforce the view of the multifaceted nature of Occupy Wall Street, and the multiple functions of the movement’s musicking.
Further, the analyses show that while Occupy Wall Street may have “lacked an anthem” during its 59-day existence, it did not lack musical output.

**Propaganda Song: “Hey Can I Sleep on Your Futon?” by Richard Barone**

Richard Barone, who is best known as the lead singer of the pop band The Bongos, is an American singer-songwriter whose current musical projects, including his album *Sorrows and Promises: Greenwich Village in the 1960s*, explore American folk music.\(^{107}\) Barone’s track on *Occupy This Album* sounds somewhere between these two kinds of music: a mix of acoustic guitar, upbeat drum kit, electric guitar with flanger, and backing vocals on “oohs,” “aahs,” and shouts of “hey!” A particularly interesting musical moment comes in the bridge of the song when the studio track cuts away to a live recording of a crowd shouting the lyrics accompanied by the playing of drums reminiscent of the notorious PULSE drum circles. In this song, Barone’s lyrics follow a pattern of short, four-line descriptions that touch on causes, events, and popular culture of the mid-to-late 2000s.

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“Hey Can I Sleep” on Your Futon by Richard Barone

Two tours of Afghanistan and one in Iraq
I gave 'em six years and I got nothing back
Trying to make things better and to be a good dad
I found out the hard way

She left her home in the fall of '09
Grabbed a guitar and kissed her mom goodbye
If Lady Gaga can do it then why can't I
She found out the hard way

(Chorus)
We believed what they said
Now the dreams looking dead and I can't pay my rent
Oh please
Hey, can I ask you a favor
Let me buy you another PBR and hey, would you be a life saver
and save me from sleeping in my car
Can I sleep on your futon?
Sleep on your futon on your futon, tonight?

Six years of school and an advanced degree and still no job is calling me
Just student loans and delinquent fees
I found out the hard way

I got a job at Neiman's in bonds and sales
Twelve hour days in a cubicle jail
They said it was too big to fail
Found out the hard way

(Bridge)
It's time to unite and fight as one
Join the circle and bang the drum
Going to take back what they took away
The moment is here and it's here to stay

(Chorus x2)

108 Richard Barone, “Hey Can I Sleep on Your Futon” Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99% (New York: Music for Occupy, 2012). Lyrics gathered from https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Richard-Barone/Hey-Can-I-Sleep-on-Your-Futon, accessed July 1, 2017. On the website, the line is given as “I got a job at Neiman’s in bonds and sales”; however, the line should read “I got a job at Lehman’s,” the banking firm that filed for Bankruptcy in 2008 following the burst of the subprime mortgage bubble that led to the financial crash in the USA, and economic depressions around the world.
The song begins in a narrative mode as a propaganda song, recognizing and describing events viewed as problematic to some of the protestors at Occupy: the war in the Middle East, the pursuit of celebrity, rising student debt, and the challenging job market following the financial crash of 2008. To this last event, Barone specifically mentions losing a job at Lehman Brothers, a banking firm deemed “too big to fail,” which filed for bankruptcy at the beginning of the financial crisis. Through the lines detailing his pursuit of higher degrees that did not lead to better job prospects, Barone’s song creates a sense of cohesion with other members of Occupy, a majority of whom had earned college degrees, the largest portion of that group carrying advanced degrees. Barone’s detailing of life events relating to major national events also builds cohesion between Occupy, through Barone, and the outside world.

Beyond these lines establishing Barone as kin to the occupiers, the song does not call for a specific set of actions or solutions, either organizational or ideological, outside of the short bridge in which the listener is asked to “fight as one/ join the circle and bang the drum.” One could take these instructions as a direct call to action; however, the vague quality of “fight as one” and “join the circle” do not illicit specific, concrete actions. It is for these reasons I categorize this song as a propaganda song; it describes and identifies political and societal problems without offering concrete solutions to the problems.

109 Kimberly Amadeo, “What is Too Big to Fail? With Example of Banks,” *The Balance*, last updated February 07, 2017, https://www.thebalance.com/too-big-to-fail-3305617, accessed July 1, 2017. “An investment bank, Lehman Brothers, proved that some banks are too big to fail. Lehman wasn’t a big company, but the impact of its bankruptcy was alarming. In 2008, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson said no to its bailout, and it filed for bankruptcy. On the following Monday, the Dow dropped 350 points. By Wednesday, financial markets panicked. That threatened the overnight lending needed to keep businesses running. The problem was beyond what monetary policy could do. That meant a $700 billion bailout was necessary to recapitalize the major banks.”

