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**MICROFOUNDATIONS OF FRAMING: THE INTERACTIONAL PRODUCTION OF
COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES IN THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT**

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MICROFOUNDATIONS OF FRAMING: THE INTERACTIONAL PRODUCTION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES IN THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

ABSTRACT

Social movement scholars typically have focused either on how social movements strategically use collective action frames to confront targets and mobilize supporters, or on how targets respond to social movements. Few have captured the interactional dynamics between the two. This neglect tends to obscure how an extant collective action frame may shift, or how a new one may arise during such interactions. To address this issue, we focus on movement-target interactions and illuminate the microfoundations of framing that produce a new collective action frame. Drawing on real-time participant observations, we examine how an unintended collective action frame emerged and escalated during a year-long interaction between the Occupy London movement and St Paul's Cathedral, Church of England. Occupy protesters shifted from a "Capitalism is Crisis" frame targeting the UK's financial establishment, to a "What Would Jesus Do?" frame targeting the Church. We develop a process model based on the interplay of frame laminations and three situational mechanisms—emotional attachment to a frame, frame sacralization, and frame amplification—derived from an analysis of framing in movement-target interactions to explain the emergence and escalation of an unexpected collective action frame.

Key words: Interactional framing, frames, emergence, process, institutions, Goffman, emotions, Occupy movement, Church, inequality, religion.

INTRODUCTION

Occupy London, part of the wave of social movements triggered by the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, set out to occupy the London Stock Exchange to protest against the mounting economic inequality between the top 1% and the 99% using the mobilizing frame of "Capitalism is Crisis." Instead, the protesters ended up occupying, and eventually targeting the Church of England's (CoE) St Paul's Cathedral; as a result, a new collective action frame emerged: "What Would Jesus Do?" As protesters became embroiled in an unexpected conflict with the Church, City bankers were let "off the hook." How did a chance encounter with the Church lead to the emergence of a radically different and unforeseen collective action frame against an unlikely target that could well have been an ally in the fight against unjust capitalism?

Social movement scholars typically have focused either on how social movements strategically use collective action frames to confront targets and mobilize supporters (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016; Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986), or on how targets counter, co-opt or respond to these efforts (McDonnell, King, & Soule, 2015). Few have captured the interactional dynamics *between* movements and their targets. This neglect of what happens “in-between” tends to obscure how an extant collective action frame around a cause or grievance may shift, or how a new one may emerge.

Even though framing is an inherently active process, scholars focus more on the “content” of collective action frames—how they define problems, diagnose causes, assign blame, provide solutions, and motivate potential adherents (Snow & Benford, 1992)—rather than on their production and use in social interactions. Much theorizing attributes collective action frames to the strategic framing, deliberate choices, and purposeful actions of social movement actors with a clear sense of “us versus them” to wrest concessions from their targets (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). This analytical predisposition has led to privileging strategic explanations of collective action *outcomes* over the understanding of movement *processes* in line with a propensity to make sense of the world representationally and ex post facto (Mackay & Chia, 2013), whereby it is the extant frames rather than the interactants that do the work (Leibel, Hallett & Bechky, 2017).

To address these issues, it is important to study movements and targets not as binary and discrete entities engaged in “solo performances” (Tilly, 2005: 222) but as dynamically interactive pairs engaged in “joint labor” involving “agreement, dissension, and ambiguity” (Steinberg, 1999: 745). Focusing on movement-target interactions can shed light on how they may unexpectedly generate a collective action frame around a grievance that emerges in a situation. Unforeseen and surprising collective action frames emerging and escalating in

interactions have been observed in social movements such as the Arab Spring uprisings (Snow & Moss, 2014), or the Gilets Jaunes (yellow vest) protests in France, which began as collective action against a fuel tax hike, but subsequently rallied around regime change.

Movements “move” in complex ways as they interact with targets. Frames and framing trajectories continually emerge and evolve over time (Litrico & David, 2017) as actors respond to local situations and emergent contingencies. The “give and tug of meaning in ongoing dialogue can have unanticipated, and sometimes contradictory consequences for movement development” (Steinberg, 2002: 208), whereby new collective action frames might emerge and take root. To understand this process, scholars must examine the “neglected situations” where parties interact and negotiate which “warrant analysis in their own right” (Goffman, 1964: 134; Diehl & McFarland, 2010; Furnari, 2019), rather than privilege causal explanations that attribute collective action frames only to goal-directed strategies. We thus need explanations of the dynamic co-production of frames whose meanings are constructed and negotiated interactionally (Gray, Purdy, & Ansari, 2015; Lee, Ramus, & Vaccaro, 2018; Zilber, 2002), rather than “available” to be accessed and strategically deployed a priori.

To understand the interactional framing process as movements interact with targets, we engaged in participant observation to study a year-long contentious encounter between Occupy London and St Paul’s Cathedral. Unexpected twists and turns during interactions produced and crystallized an unanticipated collective action frame targeting a potential ally, the Church, instead of the initial target, the financial establishment.

We contribute to the literature in three ways. First, we contribute to scholarship at the intersection of organization theory and social movement studies (Fiss & Zajac, 2006; Helms, Oliver, & Webb, 2012; Meyer & Höllerer, 2010). Whereas social movement scholars have

attributed collective action frames to “strategic [framing] processes—deliberate, utilitarian, and goal directed” (Creed, Langstraat, & Scully, 2002: 480; Benford & Snow, 2000), we provide a micro-processual explanation (Collins, 2004). Rather than viewing collective action frames as being “pulled down” from extant frame repertoires and deployed strategically to resonate with targeted audiences (Benford & Snow, 2000), we show how they are “built-up” and instantiated in interactions around imbuing a situationally triggered grievance with contingent meaning and resonance. By elevating meaning making over meaning deployment in collective action framing, we moderate overly voluntarist depictions of movements as strategically selecting and deploying culturally resonant frames.

Second, we extend the framing perspective by not only demonstrating the interactional nature of framing (Gray et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2018), but also identifying the “situational mechanisms” (Gross, 2009; Stinchcombe, 1991) at a more “concrete level of reality” (Jasper, 2011: 27) that transform interactional frames into collective action frames around issues of contention. In contrast to framing mechanisms that focus on discursive strategies or contextual inducements to explain shifts in actors’ frames at the organizational (Helms et al., 2012) and field (Ansari, Wijen, & Gray, 2013; Litrico & David, 2017; Lounsbury, Ventresca, & Hirsch, 2003) levels, situational mechanisms are derived from interactions in a situation (Stinchcombe, 1991). They reveal how participants endear, sacralize, and amplify new meanings emerging in interaction.

Third, we theorize the role of spontaneity in social movements by developing an interactionist conception of collective action dynamics. Whereas spontaneous actions are often reduced to emotional outbursts and cognitive “short-circuiting” (Snow & Moss, 2014: 2), we recast spontaneous action as situational but purposeful wayfinding, whereby social movement actors improvise in situ to “unowned” fluid situations (Mackay & Chia, 2013) that are highly

contingent, potentially transformative, and replete with the “bizarre potentials” of interactional dynamics (Goffman, 1974: 15).

THEORETICAL MOTIVATIONS

Defined as “sustained challenges to powerholders in the name of a disadvantaged population” (Tarrow, 1996: 874), social movements have a long pedigree of disrupting the established order to engender societal change. Earlier studies have been criticized for their “structuralist” bias (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999) emphasizing resource allocation and political opportunity structures (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). As a response to this critique, a “strategic approach to collective action” (Jasper, 2004: 1) emerged alongside the “cultural turn” (Snow et al., 1986), focusing on the cultural work of social movement activists.

To explain cultural work, scholars drew on Goffman’s (1974) concept of “framing” (Snow et al., 1986). An essential task in movement struggles is to frame social problems in a way that convinces their audiences of the necessity and utility of collective action to redress them (Ansari et al., 2013; Zald, 1996). The “resultant products of this framing activity” are “collective action frames,” defined as movement-specific, “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings” which define a grievance, identify specific targets for blame or collaboration, mobilize adherents, and legitimate movement activities (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614). Scholars have focused on how collective action frames are derived exogenously from cultural raw materials, “repertoires” (Tilly, 1979), or higher-order “master frames” that function as repositories of collective meanings (Snow & Benford, 1992), such as the gay rights frame derived from the civil rights master frame. Through collective action frames, movements aim to disrupt the status quo by challenging dominant “field frames” (e.g., recycling) that provide “order and meaning to fields of activity” (Lounsbury et al., 2003: 76–77; Ansari et al., 2013).

But while studies on framing and cultural work in social movement studies diffused, some of its more radical implications “were lost in the process” (Kurzman, 2008: 10). Underwritten by a notion of culture as a “tool kit” (Swidler, 1986), frames came to be seen as intentionally crafted “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings” (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614) which could be “marketed” and manipulated by movements seeking appealing “sound bites” to persuade audiences and mobilize support (Oliver & Johnston, 2000).

A strategic perspective (e.g., Zald, 1996) has enriched our understanding of how social movements can foment change by linking movement outcomes to the deliberate cultural work – framing – of activists (Snow & Benford, 1992). However, such a strategic perspective tends to privilege outcomes over processes, strategic actions over interactional dynamics, and frames (the noun form) over framing (the verb form) (Snow et al., 2014). This raises two issues.

First, by focusing either on a movement’s strategic framing of targets, or on targets’ responses, we fail to consider what transpires in the interaction between movements and their targets. By studying the interaction, we can understand how movements and targets interactively assemble collective meaning in specific situations. An interactional focus reveals that collective action frames come alive in and through specific interactions and are often “endogenous to a field of actors” (Lounsbury et al., 2003: 72). As movements interact with constituents and engage in political processes of contestation, extant collective action frames might shift or new ones may emerge. Movements may problematize issues “spontaneously” in interactions rather than premeditatedly (Snow & Moss, 2014), and experience changes to their targets, adherents, and goals. As a result, a movement can result in unintended consequences (Hiatt, Sine, & Tolbert, 2009), “spill over” into new struggles (Meyer & Whittier, 1994), experience changes to

its mission (Levy, Reinecke, & Manning, 2016), dilute (Lounsbury et al., 2003), or radicalize (Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, & Scully, 2010).

Massa (2017) documented such radical frame change in the case of the Anonymous movement, which began when a recreational online community of Japanese animation aficionados began to self-police their online interactions in response to offensive contributors and trolls. Anonymous then radically shifted to become the Internet's self-appointed "guardians" engaged in collective action beyond their own community. Similarly, Lee and colleagues (2018) showed how a social movement organization initially mobilized through a combative anti-racketeering collective action frame, but in interactions with tourists and businesses who felt threatened, modified this frame to accommodate their interests. Hence, framing trajectories are not invariant over time, and interactions among field actors can spark changes to extant frames (Dewulf et al., 2009; Litrico & David, 2017). However, treating frames as static meaning packages with a focus on content rather than situated use may obscure how their enactment in concrete situations may produce new collective action frames or modify extant ones.

Second, a strategic account attributing excessive rationality to movement actors is at odds with the recent emphasis on emotions in social movement processes (Jasper, 2011). Framing is emotive (Cornelissen et al., 2014; Giorgi, 2017; Voronov, 2014); "feeling and thinking are parallel, interacting processes" (Jasper, 2011: 286). Movement actors are not "spocklike beings, devoid of passion and other human emotions" (Benford, 1997: 419), and interactions evoke emotional responses. For instance, repressive or violent actions from authorities to quash a protest can spur righteous anger, and the urge to remedy the unjust situation that animates the movement, as in the "Black Lives Matter" movement in the U.S. How people frame a situation and become motivated to act collectively is shaped by the ebb and flow of emotional energy

produced in interactions that bind individuals to the movement's cause (Collins, 2001; Creed, Hudson, Okhuysen, & Smith-Crowe, 2014). For example, anger spurs internal solidarity against the target (Fan & Zietsma, 2017) and hope energizes by making the desirable seem attainable. Both anger and hope heighten the significance of interactions.

In sum, movements are dynamic, and collective action frames are at the mercy of contingent and emotive experiences during movement-target interactions. Understanding these interactional dynamics requires focusing on the emergence rather than the leveraging of frames. However, many scholars overlook “the interactive, constructionist character of movement framing processes” (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614), and tend to reduce interactions to “context” as though movements interact with context rather than with other players (Jasper, 2015).

Interactional Framing Dynamics

An interactional framing perspective draws attention to how “individuals create meaning through social interaction” (Snow et al., 2014: 38). It reveals how frames emerge interactionally (e.g., Dewulf et al., 2009; Gray et al., 2015), and is useful for incorporating interactional dynamics into social movement analysis. Rooted in Goffman's (1974: 25, 11) original “frame analysis,” an interactional frame is a response to the central question of “What is it that's going on here?” From this perspective, the process of social interaction is what constructs meaning. Frames are not free-floating packages of meaning to be deployed at will and transplanted from one context into another (Steinberg, 1999). Rather, they take on different meanings in the flow of interactions.

