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When narratives travel: the Occupy movement in Latvia and Sweden

Abstract

In autumn of 2011 Occupy quickly spread worldwide setting the stage for the global Occupy movement. During the last years the movement has changed considerably. The encampments have disappeared and activists have developed ideas loosely linked to OWS following different trajectories. These are obvious changes over time, however, Occupy as an idea also changed while travelling to other localities. The chapter argues that rather than one strongly interlinked network based on social media (Castells, 2009), the Occupy movement should be understood as a travelling narrative characterized by very specific reshapings and reinterpretations negotiating the global and the local. Drawing on a multi-sited narrative analysis, the chapter discusses how the global and local scale of the Occupy movement were appropriated by Swedish and Latvian activists. The main aim is to suggest a narrative approach to analyze global protest movements demanding radical and historical contextualization.

Introduction

In autumn 2011 the Occupy movement emerged as global phenomenon with camps all over the world. During the last years the movement has changed considerably. The encampments have disappeared, however, a number of working groups -- such as Occupy Sandy, a group mainly active in New York City and New Jersey supporting communities that have suffered from hurricane Sandy in October 2012 -- have developed specific causes loosely related to the initial Occupy movement further (Kellner 2012). These are plausible changes over time, however, the movement also changed through travelling to different localities around the world and in that sense provides an example of transnational activism linking different places characterized by

various political contexts across the globe (Cohen & Rai 2000). In that context, Occupy as a movement has often been considered a global protest network consisting of nodes linked by the communicative infrastructure of blogs, digests, and social networking platforms (Castells 2012; Cohen & Rai 2000; Sassen 2011). This approach to an analysis of Occupy foregrounds the importance of specific media practices for the movement's internal identification, organization and mobilization. Generally agreeing with the importance of media practices for protest movements especially involving social media, I, however, suggest to consider the global Occupy movement as a travelling narrative characterized by very specific reshapings and reinterpretations in different localities that are strongly context dependent (Mörtenböck & Mooshammer 2012).

While the network metaphor has been helpful to develop an understanding of communicative connectivity worldwide and identifying central nodes within the network, the approach also has been criticized for technological determinism and a focus on central nodes while dismissing the peripheries and in that sense establishing new hierarchies. The three main goals of this chapter are hence to firstly argue for radical contextualization of media practices (Radway 1984) especially in times of Big Data (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier 2013) and datafication of the public realm (van Dijck & Poell 2013). Secondly, the chapter suggests to combine diachronic historization as well as synchronic analysis of protest movements' social media practices. Thirdly, the chapter argues for narrative analysis as a fruitful approach to study media participation of protest movements. Relying on in-depth interviews with activists, media content produced by Occupy Stockholm and Occupy Latvia/Riga as well as a discourse analysis of mainstream media reporting the chapter illustrates these points with an analysis of Occupy Latvia and Occupy Stockholm.

The Occupy movement and its recontextualization in Latvia and Sweden

In July 2011, AdBusters¹, the notorious facilitator of anti-consumerism campaigns, launched a call to occupy Wall Street by introducing the hashtag #occupywallstreet on Twitter. Later on they were however cautious in terms of claiming the foundation of the movement. After online mobilization, a few dozen people followed the call on 17 September 2011. Since the Wall Street was strongly secured by police force, the occupiers turned to the close by Zuccotti Park. The small privately owned square became the place for camping, campaigning and deliberating for the up-coming weeks until the first eviction in November 2011 (Graeber 2013). Initially there were only a handful of activist. The numbers grew, however, quickly and the encampment developed into a diverse group of occupiers being based on what has been characterized as leaderlessness and non-violence (Bolton et al. 2013). At the same time there was a 'division over conventional politics, over reform and revolution' (Gitlin 2012, p. XV). This group of diverse people with different political visions and ideas about how to organize the movement appropriated elaborated ways for deliberation, including the human microphone amplifying the individual speaker's voice through a repeating choir; the hand sign system to organize discussions in large groups; as well as a system of working groups and breakout sessions that all gathered at the general assembly to reach consensus (Graeber 2013).

Mainstream media initially only reported little although rather sympathetically about the movement (Gitlin 2012). At the same time the word of Occupy Wall Street spread around the world, not at least to the main capitals of Europe leading to the adoption of tactics and different versions of OWS, spearheaded by the London St. Paul's Cathedral occupation (Conzanza-Chock 2012). Not only in the financial centers of Europe such as London and Frankfurt, had people begun to occupy public spaces promoting the slogan 'we are the 99%', also in cities and areas often being perceived as peripheral to global capitalism the ideas and ideals of Occupy were appropriated to the specific context, as for example by Occupy Stockholm and Occupy Riga/Latvia that will be in focus here.