110 See footnote 33.
beyond the vague urging for listeners to join Occupy, beat the drum, and take back what has been lost.

**Persuasion Song: “The Young Idealist” by Lloyd Cole**

In contrast to the propaganda function of Barone’s song, Lloyd Cole’s, “The Young Idealist” is an example of a song of persuasion. Lloyd Cole, born in England, is best known for his work in Europe in the mid-1980s with his band The Commotions, notably their album *Rattlesnakes*.111 Cole’s musical style is eclectic, with albums ranging from rock to electronica. In this song, he layers acoustic guitar over electronic guitar, drums, and chime-like synthesizers to achieve a subdued, yet restless sound. In the lyrics, the repetition of the third-person “we” combines with references to shared life experiences between the singer and the listener, placing both within a group of former “young idealists.”

“*The Young Idealist*” by Lloyd Cole112

I know I said I favored peaceful resolution  
But that was when we were the young idealists  

(Chorus)  
The Young Idealists  
Raging through the coffee shops and bars  
Make believe the world was really ours  

Still supposing we could make a difference  
Then we bought into the neocon economic dream  
And we were trading in futures we believed in  
The Young Idealists  
Career through the markets to the Mall

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This song uses the rhetorical aspects normally attributed to propaganda songs, pointing out social or political injustices to create cohesion. In this case, however, the recognition of sociopolitical problems is meant to evoke shared life experiences rather than only to spread knowledge of those problems. In this way, Cole’s song is different than Barone’s, whose song primarily points to the problems faced by his generation as a way to increase the listener’s knowledge.

“The Young Idealists” also attempts, albeit mildly, to modify the behavior of the listener in the opening line: “I know I said I favored peaceful resolution/ but that was when we were the young idealists.” Advocating for a cease to peaceful resolutions, and thus an adoption of non-peaceful ones, the song functions to modify the listener’s stance on passive resistance. At the same time, this line creates cohesion and solidarity through its use of group-centric language. When compared with Barone’s song, calling for an end to peaceful resolution is a more concrete directive than the metaphorical “beat the drum” or “taking back.” For these reasons—the creation of cohesion and behavior...
modification— “The Young Idealist” functions more as a song of persuasion than a propaganda song.

**Protest Song: “Which Side are You On?” by Ani DiFranco**

The third case study is Ani DiFranco’s cover of “Which Side are You On?” an old labor union song with roots in the struggles of coal miners in 1930s Kentucky. Ani DiFranco is an American singer-songwriter and owner of the label Righteous Babe, which she started in 1990. As demonstrated in this track from *Occupy This Album*, DiFranco’s music centers on the folk traditions of America. The original chorus, the namesake of the song, has been preserved in this a cappella cover. However, DiFranco adds new verses. Whereas the original version begins with a call to “all of you good workers” and extols the virtues of joining a coal miners’ union, DiFranco’s version begins with a declaration of the power of the people in the face of election fraud and corporate corruption. She goes on to advocate for or oppose multiple issues: feminism against patriarchy, pollution, America’s traditions of slavery and oppression, Reaganomics, and others.

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113 As outlined on the website, labornotes.org, a media and organizing project that works to be “the voice of union activists,” “Which Side are You On?” was written by Florence Reece of Harlan County, KY after her husband was almost murdered by gunmen allegedly hired by the mining company for which he worked in 1931. These events are known as the Harlan County War. Reece’s involvements in other labor struggles in Harlan County are a subject of Barbara Kopple’s 1976 documentary *Harlan County USA*. https://web.archive.org/web/20101031071017/http://labornotes.org/node/1385, accessed July 2, 2017.


