

Geography N20

week 5 - 8/6/15

Global Crisis, Global Revolt:
Populists vs. Banksters in Egypt, Eurozone, USA, and beyond

*Summer Sessions 2015
UC Berkeley - Dept. of Geography
Lecturer: Meleiza Figueroa*

Political Economy of Food Riots

FILMS:

1-2. Raj Patel on Food Inequality

“Stuffed & Starved” (*book trailer*)

Online: <http://bit.ly/1gLtuP8>

“The Economic History of
Global Food Markets”

Online: <http://bit.ly/1Mc6xBD>

3. Food & Finance

“Punk Economics #7:
The Global Food Economy”

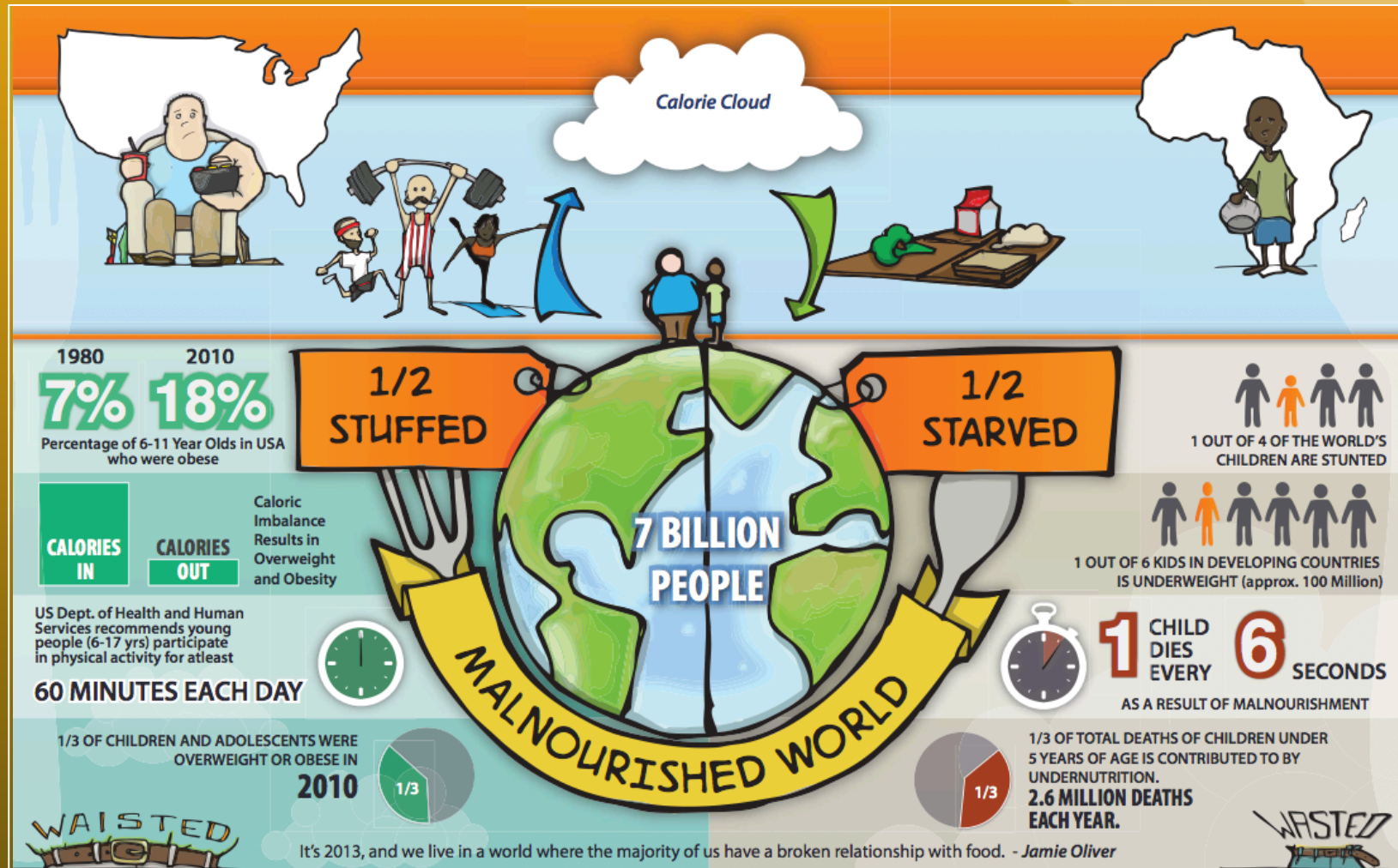
(*written & narrated by David McWilliams*)

Online: <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
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FILMS:

“World Food in Crisis”

(National Geographic, 2008)