Despite of earlier occupations of different public spaces and protests related to the economic crisis in 2008/09, Latvia has never seen an actual occupation in connection to the global Occupy movement. Linked to the general growth of Occupy worldwide, there appeared, however, loose online groups linking up to the movement discussing economic greed and politics in the Latvian context.

In Stockholm, in contrast, occupations were taking place over the course of almost one year². During the first weeks, Occupy Stockholm quickly diversified into several subgroups and committees working with specific questions. Among this committees the media group was one of the biggest consisting of several divisions working on the homepage (discontinued), Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, printed outlets and posters as well as graphics. Other subgroups were dedicated to demonstrations and to a study group that met weekly between January and May 2012. Their discussions of democracy, participation, economics and neoliberal ideology were streamed live online. As two informants that were involved with Occupy Stockholm suggested in one of the interviews, many first-time activists joined the group in the beginning. During late summer of 2012, however, more and more activists vanished from the encampment and the last camp site was evicted voluntarily. A core group of five people remained connected and held a general assembly on a regular basis until October 2012, when they decided to indefinitely pause Occupy Stockholm.

Network Society

As the Occupy movement spread globally also the research efforts grew. Special journal issues emerged (e.g. *Social Movement Studies* (vol. 11, no. 3-4) *Cultural Anthropology* (Hot Spot Occupy)), articles and books were published, conferences held, research collectives (e.g. Occupy Research Collective) were set up and even a scholarly journal appeared (*Journal for Occupied Studies*). Among these research endeavors several scholars also engaged in the

specific analysis of Occupy as a global phenomenon (Conzanza-Chock 2012; Juris 2012; Postill 2013; Uitermark & Nicholls 2012). Especially social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Tumblr have been identified and emphasized as crucial components of the global movement Occupy (Castells 2012; Gleason 2013; Milner 2013; Penney & Dadas 2014; Wang, Wang & Zhu 2013).

In contrast to this earlier research, this chapter foregrounds the question of activists' media practices and role of mainstream news media in the process of recontextualizing a globally shared frame of activism. It connects in that way to previous studies of the repertoire of collective action (Tilly 1986, 1993) suggesting that an increasingly important part of the collective action repertoire is constituted by questions of media representation and media practices (Couldry 2012) or more specifically forms of media participation in and through the media (Carpentier 2011). Participation in the media refers to contributions of lay people to the decision making processes and governance of (mainstream) media, while participation through the media refers to own productions, but also visibility of different voices in media content (Carpentier 2011). Generally it is argued that all of these forms of media participation become increasingly important in societies characterized by mediatization (Couldry & Hepp 2013; Hepp 2011). One of the most prominent approaches to analyze the role of media participation for social movements suggested by Manuel Castells' is the notion of the network society that is largely based on communicative power (Castells 2009, 2011, 2012).

Castells argues that 'the social dynamics constructed around networks appears to dissolve society as a stable social form of organization' (Castells 2009, p. 19) and explains further that 'a network society is a society whose social structure is made around networks activated by microelectronics-based, digitally processed information and communication technologies' (Castells 2009, p. 24). This notion of the network society has been identified of value for the analysis of protest and social movements as it describes a common culture that is

not based on shared values, but the shared understanding of the importance of communication. Network societies are based on communication protocols that interlink different cultures. The interlinking of different cultures without diminishing their inherent differences makes the approach especially appealing for the analysis of global protest movements that struggle for communicative power.

Communicative power is central to the network society as power is exercised through the control over minds, Castells suggests. He argues ‘by means of coercion (...) and/or by the construction of meaning on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their action’ (Castells 2009, 10). Social movements then join the ‘battle of images and frames’ (Castells 2009, p. 302) that are taking place in multimedia communication networks.

By using both horizontal communication networks and mainstream media to convey their images and messages, they increase their chances of enacting social and political change – even if they start from a subordinate position in institutional power, financial resources, or symbolic legitimacy (Castells 2009, p. 302).