“Which Side are You On?” by Ani DiFranco

They stole a few elections,                        They say in Orleans parish
Still we the people won                          There are no neutrals there
We voted out corruption and                     There's just too much misery
Big corporations                                And there's too much despair

We voted for an end to war                      America who we are
New direction                                  Now our innocence is gone
And We ain't gonna stop now                     Forgive us mother Africa
Until the job is done                           History's done you wrong
Come on all good workers                       Too many stories written
This year is our time                          Out in black and white
Now there's folks in Washington                Yeah come on people of
That care what's on our minds                   privilege
Come one, come all voters                      It's time to join the fight
Let’s all vote next time                       Are we living in the shadow of
Show 'em which side are you on                  slavery
now                                        Or are we moving on
(Chorus)                                    Tell me which side are you on
Which side are you on                          now
Which side are you on now                      My mother was a feminist
Which side are you on                          She taught me to see
Thirty years of diggin'
Got us in this hole                            That the road to ruin is
The curse of reaganomics                       paved with patriarchy
Has finally taken its toll                     So, let the way of women
Lord knows the free market                     Guide democracy
Is anything but free                            From plunder and pollution
It costs dearly to the planet                  Let mother earth be free
And the likes of you and me                    Feminism ain't about women
I don't need those money lenders                No, that's not who it is for
Suckin' on my tit                              It's about a shifting
A little socialism                             consciousness
Don't scare me one bit!                        That'll bring an end to war
We could do a whole lot worse                  So listen up you fathers
Than Europe or Canada                          Listen up you sons
Come on Mr. president                         And tell me which side are you
Come on congress make the law

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So are we just consumers
Or are we citizens
Are we gonna make more garbage
Or are we gonna make amends
Are you part of the solution
Or are you part of the con?
Which side are you on now
Which side are you on?

As she lists causes, DiFranco does not seem to offer specific actions to remedy problems. However, the question “which side are you on?” forces listeners to consider their stance on each of these issues based on DiFranco’s information. To compel the listener to choose her side, she sings in the beginning that standing together on her side has worked before and can work again.

This argument, if effective, serves to benefit DiFranco (and by proxy, Occupy Wall Street) even if the outcome of banding together with DiFranco is not in the best interest of the listener. This song presents a problem or ideology and advocates for an action that benefits the singer or origin group while not necessarily benefitting the listener. For this reason, this song can be considered a protest song in my model.

Protest Song: “Rebellion Politik” by Junkyard Empire

The fourth case study is the song “Rebellion Politik” by the group Junkyard Empire, a band that views itself as part of “the soundtrack to the new American Revolution.” As outlined on their Bandcamp.com page, “Rebellion Politik” is more

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117 On the landing page of the band’s Bandcamp.com page, the full quotation reads: “Junkyard empire follows in the tradition of those artists who have openly called for revolution in America when it was needed. With four records under their belt, a tour of Cuba as guests of the Ministry of Culture, and acknowledgement of their talents by some of the greatest political minds of today, they have carved out a niche for themselves as the soundtrack to the new American revolution.”
than a song for Junkyard Empire; it is a mentality and a call to arms: “Rebellion Politik is the art of fearlessly rising up against all political, social, and economic policies and practices that stunt humanity’s growth toward equality with no compromise.”\textsuperscript{118} This mentality was demonstrated on the national stage during the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota when Junkyard Empire embarked on their Anti-RNC Tour:

Hard as it may be to believe, not everyone is delighted to see the Republican National Convention come to the Twin Cities...at least one relentless voice is determined to be heard: that of the avant-garde jazz and hip-hop band Junkyard Empire. ‘The idea of this little tour around the Twin Cities’, says Junkyard Empire trombonist and founder Christopher Robin Cox, ‘is to play shows in celebration of and solidarity with our brothers and sisters who [are] engaged in speaking truth to power during the convention.’\textsuperscript{119}

In this song, originally written for the album of the same name in 2009, rapper Brian Lozenski, who goes by the name Brihanu, immediately frames the song as a protest: “politics” is the force that upholds corporate greed, lying governments, and war, and “rebellion politik” will end that and bring about equal distribution of land and wealth through socialized democracy and “trickle-up” economics that will bring an end to poverty and war. In much the same way that Ani DiFranco frames her version of “Which Side are You on?” Junkyard Empire utilizes “we” and “us,” especially in the second and

\textsuperscript{118} As found on the Bandcamp page for their album Rebellion Politik, https://junkyardempire.bandcamp.com/album/rebellion-politik, accessed July 2, 2017. The quotation continues, “[Rebellion Politik] is born from the realization that the governments of the world have no interest in upholding the principle of the commons and have instead initiated a monumental human rights violation in the form of global capitalism. Rebellion Politik is a state of mind, that let's [sic] us all know there can be no more policies as usual. The capitalist system is crumbling around us and the powers that be will do anything to maintain it. We must rebel with the same fury to take control of our communities and organize with like-minded people to determine our own destiny. Rebellion Politik is a call to action.”

