Research Proposal for Confirmation of Candidature

Divergent models of globalisation: New Feudalism and New Democracy
What are the consequences of global populist social movements agitating for system change?

1.0) Introduction

1.1) The Rise of GPSMs

‘All freedom movements are guided by utopian aspirations.’

- Ernst Bloch (1986)

‘The idea of the future being different from the present is so repugnant to our conventional modes of thought and behaviour that we, most of us, offer a great resistance to acting on it in practice.’

- John Maynard Keynes, 1937

The year 2011 was a particularly intense period of global political rupture. The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 and the austerity response to it of nation states in both the Global North and South offered what proved to be explosive tinder to existing fires of discontent from Tahir Square to Puerta del Sol to Zuccotti Park. The air was thick with possibility when, unpredicted by scholarship or media commentary, millions of people extemporaneously rose up against the most powerful, central actors of formal politics globally, which had been expected to go on behaving as they had indefinitely. In Occupy Wall Street’s (OWS) case, it turned out that socialising the losses of the financial industry in order to impose austerity on the rest was overreach on the part of the regime. Building on cycles of popular struggle by the Global Justice Movement (GJM) in the 1990s-early 2000s, the cries of the “99%” injected critical discourses of class, Global North-South solidarity and the potential for popular resistance to neoliberalism into the public consciousness in mere weeks - amplified across the “1%’s” own airwaves, no less (Hayduk 2013). Chatterji (2013) described how “citizens across a set of countries rapidly learnt from each other, putting forth a new political arrangement, sharing a new understanding of how power should be organized and how wealth should be used for the good of the public.” Such revolutionary moments are intensely politcising experiences for those involved. Participants learn through doing, and carry those lessons into the next prefigurative experiment, potentially along with a wider contingent.

As the police were called in and began to evict the protesters from city squares around the world, and then Occupiers collectively failed to turn an exciting historic moment into a global, institutionalised counter-hegemonic bloc capable of advancing their goals over the long term, it became clear that austerity wasn’t going away. It wasn’t in fact an ‘emergency measure’ as
promised, imposed to get the budget back in order in the heat of a crisis that threatened the structure of global capitalism itself, but a permanent one. The Keynesian Welfare State was dead, deemed ‘financially unsustainable’ in an era of an ageing population, declining rates of growth and falling tax revenues. Individuals had to be ‘responsible’ for their own pensions, healthcare, education and unemployment insurance. Guided by the undemocratic institutions of global financial regulation such as the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, the neoliberalism of Margaret Thatcher’s day had reached its next horrific phase of development, enforced through militarised police forces and surveillance states, which I suggest has yet to be adequately described.

Looking back in hindsight, was the widely touted ‘failure’ of the OWS movement, and the degeneration of the Arab Spring revolutions into Stalinism an indication that ‘the regime’ is unassailable – a kind of unshakeable natural order that will always reassert itself as though it were the tides of the ocean, no matter the scale of resistance to its will? If social movements don’t result in system change or historic legislation like the Civil Rights Act, why do their members bother asserting their agency? Furthermore, as relates to subsequent movements who have learned from Occupy, what have their consequences been for their targeted institutions, cultures and political systems?

### 1.2) Central Research Questions and How I Chose this Problem

Three case studies are the subject of this research proposal: the Climate Justice Movement (CJM), Indignados and Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM). I refer to these as Global Populist Social Movements (GPSMs) and explore:

- How we can best describe and evaluate their significance,
- What kinds of political strategies and tactics they employ and
- How well such strategies have worked in each of these three cases.

Just as Marx viewed the working class as the agent of change against capitalism, I view each of these GPSMs as the agent of change against their respective global crisis (climate change, austerity and police militarisation). Given the scale of these global crises, successful GPSMs will have to organise and mobilise on a scale to match and are therefore historically significant. Needless to say, the path to victory is littered with failed social movements. The resources arrayed against them (financial, mass media, legislative, law enforcement and so on) are hegemonic. So although the solutions may seem obvious in each struggle for justice, resistance to change is overbearing on the part of the regime and the outcomes highly uncertain. As Giugni (2007) pointed out in his study applied to older social movements, most of them don’t have a measurable impact, at least not using the standard conservative means of measuring it. Their ‘success’ can depend on a range of external factors beyond their control such as favourable public opinion, long term mass media coverage and support from elite donors.