However, several problems with Castells notion of the network society have been raised. Firstly, it has been argued that the notion of the network society overemphasizes technological aspects and is downplaying the question of access to resources and agency (Hands 2011; van Dijk 1999). Secondly, it has been argued that Castells overemphasizes social formation over social action by proposing that the society equals a network. Furthermore, networks and hence the network society are based on ties or relationships between nodes. These relations are determining the centrality of certain nodes and for the peripherality of others (Mansell 2010). The relational logic establishes consequently a different kind of hierarchy namely between central and peripheral nodes, the ones being visible and the ones being invisible, while

downplaying the character and activities constituting a node as such (Halvorsen 2012). Furthermore one could argue that emphasizing the role of communication technologies, especially commercial social networking platforms, the network metaphor maintains communicative capitalism as conceptualized by Jodi Dean (2008, 2012). Dean argues that within the current landscape of social networking sites exchange value gains more importance than the use value of messages. It is hence not the shared content that is of major interest and bears the potential for change, but the mere exchange of messages that is endorsed as it contributes to the generation of surplus value for the platforms being used. Arguing that protest movements are inherently characterized by the network logic among others embodied by social networking sites strengthens the power of these commercial players and the logic of communicative capitalism rather than critically deconstructs it.

Besides that it has been generally discussed what aspects of the global Occupy movement could be analyzed in terms of network logics. Taking Occupy as an example, Halvorsen (2012) argues that the movement did not establish global convergence spaces where central nodes for a transnational network emerged, as it was the case for the alter-globalization movement that was largely organized around events such as the world social forum and G8 or G20 meetings. No such attempts have been made within Occupy, except for the alternative day of action on human rights day (10 December 2011). In that sense, the movement was very locally anchored combining network logic with the logic of aggregation (Juris 2012; Uitermark & Nicholls 2012).

The network notion has surely contributed to develop an understanding of Occupy on a global scale, but less to an understanding of the relevance and transformation of Occupy as a shared frame that is concretely enacted in different contexts. Hence, I would like to suggest to consider Occupy as a meta-narrative that has been very specifically reshaped and reinterpreted in different contexts, while taking the limits of narratives as heuristic into account (Polletta

2006). The aim is not to completely dismiss the notion of the network, but to point out its limitations and consider relevant extensions.

Empirical Entry Points

In the following I would like to illustrate the points made above especially the argument for radical contextualization and historization with an analysis of Occupy Latvia and Occupy Stockholm. Neither Sweden nor Latvia took a central position within the global Occupy network. However, they can be considered to exemplify the recontextualization of the movement.

The analysis is twofold and could be described as multi-sited narrative analysis considering a variety of materials such as interviews with activists, media productions by Occupy Stockholm and Occupy Latvia as well as articles published in major Swedish and Latvian news outlets.

Firstly the analysis focuses on the recontextualization by activists' media practices and secondly on the recontextualization by mainstream news media in both countries. The first part is based on in-depth interviews, participant observations and an analysis of documents produced by activists in Latvia and Sweden conducted in autumn 2012. Besides materials documenting media practices of activists, the movement's recontextualization is traced through a discourse analysis of major mainstream newspapers in both countries. The discourse analysis focuses on the first two months after the first encampment of Occupy Wall Street on 17 September 2011, which constitutes the time when Occupy groups and encampments mushroomed all over Europe.

The discourse analysis sample consists of Dagens nyheter, Svenska dagbladet, Aftonbladet and Expressen for the Swedish part and Diena, Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, Latvijas Avīze (all in Latvian); Chas and Vesti (both in Russian) for the Latvian part. The choice of newspapers represents a broad spectrum of political positions (from liberal to conservative) as well as quality and tabloid newspapers. For the Latvian case the sample includes the most important Russian daily newspapers, which are mainly read by the Russian-speaking minority comprising approximately 27 per cent of the Latvian population.

The Swedish sample consists of 63 articles in total, whereas the Latvian newspapers published only 17 articles during the same period (from September to November 2011; the period was chosen based on the main activities of the OWS). The first report in Sweden appeared on 29 September 2011 by *Svenska Dagbladet*, which was a comparably long article in the economy section. In Latvia the first article concerning the Occupy movement was published on 3 October 2011.

Narrative analysis of protest movements

Instead of focusing on central nodes of a global protest network, this chapter suggests to consider the reshaping of a shared meta-narrative in different contexts. Narrative analysis originating from literature, history, anthropology, sociology, and linguistics encompasses a variety of research practices and analytical strategies, such as biographical studies, autobiographical approaches as well as life- and oral histories (Creswell 2007). Despite, or because of, the intensive engagement with narrative analysis within qualitative research, the field is characterized by ambiguities and controversies. Hence, one can hardly point to a coherent tradition of narrative analysis (Rogan & de Kock 2005). The focus of narrative semiotics is on how stories are told through the media, e.g. movies, by focusing on different levels of analysis, such as technical aspects, plot development and characters. In general, the

notion narrative may refer to an actual text or more abstract discourse. Narrative analysis enables, hence, to include individual voices and more abstract discourse. The inclusion of individual voices is of particular importance in the context of the Occupy movement that is and was characterized by broad diversity of political views and actors.