third rap breaks, to create cohesion and solidarity so as to convince listeners that instituting “rebellion politik” is in their best interest.\textsuperscript{120}

“Rebellion Politik” by Junkyard Empire.\textsuperscript{121}

(Chorus)
Rebellion politik the opposite of what you know as politics
When corporate capital makes the government break their promises
It’s a new day where people create the policy
The economy trickles up to eradicate the poverty
So get up, stand up, these are our demands
We want out money back so politicians get your hands up
The equal distribution of the land and the profits
An end to all war and a socialized democracy

I’m writing the scene, the clash of the titans
The premise is frightening, my nemesis’ playin’
They sayin’ the right-wing media hype
But Chuck D was right, “don’t believe the hype”
Deceiving the issues, misleading with fistfuls
Thieving the tents with heat seeking missiles

Visible agents they packin’ the pistols
Subliminal goals, dealing your soul
For global control come from racists backroads
Political whores patrolling the shores
Mores and stores they keep us all poor,
Knowing the cure for what’s at the core
Implored and floored in the third-world wars
Creating the wars for mineral ore
Come on y’all we gotta fight back with rebellion politik

(Chorus)
Right now, speaking as the voice of the masses
Defeated, mistreated believin’
you beat us, robbed us, and gassed us
We’ve been passed up, locked up
Exploited and downsized
But we will up-rise, no compromise, this is defined next time
My mind is still inclined to form a rhythmatic rhyme

\textsuperscript{120} The listener can infer that the changes advocated in the song are good for the rapper, not only because they are releasing the song, but because he refers directly to himself as a product of “politics”: “I am me because public policy criminalized me.”

\textsuperscript{121} Lyrics to “Rebellion Politik” transcribed by Benjamin Holbrook in absence of available printed or electronic transcriptions.
But I got enzymes in my blood that let me break it down this time

(Chorus)

So, I can’t digest all that bullshit that you feed me
You think hip hop is not that social
You ain’t read the graffiti
Cause you ignored us like the writing on an Indian treaty
We from the seedy, needy streets of each American city

We’re as gritty and grimy as public-school hallways—never shiny
But believe me, I am me because public policy criminalized me
They kept us in poverty like a third-world resident
Nobody’s exempt
Not even the brother of the president
Rebellion politick is rebellion scholarship
The science of survival in a repressive environment.

This song further creates solidarity by reaching out to disparate groups: fans of early political hip-hop in the reference to Chuck D, a founding member of Public Enemy; Native Americans through the reference to “Indian treaties”; and individuals who attended under-funded public schools with the line “We’re as gritty and grimy as public-school hallways—never shiny.” Through the immediate opposition between “politics” and “rebellion politik,” and through the creation of cohesion and solidarity through wide-reaching references and analogies, Junkyard Empire creates a clear protest song in “Rebellion Politik.”

Propaganda Song: “Crashed it, Stashed it” by The Occubilly Brothers.

The fifth case study is the song “Crashed it, Stashed it” by The Occubilly Brothers, “a New York-based radical rockabilly group.”122 Established in 2011, the band’s Facebook page sets their goals as “making music and mayhem with masks, in

Rockabilly solidarity with Occupy Wall Street.” In this song, the speaker outlines life in America over the first twelve years of the twenty-first century. Much like in Barone’s song, “Crashed it, Stashed it” is a largely informative song, taking the listener through various life experiences and national events: a diminishing 401(k); the bailout of various banks, including Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, AIG, and Bank of America (sung as “B-of-A”); and the “shipment” of jobs to overseas countries by General Electric. However, beyond the call to “Occupy,” “take a stand,” and the general call for “power to the people,” the song does not present any solutions to the problems addressed. Instead, the song directly states what it does not advocate for: “It's not criminal violence I'm trying to incite/ But if you don't see a problem then you don't know where to look.”

“Crashed it, Stashed it” by The Occubilly Brothers.

Well I opened up the mail, it was just the other day
I received another statement from my 401(k)
I looked at the number, I felt like a jerk
If this is all I got, I don't know why I even work
Wall Street has been screwing us, but we ain't been kissed
Look, if it's too big to fail, then it is too big to exist!

