



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on May 8, 2012

The “Occupy” Movement & the Moral Infrastructure

The “Occupy” movement, which the Obama administration and much of the media have embraced, has implications that reach far beyond the passing sensation it has created.

The unwillingness of authorities to put a stop to their organized disruptions of other people’s lives, their trespassing, vandalism and violence is a de facto suspension, if not repeal, of the 14th Amendment’s requirement that the government provide “equal protection of the laws” to all its citizens.



How did the “Occupy” movement acquire such immunity from the laws that the rest of us are expected to obey? Simply by shouting politically correct slogans and calling themselves representatives of the 99 percent against the 1 percent.

But just when did the 99 percent elect them as their representatives? If in fact 99 percent of the people in the country were like these “Occupy” mobs, we would not have a country. We would have anarchy.

Democracy does not mean mob rule. It means majority rule. If the “Occupy” movement, or any other mob, actually represents a majority, then they already have the votes to accomplish legally whatever they are trying to accomplish by illegal means.

Mob rule means imposing what the mob wants, regardless of what the majority of voters want. It is the antithesis of democracy.

In San Francisco, when the mob smashed the plate-glass window of a small business shop, the owner put up some plywood to replace the glass, and the mob wrote graffiti on his plywood. The consequences? None for the mob, but a citation for the shop owner for not removing the graffiti.

When trespassers blocking other people at the University of California, Davis refused to disperse, and locked their arms with one another to prevent the police from being able to physically remove them, the police finally resorted to pepper spray to break up this human logjam.

The result? The police have been strongly criticized for enforcing the law. Apparently pepper spray is unpleasant, and people who break the law are not supposed to have unpleasant things done to them. Which is to say, we need to take the “enforcement” out of “law enforcement.”

Everybody is not given these exemptions from paying the consequences of their own illegal acts. Only people who are currently in vogue with the elites of the left — the media, in politics and in academia.

The 14th Amendment? What is the Constitution or the laws when it comes to ideological soul mates, especially young soul mates who remind the aging 1960s radicals of their youth?

Neither in this nor any other issue can the Constitution protect us if we don’t protect the Constitution. When all is said and done, the Constitution is a document, a piece of paper.

If we don’t vote out of office, or impeach, those who violate the Constitution, or who refuse to enforce the law, the steady erosion of Constitutional protections will ultimately render it meaningless.



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Everything will just become a question of whose ox is gored and what is the political expediency of the moment.

There has been much concern, rightly expressed, about the rusting of bridges around the country, and the crumbling and corrosion of other parts of the physical infrastructure. But the crumbling of the moral infrastructure is no less deadly.

The police cannot maintain law and order, even if the political authorities do not tie their hands in advance or undermine them with second-guessing after the fact.

The police are the last line of defense against barbarism, but they are equipped only to handle that minority who are not stopped by the first lines of defense, beginning with the moral principles taught at home and upheld by families, schools, and communities.

But if everyone takes the path of least resistance — if politicians pander to particular constituencies and judges give only wrist slaps to particular groups or mobs who are currently in vogue, and educators indoctrinate their students with “non-judgmental” attitudes — then the moral infrastructure corrodes and crumbles.

The moral infrastructure is one of the intangibles, without which the tangibles don’t work. Like the physical infrastructure, its neglect in the short run invites disaster in the long run.

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