Situations and interactions therein present opportunities for interactants to reinterpret, construct and transform meanings through framing processes. Interactants do not simply reproduce previous frames in interaction. Instead, slippages occur, whereby people deviate from

their initial frames and disrupt the prevailing interactional norms, leading to changes in extant frames or the emergence of new frames. These interactional framing processes are what Goffman (1974) called lamination or layering of frames—that is, the process of responding to another’s frame and adding new interpretations, whereby “numerous interpretive frames are interwoven and embedded within one another” (Diehl & McFarland, 2010: 1716).

Three types of laminations are *keying*, *frame breaks*, and *misframing* (Goffman, 1974; Gray et al., 2015). *Keying* explains how a given activity is transformed so that participants see it to be “something quite else” (e.g., from play to fight) (Goffman, 1974: 43–44). To illustrate, consider the “Women in Black” movement which began as women in black veils protesting against Israeli occupation. The insulting and sexist remarks of male passersby (e.g., “sleeps with Arabs”) (Sasson-Levy & Rapoport, 2003) ignited feminist ideals. Through interaction, the anti-occupation frame was *rekeyed* as also a feminist frame, strengthening the women’s resolve to continue their protest. A *frame break* occurs when an expected frame is violated, and triggers new collective action frames. Rosa Parks’s refusal to vacate her seat for a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery and her resulting arrest reportedly helped mobilize the U.S. civil rights movement (Gray et al., 2015). Finally, *misframing* captures how interactants form different interpretations about what is going on. When *keyings*, *frame breaks* and *misframings* happen, interactants may try to restore the interaction order and uphold extant frames (Goffman, 1974), or modified or new emergent frames may find traction.

Through these interactional framing processes, people intersubjectively co-construct the meanings of their worlds (Dewulf et al., 2009; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006) and the roles and relationships they take on (Lewicki, Gray, & Elliott, 2003). As frames “involve active struggles and negotiations over meaning” (Gray et al., 2015: 116; Zilber, 2002), the resultant meanings are

provisional and indexical, continuously subject to on-the-spot revisions, updates, and replacements during interactions. An interactional perspective thus accommodates how collective action frames may not always be strategic nor deliberately fashioned (Snow & Moss, 2014) but subject to spontaneous emergence, reorientation, and shifts in new situations through dynamic meaning-making on the ground.

In sum, whereas collective action frames can be used strategically to mobilize action against targets, these frames may unanticipatedly shift, or new ones may emerge during interaction. This suggests a need to study interactional meaning construction in social situations. Examining the “neglected situation” (Furnari, 2019; Goffman, 1964) can reveal how interactional framing might yield an unanticipated collective action frame. This leads to our research question: How can the microprocesses of framing in movement-target interactions lead to the emergence and escalation of an unanticipated collective action frame?

METHODS

We performed a qualitative process study of the interlocking sequence of interactions between Occupy London (Occupy) and St Paul’s Cathedral (St. Paul’s). Taking *interaction* as our unit of analysis, we engaged in *real-time* observation of the unfolding interactions. We adopted this method for two reasons. First, by taking interaction as the unit of analysis, we were able to appreciate how frames emerge from the dynamic interplay between movements and targets. Second, observing how events and interactions unfold in real time has advantages over retrospective analysis (Langley, 1999). Outcomes often appear predictable or inevitable only in hindsight (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Real-time observation enables researchers to capture interpretive processes as they occur, thereby avoiding bias from knowing the outcome a priori and revealing the multiple potentialities present in every interaction.

The interaction between Occupy and St Paul's is a revealing case for three reasons. First, their accidental encounter created a highly ambiguous situation for both sides. What transpired was thus largely the unanticipated result of their interaction. Second, the protest camp established in front of St Paul's provided a public stage for observing encounters vital for interactional theorization. Third, studying a series of complex but observable interactions over a 1-year period enabled us to track unfolding framing dynamics.

Research Context

Occupy London, established on October 15, 2011, was part of a global wave of Occupy camps that engulfed 82 countries and 951 cities that year. Occupy was a non-hierarchical movement against the perceived crisis of capitalism, excesses in the finance industry, and the failure of democratic institutions to cope with rising inequality (Reinecke, 2018). The protest was characterized by the protesters' occupation of prominent symbols of financial capitalism. However, in London, Occupy activists were denied access to the London Stock Exchange, and instead, occupied the adjacent area around St Paul's Cathedral, which became their eventual target. St Paul's Cathedral is the official seat of the Bishop of London and an iconic religious landmark. By asking "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD), Occupy confronted the cathedral rather than its original target, the London Stock Exchange.

The unfolding crisis between Occupy and St Paul's led to a series of resignations, outcry from Christians, and extensive media and public interest across the UK. Occupy's protest camp was evicted on February 28, 2012 by the City of London Corporation (City), the municipal governing body and host to the UK's financial establishment. Interaction continued until Occupy activists staged a dramatic stunt to shame St Paul's during what was meant to be a reconciliatory Evensong on the first anniversary of their encounter.

Data Collection

We drew on multiple data sources, including participant observation, 44 semi-structured, in-depth interviews, numerous spontaneous conversations, and documentary data. See Appendix 1 for an overview of data sources.

Participant observation. We used participant observation to acquire “interactional expertise” to study people and their negotiation of the “interaction order” (Goffman, 1983). One author spent 1–2 days per week during the 4.5 months of occupation (amounting to 280 hours) visiting the campsite; attending General Assemblies (i.e., meetings of Occupy’s governing body), working group meetings, and Tent City University debates; and observing the High Court case and meetings with Cathedral officials. After the camp was evicted, she attended events and meetings such as OccupyFaith and the anniversary Evensong service at St. Paul’s. The author took field notes on site, and wrote up detailed accounts later.

Interviews. Throughout the observations, we engaged in multiple informal conversations with more than 40 occupiers ranging from brief exchanges to multi-hour discussions. In addition, we conducted 44 semi-structured interviews with 28 Occupy activists and 16 respondents from St Paul’s and the CoE. These were conducted in two phases. In early 2012, we conducted 30 interviews with respondents identified during fieldwork at the campsite, followed by 14 interviews after Occupy’s eviction with respondents identified as critical in the interaction. Given the “leaderless” nature of the movement (Graeber, 2013), we targeted protesters involved in key roles such as court case defendants, the Economics Working Group, the Press Team and the Church Liaison Group. On the CoE side, we identified vicars attending Occupy events (e.g., “flash prayers”) and interviewed key staff from St Paul’s whose job titles are not disclosed on request. The interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes and were recorded and transcribed.

Documents and social media. We also conducted systematic content analysis of the Occupy and St Paul's websites, press releases, articles in major British newspapers, *The Church Times*, and *The Occupied Times*, the camp newspaper. Social media, Twitter, online discussion forums, blogs, "radio Occupy" and livestream video recordings provided extensive accounts, as did minutes and recordings from General Assemblies, Tent City University events and internal meetings, all of which we archived and transcribed selectively. We read academic works on Occupy (e.g., Graeber, 2013), and examined visual symbols such as banners.

Data Analysis

Our analytical approach was open-ended and inductive (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Analysis began during fieldwork, which began on the first day of Occupy London: we wrote memos after each observation and interview, created a list of interactions and a timeline of emergent themes, and drew visual maps. We fed data from observations, interviews, videos, visuals, media and documents into NVivo to create a database. We were intrigued by how the anti-capitalist collective action frame targeting the City became displaced by a religious frame targeting the Church. Our hunch pointed to the chance encounter with St Paul's and the subsequent dynamics in the unfolding relationship. Subsequently, we combined process analysis (Langley, 1999) to track the unfolding interactions and emerging frames (phase 1) with grounded theorizing (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1997) to identify the underlying mechanisms driving the interactional production of an unanticipated collective action frame (phase 2).

In phase 1, we began our process analysis (Langley, 1999) by constructing a detailed timeline of events. We coded the focal interactions to get closer to the situational dynamics. Following Goffman (1983: 2; 6), we defined social interaction "as that which uniquely transpires in social situations" when two or more individuals come "into an other's response presence, whether

through physical copresence, telephonic connection or letter exchange.” We noticed relatively few face-to-face encounters. Many highly consequential interactions involved parties’ mutual observations of what Goffman (1983: 7) termed “platform performances,” including St Paul’s press conferences or Occupy’s General Assemblies, flash prayers, and other protest activities. We consulted Goffman’s typology of “basic substantive units” of interaction to identify a wider range of interactions. Table 1 presents over 47 types of interactions, including contacts (e.g., Dean’s “Open Letter”), conversational encounters (e.g., initial encounter with St Paul’s Canon Chancellor), platform performances, and social occasions (e.g., anniversary Evensong).

----- **Insert Table 1 here** -----

We then sought underlying factors that could explain how interactional dynamics affected the collective action frame. To do so, we zoomed in on each interaction and coded the interaction frames (i.e., definition of what is going on in a situation), and interactional framing (i.e., the process of collectively producing frames through interactions). We analyzed emerging *keyings*, *frame breaks* and *misframings* to understand how interactional framing changed over time (Goffman, 1974; Gray et al., 2015). This helped us trace the emergence of the WWJD frame to a specific interaction when protesters attempted to rekey a conflictual situation, and then track its development in subsequent interactions.

Next, we used temporal bracketing (Langley, 1999) to bundle together sequences of interactions, defined not by their lengths, but by shifts in interactional framing, such as from a collaborative to a conflictual keying of the situation. Several iterations yielded eight interactional episodes defined by a particular framing of the situation. We then considered whether these episodes could be linked to developments in the collective action frame. We noticed that frame breaks, or what protesters called “betrayals” were powerful triggers of a grievance against St

Paul's. We traced the WWJD frame's initial emergence and identified key moments in its evolution, such as the first public display of WWJD banners, to its deployment in the anniversary stunt. From this analysis, three phases emerged—the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of the WWJD collective action frame—to which we attributed specific interactional episodes.

We continued to plot these observations on a visual map (Langley, 1999) to identify links between interactions, interaction frames, and collective action framing over time. This ongoing process of visual mapping began during fieldwork to track interactions. It enabled us to observe twists and turns in the relationship between St Paul's and Occupy in real time. The map became a living and dynamic tool which we adapted and refined as our analysis proceeded.

After constructing an account of the unfolding interactions and emerging frames, in the second phase, we sought a theoretical understanding of how interactional dynamics shaped the production of a collective action frame. As Langley (1999: 696) noted, a visual mapping strategy is “not necessarily good at detecting mechanisms.” Thus, the second phase focused on “thematic analysis” where we looked for patterns *within* and *across* interactions (Gioia et al., 2013) to identify the mechanisms driving collective action framing. Following Stinchcombe (1991: 372–3), we considered situations to be “causal unities” which are “useful places to locate mechanisms.” Thus, we sought situational mechanisms to explain how the temporal, spatial, and communicative boundaries of the situation shaped collective framing. Mechanisms such as “process drivers” (Langley, 1999: 904) are “analytical constructs which provide hypothetical links between observable events” (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998: 13) such as between frame shifts (Ansari et al., 2013).

We thus coded for the underlying factors that could explain why social movement actors developed a strong attachment to a new collective action frame, even though it diverted from

their original target. In doing so, we went through multiple coding rounds, working up from data-led codes to clustering into themes (Gioia et al., 2013). Key constructs emerged as we iterated between our data and the literature. For example, noting several codes around intense emotional responses to particular interactions, such as “being furious,” “betrayal,” “crisis of faith,” or “righteous anger,” as well as codes about the linkages between emotional arousal and the WWJD frame (“that’s a feed-on”) enabled us to identify “emotional attachment” as a situational mechanism driving attachment to the frame. We iterated with the microsociology literature on interactions (Collins, 2004) and its use in social movements (Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017) to identify the interactional production of emotional energy as a key driver of attachment to the collective action frame that emerged in interaction (see Figure 1 for our data structure).

In the final phase, we linked our situational mechanisms derived from thematic analysis in phase 2 to our process analysis from phase 1. This enabled us to identify important relationships between interactions, mechanisms and outcomes in the collective action frame, which we continued to plot on our visual map (Figure 2).

----- **Insert Figures 1 and 2 here** -----

Finally, we assembled analytical elements into a model of the microprocesses involved in framing which explains the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of an unanticipated collective action frame. As qualitative analysis involves taking “an uncodifiable creative leap” (Langley, 1999: 691), we discussed our findings with an Occupy protester and a theologian to increase confidence in our analysis. In reporting our findings, we use generic descriptors, fictional names and publicly available data wherever quotes could reveal a respondent’s identity.

FINDINGS

Our findings document the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of an unanticipated collective action frame. We begin by presenting a brief overview of our case. We then draw on both our processual and thematic analyses to explain how the various twists and turns we observed led to an unanticipated collective action frame. We present this process across three phases, each consisting of several interaction episodes (Hereafter: IE) #1-8 as described in Figure 3.

----- **Insert Figure 3 here** -----

In each phase, we illuminate the microprocesses of framing. First, we describe interactional framing in each interaction episode by zooming in on illustrative focal interactions between Occupy and St. Paul's. Second, we show how interactional framing interrelates with three situational mechanisms—*emotional attachment*, *sacralization*, and *frame amplification*—that drive the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of an unanticipated collective action frame. Finally, we derive a more general process model of these microprocesses of framing.