(Chorus)
They crashed it, stashed it and jerked us around

Suited up, screwed it up from town to town our town
Let's occupy the Man who's been keeping us down!
They crashed it, stashed it and jerked us on high
Suited up, screwed it up the system is a lie
So let's take it back, get on track it's time to occupy!
The criminals in congress might as well just pass a tax
That goes straight from my paycheck all the way to Goldman Sachs

123 The Facebook page for the group can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/The-Occubilly-Bros-396712013697057/about/?ref=page_internal, accessed July 30, 2017.
The fats are getting rich, the rest of us are hurtin',
Hell our last vice president came straight from Halliburton
Cops can use their billy clubs, tear gas, or mace
But my ass was already kicked by JP Morgan Chase
It was homicide by Countrywide and Angelo Mozilo
Citigroup and Boeing made us all bite the pillow
Exxon Mobil, Wells Fargo pay no income tax
But nobody goes to prison for the min much less the max
AIG and B-of-A they brought us to our knees
While General Electric shipped their jobs overseas.

If investment bankers even have a use at all
they exist just so that they can allocate Das Kapital
Wall street owns Main Street and the markets aren't free
Everybody's making money that they stole you and me
They get paid for performance, so I just wanna know
Why the market's so much lower that it was twelve years ago!
They stole a lot of money with that whole damn mortgage scheme
But what they took from all of us was the American Dream
Homes across the nation were illegally seized
It was criminal, unethical, and truly full of sleaze
When I talk about The Man, there is something else that you should know
There’s only 12 women who are fortune five hundred CEOs.

Albuquerque, San Francisco and Kalamazoo
Jacksonville, Atlanta, Detroit, Kansas City, too!
New York, Dallas, Oakland, Houston, Cleveland and LA
Chicago, Denver, Portland, Philadelphia
We're in almost every city and we're all across the land
Come on down and occupy--it's time to make a stand
I'm talkin’ Power to the people, but don't be so uptight
It's not criminal violence I'm trying to incite
But if you don't see a problem then you don't know where to look
check your federal reserve appointed-politician-crook
interest-free bailout loans but only wealthy need apply
So for the other 99% it's time to occupy!

By only pointing out societal and political problems and not explicitly presenting solutions, the song does not meet the criteria for the protest song. Further, beyond the call to “occupy,” the song does not seek to change, create, or reinforce behavior. Though the reminder of societal issues may create a sense of group cohesion, this song most closely
fits the category of propaganda song in its function of communicating ideology and knowledge of societal and political ills and events.

**Persuasion Song: “If There Ever Was a Time” by Third Eye Blind**

The sixth and final case study involves a song by perhaps one of the most popular bands featured on the album, Third Eye Blind. Formed in San Francisco in the early-1990s, Third Eye Blind’s early sound can be described as an intersection between pop and grunge rock: a sound that scored the band multiple Top 10 hits, including the song “Semi-Charmed Life” (1997). For “If There Ever Was a Time,” Third Eye Blind integrated sound bites from Occupy L.A over their pop-rock sound. This song is perhaps the most reported on song of the Occupy movement, with coverage on media networks such as The Huffington Post: “Never one to step back from the ledge separating music and politics, Third Eye Blind frontman Stephan Jenkins has penned an ode to the Occupy Wall Street movement.”\(^{125}\)

In this song, Jenkins makes a plea to the youth listening to this song to “come on meet me down at Zuccotti Park” and to “get non-violent and fearless.”

“*If There Ever Was a Time*” by Third Eye Blind\(^{126}\)

If there ever was a time, it would be now is all I’m saying
If there ever was a time to get on your feet and take it to the street
Cause you’re the one who’s getting played right now by the game they’re playing
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti park

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\(^{126}\) Lyrics taken from Aaron Sanking, “Third Eye Blind Pens Occupy Wall Street Anthem (VIDEO).”
Oh, where are the youth, we need you now
Come speak the truth, come break it down
Where are the youth, we need you now
If there ever was a time, it would be now, to make the masters hear this
If there ever was a time to get downtown and get non-violent and fearless
Things only get brighter when you light a spark
Everywhere you go right now is Zuccotti park
And news corps says you don’t have a plan
Well sit-down man, I’ll tell you again
The plan’s to stand together up to greed
And a tear gas can in a veteran’s face won’t change the case
If there ever was a time, it would be now, for the rest of us

