

# Media Framing: a comparative content analysis on mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street

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## Abstract

*This study examined the relationship between media framing and the way both mainstream and alternative media sources portray similar news events. Communication theories were researched and used in a comparative content analysis that examined articles written by mass and alternative media sources within the first three weeks of the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations. The study found that the portrayal of the movement differed greatly depending on the source. While mass media articles framed the movement as lackluster, dismissive and confusing, alternative news emphasized the strength and diversity of its protesters and demonstrations. The results may have far-reaching implications and raise further questions about the mode of communication people depend on to receive their news.*

## I. Introduction

The news media, and more specifically print media, serve as valuable sources of information and powerful modes of communication. This power controls much of what people understand of events that occur around the world on a daily basis. The way information is transferred to its recipients comes through various forms of communication, all of which is framed to meet the goals of the providing source. In social theory, a 'frame' consists of a schema of interpretation, collection of anecdotes, and stereotypes that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events. In communication, framing defines how news media coverage can shape mass opinion by using these specific frameworks to help guide their reader to understanding.

The following research provides a better understanding of what media framing is, what it is composed of and how it affects the way news is presented to its readers. By examining media framing theory and applying this in an analysis of mainstream and alternative media sources, several trends appear. These trends highlight how news sources are able to influence public perception. While framing news is almost impossible to avoid, it's the motive behind the frames that warrant further research.

The agenda setting theory states that the news media have a large influence on audiences. News companies and journalists have the ability to dictate what stories are considered newsworthy and how much prominence and space they are allocated. Coupling this theory with that of framing, researchers have been able to study the influence of mass media in the formation of public opinion. With an understanding of these theories, it becomes apparent that media sources with economic support and influence could have an effect

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\* **Keywords:** media framing and bias, agenda setting, media coverage, media conglomerates, mainstream vs. alternative media

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on the opinions of their readers. The formation of words used in a news article creates a vehicle for persuasion that has the opportunity to form stereotypes and generalizations among the minds of its readers.

The passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 allowed for large corporations to buy media outlets and merge with other growing businesses and companies that would create even larger and more powerful media empires. Today, media giants, such as Time Warner and Telecom, dictate what the public reads, watches and ultimately perceives as the truth.

By comparing the manner that mainstream mass media and alternative sources portray the events of Occupy Wall Street, it is easy to see the difference in the way each structures its news. While both have agendas, the difference lies in the motive of profit. Due to the various funders, advertisers and special interest groups that keep media conglomerates in business, it would seem difficult for mainstream media sources to present news in an unbiased fashion. Conversely, alternative media outlets are independent from corporate control. And while bias is a natural result of time and space limitations, independent media sources have little to no profit motive, which allows for its news to be more transparent than mainstream media.

Researchers have studied framing theory since the late 20th century. However, rarely have the source and motive behind the frame and its possible implications been questioned and researched. This study aims at analyzing the different ways news sources frame similar news stories, their use of media framing and the effect these have on the portrayal of events to its readers.

## II. Literature Review

### ***Framing: History and Theory***

Media framing is the way in which information is presented to its audiences. Goffman was the first to concentrate on framing as a form of communication and defined "framing" as a "schemata of interpretation" that enables individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" occurrences or life experiences (Goffman, 1974). Robert Entman modernized this definition by specifying that "to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 51).

Today, media effects can be characterized as "social constructionism" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 103). Mass media constructs social reality by "framing images of reality . . . in a predicable and patterned way" (McQuail, 1994, p. 331). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), "Media discourse is part of a process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists . . . develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

By incorporating media framing with agenda setting, priming and bias, Entman believes that readers can better comprehend how and why framing occurs in the media. "Agenda setting serves as the first function of framing as it defines the problems worthy of government attention." Priming is "the goal, the intended effect, of strategic actors' framing activities" (Entman, 1993, p. 165). Agenda setting will always occur, even if it is not pervasively biased. However, when paired, agenda setting and priming have the ability to create widespread bias. Bias, as defined by Entman, is "consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side of conflicts over the use of government power" (Entman, 1993, p. 166).

Consumer culture has penetrated the business of media through the use of framing, agenda setting, priming and bias, which facilitates its commerce. According to Budd, Craig and Steinmen (1999), "Media meet recommended or endorsed bias at the most fundamental levels: consistent framing in favor of capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexism, individualism, consumerism and White privilege, among other deeply entrenched values that help allocate power in American society" (Budd, Craig & Steinmen, 1999).