Overview: How a Chance Encounter Led to an Unanticipated Collective Action Frame

Protesters set out to occupy the London Stock Exchange under the rallying cries of “Capitalism is Crisis” and “We are the 99%” to demonstrate against the excesses of the banking elite (i.e., the 1%). This signified Occupy's original collective action frame. When protesters were denied access, they settled in the adjacent St Paul's churchyard. The landmark cathedral was an unintended choice, but nevertheless “made for a natural and compelling stage” for the “high drama” that unfolded, as described by St Paul's Canon Chancellor (Fraser, 2015). This chance encounter led to fundamentally changing the movement:

“This [occupying St. Paul's] was never the intention...it's this funny coincidence which occurred, which completely changed the narrative of Occupy London. It would have been something completely different had it not ended up here by accident.” (St Paul's #3)

The encounter and subsequent interactions led to the emergence and escalation of the new WWJD collective action frame. Initially, this frame was open-ended, serving as both an invitation to collaborate and an incitement to provoke conflict with the Church. However, a year-long sequence of interactions imbued the frame with conflictual meaning, turning a potential ally into Occupy's key target. Targeting St Paul's was neither intended nor, in hindsight, conducive to promoting Occupy's original collective action frame. Occupy protesters missed the opportunity to win St Paul's blessing in wresting concessions from the City and furthering their concrete demands:¹ "The camp could work with the cathedral and focus on those concrete demands. And for whatever reason that's not how it played out" (Anglican Priest).

In hindsight, protesters regretted the unintended outcome. Protesters felt that the WWJD frame engulfed them, and they became entrapped in a highly mediatized but futile conflict, which "created a deviation from the actual target" (Email, Occupier Seth). During an interview, Occupier Jamie admitted: "It was a bit of a distraction because we weren't there for the Church, man! We were there for the London Stock Exchange!" During an informal conversation, Occupier Tom expressed similar sentiments: "We shouldn't be wasting energy fighting each other. It's like that was a waste of energy, wasn't it?" Likewise, St Paul's regretted that it had become Occupy's target:

Hey, we could have made a common cause against bankers, the City, or whatever. But instead, this has become something where we're not even getting across the amount of damage you're doing to us. It's very, very difficult to move it on, when we could have been partners. (CoE Policy Advisor)

In short, St. Paul's-Occupy interactions resulted in the emergence and escalation of an

¹ Contrary to popular misconception, Occupy made concrete demands to the City of London, in November, 2011 (<http://occupylondon.org.uk/about/statements/demands-to-city-of-london/>): Publish full breakdowns of the City Cash accounts; make its activities subject to the Freedom of Information Act; detail all advocacy undertaken on behalf of the banking and finance industries since October 2008.

unanticipated collective action frame (WWJD) targeting the Church, despite the omnipresent possibilities for forging a united front to reinforce the original frame targeting the City. How and why did this happen?

Phase 1: Emergence of the WWJD frame

In phase 1, a short but intense chain of interaction across two episodes shifted attention away from the original target and prompted the emergence of a new collective action frame. Protesters replaced “Capitalism is Crisis” with “What Would Jesus Do?” banners.

Interactional framing in IE #1: Initial encounter. When Occupy protesters camped in front of St. Paul’s as shown in Picture 1, physical co-presence prompted direct interaction. This presented the primary framework for defining the situation. In Goffman’s (1974: 358) terms, St Paul’s was inadvertently “flooded” into the frame of activity. Participants on both sides faced Goffman’s (1974) core question of defining the situation in terms of “What is it that’s going on here?” Neither protesters nor St Paul’s staff could readily frame the situation or their relationship. This is because the situation was defined not only by the primary framework, but also by the laminations that layered it with additional meanings—the *keyings*, *frame breaks* and *misframings* which arose as interactants negotiated their interaction order.

----- **Insert Picture 1 here** -----

Our real-time observations reveal how sequences of direct and indirect interactions produced consequential frame laminations. The first and fateful face-to-face encounter with St Paul’s Canon Chancellor, Giles Fraser, on the occupation’s first morning led to misframing:

Focal interaction “Welcome” (#IE 1): 7.30am, 16.10.2011. On the first morning of the occupation, St Paul’s Canon Chancellor Giles Fraser steps out to prepare for the eight o’clock communion service. Seeing “a line of police along the west steps of the cathedral,” he asks police to clear the steps “so that people could get to Church for the eight o’clock service.” Afterwards, he walks over to the tents, and greets and addresses a group of sleepy protesters:

GF: My name is Giles Fraser. I’m the person at the moment that’s uh supposed to be, so, operationally in charge of this place. I’ve no problem with people protesting.

Occupiers: [cheering] Thank you. Thank you, sir.

GF: And *I* know that *you're* not to occupy *us*, it is about the stock exchange [gesturing to Paternoster Square]. So I understand that.

Occupiers: [nodding, cheering] Yeah!

GF: So I heard your drums last night. That's nothing compared to what's coming [i.e., church bells] at about half past 10! [laughs]

Occupiers: [cheering, clapping, waving, laughter].

In this initial face-to-face encounter, Fraser established what seemed to be a frame alignment in defining the situation: Occupy was protesting peacefully against the stock exchange rather than the Church. Fraser framed himself and the cathedral as mere incidental onlookers in the situation located outside Occupy's core collective action frame. However, this framing was fateful. Fraser's intervention saved the camp from immediate eviction and, inadvertently, raised protesters' expectations that "[St. Paul's] are happy to support us" (Occupy General Assembly Minutes, 18 Oct 2018). But what seemed like frame alignment turned out to be misframing as parties formed divergent interpretations. Protesters framed the interaction as an invitation to stay. Encouraged by the "welcome," protesters set up a permanent "tent city" in the churchyard and raised colorful banners, notably "Capitalism is Crisis." Within a few days, the camp grew to about 100 (later 170–200) tents. In contrast, St Paul's staff framed the situation very differently: "We were not expecting it to end up outside St. Paul's, only expecting it to start at St. Paul's" (St Paul's #3). In various press statements, Fraser insisted that he did not invite protesters to stay: "What I didn't do is say the protesters are very welcome to camp here. I didn't say that" (in Butt, Malik, & Davies, 2011). Misframing led to a frame break for St Paul's staff, who felt that protesters were abusing the temporary sanctuary that was offered.

Interactional framing in IE #2: The WWJD frame is born. The WWJD frame emerged for the first time when protesters debated an Open Letter by St Paul's Dean, pleading for the

protesters to leave and threatening closure of the cathedral.² The interaction below traces this initial appearance of the WWJD frame.

Focal interaction “Open Letter” (#IE 2): 4pm on 21.10.2011. The Church bells ring. The large “Capitalism is Crisis” banner flies over the camp. About 200 protesters gather for an “Emergency General Assembly” to discuss the Open Letter from the Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral, pleading for the protesters to leave.

Protester 1 reads out the letter: ...“With a heavy heart I have to tell you that St Paul’s Cathedral has to be closed today until further notice, because of the legal requirements placed upon us by fire, health and safety issues...in order that we might re-open the Cathedral as speedily as possible, we ask you to withdraw peacefully...With my thanks, [Dean] Graeme Knowles.”

Occupiers: Buhh! [other noises]

In subsequent break-out groups, one group picks up on a *Guardian* blog by a Christian social activist (Hill, 2011) asking “Would Jesus kick the Occupy London protesters off St Paul’s grounds?”

Protester 2 presents feedback from break-out group 2: We talked about the article that Symon Hill wrote...we talked about how we can use this...for faith outreach because we think there are Christians out there who agree with us and who would speak out, including prominent and high profile Christians, and other faiths as well...and also that when we’re talking about this in the media we should use examples of faith...

Occupiers: [clapping, waving, loud cheering].

As discussions progressed, the idea to provocatively ask: “Where would Jesus be?” consolidates.

Protester 10 presents feedback from break-out group 10: We think that this statement [points to a large, hand-written poster] should be read out. Every single person should read the statement, especially the Dean, because...

Occupiers: [shouting] Read it! Read it!

Protester 10: Ok, ok! I will read it, sorry. Ok [reads out the statement]: “Where would Jesus be if he were here today? Would he be camping out in the freezing weather? Speaking out against inequality? Or will he be inside a religious building, worrying about revenue from tourists?”

Occupiers: [clapping, waving, loud cheering].

As this interaction shows, the invocation of Jesus in the WWJD frame emerged from interactions amongst protesters to frame the evolving situation, as they turned to morally shaming the Dean of St Paul’s and mobilizing sympathetic Christians to support them.

Mechanism 1: Emotional attachment to emerging WWJD frame. The first mechanism driving the emergence of the WWJD frame was emotional attachment. Interaction in physical

² No direct conversational encounter took place, as “clergy received strong legal advice” that direct communication “might imply consent to them staying” (Fraser, in Butt et al., 2011).

proximity to St Paul's infused the movement with emotional energy. The production of emotional energy is illustrated by the first series of interactions with St Paul's that

“compensated” for protesters' disappointment at failing to occupy the London Stock Exchange.

The stock exchange is fenced off!...Protesters are frustrated, it's getting cold, energy is low ...All of a sudden, the crowd is moving over to St Paul's where a lively General Assembly starts. I join a circle of protesters sitting down in the warming sun by St Paul's steps...The discussion is about what to do next, where to go? “Canary Wharf?” “Too far!” an elderly lady in a wheelchair shouts. The decision is taken to stay. The mood soars, energy rises...Protesters discuss, play drums and dance until late into the night. (Field diary, 15 October 2011)

The extract above illustrates how gathering in front of the iconic St Paul's cathedral infused the protest with renewed energy. The next morning's “welcome” and Fraser's apparent endorsement of their protest fueled this emergent turn toward St. Paul's, and filled participants with enthusiasm and hope. Several protesters shared their accounts of the interaction with Fraser, such as Occupier Ken who addressed a gathering outside St Paul's in the afternoon:

I just wanna say, it's really exciting. We've got the Bishop [Fraser] on our side...it's looking very good for us...This morning there's a real sense of hope that this is actually gonna be a proper occupation because the Bishop has said it's cool; we're probably gonna be here for a couple of weeks. (Video footage, 16 October 2011)

Seeing themselves as legitimate “guests of the church” (Occupied Times, 3: 4), protesters felt elated that St Paul's was on their side and offered them shelter. Occupier Neve recalled: “Being there was tremendously inspiring!”

Thus, when protesters were asked to vacate the church grounds just after the “welcome” had raised their hopes, protesters were far too emotionally vested to simply leave and target another symbol of financial injustice. The emerging WWJD frame emotionally captured how protesters felt about the situation, encapsulating both their desire to urge St Paul's into supporting them as well as a sense of being let down by the church.

Mechanism 2: Sacralization of the emerging WWJD frame. The second mechanism which fueled the emergent WWJD frame was its sacralization – the process of imbuing an object,

experience, person, place, idea, or in our case, a frame, with sacredness. “Sacred” can be both religious and secular. Through their interactions, protesters paid increasing attention to St Paul’s rather than the stock exchange, and imbued these emotion-laden interactions with strong symbolic significance. During an interview, Occupier Tim called St Paul’s a “poetic symbol of the occupation.” Moreover, the camp’s proximity to “God’s house” was viewed as a symbolic “blessing” of the protest, which reinforced emotional responses. Despite not being religious, Occupier Peter said:

When I first got here, seeing this camp...in front of this absolutely magnificent building... I think it’s absolutely amazing. It really is inspirational to anyone coming in the City. We’re there in front of His [God’s] house saying we want to make the world a better place to live in. There’s an amazing synergy between the two [Occupy and St Paul’s]...when we’re having a General Assembly or a meeting, when the [cathedral] bells start ringing, it almost brings tears to my eyes. It’s like the voice of God is sort of giving a blessing, or it feels that way to me.

Protesters symbolically linked the protest to the Gospel of Jesus, which endowed it with a higher order purpose. Fraser’s first sermon following his “welcome” appeared to spiritually endorse the protest: “Of course that morning the readings did have to say, ‘Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God which is God’s [laughs].’” Fraser reflected on the irony of having to preach the Gospel of St. Matthew (22:21), which he interpreted as a reminder that “you [St Paul’s] cannot serve God and money [City].” These “famous words of Jesus” (Occupier Jon) become a key reference used to invoke the protest’s moral righteousness.

In sum, protesters began to symbolically link their protest with St. Paul’s, which as a holy place, a social justice institution, and an aesthetic image, became an emotionally laden symbol of the movement infused with a sense of righteousness and moral purpose. This fueled protesters’ intentions to stay, and sacralization provided the moral justification for doing so.

Mechanism 3: Amplification of the emerging WWJD frame. A third mechanism driving the emergence of the WWJD frame was its amplification by third-party audiences (i.e., the media,

the general public). Initially, protesters sought amplification for their original “Capitalism is Crisis” frame; however, this changed when the Dean asked them to leave. As illustrated in IE #2, protesters began to consider how framing the movement’s cause in moral and religious terms might serve as an “outreach strategy” to gain external support in ways that might help them provoke St Paul’s into living up to its moral expectations. To do so, they embraced an activist’s blog invoking Jesus to frame the situation in a way that resonated with wider audiences, particularly sympathetic Christians. Thus, protesters reframed the situation with a religious tone to confront the cathedral, but also to enlist external audiences to increase pressure on St Paul’s.