If there ever was a time it would be now
Cause money and power are incestuous
A moment makes a movement or it fades out in the dark
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti park
And I saw a sign in the Oakland Spring
It said: “Occupy Everything!”
Or “by” and “for” and “of” won’t mean a thing
If there ever was a time it would be now
Is all I’m saying
If there ever was a time to get on your feet
Take it to the street
Cause you’re the one who's getting played right now
By the game they're playing
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti Park
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti Park
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti Park
Come on meet me down at Zuccotti Park

“If There Ever Was a Time” calls specifically to young people to “occupy everything” and occupy everywhere, to “light a spark” and create a moment that “makes a movement” lest it is lost in the dark. Though in other songs the generic call to “occupy” did not make a strong case for the change or creation of behavior, this song’s primary focus is to make such a case. Its imploring is made stronger and clearer as it asks the youth to join the Occupy Movement wherever they are. It is for this reason this song can be considered a song of persuasion, for it attempts to change behavior and create cohesion between the youth and the Occupy Movement.
Analysis: *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%*

I applied this method of lyrical analysis, demonstrated with six selected songs above, to the entirety of *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%.* As Table 4.1 indicates, only 87 of the 99 songs available on the album were found to fit within the uses of the purpose model: I removed songs from consideration if their lyrics did not meet any of the criteria of the purpose model, or, as in the electronic tracks or the live recording of drum circles, the songs lacked meaningful lyrics altogether. I did not consider the “Hidden Track,” a second recording of Michael Moore’s cover of “The Times, they are A’Changin’,” because the lyrical content was similar enough to the original track as to not change its categorization. Of the remaining 87 songs, 41 songs (47.12%) are categorized as propaganda songs; 28 (32.18%) as songs of persuasion; and the remaining 18 (20.6%) as protest songs. Table 4.1 shows these compared with the results of Denisoff’s analysis, discussed in Chapter III, Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PROTAGONDA</th>
<th>PERSUASION</th>
<th>PROTEST</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.W.W. (1905-1915)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Song Book I (1945-1950)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadside (1957-1964)</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNCC Songbook (1964)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupy This Album (2012)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Breakdown of Sociopolitical song found on *Occupy This Album* as compared to Denisoff’s data.\(^\text{127}\)

\(^\text{127}\) Data taken from Table III in Denisoff, 76.
As discussed in Chapter III, a group that advocates for the differentiation and development of different actions units, the inclusion of a mass group of citizens in the political process, and value generalization could be indicated through a body of songs that favored the functions of the propaganda song: increasing knowledge and awareness of a wide variety of topics while advocating for change without specific prescriptions of action. My analysis, which shows a larger amount of propaganda songs, indicates that the group represented by the music on *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* is one that is progressive in terms of Parson’s processes of modernization due to its musical appeal for mutual understanding and knowledge and generalized values.

As indicated in Table 4.1, Denisoff’s original analysis did not consider protest song as an individual category, but places these songs within the songs of persuasion category. If my analysis of *Occupy This Album* were to do the same, it would show more persuasive songs than propaganda songs, indicating a group focused more on its own views than the creation of homogeneity through heterogeneity. While this would indicate a movement with higher class conscious, the effectiveness of using modernization over historical materialism is not necessarily diminished. As is shown, Occupy This Album contains an almost equal spread of propaganda and persuasive songs, which is indicative of a group equally committed to “class in itself” as well as the world outside the movement. To Occupy, the “99%” must become part of a larger group consciousness to rise up against the “1%.” The means by which that group achieves unity, however, is through the homogenizing effects of modernization—generalizing the struggles of the world’s “99%” into the shared value of opposing the dominance of the “1%.”
A question asked of Occupy Wall Street almost as often as “where have all the protest songs gone?” was the question, “what do they want?” As Jeremi Suri of the University of Texas at Austin said in an interview with marketplace.org, “You have to be against something, but you also have to be for something. And unfortunately [Occupy is] not offering any cohesive or coherent alternative to the capitalist system as we know it. But maybe they will.” Although Occupy’s anger and demands encompassed disdain for the state of labor relations in the twenty-first century, its protests and songs indicate that it was focused on inequalities outside of the workplace as well, rendering historical materialism a less than ideal lens through which to analyze the movement. Modernization Theory allows for the consideration of the movement’s multifaceted demands without the theory being bent or broken and then related back to the demands, as would be necessary when using historical materialism.