### ***Framing the Media: 1996 Telecommunications Act***

According to Robert McChesney, with the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the United States government deregulated control of media and created a laissez-faire commercialized media. All media systems now are the result of government-sanctioned monopoly rights to scarce frequencies and franchises where the notion now is that media systems are "naturally the province of private interests in pursuit of profit

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(McChesney, 2000, p. 128). The Telecommunications Act of 1996 acted as the catalyst to rapid changes in global media systems as it “opened up a ‘Pandora’s box’ of consolidation in the media industry” (Herman & McChesney, 1998 p. 50).

This act gave way to the merging of major film studios with networks that allowed vertical integration. Vertical integration in economic terms is the common ownership or control of successive stages of the production and distribution process of a good or service. In result, the viewing public suffers from reduced diversity and quality of programming (Waterman, 1999 p. 536). This is a trend that follows the predominant tendency within capitalism toward centralization of economic power in the hands of oligopolies (Bettig and Hall, 2003, p. 16). Major corporations saw the rise of media conglomerates as an opportunity for savvy investments through the forms of stock ownership, joint ventures and interlocking boards of directors (Bettig and Hall, 2003 p. 32).

With these investments and joint interest groups came indirect and structural influences in content since media owners were most concerned with sound financial results (Thomas Guback, 1982 p. 32).

### ***Framing as a Tool in Modern Communication***

Framing is a tool used by media and politicians to make salient points that would direct their readers to a desired frame of mind. Frank Luntz was the first “professional pollster to systematically use the concept of framing as a campaign tool” (Diatram A. Scheufele & David Tewksbury, 2007, p. 9) as advertised in his 222-page memo called “Language of the 21st century,” which was sent to select members of the U.S. Congress with the distinct message: “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it” (Frank Luntz, in press). Luntz has researched Republican campaign messages and “distilled terms and phrases that resonated with specific interpretive schemas among audiences and therefore helped shift people’s attitudes” (Diatram A. Scheufele & David Tewksbury, 2007, p. 9).

Frank contends, “The lessons of effective language transcend politics; business, media and even Hollywood . . . language, politics and commerce have always been intertwined, for better or for worse” (Luntz, 2006). Luntz notes, “Given the sheer amount of communication the average person has to contend with, the rules of communication are especially important.” With the right language, word or phrase, he argues, businesses, CEO’s and politicians can get “safely at your destination with money in [their] pocket.” Luntz asserts that, by using “words that pop, the kind of words and phrases you only have to hear once before they burn themselves into your mind and drive you to action,” those with influence over the news can facilitate a change the minds of the readers on any subject matter (Luntz, 2006).

### ***Big Media Effects***

After understanding the science behind the use of framing as a media tool and the fact that through governmental deregulation media could be bought and merged between major corporations, it is imperative to now grasp how to incorporate these truths in the examination of who it is that owns the media and the effects these owners might have on the way the news is portrayed to its audiences.

According to McChesney, the media system is not simply an economic category; it is responsible for transmitting culture, journalism and politically relevant information. Fulfilling those needs is mandatory for self-governance (McChesney, 2000, p. 130). On the contrary, as a result of deregulation and the opportunity to make large profits, mainstream media target as their primary audience market not the general public, but rather their advertisers. This introduces a layer of commercial vetting of content – and it gives media tremendous incentive to appeal to those audience members that advertisers wish to reach. Commercial journalism routinely emphasizes business stories and issues of importance to investors (McChesney, 2000, p. 131).

## **III. Methodology**

In order to explore the relationship between media framing and its effects on the portrayal of events in the news a content analysis was performed on articles pertaining to the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations. Seven articles from both mass and alternative media were chosen to be cross-examined. Given the time and space limitations of this study’s research, the article selection was limited to the short time period of September 17th to October 8th. This time period was chosen because it represents the first three weeks the Occupy demonstrations took place on Wall Street.

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With the set timeline, the researcher then investigated which news sources were considered 'mainstream media' and 'alternative media.' Mainstream media are defined by its wide-reaching circulation that generally results in what media consumers are likely to find. They are the large influential news conglomerates that underwent mergers in the U.S. after the Telecommunications act of 1996. They are often referenced as 'mainstream' or 'mass media' sources.

Independent media sources are referred to as being providers of news that present alternative information to that of the mainstream media. According to scholar John Downing, alternative media often aim to challenge existing powers, to represent marginalized groups and to foster horizontal linkages among communities of interest. An extensive list of alternative media sources is found online via The Alternative Press Center\*\*.