Phase 2: Ascendance of the WWJD frame

Phase 2 marked the ascendance of the nascent WWJD frame as the camp became increasingly defined vis-à-vis St Paul’s rather than the financial establishment.

Interactional framing in IE #3: St Paul’s closes its doors on Occupy. As protesters refused to leave, the cathedral closed its doors for the first time since World War II, citing “fire, health and safety issues,” and voted to join the City of London in taking legal action to clear the protest camp. This action amounted to a brutal frame break for protesters, who rekeyed the situation as a “betrayal” of the initial “welcome” and as St Paul’s “closing the doors on the 99%.” In response, Fraser announced his resignation on Twitter: “It is with great regret and sadness that I have handed in my notice at St Paul’s Cathedral” (27 Oct 2011). This action dramatically increased the significance of the WWJD frame. A Christian vicar admitted in an interview:

That was the moment in which it became clear that the issue was more complicated than just get these people off our land. That was the moment it became clear there were significant moral questions that needed to be answered. (CoE vicar 2)

Morally vindicated by Fraser’s “principled stance,” WWJD “provided a readily available frame which Occupy could seize and take upon ourselves” (Occupier Toni). The massive

“Capitalism is Crisis” banner was taken down and replaced with a banner asking, “What Would Jesus Do?” (Picture 2). Enacting the WWJD frame, protesters staged a series of dramatic performances to shame St Paul’s for betraying its own mission statement to “welcome all who visit this House of God.” They organized a series of platform performances of flash prayers via Twitter (23 and 26 October 2011), while “the doors of the Cathedral itself remained firmly shut to worshippers” (Occupier Rowan). Organizer Kathryn explained how the flash Evensong came about: “I organized [it] basically by saying on Twitter ‘Hey, does anyone want to sing Evensong with me outside St. Paul’s,’ and people turned up” (Video footage). Flash prayers were followed by a “Sermon on the Steps” modeled after Jesus’s famous Sermon on the Mount (a collection of Jesus’ moral teachings in the Bible). Protesters sought to shame the Church for shirking its religious duties: “We’re here doing your job” (Occupier Jess). Asking the WWJD question was both a provocation to shame the Church, and an invitation to the Church to live up to what Jesus “would” have done – side with the protesters.

----- **Insert Picture 2 here** -----

Interactional framing in IE #4: Attempts at collaboration. Following Fraser’s resignation and massive public criticism, the Bishop of London stepped in. He invited protesters to the first official “Open Meeting” between the two parties in an attempt to find common ground and align their conflicting frames.

Focal interaction “Open Meeting” (#IE 4): Oct 30.10.2011: The Bishop of London and the Dean of St Paul’s join an Open Meeting outside St Paul’s Cathedral. As the Bishop earlier declared in a statement, his intention is to “refocus the debate...on the fundamental issues...and not so much on the confrontation between the cathedral and the campsite.” A large crowd of protesters has gathered. An Imam sings a prayer. The Bishop steps in front of the crowd.

Occupiers: [clapping]

Bishop: Five years ago, I built a tent myself, in the City of London... You’ve got a notice up saying, “What would Jesus do?” That’s a question for me as well. Where would Jesus be today and here?

Occupiers: [waving their hands in agreement, loud cheering]

Bishop: Uh the second thing is, that *whatever* happens, that nobody, *nobody* wants violence...

Occupiers: [waving, cheering]

Occupier Kris: I'd like to thank the Dean and the Bishop for accepting this offer of open dialogue and genuine listening. Now, we didn't choose this location, we didn't choose to be here. I think nobody here has any issues with the Church, and we don't want to inconvenience the Church. Our argument is with the people over *there*—the stock exchange, the banks...But I think we need to look beyond the inconveniences [to the cathedral]...and we need to look towards the deep values that we share with the Christian Church.

Occupiers: [clapping, cheering, waving]

Occupier Kris: Now, we ought to be fighting on the same side here, we really ought. The more force there is behind us, if the Church gets behind us, we'll...start building a force to really make a change in politics and *this* is what we need to do.

During this interaction, the Bishop acknowledged the relevance of dialogue in tents and of posing the question “What would Jesus do?” as well as the common aim to avoid violence.

Kris's response pushed the cathedral to acknowledge shared values and being “on the same side,” hoping to enroll the Church into supporting the protest.

A day later, St Paul's suspended legal action. The Dean resigned to “allow new leadership to be exercised” (St Paul's press conference). The Archbishop of Canterbury, the CoE's most senior clergy, prominently endorsed Occupy's original “Capitalism is Crisis” frame “as the expression of a widespread exasperation with the financial establishment” (Williams, 2011). The Bishop of London initiated regular meetings with the “Church Liaison Group” and announced the “London Connection” which led to a high profile meeting with the UK's Financial Services Authority about financial reform. This collaborative keying of the situation renewed protesters' hope of winning the Church as a powerful ally in their fight against capitalist injustice. However, this entangled them even further in the WWJD frame because protesters believed that this frame could induce the Church into doing what Jesus “would” have done and support the protest.

Mechanism 1: Emotional attachment to ascending the WWJD frame. In phase 2, emotional attachment to the WWJD frame intensified, fueling the frame's ascendance as protesters became even more emotionally attached to it. St Paul's closure (IE #3) elicited strong emotional

reactions from protesters; Occupier Ronan likened it to “a slap in the face” (Video footage), and others described it as another “betrayal” (Field notes). Christian protesters such as Jess were outraged: “When the cathedral closed I was shocked and furious to be quite honest. As a Christian there is no reason to close God’s house!” (Field notes). Fraser’s resignation tapped into protesters’ righteous anger and emotionally energized them. When he visited the camp protesters received him enthusiastically, celebrating his heroic act with loud cheering and excitement. When St Paul’s agreed to meet and collaborate, the protesters felt morally vindicated and enthused to have the “Church on our side” (Occupier Eva), hoping St Paul’s support might help them in an upcoming court case regarding the City of London’s request to clear the camp.

In sum, interactions with St. Paul’s—both the perceived “betrayal” as well as the show of solidarity by a former senior clergy—emotionally energized protesters further by infusing them with a sense of righteous anger and hope that fueled their attachment to the WWJD frame.

Mechanism 2: Sacralization of the ascending WWJD frame. Protesters increasingly linked the occupation to the Church and religion, imbuing their interactions with moral and symbolic significance. In turn, the WWJD frame became increasingly sacralized, feeding the frame’s ascendance. Religious references permeated the camp’s everyday vocabulary. Catholic activist Ciaran linked the “flash prayers” with Christianity’s early history: “I think the beauty of what’s been practiced here [i.e., worship on the streets] really resonates with the praxis of the early Church” (Video footage). Protesters began wearing rosaries handed out by Sister Ruth, who declared herself a Catholic nun.

Fraser, who gave up a privileged post as Canon Chancellor at a prestigious cathedral, became a collective symbol of the moral righteousness of the protest. Protesters at the campsite described

his resignation as “inspiring,” “courageous,” and an “act of sacrifice.” Fraser himself validated the symbolic linkage between Christianity and Occupy in his various media appearances:

St. Paul was a tent maker. I mean, it’s just extraordinary. For me the whole idea is if you looked around and you saw where, if you tried to recreate where Jesus would be born for me, I could imagine Jesus being born in the camp. (Fraser, in Butt et al., 2011)

Rejuvenated by Fraser’s sacrifice, protesters began to routinely justify their presence by comparing themselves to St. Paul “the tent maker:”

Two drunken, slightly disheveled campers with rosaries around their necks greet me: “D’you know St. Paul?” I look at them slightly confused. His friend answers: “St. Paul, he actually was a tentmaker! And we’re the tent makers!” “That’s right. So, we have every right to be here.” (Field notes, 11.2011)

This unexpected religious link was noted in a column in *The Occupied Times*, written by a protester under the pseudonym, *The Irreverent Reverend*: “Who ever imagined that all this Jesus-talk would become so normal? On the cathedral steps, everyone has become a theologian, taking up whips against the money-changers.” The religious passage “Jesus threw the moneylenders out of the temple” from the New Testament became a key slogan to shame St Paul’s.

The WWJD frame became increasingly sacralized as protesters reframed their chance encounter with the cathedral as “providential,” placing the protest “under the protecting and directing hand of God” (Occupier Sam). It imbued their protest with a renewed sense of higher-order purpose and moral significance. Occupier Jess argued that the encounter was a “providential calling” to engage St Paul’s religious leaders: “I don’t think it’s a coincidence at all. This is my Christian belief: God is moving...I think being here was intentional in terms of we were led to be here by God, our Creator.”

Even St Paul’s staff agreed that Occupy seeking sanctuary in an icon of Christian faith was a “nice bit of divine providence:” “if you’re more religious minded you might call it providential” (St Paul’s #3). Refusing to believe that “it’s an accident that we’re outside a cathedral” (Occupier

Jess), protesters viewed the chance encounter as preordained even though it detracted from their original goal. Thus, the WWJD frame was not just a strategic tactic. Instead, engaging the Church on moral grounds became a “calling” with a moral purpose in its own right. This justified deviation from the original target, fueling the sacralization of the WWJD frame.

Mechanism 3: Amplification of the ascending WWJD frame. In phase 2, the WWJD frame was amplified far beyond what protesters had imagined. The conflict with St. Paul’s—an iconic landmark—attracted significant public attention, making front page headlines in major British newspapers and igniting a national debate about the moral obligation of St Paul’s (and more broadly, religion) to advocate for social justice. WWJD banners in front of St Paul’s cathedral provided powerful images to accompany and visually reinforce media headlines (see Picture 2). The frame was also amplified from within the Church. In addition to suffering a “public relations disaster,” St Paul’s attracted “thousands of emails” from angry Christians (CoE Policy Advisor). In an article in the *Telegraph*, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey (2011), criticized the cathedral’s mismanagement, noting they “seemed to lose their nerve:” “One moment the church was reclaiming a valuable role in hosting public protest and scrutiny, the next it was looking in turns like the temple which Jesus cleansed.” Picture 3, a newspaper cartoon, illustrates the public derision of St. Paul’s.

----- **Insert Picture 3 here** -----

Positive feedback from the media, Christians and the wider public further increased the salience of the WWJD frame, as protesters realized that “the tension with the Church provides a very interesting news agenda” (Occupier Jordie), thereby attracting a “disproportionate amount of coverage.” Occupier Toni explained:

There's a sense that because of the Church, Occupy is like, we've got this incredible amount of media coverage...but it's only, you know, 100 tents, many of which don't have people staying in them all the time and stuff. It's not very big at the moment.

Although disappointed by St Paul's "betrayal," the "incredible amount of media coverage" renewed protesters' hope and enthusiasm. Many protesters felt that the morally loaded WWJD frame offered a "God-given opportunity" for them to "win hearts and minds" (Occupier Jean) for their cause, and morally induce St Paul's into supporting the occupation. Protesters creatively adapted their collective action frame by skillfully "improvising around a situation which arose accidentally" (CoE Senior Clergy). Their attempt to "out-Christian the Church" (Occupier Jordie) in staging a series of dramatic performance such as the flash prayers seemed to pay off when St Paul's suspended legal action and engaged in a series of collaborative initiatives. In sum, positive feedback from external audiences drastically amplified the WWJD frame, which induced protesters to creatively adapt it and thereby reinforce its ascendance.

Phase 3: Escalation of the WWJD frame

During phase 3, four interaction episodes facilitated the escalation of the WWJD frame, fueled by two additional frame breaks, or "betrayals" for protesters.

Interactional framing in IE #5: Court case to evict Occupy. A major frame break occurred when St Paul's registrar unexpectedly testified against Occupy in support of the City's court case in December 2011. The registrar's allegations invalidated the testimonials from sympathetic vicars who had testified that Occupy embodied core Christian principles, echoing civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson's claim that "Jesus was an Occupier" (Speech at Occupy camp, 15.12.2011). Protesters were outraged when they lost the case. Tilly, Occupy's named defendant fumed: "You'd be furious if you were in court!" They framed the registrar's statement as another "betrayal" and evidence of St Paul's collusion with the City (i.e., the 1%). Occupier Jess angrily

summarized the situation: “They’ve actually lied to us because they said that they were lifting the threat of legal action, yet their support of the City of London’s case is what won the case!”

Interactional framing in IE #6: Forceful eviction of Occupy. The next major frame break occurred when the City of London police forcefully removed praying protesters from the cathedral steps during the night of the camp’s eviction, leading to dramatic headlines (e.g., “Christians were dragged from steps of St Paul’s while they prayed;” Taylor, 2012). Protesters framed this action as the “third betrayal.”

Livestream video footage and interaction via Occupy’s group email platform reveal how protesters framed being forcefully “dragged from cathedral steps” on the night of the eviction:

Focal interaction “Eviction Night” (#IE 6): Night of 28.02.2012. Tilly sits on the steps of the cathedral. Looking visibly distressed, she witnesses first-hand the destruction of tents and camp equipment—the camp’s sacred objects. She also experiences the sacrilege of “praying” protesters like herself being forcefully removed from the cathedral steps.

