

# 3Qs: Did Occupy Wall Street change Wall Street?

September 27 2012

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Occupy Wall Street marked its one-year anniversary on Sept. 17. Protestors have packed up their tents and vacated sites such as New York's Zuccotti Park and Boston's Dewey Square, but we asked Jeffrey Born, a professor of finance in the D'Amore-McKim School of Business, to assess the movement's success.

## **What impact did Occupy Wall Street have on the financial sector?**

I can't point to any specific changes that are a direct result of the Occupy [Wall Street](#) movement, but I think it's clear that the movement was very successful in influencing political discourse in this country. Depending upon the results of elections this fall, it is quite possible that there will be more and new regulations on the financial sector. In addition, tax policies are playing an important role in this election cycle, and it seems clear that there will be calls to change the tax code in their aftermath.

## **Did the movement accurately depict Wall Street or were the protests more rooted in perception than reality?**

The OWS movement helped people understand the reality of income and wealth distribution in this country, and how those distributions have changed over the past 20-plus years. I think that this data helps to create a more informed electorate and I am very much in favor of that outcome.

Unfortunately, most people have little or no understanding of capital markets—how they work, and how they contribute to our society and standard of living. I think it's fair to say the goals of OWS did not include the improvement of our society's financial literacy, so I think that we will need finance professors for a while longer.

## **Is Wall Street—and, more broadly, the global financial sector—in a more secure position now than it was at the height of the recession? What more needs to be done in order to improve the stability of the**

## **economic sector?**

Since the nadir in 2009, the passage of time has given domestic financial institutions an opportunity to restore profitability and significantly improve their financial condition. Domestic real-estate prices are stabilizing and rebounding, reducing the stress on U.S. banks and other institutions that hold mortgage-backed securities. Unfortunately, the financial situation in Europe is not showing a similar improvement. In short, the global financial sector is still fragile but less dangerous than it was two or three years ago.

Provided by Northeastern University

Citation: 3Qs: Did Occupy Wall Street change Wall Street? (2012, September 27) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-3qs-occupy-wall-street.html>

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