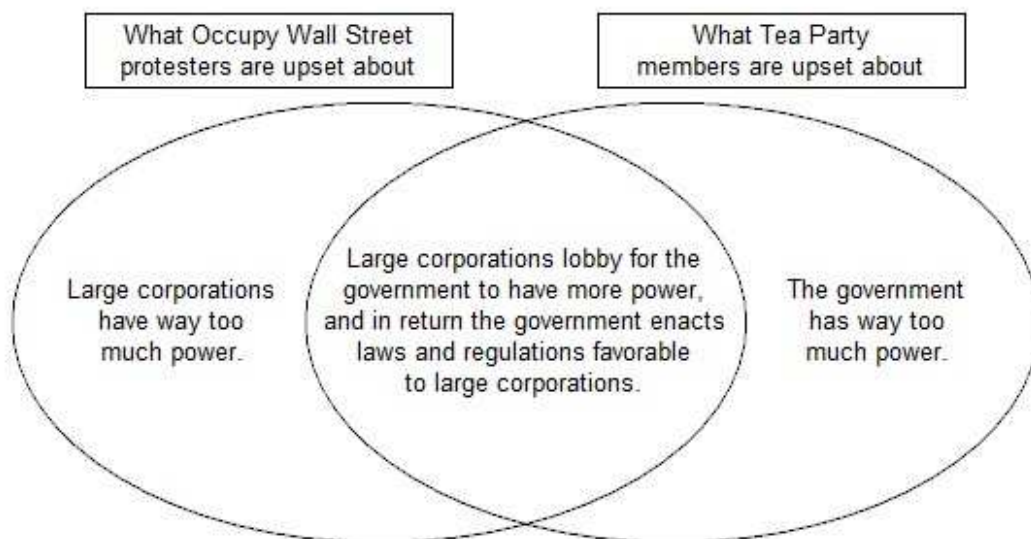


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How Much Does the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street Really Have in Common?

This here's a blog for families with wingnuts. Every family has them, but [My Crazy Right Wing Brother](#) is special. AM Radio and Fox News took his brother and molded a perfect zealot. Through careful dialogue, the sane one works to coax him back to reason and moderation. It's a totally pointless exercise.

Earlier this month, the Cato Institute posted [this Venn diagram](#) to illustrate the overlapping frustrations of the [Tea Party](#) and [Occupy Wall Street](#):



I sent it to my brother, who initially called it an “interesting analysis.” Upon further reflection, which in this case meant listening to [this clip of Al Sharpton](#) on Glenn Beck’s website, The Blaze, he came around to a less nuanced position. This, from one of his emails:

The real story behind the occupy wall street is a grander movement of a Marxist-like revolution which Glenn Beck correctly identified on O’Reilly last night. Sharpton and your scum-in-chief Obama can’t help themselves but to show their real colors: Communists who want to spread the wealth and foment more class warfare which is exactly the sentiment of the mob on Wall Street and actually has nothing in common with the Tea Party.

Cato’s diagram is devastatingly succinct. But my brother has a point: these two movements are ideologically and politically opposed. And while the fruitier windbags of Occupy Wall Street and the loonier Bible-thumpers in the Tea Party might share the same desperate rage, they are not of the same cloth. The pierced and tatted Millenials I drove by in Zuccotti Park last month are not the paunchy, Stars & Stripes-vomiting Baby

Boomers I saw at a San Antonio Tea Party in 2009. The Occupy Crowd is, for starters, a bit more ragged.

Or as my brother put it:

These people are also behaving like bums, are anti-Semitic, leftist-minded, and are defying authority. There are no Tea Party rallies that resemble these bums in any way. If you believe the lies the media is making by comparing them then I have nothing to say but they are wrong.

My brother sees warring tribal factions. Understandably. The dissonances between the Tea Party and #OWS are shaped by the context of easily caricatured sub-cultures: Red vs. blue, rural vs. urban, Toby Keith vs. Keith Olberman, diabetes vs. gonorrhea. Such a wide cultural gap makes the other side's motivations either invisible or incomprehensibly evil. This endless culture war keeps my brother at a boil, and the airwaves humming.

But put aside for a moment whatever it is you like or loathe in either camp, and some commonality in their discontents is also clear. They are angry about more or less the same thing: government and/or corporations wield too much power. (The true disease, we know, lurks in the interactions between government and corporations.) Aspects of both complaints are valid, and despite their differing tools of expression, both movements can rightly claim a deep concern for their country.

Maybe instead of the crude cartoon versions we are force-fed, the media could respect us (and the protestors) enough to show us the commonality between them, and by extension, the larger body politic. Tell us how we are alike, for once, instead of how we hate each other.

(This novel concept was last exploited by one Barack Hussein Obama, circa summer, 2008. In the media, Reason magazine has been doing the best job of this lately.)

Ah, but Identifying some common ground could lead to actual political problem solving. And as we are all slowly learning, solving problems is no longer the political imperative in this country. For the greater Politicotainment Complex, the real money is in division.

Illustrated, ever so colorfully, by my very angry, very patriotic older brother:

My sympathies are not with the protesters. I have read and heard it is true that the Oakland protesters were the ones out of line and there wasn't any police brutality. These law defying, leftist scum deserved whatever beatings and arrests they got.

To be continued next week...

You can read this blog post and many more like it over at [My Crazy Right Wing Brother](#). This specific post can be found [here](#). For more of his brother's and uncle's insights, follow [@RightWingBro](#) on Twitter.