A few days later, Occupier Ben starts an email thread that we report (3.03.2012): “The eviction...Mic check! We are informed by a fellow occupier that the St Pauls posse have requested the police to clear the steps of St Pauls two days previous. Of course they did...The orders are given to clear the steps. Three people are praying. People of faith. I join them in solidarity. The line of police sweeps in and pushes all of us back. No I won’t move. Four of them pick me up, I go limp and wriggle till I’m completely upside down...At the bottom of the steps now and I am feeling the rage...I incoherently yell out about how Giles Fraser in conscience resigned so that this would not happen...”

Samia responds: “Tears in my eyes Ben, thank you. Samia xxx”

Tilly responds to Ben and Samia: “...the heartache of seeing all our hard work, our community being broken up, the tents being crushed, the police on holy land, the refusal of giles [Fraser’s] entry, the fear anger and hurt on my occupy families faces [...] all i had left was that little spark of faith and hope so i went back where i felt safest, the cathedral steps. oh what a mistake. see i was certain we would b ok there, i felt close to god there, protected, looked after, strengthened...then the riot police began advancing down the steps...i explained how painful it was to see this happening on holy space, saw [Seth] assaulted and [Ben] grabbed, saw ppl crying in disbelief i guess, then my own tears came, they fell down my cheeks as i begged the female sergeant not to do this, she took my hands and said ‘pls don’t be distressed miss, the cathedral ordered this and we must move u all on, if u do not move u will be arrested for trespass’ I couldn’t believe. literally couldn’t believe it...as i write this the tears and pain i feel just remembering...im stopping at this because im hurting really hurting but i swear im not done with either the cathedral the col or the cops. love u all x”

Ben and Tilly’s first-hand accounts of the eviction show how protesters blamed St Paul’s and not City authorities for their agony. They framed the clearing of the cathedral’s steps at the

behest of St Paul's as a betrayal that destroyed their last "spark of faith and hope," while feeling vindicated by Fraser's continued support. They described their rage, anger, heartache, hurt, disbelief, and tears. For Tilly, a devout Christian, being dragged from cathedral steps, a "holy space" in her eyes, was an irreparable violation of her faith that sparked a desire for revenge.

Interactional framing in IE #7: Post-eviction feud versus reconciliation. In the weeks following the eviction, the sense of betrayal and righteous anger fueled a small group of protesters around Tilly to repeatedly demand an apology from the leaders of St Paul's for their "collusion" in the eviction. Meanwhile, Christian protester Tanya formed OccupyFaith to spread a collaborative keying of the WWJD frame into local communities. The group solicited the support of St Paul's for a 2-week "Pilgrimage for Justice" from St Paul's to Canterbury Cathedral, the seat of the CoE. Building on the collaborative keying, OccupyFaith co-organized an anniversary Evensong inside St Paul's "in the Christian spirit of reconciliation" (Email) and "to heal wounds and to come together in prayer and worship" (St Paul's #3).

Interactional framing in IE #8: Action against St Paul's. In the final episode, the WWJD frame escalated and its conflictual keying triumphed. Tilly's group of aggrieved protesters staged a dramatic protest stunt during the anniversary Evensong on October 14, 2012. Their lingering feelings of "betrayal" sabotaged the efforts of OccupyFaith to mobilize a collaborative keying that could have united Occupy and St. Paul's:

Focal interaction "Evensong stunt" (#IE 8): 14.10. 2012. Some 50 Occupiers gather inside St Paul's. Moments after Tanya from OccupyFaith read her prayer, four white-clad female protesters, one in a wheelchair, rush forward and chain themselves to the base of the pulpit and unfurl an umbrella with the words "Throw the moneylenders out of the temple." The organ plays; plumes of smoke rise from burning incense; it is a dramatic scene. The women stage a theatrical "mic check"³ comparing the three "betrayals" they suffered to the biblical story of Jesus being denied three times:

³ A "mic check" is a practice used by Occupy whereby speakers invite audience members to repeat what is said to amplify the human voice via the "human mic(ro)phone." In the passage, [:], the musical notation for "repeat" indicates that the words were repeated by audience members.

Protesters: Mic check! [:] In the fight for economic justice [:] Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple [:] but you invited them in [:] and instead evicted us [:]. Your collusion with the City of London Corporation [:] led to our violent eviction on your doorstep [:]. You testified against us [:] which acted to uphold injustice and inequality [:]...

Dean Ison: [from his pulpit] It seems I now have a captive audience. I hope you will listen to what I have to say. [Delivers his sermon Joshua 5:13–6:20, and Matthew 11:20–end:] “Are you on our side, or the side of our enemies?” ...And the man replies, “Neither. I’m on God’s side.”... throughout the Jewish Bible, the theme that God is actually on everyone’s side keeps reappearing... we believe that God is on the side of all of us, and none of us. God in Jesus Christ affirms us all, and challenges us all... Joshua said to the man with the drawn sword: “Are you for us, or for our enemies?” And he said: “No. I fight for the kingdom of God.”

When the Dean later joins the four protesters still chained to the pulpit, they make a last-ditch effort to convince him to support Occupy’s agenda:

Amy: The reason why we’ve come here today is...because the cathedral has not at all, at all, in our point of view, adhered to anything like the radical and progressive message of Jesus...

Dean Ison: At the moment we’re going through a process at the cathedral asking precisely these kind of questions.

Tilly: The situation is: I’m chained to your pulpit. I’m a Christian. I don’t have a key!

Dean Ison: You have already achieved your agenda; you’ve disrupted the service.

Tilly: Father, the cathedral is expensive to run. I understand that. I’m aware that it is a major nightmare, but it is a moral dilemma... You can’t contain God between the great west doors and these arches and chandeliers. You can’t. You know that! So, to stand up to them you’re gonna have to eventually say Jesus wouldn’t have taken these people’s money.

The stunt shows how the WWJD frame was no longer invoked to simply save the camp from eviction. Instead, the focus had shifted to reforming St Paul’s to follow the “radical message of Jesus” and face up to the “moral dilemma” of accepting large donations from City financiers (“moneylenders”). Stunned by this frame break, St Paul’s rescinded its offer to collaborate with Occupy. They parted ways acrimoniously, with both ruing this unintended escalation of Occupy’s new collective action frame that transformed potential allies into adversaries.

Mechanism 1: Emotional attachment to the escalating WWJD frame. Increasing emotional attachment to the WWJD frame was a critical driver for its escalation. Paradoxically, rather than distancing protesters, the conflict with St Paul’s energized them, ensuring sustained mutual focus of attention on the Church, reinforcing the WWJD frame as “the narrative that they are emotionally most invested in” (Manager of St Paul’s Institute, Gordon, 2012). Protesters’ anger

instigated by the first “betrayal” in phase 2 was intensified by two additional “betrayals” in phase 3. Ben and Tilly’s highly emotional accounts of the eviction, the third “betrayal,” reveal the intensity of emotional pain associated with being evicted from a “holy space” where Tilly, a devout Christian, had felt “safe.” It fueled a desire for revenge (i.e., “i swear im not done”). Circulating their accounts via the email list enabled other protesters to vicariously experience their anger and pain, such as Samia who confessed to having tears in her eyes. Her response illustrates how Ben and Tilly’s feelings were contagious, roused others, and generated a shared emotional mood in the wider movement. In subsequent Occupy meetings, protesters shared their emotional distress. Lina told us: “We watched it [eviction] live [on livestream] and just cried.” Feelings of betrayal spread throughout the movement. Occupier Jamie explained: “We had a lot of Christians in our camp...And Tilly herself, Tilly is a Christian. She gave a tear-jerking speech about how it’s destroyed her faith the way that church has behaved... Emotional, man!”

These emotional responses to the interaction with St Paul’s intensified, filling the protesters with righteous anger that further fixated their attention on the Church. Tilly’s letters to St Paul’s post-eviction illustrate her struggle to let go of the painful feeling of “betrayal:”

Dear Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral,
Here I am, almost two weeks after witnessing the destruction...A fortnight later I feel shocked and numb and sad and hurt. I feel betrayed. I feel I saw a darkness of which I had no idea existed. A darkness which I would never have believed existed until I saw and felt it for myself. I have wished repeatedly since that night that I had not seen the things I did on those steps... [“Tilly”] Named defendant for Occupy London Stock Exchange”

Tilly’s feelings of righteous anger emotionally stirred participants, and spilled over into subsequent interactions. A St Paul’s respondent described how “all of this pent-up emotion” and lingering sense of betrayal fueled protesters’ determination to stage an attack on the cathedral:

That [sense of betrayal] then leads into what happened when those four women chained themselves to the pulpit. Because that’s a feed-on from that. And that sense of betrayal and that sense that we sold them up the river as such. (St Paul’s #3)

In sum, stoked by the accumulation of perceived “betrayals” resulting from frame breaks that reversed a previous alignment between the two parties, protesters became more and more emotionally attached to a conflictual keying of the WWJD frame, fueling its escalation.

Mechanism 2: Sacralization of the escalating WWJD frame. Sacralization contributed to the escalation of the WWJD frame, as it provided a moral justification for protesters’ emotional attachment to it. The perceived betrayals fueled the movement’s sense of moral righteousness as protesters linked their destiny to the Gospel of Jesus. Seeing their forceful eviction taking place on “holy ground” sacralized this framing. The “holy ground” of the campsite in St Paul’s churchyard became a collective symbol of their betrayal. Protesters compared their betrayal to Jesus’s own betrayal by religious authorities, as illustrated in Tilly’s speech to approximately 50 protesters who gathered on the steps of St Paul’s the day after the Evensong stunt.

I remember Giles Fraser saying that if Jesus was born today, he would be born in one of these tents. I also think that if Jesus was born today he would probably be done for public disorder, criminal damage, Section 14 blocking the highway, that’s my favorite!...As a Christian myself, I found more humanity, more Christian spirit, more everything in the camp than you would find behind these two grand doors in this monstrosity [pointing to St Paul’s].

Rather than letting go of the conflict with St Paul’s and focusing on their original target, protesters repeatedly spurned the Church’s pre-eviction offers to “occupy” alternative church buildings, which would have allowed them to continue their protest against capitalist injustice without the threat of eviction. Even after their forceful eviction, protesters refused to move their weekly General Assemblies to a more potent symbol of financial wealth, which could have revived the original collective action frame. An observer from St Paul’s recalled:

There was a big argument to say “Well, we need to move somewhere else.” But people very passionately saying “No, this is our home!”...I can understand that. No one goes through 4 months of that intense environment without forming an attachment with it. (St Paul’s #3)

In sum, sacralization inspired and emboldened protesters to justify their actions, in particular, their deviation from the original collective action frame targeting the stock exchange to enact the

WWJD frame targeting the cathedral.

Mechanism 3: Amplification of the escalating WWJD frame. Frame amplification continued to provide positive reinforcement from external audiences that encouraged protesters to further leverage the WWJD frame, thereby feeding its escalation. In fact, St Paul's staff (St Paul's #3) accused protesters of exploiting the WWJD frame to attract media attention, and viewed the "quite famous photos of 'Christians dragged from the steps of St Paul's whilst praying'" associated with IE #5 as a carefully scripted performance to engineer "a headline:" "They made sure they were praying when the press was there... Would they have done it if they weren't pretty sure they'd get 400 news articles out of it?"

The "ring of prayer" illustrated how protesters scripted performances to attract media attention and sympathy from Christian audiences. To magnify the effect of "pictures going around the world" of a violent eviction on "holy ground," protesters planned to stage a dramatic scene: "The Christians will form a ring of prayer around the camp. We will sing. We will pray" (Occupier Ruth reporting to the General Assembly, 21.01.2012). Even declared atheists, such as Occupier Jean, embraced the opportunity to mobilize sympathetic Christians:

While I still think those Christians are misguided to have stuck with a rich, hierarchical, establishment-supporting... Church, some... of them could even be persuadable to drop the prayers for protest. Y'never know... So, I think going into churches and reminding Christians of politics, poverty and protest is probably a worthwhile thing to do.

However, by this point, frame amplification had become a double-edged sword. On the one hand, protesters could reach out to a much wider audience: "It made people think: 'What would Jesus do?' That was fucking amazing!" (Occupier Jamie). A religious observer agreed that Occupy's encounter with St Paul's "massively amplified their voice in a way which they could never have known or suspected" (CoE Expert #2). Occupier Jess readily admitted the benefit:

I think being here was providential in terms of we were led to be here. We wouldn't have had the impact in Paternoster Square that we've had by being here. Because this has focused a lot of attention on St. Paul's, and it's focused a lot of attention on Occupy.

On the other hand, protesters also realized that it diverted attention from their original target.

During a TV interview, press team member Ronan noted: "We actually closed down an RBS [Royal Bank of Scotland], we did a teach-out at the Bank of England, you know, some amazing stuff! But they didn't get the media coverage or attention that they deserved." In hindsight, protesters regretted that "over the months we have seen the language and our own agenda subtly diverted through the media" (Email, Occupier Seth).

In sum, media attention to the conflict with St Paul's encouraged protesters to further leverage the WWJD frame. However, the more the WWJD frame was amplified, the more the protesters nourished it by staging dramatic performances, and the more it overshadowed their original anti-capitalism frame and detracted from their initial target.