Online: <http://bit.ly/1JNhBU4>

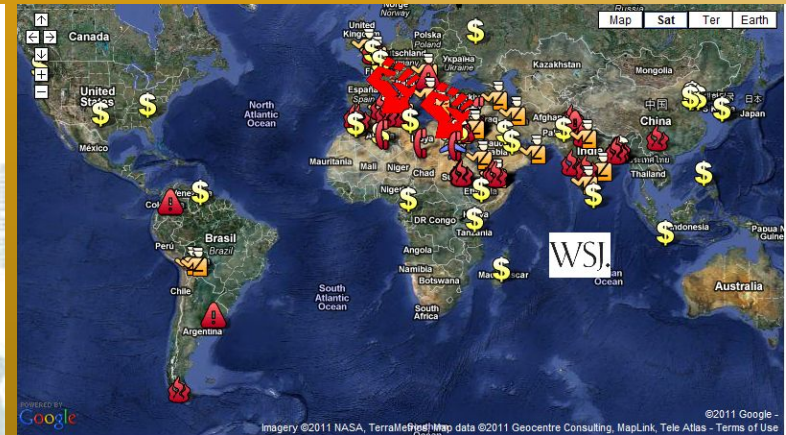
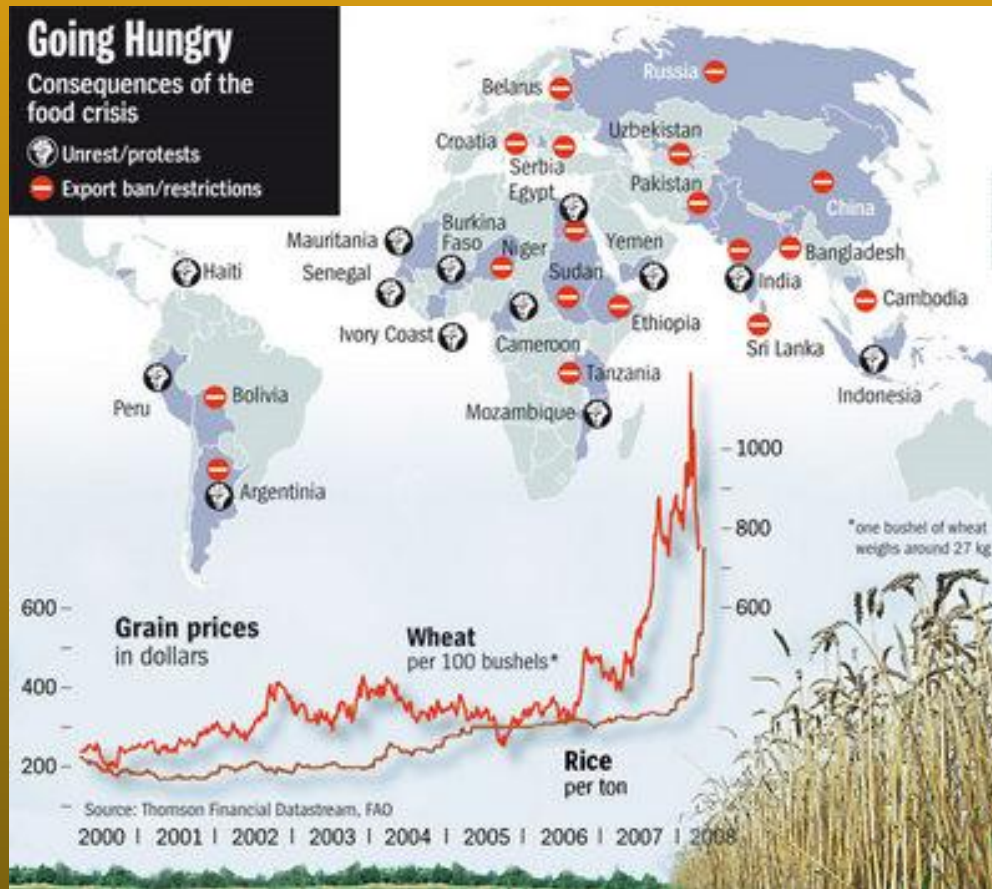
“The Casualties of Egypt’s Food Crisis”

(Al Jazeera English, 2008)

Online: <http://bit.ly/1SRvNRC>

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>

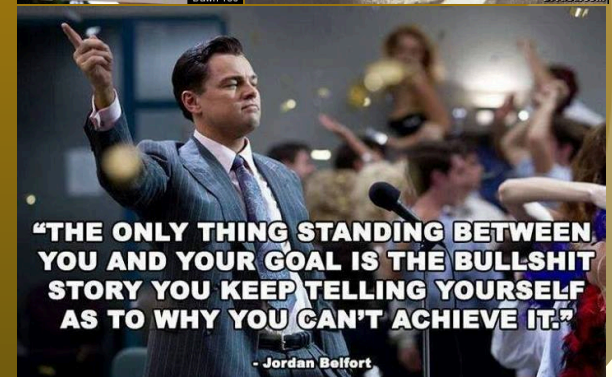
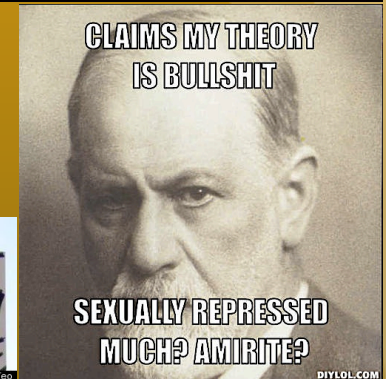
The Double Movement Revisited

- **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*

- *Antecedents: 2008 Greek riots / 2009 Anti-austerity protests (Europe) / 2009-2010 student occupations (UC campuses) / 2010 Oscar Grant riots (Oakland, USA) / 2010 food riots (Africa, Latin America) / 2009-2010 Oaxaca teachers' strike (Mexico)*
- 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?