Stories and narratives are furthermore considered as expressions of emplotment. On the micro level of stories as well as more abstract discourse level, they provide coherence in a world of disorder (Ricoeur 1984). Focusing on narratives allows hence to follow the emplotment of experiences here in the sense of recontextualization (Bennett 2013, Van Leeuwen 2007, Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). Recontextualization refers to the idea - following van Leeuwen - that all social practice is reformulated as talk and texts in discourse. Through discursive articulation practices become meaningful from a specific point of view. This view establishes discourse as being clearly grounded in a material world transcending pure exercise of ideology (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, Van Leeuwen 2008). Van Leeuwen constructs, furthermore, a chain of recontextualization moving from social practices to discursive, signifying practices to discourse. He further identifies participants, actions, performance modes, presentation, time and location as well as resources as key elements within this chain of recontextualization.

Occupy Narrative/s

In order to trace the recontextualization of the meta-narrative of Occupy, it seems however difficult to establish a coherent narrative of Occupy in the first place. In the beginning of the movement the leaderlessness, multi-voiced character and openness in terms of demands were the fundamental features of Occupy Wall Street making it obsolete to tell one story of the movement. Struggles about defining the movement were part of the initial organizing and mobilizing period of Occupy Wall Street, when different (political) groups aimed to establish narrative power (Graeber 2013). Graeber nicely narrates this struggle that manifested itself,

for example in one of the first meetings (general assembly on August 2, 2011), where members of the Workers World Party (WWP) seemed to have been dominating the discussion initially (p. 24-26), but anarchist activists successfully questioned their position. This had consequences for the character of the movement that consequently emerged organically in terms of organizational structures without hierarchies and the deep commitment to multi-voicedness, which lets carving out one major narrative appear counter-intuitive (Bolton et al. 2013).

However, in order to develop an understanding of the narrative structure of Occupy, the distinction between story and narrative established earlier is crucial as the individual stories of occupiers that feed into a grander web of the Occupy narrative. In this context, Occupy together³ establishes an international platform that gathered shared narratives of the movement with an emphasis on diversity, multiplicity of voices and the individual. The openness of the defining Occupy narrative allows for different political subject positions to cling onto and contributes to the “opening up of the radical imagination that Occupy allowed” (Graeber 2012, p. xxvii). This radical imagination that allows for the construction of chains of equivalence concerning concrete local concerns allowed for a global appropriation and spread of the movement to numerous places in the world as illustrated in figure 1. In April 2014, Occupy.net listed 1518 occupations worldwide.

Figure 1: Visualisation of the global spread of occupy, source <http://tiles.mapbox.com/occupy>, accessed April 12, 2014.

Activists' Stories: Negotiating the global and the local

In terms of recontextualization Occupy Latvia activists were faced with a general negative attitude towards the term *Occupy* as such. Two of my Latvian informants suggested that the name Occupy was little appealing to the Latvian population and potential activists considering Latvia's German and Russian occupation in the first half of the twentieth century. In that sense, one of the aims of the Occupy movement, namely to overturn and reclaim the notion of occupation (Pickerill and Krinsky 2012), failed in the Latvian context. Adam, one of my interview partners, remembered

There wasn't Occupy as such in Latvia. The problem started with the word Occupy. It reminds very much of the occupation in Soviet times and the German occupation. That's not really inviting. But the movement has been discussed for examples in our blog. Mainly it was discussed how it looks like in the US and Spain, but not in Latvia, where people are not used to protests and demonstrations. One exception was 2009, when –

during the winter – there were demonstrations and a small encampment in front of the parliament for a couple of weeks, but this was considered as hippy-like activities, in a way. (Interview with Adam⁴ – Latvian activist)

For Adam, one of the main reasons that Occupy never took off in Latvia, was the problematical naming of the movement, although the country has seen crisis related protest mobilizations including occupations already in 2008/2009. He recounts that on 13 January 2009 a protest against the government's handling of the crisis turned into a violent riot. Protesters, mainly students, were pressing for resignation of the government. During the time of mobilization a number of protesters tried to hinder MPs to enter the parliament and camped in front of the building. After the resignation of the government on 20 February 2009 the protest, however, quickly faded as the activists seemed to have reached their goals with the resignation. Additionally, in autumn 2009 a group of approximately 20 activists was camping in front of the Cabinet of Ministers, the main Latvian government building. They remained in the self-organized camp until summer 2010 promoting a broad range of demands from the Latvian government. Some of the main issues were unemployment and austerity measures that were recently introduced. The above illustrates the importance of considering the historical situatedness of global movements such as Occupy and the need for including diachronic analyses.