Process Model of Collective Action Frame Emergence and Escalation

We encapsulate the insights from our case and the theoretical issues they raise into a process model to explain the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of an unanticipated collective action frame arising from movement-target interaction (see Figure 4).

---Insert Figure 4 here---

At its core, our model captures how interactional framing and the laminations produced therein—keying, frame breaks, and misframings—interact with three situational mechanisms to produce a new collective action frame. Over the course of collective action, movement participants interact with "elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow, 1998: 4). These interactions can modify an extant collective action frame or potentially trigger a new one that can alter, overshadow, and displace a movement's extant collective action frame. A new collective

action frame is more likely to emerge when interactional framing leads to the construction of a new grievance, such as after a significant frame break. Protesters must then reconsider on the spot and seek a frame that can strike a chord with the target. Indeed, “grievance interpretation” lies at the core of collective action framing (Snow et al., 1986: 466). However, a nascent collective action frame does not inevitably develop into a fully-fledged one. Whether and how this happens can be gleaned from three mechanisms that strengthen via feedback loops.

Mechanism 1: Emotional Attachment to a Collective Action Frame

Emotional attachment to a collective action frame arises from the buildup of emotional energy over the course of interaction. Interactions serve as a “stimulus to evoke emotional responses” (Hallett, 2003: 705), and produce varying levels of shared “emotional energy”—the powerful “feeling of confidence and enthusiasm for social interaction” (Collins, 2004: 108) (arrow 1a). The production of emotional energy is critical to group experience in social movements as participants “become pumped up with enthusiasm and confidence” to fight for their cause (Collins, 2001: 28). Both hope and anger are powerful group-based emotions that fuel emotional energy and together create and solidify emotional attachment to a frame over time. Hope creates expectations about attaining the desirable but their violation through frame breaks generates anger and moral outrage, one of the strongest and most contagious sources of emotional energy (Collins, 2004). Collective anger can rally a movement around a new collective action frame to fight an emerging grievance, while the hope to right a wrong keeps it going. Repeated frame breaks fuel the sense of grievance, spur internal solidarity against the target and intensify emotional attachment to the new collective action frame.

In our case, anger about St Paul’s threat to close the cathedral was framed as a significant “betrayal,” or grievance that spurred protesters to seek new frames to define “what it is that is

going on,” leading to the emergence of the WWJD frame. Alternation between hope for a collaborative outcome and anger arising from frame breaks reinforced emotional attachment to a conflictual keying of the WWJD frame. As a result, Occupy protesters could not extricate themselves from their fixation on St. Paul’s, even though it diverted the movement away from its original frame and target. This indicates how participants become caught in what Scheff (1990) called a “feeling trap, where emotions ‘spiral’ on for long periods of time” (Hallett, 2003: 709), leading to growing emotional attachment to the collective action frame. In sum, the production and accumulation of emotional energy in interactional framing creates increasing emotional attachment to the new collective action frame (arrows 1a, 1c).

Mechanism 2: Sacralization of a collective action frame

Emotional attachment is reinforced by frame sacralization, a process by which sacred meaning is projected onto a frame. Though originally used in a religious sense, sacredness is “socially constructed through interactions” and can also endow secular objects with transcendent meaning (Harrison, Ashforth, & Corley, 2009: 228; Collins, 2004). Sacralization is a powerful mechanism for riveting participants’ attention to a collective action frame. It occurs as potent, yet previously unattended sacred meanings are activated in interactions (arrow 2a) and imbue the collective action frame with a sense of higher moral purpose.

In our case, Occupy’s interactions with St Paul’s and the perceived “welcome” sparked hopes of support from an iconic religious institution, thereby unintentionally activating sacred beliefs around Christianity. While here sacralization coincided with religious meaning, in social movements more broadly, strongly held values, beliefs and ideals can imbue a frame with sacredness. In the Women in Black movement, interactions produced righteous anger that activated feminist beliefs, and protesters rekeyed a situational provocation as an attack on sacred

feminist values. The interactional construction of sacred meaning enhances the moral and symbolic significance of an emerging frame, making it seem extraordinarily meaningful.

As shown by arrows 1b and 2b in the bottom row of boxes in Figure 4, sacralization and emotional attachment are mutually reinforcing. Sacralization energizes participants emotionally (arrow 1b) by generating “a sense that what one is doing has a higher importance, even a magnetic quality” (Collins, 2001: 29; Fan & Zietsma, 2017). In turn, a surge in emotional energy through feelings of enthusiasm or righteous anger increases the interaction’s significance (arrow 2b), and heightens and rivets attention to the frames emerging from it (Collins, 2001). In our case, sacralization enabled protesters to frame the interaction with the church as “providential” rather than a chance event, and justified the shift to the WWJD frame as a “calling.” In sum, through the interactional activation of potent, yet previously unattended beliefs, sacralization imbues emergent frames with significance which, together with emotional attachment, fuels the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of the collective action frame (arrows 1c, 2c).

Mechanism 3: Amplification of the Collective Action Frame

Amplification (middle row of Figure 4) explains how frames produced in interactions are both reinforced and transformed by third-party audiences (arrow 3a), generating positive feedback loops (arrows 3b, 3c) that fuel an emerging collective action frame. If an emerging frame is embraced by a wider audience such as the media, it may enable the social movement to reach “one of those rare and sought-after moments when a majority of society is paying attention” (Collins, 2001: 32).

Unlike traditional notions of “resonance” that focus on how social movement actors strategically choose resonant frames up front, interactional framing and positive audience feedback operate iteratively. A frame’s emergent appeal among external audiences can imbue the

frame with “situational resonance.” Frames thereby become salient and compelling through interaction. Participants may leverage a frame that has attracted wider sympathy to induce the target to concede to their demands, which further amplifies the frame. Audiences such as the media then become part of the interaction in “mediated quasi-interaction” (Thompson, 1995: 84), whereby collective action framing and media amplification reinforce each other. In our case, media attention to the conflict between Occupy and St Paul’s amplified the “newsworthy” WWJD frame. In turn, protesters’ dramaturgical tactics aimed at “out-Christianing the Church” show how the WWJD frame gained resonance in the interaction to both shame and persuade St. Paul’s. In sum, amplification works through a self-reinforcing feedback loop (arrows 3b, 3c); amplification by external audiences elevates a collective action frame’s salience and appeal, which then induces further use of the frame.

In sum, our model illuminates how situational mechanisms interact with frame laminations over three cycles that lead to the emergence, ascendance, and escalation of a collective action frame. The situational mechanisms reinforce each other through feedback loops. Increased emotional attachment fuels sacralization, and increasing sacralization further attaches participants to the frame (arrows 1b, 2b). Frame amplification strengthens the frame by creating a positive feedback loop between collective action framing and audience adoption (arrows 3b, 3c). Frame amplification also reinforces emotional attachment and sacralization (arrow 4). As the interaction is loaded with uncertainty and indeterminacy, multiple potentialities and alternative pathways inhere. Although a new frame emerged in our case, the existing frame could have been altered instead, or both frames could have merged into a composite frame. However, over time, reinforcing feedback loops make alternative outcomes less likely, and increasingly bind movement actors to the new collective action frame.

DISCUSSION

Our study of the microfoundations of framing sheds light on how interactional framing during movement-target interactions yield a new collective action frame. Interactions between the London Occupy movement and St Paul's cathedral had Occupy protesters rally around the unanticipated "What Would Jesus Do?" frame, losing sight of their original "Capitalism is Crisis" frame. In contrast to a strategic perspective on framing, we demonstrate the value of studying how frames and meanings are reworked at the interactional level.

Implications for Social Movement and Framing Scholarship

Interactions and collective action frames. First, by conceptualizing collective action frames as interactional co-constructions rather than simply as strategic tools, or cognitive representations of reality, we have responded to calls to develop a "truly interactive understanding of how meaning is co-constructed" (Cornelissen et al., 2014: 21; Zilber, 2002). Our work shows how movements and their frames evolve in dialogue with each other.

Our model explains collective action frame emergence rather than deployment. The existing literature seems to swing between a "strategic view" of collective action frames as tools of persuasion that are crafted and deployed (Creed et al., 2002; Giorgi, 2017), and a "cognitive view" of frames as grammar or representational meaning packages that guide decision-making (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014) and have structuring properties independent of the context. In contrast, our interactional account shows how meaning is open to reinterpretation and appropriation during contention. Collective action frames are not simply context-free conduits of meaning that guide behaviors and provide readily available and strategically deployable resources. Rather, they are indexical to situations and endogenous to a field of actors who co-construct grievances and targets interactionally. From this perspective, a collective action frame

is a “dependent variable” (cf., Zilber, 2016) shaped by interactions, rather than an “independent variable” that guides interactions or serves as a strategic tool. Focusing on how frames are forged in the interaction between challengers and powerholders offers a more dynamic account of how contentious issues are constructed. This avoids both the “excessive voluntarism” (Steinberg, 2002) implied by a strategic approach, and the determinism implied by a cognitive approach.

Our model reveals the collective and contested process of meaning making through which frames emerge and are adapted, subverted, or abandoned as they take on different meanings in “lived” situations and at different times. More generally, our focus on the microfoundations of framing reveal the value of staying “close to the ground” at the interaction level, and is in line with recent efforts to study the microfoundations of institutions (Powell & Colyvas, 2008; Zilber, 2016). Our interactional view demonstrates how collective action framing is situationally contingent as social movements move, improvise, and adapt to situations.

Our perspective does not impugn the strategic use of frames, but locates it inside the interaction. Neither does it deny the role of “tethered understandings” arising from cultural embeddedness (Leibel et al., 2017), as people do not join interactions from scratch. Rather, we show how cultural predispositions (such as Christian beliefs) may be reworked in interactions, or applied in new ways through in situ strategizing in response to the exigencies of a social situation.

In future work, scholars can further examine how framing recursively connects collective meaning structures with the micro-interactional level of meaning making. For instance, in the 2019 Hong Kong pro-democracy movement, collective meaning structures around civil liberties were activated in clashes with authorities during protests that were initially aimed at reversing a controversial legislation. Thus, it would be productive to study how broader meaning systems are

reworked at the interactional level, and how interactional meanings scale up to affect those meaning systems.

Situational mechanisms shaping framing processes. We extend the framing perspective by not only revealing the interactional nature of framing (Gray et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2018), but also identifying the situational mechanisms (Gross, 2009; Stinchcombe, 1991) that transform interactional framing into a collective action frame at a more “concrete level of reality” (Jasper, 2011: 27). The situational mechanisms we derived yield new insights by explaining how the contingencies of a situation lead to frame shifts and the production of a collective frame around a contentious issue that emerges in interaction. This complements framing mechanisms derived from contextual inducements such as public or peer pressure (Litrico & David, 2017), discursive strategies such as cognitive shortcuts (Reinecke & Ansari, 2016), and collective theorization (Ansari et al., 2013) at the organizational and field levels to explain how actors situationally shift their extant frames on a contentious issue and construct new collective action frames.

Situational mechanisms shed new light on some of the key factors in collective action dynamics—emotions, resonance and sacralized beliefs. These are not ingredients of collective action frames but are contingent and situationally produced. Emotions are often depicted as purposeful tools to create frame resonance (Giorgi, 2017) and galvanize support for a cause (Jasper, 2011). In contrast, we have shown how emotions such as empathy and righteous anger emerge interactionally and create “situational resonance” to bind participants to a frame.

Moreover, we have illuminated the process of how sacralized beliefs such as human rights and moral justice (Zald, 1996) are activated through interaction and imbue an emergent frame with moral purpose. Thus, the meaning of morality is interactional rather than being intrinsic to a frame, and cannot be detached from people’s feelings and experiences in a situation. The WWJD

frame does not have a specific moral implication out of context. It took on a particular moral meaning in the situation we examined. Protesters provoked the Church to do what they believed Jesus would have done: side with a movement of the 99%, rather than the 1%. Notably, in the right wing anti-statist Tea Party movement the WWJD frame took on a very different meaning to promote free market ideology. Thus, an interactional framing view suggests that moral meaning does not reside in the content of the frame itself, but in the way a frame is indexed to a situation.

We invite scholars to examine how the moral meaning of frames is constructed in interactions and shaped by affective judgments and immediate reactions to situational contingencies as against being abstract generalizations.

Spontaneity and unexpected interactional outcomes. Third, we respond to calls to pay greater attention to the role of spontaneity in social movements by developing an interactional account of collective action dynamics “on the fly” (Snow & Moss, 2014). Although spontaneity has been recognized as highly consequential for collective action (Snow & Moss, 2014), existing accounts tend to focus on outcomes, and downplay the influence of contingency and indeterminacy in social movements. When outcomes are studied retrospectively—after the dust has settled—scholars can “miss out on seeing where the dust came from or how it settled” (Young, 1998: 4).

Failing to consider interactional dynamics can also make the pathways taken seem more inevitable and determinate than they were. As the various twists and turns show, the Church and protesters could have become allies rather than adversaries in the fight against capitalist injustice. While we studied a diverse movement with a loosely defined goal – fighting inequality – social movements with a higher degree of cohesion and focus might be less likely to sway from their core claims (Wang, Rao & Soule, 2019). However, whether an existing collective action frame

persists, whereby targets yield to movements' demands (King, 2008); or expands to encompass broader interests whereby activists and targets find common ground (Ferraro & Beunza, 2018) would still depend on the dynamics of movement-target interactions.