After identifying the verified types of media sources, the researcher searched "Occupy Wall Street" and the name of each specific media source, e.g., "Occupy Wall Street" FOX NEWS. Together with these search terms and selected dates, a series of articles from each news source were found. From this list, the researcher chose one article that was written closest to September 17th.

The following six mainstream media sources were chosen: FOX NEWS, The New York Post, CNN, The New York Times, ABC News, CNBC and The Wall Street Journal. These sources were chosen because of their prominence and extensive readership, and their ties with large media conglomerates. The following six alternative media sources were chosen: Truthdig, Mother Jones, Loop21, Democracy Now, Digital Journal and Adbusters. These sources were picked because of their reputation among independent news media as being credible and authentic.

Content analysis is a method of research defined, in brief, as "the systematic assignment of communication content to categorize according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p. 3). Under the consideration of framing theory, researchers are able to conduct content analysis by measuring clusters of messages also known as frames to see how these are then incorporated into their audiences' schemata (Entman, 1993). Content analysis is essential to finding patterns, based on which scholars and researchers can methodically evaluate news media and its use of framing. In turn, this allows for the comparison of possible agenda setters' bias of the event.

Articles were categorized by length — small (0-400 words); medium (401-800 words); long (801-1,200 words) — tone (positive, negative or neutral), and dominant frames, which varied depending on source of media.

## IV. Research Design

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the differences between the way mainstream and alternative media report on the same news event.

RQ. 1: In what ways is news framed by print media?

RQ. 2: Does the way print media frame cultural and social events in their publications affect the perception of the event to its readers?

RQ. 3: When comparing media coverage of Occupy Wall Street, are there differences and/or similarities between the two different groups of media and the way each has framed the events.

By exploring the impact of a media source's frame, agenda, bias and priming, the author hopes to identify what effect these elements may play on news articles.

### **Mainstream Mass Media**

Article 1) FOX NEWS, Demonstrators 'Occupy Wall Street' to Protest Influence of Money on U.S. Politics

Article 2) New York Post, "Over 50 'occupiers' cuffed in Union Sq. chaos"

Article 3) CNN, Dozens arrested in 8th day of 'Occupy Wall Street' protests

Article 4) New York Times, "Hippies and Hipsters Exhale"

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\*\*<http://www.altpress.org/>

Article 5) ABC News, Occupy Wall Street Protesters: We Are Americans

Article 6) CNBC, What Does Occupy Wall Street Want?

Article 7) Wall Street Journal, “Wall Street Protest Digs in, Spreads”

### **Alternative Media**

Article 1) Truthdig, “99 Percenters Occupy Wall Street”

Article 2) Mother Jones, “Is #OccupyWallStreet Working?”

Article 3) Loop21, “Occupy Wall Street becomes Nationwide Movement”

Article 4) Democracy Now, [audio] “Cornel West on Occupy Wall Street: It’s the Makings of a U.S. Autumn Responding to the Arab Spring”

Article 5) Digital Journal, “Op-ed: Millionaires, unions and activists join (Unions and Activist Join-capitalization) Occupy Wall Street”

Article 6) Mother Jones, “Occupy Wall Street, Powered by Big Labor”

Article 7) Truthout, “Occupy Boston: Day One”

## **V. Findings**

### **Mainstream Media**

Length: Research has shown that there is significant relationship between length of the news article and its perceived importance. By analyzing article length, the researcher was able to understand and draw conclusions about how important the media source felt the covered topic was or should be regarded by its reader. The reason is that the magnitude of a news article can be signified by the location of the story and its length. For example, a news story on the front page and 900 words long can be perceived as more important to its reader than one buried in the middle of the publication and written with only 200 words.

Out of the seven articles examined in this study, five of them were written with less than 400 words and two with more than 800 words, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The length of news stories**

LENGTH:	SHORT*	MEDIUM*	LONG*
	1,2,3,5,6**		4,7*

*Note.* \*short indicates 0-400 words; medium, 401-800 words; and long, over 800 words;

\*\**The number represents an article listed above.*

Tone, Dominant Frames & Viewpoint: These three analyses were grouped together because they all overlap and show a relationship. Generally, the article’s use of tone and various viewpoints all contribute to the dominant frames seen in all of the articles (see Table 2): downplay/dismissal and conflicts of the Occupy demonstrations. The categorization of frames came directly from the news stories.