I became interested in this topic as an undergraduate student of political subjects, seeing many of my peers not get jobs in the field they trained for despite being diligent and dedicated people, seeing the effect on my friends and family of the ongoing transfer of industry from the Global North to the Global South and the low-paid long-hours service sector jobs that replaced the union ones with good conditions, and worsening environmental crises; my time in China when air pollution
escalated made this particularly vivid. At the same time as these sociological trends were happening, my outlook towards electoral politics became cynical as I saw well-meaning, hard-working people vote for progressive change, earnestly believing that the ‘lesser of two evils’ would tend to their interests in exchange for campaigning support. Through experiencing this familiar cycle of broken promises, those good people ended up feeling jaded at this democratic deficit; “they’re all the same, what’s the point in voting?” They turned inward and became politically apathetic. The social movement mobilisations of 2011 struck me a desire to find out more about alternative methods to electoral politics such as direct action. Eventually this cohered into a project about globalisation and social movements. But so much had already been written about the earlier stages of movement formation and mobilisation. As a result I decided to focus on that stage which social movement scholars had left most untouched; movement aftermath and consequence.

This area is one of the least researched in social movement studies because of the difficulty of assigning a direct causation: “movement mobilisation X led to policy outcome Y”. Social movement impacts also transverse national boundaries further complicating the matter. Often movement impact can seem quite nebulous; indirect and only fully realised over the long term. For example environmental regulations have only taken off within in the recent decade or two, despite the environmental movement itself being active since the 1970s or so. Perhaps the GPSMs will see their consequences realised over a shorter timeframe owing to technological advances (especially the accountability imposed on authorities by the populism of social media). These are some of the concerns that the methodology sections (3.1-5) of this proposal seeks to grapple with.

At a broader level, this inquiry offers a more inclusive understanding of what constitutes political ‘success’, ‘efficacy’ or ‘consequence’ than previous scholarship which defined the ‘impact’ of social movements along narrower, positivist lines of empirically verifiable direct impact (legislation enacted to reflect demands in the targeted political system). It is hoped that debate can be stimulated in a number of ways in this area. Drawing on Gramsci; as to the ways in which social movements matter in this age of globalisation, counter-hegemonic struggle and system transition. Secondly; the capacity of ordinary members of civil society to exercise their agency through consciously electing to participate in political activity (in many cases for the first time or after many years of political apathy and demobilisation), in contrast to the conventional understanding of politics as a sealed space for technocrats, diplomats, lobbyists and parliamentarians. This is to challenge the orthodoxy of what Yates (2014) called structural pessimism. Overarching the project is an ethnographic philosophy which seeks to capture the essence of what these subcultures are ultimately creating, how they seek to expand their influence and what aspects of those strategies have yielded results. To address these questions I propose to use a constructivist mixed-methods approach comprised of:

- in-depth interviews with 27 activists (9 from each movement; with a mixture of 3 intellectual leaders, 3 seasoned rank-and-file activists and 3 newly politicised participants),
- a critical discourse analysis of their reframing of debates to be analysed through interview transcripts and
- participant observations at the site of significant upcoming GPSM mobilisations.

1.3) Networked ‘Rhizomatic’ Social Movements
Central to this proposal’s theoretical orientation is an emphasis on civil society and an intention to leave the traditional focus of the state and inter-governmental organisations to other research (of which plenty exists and will continue to be produced). Naturally, these movements did not emerge in a cultural-political vacuum, so it is important to ask ‘where did the GPSMs come from?’ and ‘what material conditions provoked their mobilisation?’ By the 1990s internationalist components of the New Social Movements (NSMs) of the 1960s-70s (feminist, anti-war, ecology, student and anti-racist) had ideologically and organizationally cross-pollinated to such an extent that they were converging into multi-issue mass movements built along global networks. This was facilitated by new communications support systems such as the internet which enabled these movements to immediately collaborate and organise with common interests both within their local political systems and across the globe. Facebook and Twitter in recent years have proven to be such critical tools in mobilizing activists that some governments have simply resorted to a blunt censorship strategy of shutting them down for a period in order to quell internet-powered mini-rebellions. However, “information longs to be free” (Hughes 1993), and activists have been highly resilient and to some extent outsmarted new tools of dissent repression, through virtual private networks and encryption services for example.