Our account enables an appreciation of how any interactional outcome is at the mercy of fluid and contingent processes that could turn out differently due to minor mishaps, blips or contingencies arising during the interaction. For example, in the 2011 Egyptian revolution, an unplanned confrontation with security forces on Cairo's streets turned a protest against government policies into a full-blown movement for regime change. As Gibson (2011: 406) noted: "Up close, things rarely seem as inevitable as they seem from afar, after the fact, but the temptation to deny this sort of indeterminacy is great." Rather than focus on movement outcomes and attribute them to deliberate choices, it is important to understand the specific moments of collective indeterminacy that lead to unexpected outcomes through conducting a blow-by-blow real-time analysis of movement-target interactions.

Interactional Framing, Materiality and Multimodality

Our model is built around the microprocesses of framing in a situation largely marked by the physical co-presence of a movement and its target. This might limit extending our insights to other settings of collective action framing, such as virtual communities and social media that increasingly characterize social movements. Some commonalities exist such as online platforms that provide powerful echo chambers through which virtual interactions amplify emotions and escalate conflict or solidarity (Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017). Other aspects might be different, such as the material or sensory dimensions of physical interactions.

At the same time we believe that the physical and material dimension makes our study particularly revealing of "on-the-ground" interactional dynamics that may be less visible in other

contexts. For instance, our findings highlight the role of the material affordances of a situation such as building design or spatial configurations that influence interactional framing. People frame *with* and *through* engagement with the material world and not just *about* it. Material circumstances and artefacts may activate a certain interpretation or frame, but also substantialize frames by grounding them in concrete realities (Cornelissen et al., 2014). In our case, the spatial layout of the City of London materially anchored the interaction between Occupy and St Paul's cathedral. The visual grandeur of the iconic cathedral building and the chiming of its bells afforded potent sensory cues that stimulated framing processes. Future research can study more explicitly how materials meaningfully participate in framing processes. Scholars can examine how frames emerge in the partnership between mind and matter as people engage with the material world.

More generally, scholars can examine “multimodal” framing processes, and understand how the verbal, visual, material and sensory components of a situation conspire to construct reality (Höllerer et al., 2019). This can reveal how collective action frames are multimodal accomplishments. For example, in their study of anti-plastic pollution activists, Barbera-Tomas, Castello, de Bakker, & Zietsma (2019) show how visuals worked together with other cultural elements in multimodal interactions to emotionally rouse support for their cause. Scholars can also study the “lived” dimension of interactional framing. Immersive encounters, such as coming face to face with victims of injustice, can induce an embodied and emotive experience of an interactional frame. Frames are also accomplished through facial and bodily expressions and gestures involved in embodied performances, such as activists of *Extinction Rebellion* (a movement to fight climate change) offering their body for arrest as a site of resistance. Future research can unpack how the interplay of different modes of interaction perform framing

processes.

To conclude, our study refocuses social movement and framing conversations on interactions and meaning-making on the ground. This facilitates a more granular understanding of the interactional dynamics of collective action.

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TABLES, FIGURES AND PICTURES

Table 1: Interactions between Occupy protesters and St Paul's (based on Goffman, 1983)

Entities	Type	IE ⁴ Interactions	Date		
Contact: when an individual comes into another's response presence	Mutual noticing	1 Occupy protest comes into physical co-presence with St Paul's	15 Oct 2011		
		1-6 St Paul's staff visit the camp anonymously	ongoing		
		1-6 Occupy protesters notice, greet or shout at St Paul's staff crossing the camp	ongoing		
		6 St Paul's officials look on from balcony on eviction night	28 Feb 2012		
		6 Exchange of glances with Fraser during eviction	28 Feb 2012		
		1-8 Protesters attend St Paul's cathedral services	ongoing		
	Spontaneous talk	1-6 Informal chats with cathedral staff at the campsite	ongoing		
	Sending letters, notices	Un-organized encounter	2 Open letter from St Paul's Dean to protesters	21 Oct 2011	
			2 Twitter message from Fraser	21 Oct 2011	
			3 Tweet from Fraser announcing his resignation	27 Oct 2011	
			2-3 Protesters send letters to Bishop of London (unanswered)	Oct 2011	
			6 Court judgments citing St Paul's registrar	18 Jan 2012 22 Feb 2012	
			6 Letter exchange between Occupy/church groups and St. Paul's		
			6 Fraser's supportive tweets during eviction night	28 Feb 2012	
			7 Post-eviction letter exchange between Occupy/church groups and St Paul's and Tilly's follow-up letters	Mar 2012	
Conversational encounters: talk-based activities			Un-organized encounter	1 Fraser's "welcome" of Occupy protesters	16 Oct 2011
				1 Liaison with St Paul's clerk of works	16-20 Oct 2011
	4 Fraser joins General Assembly	1 Nov 2011			
	3-6 Fraser visits and engages in spontaneous meetings with Occupiers	ongoing			
	5 Fraser joins protesters at High Court ruling	18 Jan 2012			
	8 Post-stunt conversation with St Paul's Dean	14 Oct 2012			
	Organized meeting	Organized meeting	4-6 Weekly "Church Liaison Group" meetings	Nov 2011- Feb 2012	
			5 "London Connection" meeting with UK Financial Services Authority	7 Dec 2012	
			7-8 OccupyFaith meetings with St Paul's to prepare for Pilgrimage for Justice and anniversary Evensong	4 Jun 2012 9 Oct 2012	
			Platform performance: set before an audience	Public assembly	2 Occupy "Emergency GA" discusses Open Letter
Public display of symbolic messages	3 Open meeting with the Bishop of London and Dean of St Paul's	30 Oct 2011			
	5 Occupy GA rejects St Paul's "exit offer"	3 Dec 2011			
	3-6 "What would Jesus Do" and "Jesus threw the money lenders out of the temple" banners in the camp, protesters wearing rosaries	ongoing			
Public ceremony	Public display of symbolic messages	3 Flash prayers	23 Oct 2011 26 Oct 2011		
		3 Sermon on the Steps	29 Oct 2011		
		7 Protesters join St Paul's Institute event	16 Apr 2012		
		Press conference and releases, tweets	Public ceremony		1-8 Occupy press releases and tweets
2-3 St Paul's press conference and statements about Occupy	21 Oct 2011 27 Oct 2011				

⁴ IE = Interaction episode

		28 Oct 2011	
	3 St Paul's press conference announcing the Dean's resignation	31 Oct 2011	
	4 St Paul's suspends legal action, and announces the "London Connection"	1 Nov 2011	
	4 Press conference on St Paul's report and values	7 Nov 2011	
Media platform performances	3 Former Archbishop George Carey article in <i>The Telegraph</i>	27 Oct 2011	
	4 <i>Financial Times</i> article by Archbishop of Canterbury	1 Nov 2011	
	4 Bishop of London article in <i>The Church Times</i>	2 Nov 2011	
	1-8 Fraser interviews: BBC, <i>The Guardian</i> , <i>The Independent</i>		16 Oct 2011
			27 Oct 2011
			18 Dec 2011
			5 Jan 2012
			22 Jan 2012
	4-8 Fraser articles in <i>The Guardian</i>		17 Nov 2011
			12 Dec 2011
		31 Jan 2012	
		28 Feb 2012	
		8 Mar 2012	
		5 Oct 2012	
		14 Oct 2012	
7 St Paul's Institute articles on Occupy		12 Mar 2012	
Social occasion: Celebratory sense of official occasion proceedings	7 Bishop blesses participants in OccupyFaith Pilgrimage for Justice	7 Jun 2012-22 Jun 2012	
	8 Joint anniversary Evensong: Prayer by OccupyFaith, Sermon by St. Paul's Dean Ison, and Occupy Evensong Stunt	14 Oct 2012	
	Non-celebratory occasion	5 Hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice	19 Dec 2011-23 Dec 2011
5 Hearing at Appeals Court		13 Feb 2012	
6 "Praying Christians" removed from steps of St Paul's by police, authorized by St Paul's during eviction		28 Feb 2012	