Tone of Downplay/Dismissal: The dismissive tone of these articles is highlighted by the viewpoints from which the journalists write.

In a piece written for FOX NEWS, the journalists writes, “Hundreds of demonstrators gathered on Wall Street . . . to protest the influence of money in U.S. politics and decry what they perceive to be the injustices of the financial system.” First, the article provides a false count of demonstrators, which was reported by U.S News as 1,000 on September 17th (Green, 2011). Second, the subtle use of the words, “they perceive,” immediately places the readers of the article apart from those who are demonstrating. The language used here is one example of the dismissive tone that carries through the rest of the article.

In article 2, Josh Saul and Joe Walker of The New York Post quoted a “complaining” 24 year-old college student named Moses Appleton, who was described as having made the “pilgrimage from Virginia

Beach” to come demonstrate on Wall Street. By quoting a demonstrator with the name, Moses Appleton, and describing how he came to New York as a “pilgrimage,” they create a perception of the demonstrations as being of another world, different and peculiar (Saul & Walker, 2011). Additionally, their use of the verb “complain” to describe how the demonstrator felt reinforces the bothersome frame that the article is using to describe the protesters. This excerpt reinforces the frame that downplays the events of Occupy.

In article 4, New York Times writer, Blow, began his article by describing the Occupy movement as a “festival of frustrations, a collective venting session with little edge or urgency. He continues by adding that Occupy is “a ‘leaderless resistance movement’ of a couple hundred people (depending on whom you ask)” who “have camped out and sat-in at a tiny park in Lower Manhattan to protest greed and corruption, among other things.” He concludes the article by adding that “the protesters would first be meeting at Bowling Green Park for a program that included yoga, a pillow fight and face painting” (Blow, 2011).

By picking out several key words in the above quotations, the trivializing and condescending framework becomes evident. The words and phrases, “festival”, “venting”, “little edge or urgency”, “depending on whom you ask” and “pillow fight and face painting” evoke a sense of insignificance. By presenting the Occupy demonstrations in this light, the writer gives the reader the perception that the movement is trivial and inconsequential.

Articles 3, 4, 5 and 7 each use words like “claim,” “so-called,” “few,” “small-scale,” “off-shoot,” “disorganized,” and “confusing.” These all create an unobtrusive nature to the events of Occupy, which when used frequently enough, result in the downplaying of the demonstrations.

**Conflict:** The conflict frame is one used in most articles to date, and media coverage of Occupy was no different. All but two out of the seven articles written by the mainstream media elaborated on the conflict between police and Occupy protesters.

In a piece for FOX NEWS, the journalist commented on this conflict, “The NYPD had taken action to prevent protestors from wreaking havoc” (2011). By using the phrase “wreaking havoc,” the reader automatically pictures a violent and destructive cataclysm between the officers and protesters. By focusing on this conflict, the journalist steers the reader’s attention away from the actual reasons for the protests in the first place and places more emphasis on the violence.

Journalist Nina Golgowski wrote an entire CNN article on this conflict and titled it, “Dozens arrested in 8th day of ‘Occupy Wall Street’ protests.” The first paragraph reads that “the latest arrests include disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, obstructing governmental administration and assaulting a police officer” (Golgowski, 2011). All of these offences create a framework, which works against the protesters and the movement as a whole

**Table 2. The tone and frame of news stories**

<b>TONE:</b>	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
	6	1,2,3,4,5,7	
<b>DOMINANT FRAMES:</b>	CONFLICT (X v. Y)	DOWNPLAY	
	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,3,4,5,7	

### **Alternative Media**

**Length:** In contrast to the articles written by the mainstream media, stories from the alternative sources were much longer. Out of the seven alternative news articles, two were of medium length and five were written with more than 800 words (see Table 3 on next page). The reason for this may be due to type of publication or printing costs. Alternative media sources are all online so longer articles don’t cost much to the organization. Still, the length of each article denotes how important these news sources feel the Occupy movement is to its readers.