An analysis of the music found on *Occupy This Album: 99 Songs for the 99%* through the Holbrook Purpose Model for Sociopolitical Song in relation to the principals of Modernization Theory engages the many goals of Occupy Wall Street. It also situates these songs within the musical activities of the group, allowing for the album to be considered as part of the same process of musicking as that which took place during the protests. Although it is challenging to consider Occupy Wall Street within a single narrative, my analysis of the many narratives and causes as demonstrated through its music—much like the multiple layers of a palimpsest—allows the movement to be placed within a unified theory of modernization, rather than a collage of labels and theories that

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129 Ibid.
would be necessary to relate the movement to the strict dichotomy of historical materialism.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I explored the place of Occupy Wall Street in society through its musicking and the album *Occupy this Album: 99 Songs for the 99%*. Whereas scholars in other fields have looked to subsequent movements to understand Occupy Wall Street, through categorical analysis of the songs on *Occupy this Album*, coupled with the Modernization Theory of Talcott Parsons, I have shown that Occupy Wall Street was a modernizing movement. This progressiveness through Modernization Theory is indicated through Occupy Wall Street’s large output on propaganda songs, which show its commitment to communication of diverse knowledge and ideologies, diversification of action units, and generalized value sets. Beyond this conclusion, this thesis provides a method through which to evaluate other cultural movements through their music instead of through direct or indirect political and cultural impact.

In a 2016 interview with Alex Shephard for New Republic, Cecily McMillan, who was arrested during Occupy Wall Street and was held in Rikers Island Correction Center for 58 days, reflected on the impact of Occupy Wall Street: “It drew a line. It was the beginning of a cultural movement, a social revolution. When we look back 20 or 30 years from now, we’ll say that was the beginning.”130 What McMillan describes here is the absence of direct successor movements, or tangible, specific effects on the status of politics and society in post-Occupy America. Although some saw the influence of OWS in the 2016 American presidential election cycle, with the left-leaning concerns of the occupiers embodied in Senator Bernie Sanders and the same popular dissatisfaction

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embodied on the right in President Donald Trump, others, like McMillan, continue to wait to see if Occupy’s war on the “1%” will ever truly begin.\textsuperscript{131}

McMillan’s reflection on the impact of the Occupy Movement on the political landscape in the United States could be applied to the sociopolitical musical landscape as well. Future research might explore the impact of political and cultural movements of the late-twentieth century and early-twenty-first century on the sociopolitical music of succeeding movements in order to understand how sociopolitical music has changed both musically and as a tool for movements. This research would include ways in which musicking has functioned across these movements, considering music not only as a sound phenomenon but also as an action.

In his work on music and soundscapes surrounding the Wisconsin Uprising that predated Occupy Wall Street by mere months, Michael S. O’Brien explored the musicking taking place at the movement. He concluded his study with the following:

[T]he Solidarity Sing Along in particular and the soundscape of the Wisconsin Uprising in general do suggest that, at the very least, protest music can still form an important component to contemporary social movements. Furthermore, oppositional dichotomies between the live and the mediated, between the presentational and the participatory, and between music that is passively consumed in isolation and music that is communally created are perhaps overstated…The protest song may have gone from the airwaves, but it is not entirely gone.\textsuperscript{132}

The musical legacy of Occupy Wall Street, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, confirms O’Brien notion that the “protest song” has not vanished, but perhaps switched mediums. Moreover, it is clear that the ways in which the musicking of a movement


happens, whether in person or through mediated avenues, does not change its importance to a movement, even if the effectiveness of different modes of musicking—in person, online, alone or together—is yet to be tested. Future research might also consider the effectiveness of different types of sociopolitical songs in achieving their communicative function and in bringing forth change for the groups that use them. Furthermore, research into type effectiveness could facilitate the evaluation of arguments about the usefulness of particular genres (for example, Denisoff’s privileging of folk music) in achieving specific functions within different movements.

We can begin to answer the questions “what is music saying and to whom?” and “how is music communicating and what does it mean?” through models that currently exist, to which I have added my own. Still to be explored are new avenues of questioning, such as “how are musical messages received?” and “how can they be received more effectively?” Pursuing answers to these questions will increase our understanding of how music functions within social movements and utility within social movements.
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