Global Crisis, Global Revolt: Populists vs. Banksters in Egypt, Eurozone, USA, and beyond
Political Economy of Food Riots

FILMS:

1-2. Raj Patel on Food Inequality

“Stuffed & Starved” (book trailer)
Online: [http://bit.ly/1gLtuP8](http://bit.ly/1gLtuP8)

“The Economic History of Global Food Markets”

3. Food & Finance

“Punk Economics #7: The Global Food Economy”
(written & narrated by David McWilliams)
Online: [http://bit.ly/1hkps0i](http://bit.ly/1hkps0i)
Inequality in Global Food Markets:
poverty & malnutrition at both ends of the cheap food regime
Food Price Riots: A Perfect Storm

- NOT a shortage of food supply as much as a problem of effective demand (ability to pay for food)
  - Spike in price of oil after 2008 → raised cost of production
  - Climate Change did cause major droughts, lower yields
  - Fallout of financial crisis: high youth unemployment, rising anger

FILMS:

“World Food in Crisis”
(National Geographic, 2008)

“The Casualties of Egypt’s Food Crisis”
(Al Jazeera English, 2008)
The Pre-Revolutionary Spark: global food price crisis & food riots (2007-8, 2010-11)
Global Revolts: Timeline

FILM:

“Global Uprisings”

Independent (2013) | 15 min.
produced by Brandon Jourdan & Marianne Maeckelbergh

Watch entire film online: http://bit.ly/1SVM1t7
Global Uprisings conference website: http://www.globaluprisings.org
The Double Movement Revisited

- **Karl Polanyi - The Great Transformation**
  - Prediction re outcome of neoliberalism?
  - Comes out of move to disembed markets from society
  - His understanding of political economy - 2 premises:
    - The ‘Free’ Market doesn’t magically resolve itself; *tends toward crisis*
    - Until recently, was always *embedded* in social/cultural norms & practices; attempt at full market autonomy is “impossible utopia”
      - Autonomy = *subordination* of society to market; thus ‘market society’
  - Commodification of one or more ‘Fictitious Commodities’
    - **LAND** *(environment)*
    - **LABOR** *(jobs & social welfare )*
    - **MONEY** *(financialization & bubbles?)*
  - **Double Movement** - a reaction that comes *out of* experiencing adverse affects of commodification of land, labor, or money
    - Attempt to re-embed markets within society
    - Not always more ‘progressive’ or ‘humane’ - can also be reactionary, violent; depends on its *articulation* with a society’s ‘common sense’
Common Sense, Revisited

- How discourses work *(Hall/O’Shea reading)*
  - Social theory - from Gramsci
  - ‘Popular philosophy’ - a form of everyday thinking that offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world
    - Customary beliefs, norms, values, common sayings
    - Fragmentary and ‘incoherent’ - does not form a complete philosophy, but bits and pieces of ‘wisdom’
  - Fundamentally contradictory
    - ‘Several conflicting stories stitched together - while failing to resolve the differences between them’
    - Vulnerable to political manipulation
      - “By asserting that popular opinion already agrees, produces agreement as an effect”
    - Has an internal logic, but also a history
  - Tends toward tradition (conservative), but also contains critical/utopian elements
    - ‘Healthy nucleus’ of a new discourse *(Gramsci)*
    - In periods of rupture - can change quickly
    - Is necessarily a site of political struggle
2011-NOW: GLOBAL REVOLTS*

- Jan 2011-2013: Arab Spring (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait)
- Feb 2011: Wisconsin Capitol occupation (USA) / Jasmine Revolution, village revolts (China)
- Mar 2011: Indignados-15M-Movement of the Squares (Greece, Spain, Portugal, UK, Italy, Ireland)
- May-July 2011: Chilean student movement / Telangana protests (India) / Israeli anti-austerity protests
- Aug 2011: London riots (UK) / Red Wednesday (Malawi)
- Sep-Oct 2011: Occupy Wall Street / Occupy Everywhere (USA, worldwide)
- Nov-Dec 2011: Oakland General Strike / Occupy Cal (UC Berkeley) / West Coast Port Shutdowns (USA) / UK General Strike
- Dec 2011-2013: Anti-Putin protests (Russia)
- Jan 2012: Anti-Austerity protests (Romania) / Asturian miners’ strike (Spain) / Idle No More & Keystone XL movement (USA,Canada)
- Jan-Apr 2012: Arab Winter (Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, Turkey, Afghanistan, Palestine, Morocco)
- Feb-Mar 2012: Maple Spring student movement (Canada) / Yo Soy 132 student movement (Mexico)
- May 2012: May Day (Worldwide) – End of Occupy cycle
- Sep 2012: Marikana Massacre (South Africa) / Cacerolazo protests (Argentina)
- Jan-Mar 2013: ‘Winter of Discontent’ (Bulgaria, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland) / Shahbag riots (Bangladesh)
- May-Aug 2013: Gezi Park protests (Turkey) / Anti-coup protests (Egypt)
- June 2013: Free Fare movement & Anti-World Cup protests (Brazil)
- Nov 2013: Red Shirt protests (Thailand) / Euromaidan (Ukraine)
- Dec 2013-Mar 2014: Blockupy Frankfurt, Hamburg protests (Germany) / Freedom Park protests (Cambodia)
- Mar 2014: March for Peace (Russia)
- Jul-Aug 2014: Silent Intifada (Palestine)
- Sep-Dec 2014: Umbrella Revolution (Hong Kong) / Burkinabé uprising (Burkina Faso)
- Oct 2014: Kurdish riots (Turkey)
- Nov 2014: Global Student Day of Action (worldwide) / Black Lives Matter protests (USA - Ferguson, Oakland, LA, NY, etc)
- Dec 2014-Jan 2015: Anti-government protests (Moldova, Kosovo, Congo, Venezuela)
- Jan 2015: Syriza elected (Greece) / Ayotzinapa 43 protests (Mexico)
- Apr 2015: Baltimore Uprising (USA)
- Jun 2015: Armenian Uprising

*only a partial list!
20 Reasons It’s Kicking Off Everywhere

1. New Sociological Type: graduate w/ no future
2. Access to social media
3. Propaganda is flammable
4. Not prone to traditional ideologies
5. Women central to movements
6. Horizontalism (due to tech)
7. Memes
8. Ad-hock network of activists
9. Specifics of economic failure: access to higher education
10. Evaporation of a promise: developed vs. emerging mkts
11. Angry & Educated population
12. Weakness of organized labor
13. Loss of fear among youth
14. Variety of options for action
15. More informed population
16. No effective ‘bogeyman’ to diffuse dissent
17. Underground social network on and off internet
18. Better understanding of power
19. Less economically radical defensive of social programs
20. Technology has expanded the space & power of individuals
**Formal political expressions**

- Precursor: Latin American ‘pink tide’ (2000s)
  - Against US-led neoliberalism, but not revolutionary
- Social programs (*In reader: Ferguson*)
  - Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)
  - Retention of state-owned enterprises
- Brazil: *externally neoliberal, internally socialist*
  - Pursued ‘cheap & easy’ social programs
  - Recession of 2013: Austerity → World Cup protests

- Populist Parties / Politics (2014-present)
  - Left-wing parties/movements
    - SYRIZA (Greece)
    - Podemos (Spain)
    - Die Linke (Germany)
    - Bernie Sanders campaign (USA)
  - Right-wing parties/movements
    - Golden Dawn (Greece)
    - PEGIDA (Germany)
    - UKIP (England)
    - 5-Star Movement (Italy)
What kinds of policies/discourses work better for your society?  

Which side will you be on?