**Table 3. The length of news stories**

LENGTH:	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
		1,2	3,4,5,6,7

Tone: Each of the seven articles referenced at least one element of the Occupy movement in a positive manner. In an article for Mother Jones, journalist Any Kroll commented on the labor union's joining Occupy by adding, "It's not only Occupy Wall Street winning union support. On Tuesday evening, the Greater Boston Labor Council, which speaks for 154 unions representing 90,000 workers, publicly praised Occupy Boston for shining 'a spotlight on the imbalance of power in our nation and the role that Wall Street has playing in devastating our economy'" (Kroll, 2011). One union worker commented, "My sense is that the outrage they're speaking of is the same outrage we're feeling here in the union." These conversations frame the Occupy movement in a strong light and one that is felt among thousands. Additionally, Cryn Johansen's Loop21 article quoted activist Dr. Noam Chomsky who said, "The courageous and honorable protests underway in Wall Street serve to bring this calamity to public attention and to lead to dedicated efforts to overcome it and set the society on a healthier course" (Johanson, 2011). The overall positive tones of these articles create a frame from which the readers can better understand who the movement speaks for and why they are speaking for it.

Two dominant frames were salient among all seven articles: conflict and diversity in viewpoints. When looking at conflict among the alternative media articles, most of what they discussed pertains to the cause of the movements and the reaction of police and government to the protests. In article 1, written by Amy Goodman for Truthdig, she explained that the rift between both political parties comes as a result of their different ideologies. Their differences can be seen in the Republican's reaction to President Barack Obama's proposed "millionaire's tax" in efforts to reduce the deficit: The Republicans refer to projected tax as "class warfare." Goodman cited one of protesters, who said that "for the last 30 years we've seen a political battle being waged by the super-rich against everyone else," and this sentiment, she concludes, "is the reason why young people have abandoned any thought of appealing to politicians"(Goodman, 2011). These conflicting frames illustrate to the reader the cause of the demonstrations and the reasons why they are continuing their fight.

Additionally, in article 5, Nancy Houser wrote an op-ed for the Digital Journal, where she quoted Glenn Greenwald from Politics.salon, who described the cause of the Occupy Movement as "an adversary of long prevailing institution power which is viewed with hostility by established institutions and their loyalists." The majority of corporate media, says Goodman, "is treating the movement with dismissal or in a rather condescending manner" and that "the more effectively adversarial it is, the more establishment hostility it's going to provoke" (Houser, 2011)

The other frame apparent is the conflict between police and protesters. Lauren Ellis (2011) from Mother Jones wrote that while "the crackdown [of police] has made the mainstream media belatedly pay attention to Occupy Wall Street" the downside is that "the cop vs. protester storyline overshadows the campaign's populist message" (Mother Jones, 2011).

Viewpoint: A person's perception of a news event is a product of the viewpoint(s) from which they heard about it. Contrary to the majority of mainstream articles, those written by alternative sources included a wide-breadth views and perspectives.

In an article for Truthout, journalist Mark Provost started by establishing the fact that his interpretation of the events in the article is a reflection of his own views and "not of the other '99 percent' movement or Occupy Boston as a whole." Furthermore, he included the perspective of one Bostonian banker he ran into on his way to the Occupy site in Boston. "I work for an investment bank. I am a capitalist . . . but I don't agree with American-style capitalism." Without pause, Provost wrote, "he refined his thoughts, 'I am a socialist'" (2011). By including this perspective, the reader now has the understanding that the Occupy movement may not just be for those camping on the streets but also for those working in finance.

Provost continued by adding, "We share painful stories and common concerns" and with this, the demographics of the movement vary greatly. The "ages range from seven to 77," and include "men and women, middle class and homeless, gay and straight, bisexual and transgender, anti-war activists and Marine Corps veterans, African-Americans and immigrants, Arab and Jewish, Asians and Latinos, unemployed and overworked, working class and Ivy-League educated." Here the article illustrates just how diverse the Occupy movement is (Provost, 2011).

Another viewpoint pointed out among the articles is that of both Republican and Democratic parties. In article 4, Democracy Now's Amy Goodman (2011) interviewed Cornell West, an American philosopher and author the Democratic Socialists of America on the Occupy movement. West comments, "It's sublime to see all different colors, all different genders, all different sexual orientation and different cultures, all together" at the demonstrations. The implications of these descriptions add a positive tone to the diversity of Occupiers. Additionally, West describes the political parties' current eco-political climate as "the mean-spiritedness of the Republicans moving towards reactionary and quasi-fascist politics, and the relative spinelessness of a Democratic Party" that helped catalyzed the movement in the first place. These harsh descriptions provide quite a different viewpoint from that of the mainstream media articles discussed previously.

**Table 4. The tone and frame of news stories**

<b>TONE:</b>	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL
	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	2	
<b>DOMINANT FRAMES:</b>	CONFLICT (X v. Y)	VIEWPOINT	
	1,2,4,7	2,3,4,6,7	

## VI. Discussion

Upon analyzing the content of articles pertaining to the Occupy movement written by both mainstream and alternative media sources, several trends became salient.