Although there were no Occupy camps in Latvia, Occupy narratives were circulating in blogs, e.g. <http://politika.lv/> and on social networking platforms such as Facebook, e.g. the OccupyLatvia facebook page, which describes itself and its' aims as follows:

‘We will publish here information about events that are connected with the movement against the financial terrorism of bank and corporations.

Dear citizen! We are not some kind of organized group that will try to convince you what you should do. There will be no Lenin or Ulmanis⁵ who will give orders

to others from above. That would be against the nature of the action for which we got inspired by the occupation of the Wall Street and its followers in the whole world. We have painful credits from banks too, we have also tightened belts because of reduced budgets, and we also have relatives and friends who have been forced to leave the fatherland in order to earn money in exile. Meanwhile the 1% - owners and managers of banks, oligarchs, as well as the “cream” of government and state administration - earn money on that. But the sovereign power in the Republic of Latvia belongs to people. Thus to those 99%, and not to the elite that is only 1% of the population. It is time to use this power. It is time to occupy Latvia so that it really belongs to us and not to handful greedy men of wealth.

We do not intend to keep silent!

Only together we can reach something!

Yours, 99% citizens of Latvia’ (OccupyLatvia Facebook group⁶)

The section opens with the general statement of the aim of the group to inform about the occupy movement. In what follows the citizens are firstly addressed as citizens and then invited to join the group that is open to everyone and welcomes all kinds of ideas. It follows a reference to the Occupy Wall Street encampment as a source of inspiration. A clear distinction is drawn between the 99 per cent of depth-having, exploited majority of the Latvian society against the 1 per cent of elite politicians and bankers. The description closes with a mission statement, call for participation and the signature of the 99 per cent. The description of the group is both an attempt to include first-time activists and interested citizens. It establishes at the same time, a description of the group in distinction to others (greedy bankers, politicians and those not yet involved), while offering points of identification through describing the life circumstances with depth and insecurity for a majority of the Latvian society. Hence, the section functions as

possibility for group internal identifications, which are based on marking the difference to others, here the elite.

In the case of Occupy Stockholm, the activist emphasized very strongly the general features of the Occupy Wall Street narrative: an open space for discussion and the aim to restructure the economy and democratic organization fundamentally as the following press release for the one month anniversary of the Occupy Stockholm camp illustrates:

‘Occupy Stockholm is going to celebrate its one month anniversary of occupation at Brunkesberg Torg tomorrow Saturday, November 12. As far as we know, this occupation has been the longest open-air occupation in the modern history of Sweden and you are warmly welcome to celebrate! Occupy Stockholm is in solidarity with all other occupations and protests that take place around the world. Now that our planet faces global economic and environmental crises, we have reclaimed our voices against the propaganda of corporations. The change we are aiming for includes all levels of society: culture, health care, education, agriculture, energy, financial politics, and so on. If we want to build a better life, all these areas need to be developed. These responsibilities live with us as humanity. Only if we are united beyond our individual goals, there will be a responsible future for coming generations. In order to make this happen, we need to support each other. The solution needs much more than a camp at Brunkesberg torg, but we are going to be in the park to remind you of what is going on in the world and what needs to be done and together we work on realizing it. You are always welcome to us. We are going to be there. (...)’ (Occupy Stockholm website⁷).

The general demands for change on all levels of society that resonate with formulations by Occupy Wall Street are anchored in the local presence of the activists, making the aim for change visible on a daily basis (Hayduk 2013). The more context specific recontextualization

of the local encampments was especially visible in the demonstrations and particular events that Occupy Stockholm either organized or supported. The causes for mobilization on the local level stretched from protests against the further privatization of housing in Stockholm, homelessness, Swedish weapon deals with Saudi-Arabia as well as the data retention directive (FRA⁸). Furthermore Occupy Stockholm mobilized for European-wide protests against public debt, the ESM funds and advocated for a European directive for the increased regulation of banks on the European level. Globally they supported the world environment day, protests against US war politics as well as 1 May marches. Combining global Occupy features with local causes, the encampment becomes hence a site of negotiating the global in conjuncture with local that also happens on the individual level. Thomas, for example, describes his previous (remote) involvement with Occupy Wall Street that paved the way for his mobilization and support of Occupy Stockholm. The physical mobilization meant for him

‘the biggest challenge personally, because almost all my interests and a large share of my normal social context are technology-based. I grew up in the context of the BBS-scene – that’s how the internet was called before – and was one among the first users of a private internet provider in Sweden. This form of social engagement is expressed today in the fact that I spent almost all the time I am awake with consumption, commenting and forwarding of current developments in social media (Twitter and the like). So to go within an afternoon from an intensive activity around for example Occupy Wall Street (New York and other branches) and the North-African/Middle East revolutions with little sleep to not knowing anything about the world beyond the 200 – 100 meters or something around you. Except for the little things that you pick up from passers-by... A big change’. (Interview with Thomas⁹ – Occupy Stockholm).

