

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 2021

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“In the most nuanced analysis to date of the gender and intersectional dynamics of the Occupy movement, Hurwitz probes the contradictions beneath the slogan ‘We are the 99%.’ Beautifully illuminating ‘the tyranny of structurelessness,’ she argues that preexisting hierarchies privileging white male Occupiers over women, people of color, and sexual minorities fractured the movement and hastened its demise. Yet, as Hurwitz also shows, efforts by feminists and others within the Occupy movement to dismantle those hierarchies ultimately strengthened the movement. A must read!”

—Ruth Milkman, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center,
and author of *Immigrant Labor and the New Precariat*

Are We the 99%?

The Occupy Movement, Feminism, and Intersectionality

Heather McKee Hurwitz

The protestors that comprised the Occupy Wall Street movement came from diverse backgrounds. But how were these activists—who sought radical social change through many ideologies—able to break down oppressions and obstacles within the movement? And in what ways did the movement perpetuate status-quo structures of inequality?

Are We the 99%? is the first comprehensive feminist and intersectional analysis of the Occupy movement. Heather McKee Hurwitz considers how women, people of color, and genderqueer activists struggled to be heard and understood. Despite cries of “we are the 99%” signaling solidarity, certain groups were unwelcome or unable to participate. Moreover, problems with racism, sexism, and discrimination due to sexuality and class persisted within the movement.

Using immersive first-hand accounts of activists’ experiences, online communications and media coverage of the movement, Hurwitz reveals lessons gleaned from the conflicts within Occupy. She compares her findings to those of other contemporary protest movements—nationally and globally—so that future movements can avoid infighting and deploy an “intersectional imperative” to embrace both diversity and inclusivity.



Heather McKee Hurwitz is a Lecturer of Sociology and feminist scholar at Case Western Reserve University and a Visiting Researcher at the Cleveland Clinic. For nearly 20 years, she has been participating in and studying a variety of social movements in the US and Global South, including feminist, anti-war, student, environmental and Occupy movements. She analyzes contemporary urban protests, social movements, inequalities, and health disparities using a feminist and intersectional lens. With a grant from CWRU's Freedman Center for Digital Scholarship, Hurwitz recently developed a digital Occupy Archive of the data that informed the book—the flyers, posters, newspapers, postcards and other movement ephemera—now freely available to the public online at www.arewethe99book.com