From the early 2000s the World Social Forum (WSF) network allowed such seemingly disconnected movements to collaborate and strategize on areas of agreement. Paths toward the institutionalisation of social movements with an emphasis on NGOs have even been raised at WSF meetings. However this is controversial with social movements from the Global South who view NGOs as prone to elite-donor manipulation and Western co-optation of the WSF process, which aspires to the praxis of direct-participatory democracy at all levels; an ambition that we will explore in the literature review section. Juris (2009) suggested that an “anarchist cultural logic of networking” helps account for these social movements’ recognition of the benefits of cooperation. This is comprised of “antipathy to hierarchies of State and Capital, opposition to intersectional oppression, belief in consensus process and direct, participatory or deliberative democracy”. Feixa (2009) suggested that these new networked political actors should be understood in the context of broader social changes; the globalisation of the economy and politics gives rise to the globalisation of social movements; the emergence of a new social morphology – the network – leads to networked social movements. Castells (2012) shows how in the Internet Age, the rhizome or network has displaced the hierarchy as the central unit of organisation in advanced industrial societies.

Whilst their ancestor-NSMs of the 1960s rebellions were identity-based cultural movements, GPSMs combine cultural, symbolic, material and social demands (Milani 2007 refers to them as “New New Social Movements”). World politics is no longer solely the domain of nation states in this paradigm, but increasingly influenced by empowered popular forces. Wider sociological trends such as the growth in social media are creating pressure for the general population to not merely serve as passive spectators and consumers as in the old framework of representative democracy but as actively engaged participants with the capacity to contribute toward policy changes.

Evans (2009) posed the question “is an alternative globalization possible?” and argued for the possibility of “counter-hegemonic globalization”. He describes how in the conventional wisdom structural pessimists view “generic globalization” (the shrinking of geographic space and the
increased permeability of physical and political boundaries that have followed from the twentieth century’s revolutionary transformation of transportation, information, communication, and other technologies and the neoliberal corporate model as interchangeable. However, generic globalization need not be tied to it, and can be seen as a repertoire of tools and resources potentially available to a range of other political projects, including progressive ones. This proposal’s conception of counter-hegemony is expanded on in section 2.4.

1.4) Defining the ‘political’: Why emphasise GPSMs as actors in an emergent Global Civil Society?
Three particular movements – the Climate Justice Movement (CJM), Black Lives Matter (BLMM) and Indignados - were selected to formulate a conceptualisation of global politics which privilege the popular reaction to three global crises of climate change, austerity and police militarisation in an era of democratic deficit and system transition, seeing them as the agents of change in an emergent and informal global political theatre of contention. Thus I define the political as both broader and more inclusive than merely what happens behind the closed doors of multilateral trade summits and parliament buildings solely between agents of the state. As the feminists said; the personal is political. As is the workplace, the strike picket line, the way strangers interact in urban space such as university campuses; as consumers of commodities versus citizens accessing the commons (Harvey 2012), products versus human rights, and so forth. The political is everywhere. This contrasts with standard objectivist political science and international relations studies which privilege state-directed political activity, tending to ignore the influence of civil society, and in particular social movements. While organisationally separate, these GPSMs are simultaneously connected within the older and broader alter-globalisation movement which famously shut down the WTO meetings in Seattle 1999 and went on to contribute to the founding of the World Social Forum (WSF) (Hayduk 2013).

In seeking to understand the significance of the outlined GPSMs, this project has sought out sources which may seem somewhat out of place among the scholarship of social movements, but which speak quite directly to broader issues of an emergent global civil society and its role in addressing the outlined crises. One such source is a report by the National Intelligence Council. In it Kojm (2012) describes a “non-state world” scenario of a hyper-globalised order of the year 2030. Social cohesion and the distribution of political power is boosted by the relative decline of the nation state and relative rise of non-state actors; NGOs, social movements and subnational units such as megacities. Global public opinion consensus emerges on a range of issues: poverty, the environment, anti-corruption and peace. Countries do not disappear but increasingly see their role as organising and orchestrating “hybrid” coalitions of state and non-state actors which shift according to the particular challenge. Large and authoritarian regimes, preoccupied with asserting primacy and control of central government – find it hardest to operate in this world while smaller and more agile actors adapt better. This scenario reflects key aspects of how I conceive of global civil society’s emergence.