Figure 1: Data structure

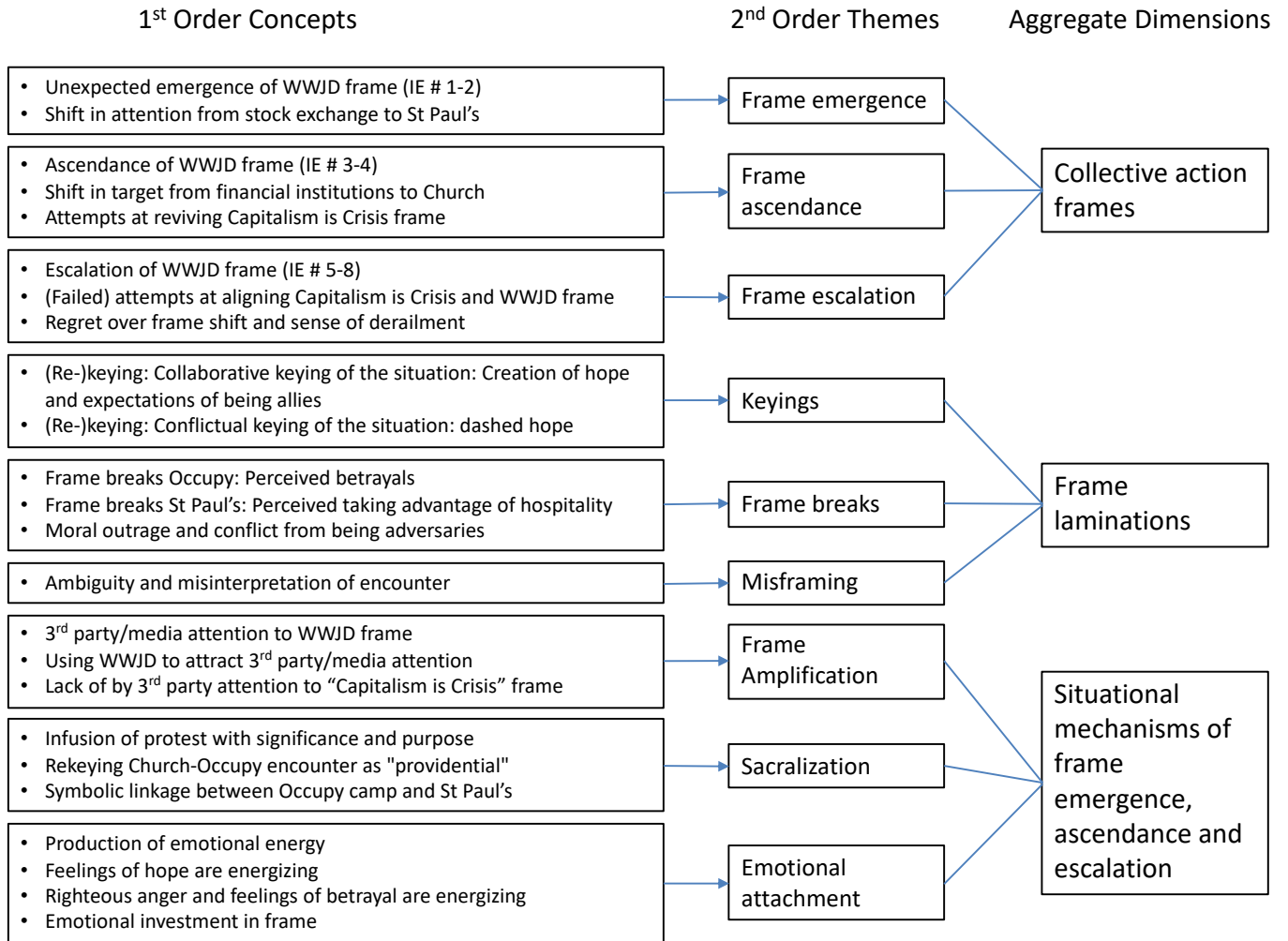


Figure 2: Extract of visual mapping

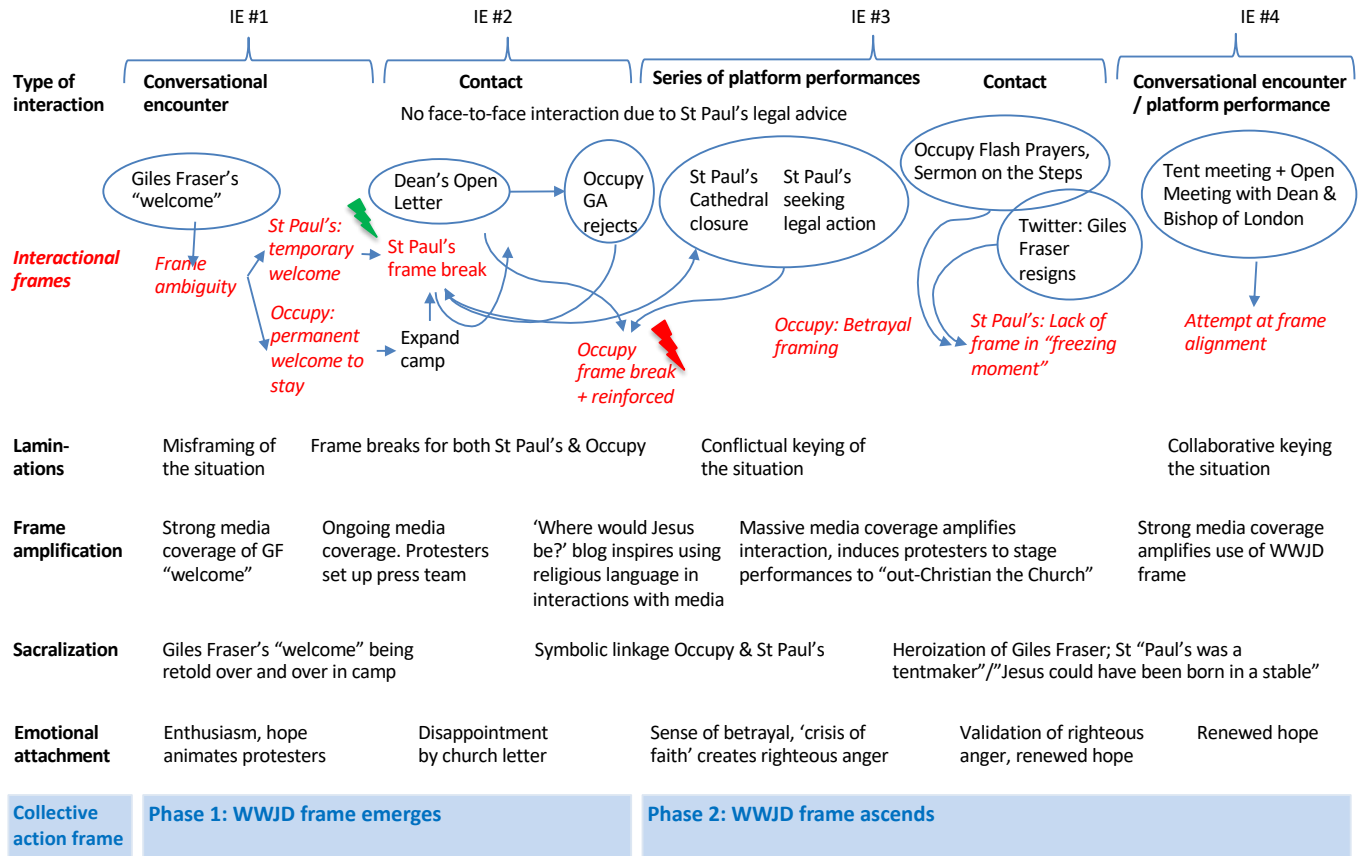


Figure 3: Timeline of interaction episodes

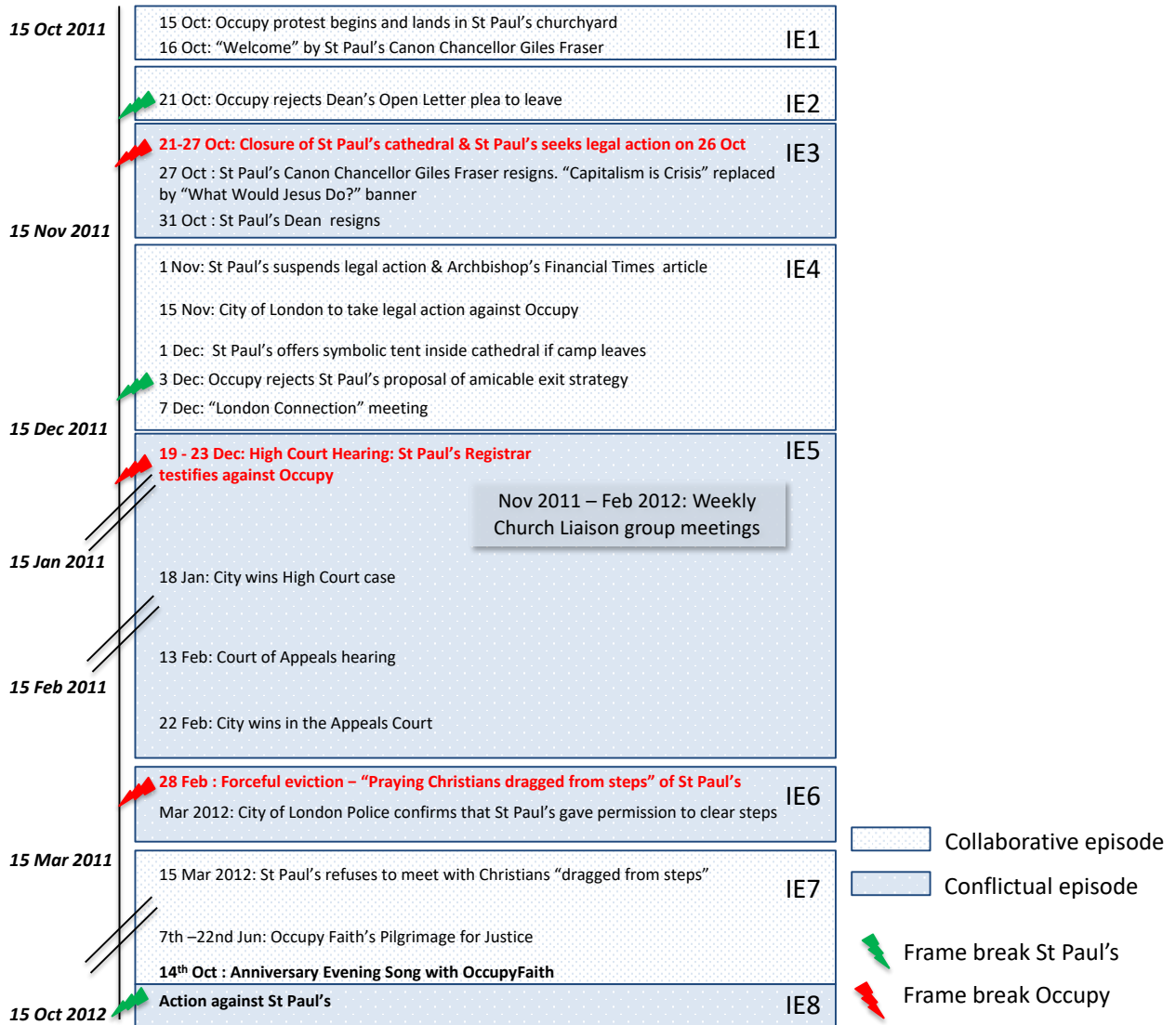
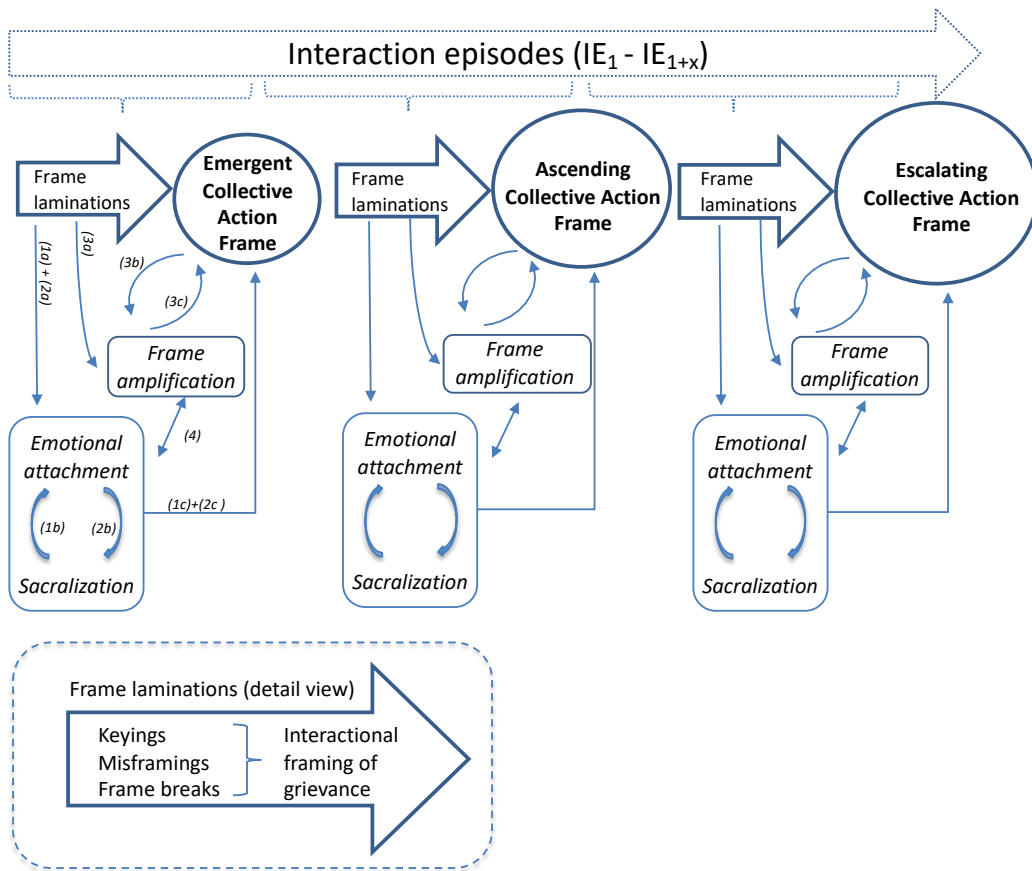
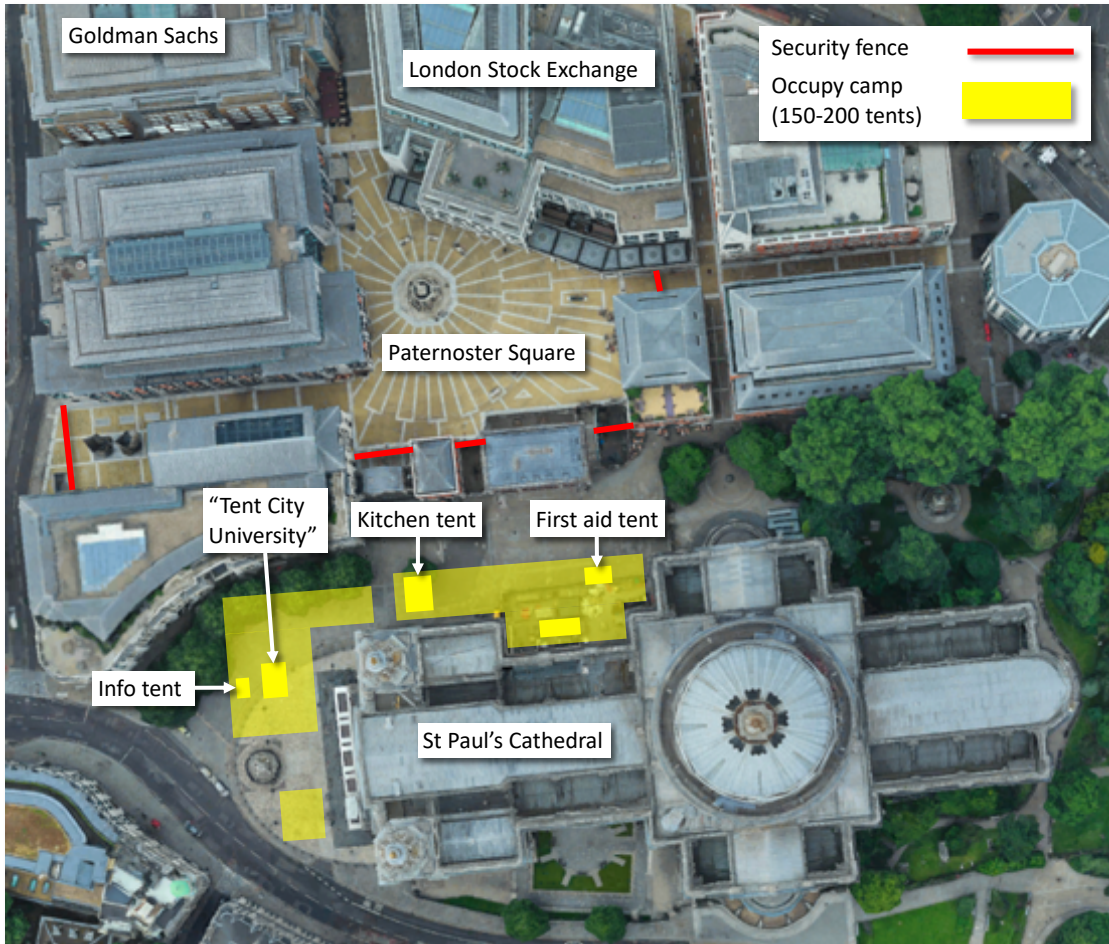


Figure 4: Process model of collective action frame emergence and escalation



Picture 1: Spatial configuration of the Occupy London camp (Map data: Google Earth, with own drawings)



Picture 2: From “Capitalism is crisis” to “What would Jesus do?”



Picture 3: Cartoon depicting St Paul's cathedral staff in front of Occupy tents (Copyright © Steve Bell 2011-All Rights reserved – link to the following URL: <http://www.belltoons.co.uk/reuse>)



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