First, it is important to note that the difference in lengths between news sources may lie in the printing costs that accompany many of the news articles written for the mainstream media. And so, the alternative media's longer articles may be attributed to the fact that they are all online-based instead of print.

After analyzing the content of these articles, several major trends appear. First, while the mainstream media used confusion over the event as their dominant frames, alternative media focused on what the demonstrators were actually trying to accomplish.

Secondly, while both news sources highlighted various conflicts surrounding the events of Occupy, they did so differently. The mainstream media placed the protesters at fault of the violence, and conversely, the alternative media sources focused on the brutality of the police and their violent acts on the peaceful protesters.

While it is naïve to assume that the reasons for these differences lie in media ownership alone, this study calls to question the agenda, intentions and motive behind the various frames. For example out of the 12 people sitting on the board of The New York Times, all 12 of them had an interest tied to at least two other major corporations, businesses, banks, advertising companies, pharmaceuticals or industries under government influence<sup>\*\*\*</sup>.

Some of these industries include Merck Schering-Plough Corporation, the second largest pharmaceutical company in the world; Flamel Tech, a drug delivery business; and the Carlyle group, an infamously corrupt defense equity firm, which makes large sums of money when American goes to war and one that has also been directly tied to both Bush administrations. Also on the board are executives from Tropicana, Nabisco, Verizon, Telecom, Bell Atlantic, Hallmark, Lehman Brothers, Pepsi, Sara Lee and Staples.

The most disconcerting of them all would be William Kennard, an elected member of the board of directors in 2001. Kennard sits as managing director of the Carlyle group, a global equity firm with reported assets in excess of \$150 billion under management<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>. Before this, he served as Chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission and is the U.S. ambassador to the European Union<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>.

\*\*\* [http://www.nytc.com/company/board\\_of\\_directors/index.html](http://www.nytc.com/company/board_of_directors/index.html)

\*\*\*\* Carlyle Group: Culture of Performance, 2010: <http://www.carlyle.com/Media%20Room/Annual%20Report%20Files/2010%20Annual%20Report%20-%20English.pdf>

\*\*\*\*\* [http://www.nytc.com/company/board\\_of\\_directors/William\\_E\\_Kennard.html](http://www.nytc.com/company/board_of_directors/William_E_Kennard.html)



Through its large amounts of wealth and influence, The New York Times has grown in size and range of influence; resulting in becoming a trusted news source that people read and rely on today. While, the specific effects of these influential executives go unpublished, their relationship with The Times and that of their other investments and interests should be questioned.

Since alternative media sources lack large corporate sponsorships and advertisers, the news they provide would seem to be more objective and transparent. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge the long-standing prejudice independent media has had against large corporations and their relationship with government. And with this, there is a certain degree of bias that resonates throughout the alternative media.

Interestingly, Occupy Wall Street highlights the differences between these two media sources. On the one hand, the mainstream media portrayed Occupy as a directionless and confused gathering of “hippies”; on the other, alternative media focused on how the police, corporations, government and mass media are preventing them from having a voice by prohibiting their free speech through legalities and logistics.

This study only took into account the articles written about the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations between September 17th and October 8th. Due to time constraints, this study was limited to only looking at 14 articles all except one of which pertained to the events in New York City. If given more time, the researcher would have analyzed more stories with a broader time frame and more news sources.

## **VII. Conclusion**

News media serve as an effective source of information and powerful mode of communication. In order to communicate efficiently, writers and journalists use media frames to streamline information flow to their readers. Framing is, on the most fundamental level, the combination of words that form a sentence, phrase or story that consequently provides a message to its recipient. This message, whether it be provided by mass or alternative media, is being framed in some way.

Through content analysis and research, it has been determined that there is a difference between the way mainstream and alternative media present news information. It is speculated that the cause in difference could be due to the financial backing behind different media sources and the motives that drive them. While mainstream media want to protect their fiscal security, independent media aren't pressured by big business and thus are able to project themselves as transparent and objective. Further research needs to be done to determine the strength of the relationship behind funding and media frames used. However, the inherent differences between mainstream and alternative media sources beg to question where they get their funding and what effect this may have on the content of their news.

Framing works in conjunction with agenda setting, priming and bias. But who is it that decides the framework of each story or agenda of each news source? Furthermore, what are the specific implications of such decisions, and how do these affect how news is portrayed to its readers? These are questions yet to be answered.

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