

ARE WE THE 99%?

THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT, FEMINISM, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

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STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the Occupy movement in your own words. Consider the movement's goals, protest actions, culture, infighting, etc. How is the movement distinct from other social movements?
2. What was the Great Recession? Were the government responses and/or social movement responses to it appropriate? Sufficient? How so or how not?
3. In your own words, explain, what is intersectionality? How do activists use intersectionality – or intersectional praxis - within social movements?
4. When conflicts about intersectionality emerged in historical movements or in the Occupy movement, what were the various sides of the conflict? Are these conflicts justified? What could be done to mitigate conflicts?
5. Compare and contrast the movements that are the main focus of this book's research study: Occupy Wall Street in New York, Occupy Oakland and Occupy San Francisco in California.
6. Why did Hurwitz undertake the research study for this book? What were the main research questions? What research methods did she use to conduct the study?

CHAPTER 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is forming collective identity so important to the development of social movements? If it is so important, why has there been so much infighting about it?
2. Participants formed a boundary between themselves as the 99% in opposition to the 1%. What does it mean to be a part of the 99%? Illustrate your response with rich vibrant details from the text.
3. Considering the racial dynamics of the 99%, should the Occupy movement have changed its name to Decolonize?
4. Many separate groups formed to critique the 99% identity and provide a "free space" for people who were not white men to participate actively. Considering your own personal interests, what were the most intriguing groups that formed to oppose racism, sexism, classism, and/or discrimination based on sexuality?
5. Was it beneficial or disadvantageous that so many separate groups formed within the Occupy movement?

CHAPTER 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the 99% frame. How inclusive was it?
2. Why were there so many different frames in use in the Occupy movement? Did this strengthen or weaken it?
3. Choose one of the media and cultural products featured in the dominance frame section. How would you modify it to make it more inclusive and appealing to audiences other than white men?
4. Why did the intersectional frame appeal to feminist participants and how did they deploy it? Who was not represented by this frame?

CHAPTER 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is relational leadership theory and how does it differ from other ways scholars have analyzed leadership?
2. Even within the Occupy movement, the "double bind" and the "leadership labyrinth" persisted. How did women and queer persons experience barriers and challenges to taking on leadership responsibilities?
3. Were leaders and/or followers responsible for discriminatory resistance? Who should take responsibility for stopping it?
4. Reflecting on the range of leadership and followership experiences in this chapter, how can organizations design more equal and more accessible leadership structures especially for women, genderqueer persons, and/or people of color?

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Define feminism and feminists in your own words. Why did feminists become involved in the Occupy movement? How did they contribute to it?
2. How did the Occupy movement's goals, participants, culture or other aspects influence the feminist activists?
3. How was it beneficial to both movements that feminism spilled over into Occupy and Occupy spilled over into feminism? How was it detrimental?
4. What are feminist free spaces? How are these spaces distinct from other spaces within the Occupy movement?
5. Should feminist bridge leaders become a more formalized aspect of social movements?
6. Upon studying the scope of contemporary feminism within the Occupy movement, what can you surmise about the state of feminism in the 2010's?

CONCLUSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / POSSIBLE FINAL ESSAY PROMPTS

1. Take a stand and make an argument: Is the Occupy movement one that you would consider joining? Why or why not? Back up your argument with quotes and details about the movement that illustrate your argument.
2. Men, women, and genderqueer persons contributed to the Occupy movement. How would you evaluate the gender dynamics of the movement? Was there gender equality, inequality, or something else? Back up your argument with quotes and details about the movement that illustrate your argument.
3. Choose one or more of the following to discuss: What are the similarities and differences between the Occupy movement and the Civil Rights movement? Occupy and #BlackLivesMatter? Occupy and feminist movements? Occupy and Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns? Are there commonalities across all of these movements?
4. Considering the movements active in the 2010's from the Arab Spring, to Occupy, to the range of movements nationally and globally inspired by this period of activism, how should we assess the state of social change and social movements in the United States and globally? How far have activists come? Moving forward, on what goals and strategies should activists focus and why?
5. What are the most important lessons about creating more diverse and inclusive groups for social movement activists or anyone involved in an organization? Why?
6. Why is it important for social movement participants to not only create social change in society broadly but even within the progressive social movements themselves?

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