Thomas describes further in the interview how he was involved with setting up the online infrastructure of Occupy Wall Street in New York City and how activism came to mean being

a relay or hub for information on a global scale. Being one of the longest and most involved occupiers meant for him not having access to global news, since the technological infrastructure and hardware in the Stockholm encampment did not allow for it. In more general terms, Thomas' shift from being a broker in a network to an occupier, reflects the double articulation combining network logic and logic of aggregation that Jeffrey Juris (2012) describes. Both logics are of importance in terms of sustaining a global protest movement, although the focus might be shifting over time. Juris argues for example that networking logic – “that is shaped by our interactions with networking technologies and (...) gives rise to specific kinds of social and political networking practices” (Juris 2012, p. 266) – was of utmost importance during the initial mobilizations for Occupy and after the evictions of the camps.

Ultimately, the narratives by Occupy Stockholm and Occupy Latvia activist reflect the negotiation of a global frame with the local conditioning that has been discussed in scholarly literature especially in the context of new social movements (Cohen & Rai 2000). Occupy emerges as a multi-level movement reflecting a nation state that is being continuously challenged by globalization of finance capitalism (della Porta & Piazza 2008). Part of the multi-levelled character of the movement is the integration of the logic of the network and of aggregation that is expressed in multiple forms of action that link local protest to global movements (della Porta & Piazza 2008). Following only Castells network society argument would preclude the aggregation aspect. However, both logics are of importance for the global movement although a shifting one over time and for different aspects (Nayak 2013). In the Latvian context the movement remained within the logics of networking, never leading to physical aggregation in a public space, while in the Swedish context both logics were fully played out.

News Media Stories: Global Trumps Local

The following section analyses the recontextualisation of the Occupy movement in Sweden and Latvia by mainstream news media. By way of a discourse analysis, four major strategies of emplotting the narrative in a different context were identified: nomination, predication, perspectivation and mitigation (Van Leeuwen 2008).

Nomination refers to the discursive construction of social actors, objects, events and actions and ultimately asks for who gets to talk about what kind of events. In general the reports about Occupy and Occupy in the Swedish and Latvian context are rather few and dominated by elite actors such as politicians, artists and intellectuals. Rarely activists themselves are given voice in the articles. In the Swedish case activists are appearing in the articles more frequently after the first encampments in Stockholm. In the Latvian case no local activists or politicians are considered in the articles.

In terms of the motivations and causes of the Occupy movement to emerge, the newspapers both in Latvia and Sweden are focusing on the greed of individual bankers and corporations as well as the growing inequality is partly mentioned, but then only justified and evidenced for the American not the Swedish or Latvian context as the following example from the Swedish Expressen illustrates and remain rather unspecific in terms of the critique that Occupy suggested.

The average income in the US has marginally increased the last 30 years. At the same time as the income of the richest part has exploded. The large productivity growth has not reached the middle class, however, the richest are paying ever less and the middle class ever more (Expressen 22/10/2011).¹⁰

Predication as a second discursive practice prevalent in the articles refers to the qualification of actors, objects, events and action, namely in comparison to what other actors, objects, events and actions they should be understood and hence to which kind of categories they potentially belong. In both contexts Occupy is associated with other protest movements such as the global

justice movement, Arab Spring, the Indignados, but also Wikileaks and Anonymous as well as the tea party movement as in Diena:

The activists of *Occupy Wall Street* like to stress that they are repercussion of the so called Arab Spring protests. The internet edition *International Business Times*, however, rather links the American movement with the movement, started in May in Madrid, the *15M*, followers of which, for weeks and months are staying in the parks of the biggest cities, in order to demand the government social and political reforms. *15M* can be proud with real achievements, because the socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero announced extraordinary parliamentary elections in summer (Diena 14/10/2011).¹¹

There are however no links to traditional political organizations such as trade unions, although they have been supporting specific mobilizations of for example Occupy Stockholm. Through this kind of predication the movement is ideologically depoliticized, especially the comparison to all kinds of protest and social movements from the radical left to the right contextualizes the movement as ideologically and structurally arbitrary.

In terms of perspectivation, it is clear that both Latvian and Swedish newspapers create only weak links between Occupy and the local/national context. The movement is largely considered in the foreign news section and as having little relevance for the local political and economic context:

Started as a rather marginal movement against the bankers of the Wall Street, the protest campaign Occupy Wall Street, concerns almost everybody in the American society (Latvijas Avīze 14/10/2011).¹²

This also links up to the discursive strategy of mitigation namely the down toning to minimize the act of protesting and occupying public space itself. Expressen down plays the movement in the following way:

Anyway it is itching in the eyes. It is not true. 99 per cent of the Swedes do not at all have to choose between paying for food *or* the rent. Of course the differences have increased the last couple of years, but most parts of the Swedish population do not suffer economically (Expressen 22/10/2011).¹³

In the Latvian context, mitigation of the movement in general is executed through completely delinking it from the Latvian crisis experience, while in Sweden commentators question the severity of the crisis and consequently the motivation of the local activists as such.

In general the movement is depoliticized through disconnecting it from its initial cause of questioning and criticizing global finance capitalism that led to the economic crisis. Furthermore, the movement is disconnected from other forms of critiquing or countering capitalist practices for example through institutionalized forms of political organization such as unions. Additionally the causes of the movement are mitigated by delinking it from the crisis experience in the local context of both Sweden and Latvia. Hence, Occupy is largely constructed as foreign and less relevant in the North - European context. In terms of negotiating the global movement with the local context mainstream news media in both Latvia and Sweden attribute more importance to the global level of the movement rather than its local relevance leading to a crude discrediting of the root causes for the movement to emerge.

Conclusion

The main aim of the chapter was to show that the protest network metaphor that has been invoked by for example Castells (2009, 2012) might be helpful for certain kinds of analyses. In order to grasp the relationship between the global movement and its local

expressions, I would however argue that it overemphasizes the technological aspects and downplays the contextual considerations of how global narratives and practices are appropriated and recontextualized. Besides the problems that have been pointed out, the network metaphor emphasizes the newness of how protests are organized and places communication technologies at the center without investigating changes or the legitimacy of newness claims. In order to develop an in-depth understanding of media practices of current protest movement they have to be put, however, in a historical context of previous movements and their (social) media practices. Consequently, in the chapter I suggested to focus on the discursive practices of activists and mainstream news media constituting a global movement in local contexts. In line with that radical (re)contextualization is stressed as an approach that allows for an analysis of the local context in which Occupy emerged. Furthermore the chapter argues for comparative research to develop a deeper understanding of local particularities and shared characteristics of global social movements. The comparative analysis conducted here aimed for the articulation of structural differences and communalities in order to show the linkages while preserving the particularities of the movement in specific localities. Furthermore analyzing narratives provided by the activists in contrast to mainstream news media narratives shows how the global and the local are negotiated differently and the consequences of these diverse appropriations. While activists stories emphasize the local specificities of their activism in relation to a global cause, mainstream news made that have been analyzed here consider merely the global scope. By doing so they mitigate the importance of the movement in the local context and question its origins as inappropriate concerning the political and economic realities in Sweden and Latvia.

In addition to the investigation of how the global and the local are negotiated in different contexts, the multi-sited narrative analysis exercised here allows to grasp the double articulation

of network logics in combination with logics of aggregation. Network analysis as a dominant perspective on global social movements only partially grasps this double articulation.

As earlier studies have pointed out, global social movements today emerge in the nexus of the global and local. The Occupy encampments around the world are vivid expressions of contentious politics against global (finance) capitalism expressed on the local level through physical presence in public spaces as well as mobilizing for direct action with specific local foci. While the network metaphor emphasizes the global connectedness and contributes to an understanding in terms of visibility versus non-visibility, center versus periphery, multi-sited narrative analysis contributes to an understanding of the actual negotiation process between the local and the global.

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¹ For a critical analysis of AdBusters as a facilitator of social and political criticism see Haiven (2007).

² 15 October 2011 – 29 February 2012: Brunkebergstorg; 2 March 2012 – 4 April 2012: Rålambshovsparken; 7 April 2012 – 17 May 2012: Fittja; 27 June 2012 – 31 July 2012: Tantolunden.

³ <http://www.occupytogether.org/aboutoccupy/> Accessed April 12, 2014.

⁴ Name changed by the author.

⁵ Kārlis Ulmanis was the Latvian president 1936-1940.

⁶ Dārgais pilsoni! Mēs neesam nekāda organizēta grupa, kura tev mēģinās iestāstīt, kas tev ir jādara. Te nav un nebūs neviena Ļeņina vai Ulmaņa, kas komandēs citus no varas pjedestāla. Tas būtu pretrunā ar pasākuma būtību, kuram iedvesmu esam smēlušies no Volstrītas okupācijas un tās sekotājiem visā pasaulē. Arī mums ir grūti atdodami kredīti bankās, arī mēs esam savilkuši jostas valsts budžeta samazināšanas dēļ, arī mums ir radi un draugi, kuri ir bijuši spiesti pamest dzimteni, lai pelnītu naudu svešātnē. Mēs esam 99% Latvijas iedzīvotāju, kuri iznes visu krīzes smagumu uz saviem pleciem. Tikmēr 1% — banku īpašnieki un vadība, oligarhi, kā arī valdības un valsts pārvaldes “krējums” — uz to visu pelna naudu. Taču suverēnā vara Latvijas Republikā pieder tautai. Tātad tiem 99%, nevis elitei, kas ir tikai 1% no iedzīvotājiem. Ir pienācis laiks izmantot šo varu. Ir pienācis laiks okupēt Latviju, lai tā tiešām piederētu mums, nevis saujīgai mantrausīgu bagātnieku. Mēs vairs nedomājam klusēt! Tikai kopā mēs varam kaut ko panākt! Ar cieņu, 99% Latvijas pilsoņi
(<https://www.facebook.com/OccupyLatvia>, accessed April 14, 2014.)

⁷ Occupy Stockholm kommer att fira sitt ettmånadersjubileum av ockupationen på Brunkesberg Torg imorgon lördag, den 12 november. Så vitt vi vet har detta varit den längsta utomhusockupationen i modern historia i Sverige, och du är varmt välkomna att delta i firandet! Occupy Stockholm rörelsen är i solidaritet med alla de andra ockupationer och protester som äger rum runt om i världen. Då vår planet står inför globala ekonomiska och miljömässiga kriser har vi åtagit oss att ha våra röster hörda i ansiktet av företagens propaganda. Den förändring vi söker omfattar alla sektorer i samhället; kultur, hälsovård, utbildning, jordbruk, energi, ekonomisk politik, etc. Om vi skall kunna bygga ett bättre liv, måste alla dessa sektorer utvecklas. Detta ansvar lever med oss som mänsklighet. Om vi förenas genom omvandling av våra individuella åtgärder kommer vi först då att manifesteras en framtid som är hänsynsfull för kommande generationer. För att göra detta behöver vi stödja varandra. Lösningen beror på så mycket mer än ett läger på Brunkesberg torg, men vi kommer att vara i parken att påminna dig om vad som händer i världen och vad som behöver göras och tillsammans arbeta för att detta blir verklighet. Du är alltid välkommen till oss. Vi kommer att vara här. (Accessed through http://web.archive.org/web/20120201000000*/http://occupystockholm.org/, April 14, 2014).

⁸ The FRA-law enables Swedish authorities to wiretapping telephone and internet communication that passes a Swedish border without a warrant.

⁹ Name changed by the author.

¹⁰ Medelinkomsten i USA har nämligen knappt ökat alls på 30 år, samtidigt som den rikaste procentens inkomster exploderat. Den stora produktivitetsökning som skett har knappt alls kommit medelklassen till del, ändå har skattesystemet gjorts om så att de rikaste betalar allt mindre och medelklassen mer.

¹¹ Kustības Occupy Wall Street aktīvistiem patīk uzsvērt, ka viņi ir tā sauktā Arābu pavasara protestu atskaņa. Interneta izdevums International Business Times amerikāņu kustību gan vairāk saista ar maijā Spānijas galvaspilsētā Madridē aizsākušos kustību 15M, kuras sekotāji nedēļā un mēnešiem ilgi uzturas lielāko pilsētu centrālajos laukumos, lai pieprasītu valdībai politiskās un sociālās reformas. 15M var lepoties ar reāliem panākumiem, jo sociālistu premjerministrs Hosē Luiss Sapatero vasarā izsludināja ārkārtas parlamenta vēlēšanas.

¹² Sākusies kā samērā margināla kustība pret Volstrītas bankājiem, protesta akcija „Okupē Voltstrītu” vienaldzīgu neatstāj nevienu amerikāni.

¹³ Ändå skaver det i ögonen. Det är ju inte sant. 99 procent av svenskarna måste inte alls välja mellan att betala mat och hyra. Visst har klyftorna ökat på senare år, men de flesta svenskar har det ekonomiskt rätt bra.