As Castells (2012) points out, such movements are characterised by their rapid mobilisation and sometimes dispersal, use of diverse and innovative practices, simultaneous use of digital and urban space to emphasise their politics of prefiguring an alternative model rather than making demands on the State as movements conventionally did throughout history. Their popular struggle is a counter-hegemonic one against what I term New Feudalism; the dominant model of globalisation typically
described as Neoliberalism. That is; an economic framework conventionally portrayed as being divorced from political contexts, but with some important distinctions to take account of adaptations in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 such as austerity, the democratic deficit seen in the decay of parliamentary democracies (see Rosenthal 2014), police militarisation and exponentially increasing inequality both between individual nations and within them. The efforts of these movements can be viewed as part of a coherent rise of global civil society actors. Through informal theatres of political contention they are in many ways displacing functions previously monopolised by State-directed actors.

In terms of this proposal’s overall theoretical framework, I adopt a Neo-Marxist perspective, and seek to address the problem posed by Hetland and Goodwin (2013) that reference to capitalism and a political economy framework has mysteriously disappeared from social movement studies over the neoliberal period (the 1970s onwards). They suggest that capitalism should concern social movement scholarship for the following four reasons:

- Capitalist dynamics alternately inhibit or facilitate the formation of new collective identities and solidarities, including both class- and non-class identities. In this way, capitalism shapes the very conditions of existence of many social movements.
- The balance of class forces in a society powerfully shapes the way movements evolve over time and what they can win for their constituents.
- Class divisions generated by capitalism may unevenly penetrate and fracture movements. The balance of class forces within movements – sometimes more and sometimes less organised and self-conscious – may powerfully shape movement goals and strategies.
- Finally, ideologies and cultural idioms closely linked to capitalist institutions and practices may also strongly influence movement strategies and goals.

The theoretical framework I propose builds on the work of Holloway (2010), Hardt & Negri (2000) and Yates (2014 and 2015) on prefigurative politics, Harvey (2012), Wodak (2004) and Fairclough (2006) on problematizing and politicizing concepts which under state-capitalism are treated as ‘neutral’ or ‘apolitical’, Gramsci (1935) and Evans (2009) on counter-hegemonic struggle, Klein (2014) and Picketty (2014) on the decay of parliamentary democracy and the outlined global crises to which these movements are reacting. In seeking to synthesise these critical theoretical perspectives into a relatively new way of conceptualising global politics, I suggest that old dichotomies of institutional reformism versus revolutionary radicalism are being ignored by such movements. In their lived and experimental praxis of direct democracy (although de facto temporary leaders naturally emerge), they extemporaneously adopt a diversity of radical and reformist tactics that are directed towards realising the central objective of global justice, although cadres of seasoned activists exist who can at times fall victim to what Rowe and Carroll (2014) described as “hyper-vigilant identity attachment” and thus hinder the potential for a ‘united front’ approach.

“…although they offer us concessions change will not come from above”.

- The Internationale, Eugene Pottier, 1871
In the never-ending debate of structure versus agency, I hope to revive discussion on the need for ordinary members of civil society to assert their agency. I suggest that for the GPSMs to succeed, ordinary members of civil society (what Hardt and Negri 2000 called ‘The Multitude’) who see themselves as neutral and passive spectators to the global crises I outline, must be politicised and drawn into collective struggle. However, overcoming structural pessimism and the neoliberal, individualist logic of ‘there is no alternative’ to planetary crisis is no small task. I argue building on Petras (2014) that social scientists (and all those with the privilege of a public platform) have a moral duty to resist the detached circular logic of rationalist objectivism which ultimately produces a chilling silence instead of lively critical debate. Those who wish to avoid the horrors portrayed in Turner’s (2014) scenario of societal collapse through resource depletion in around the year 2050 are obligated to actively build public understanding that structures (such as subsidies for fossil fuels) are not an eternal natural order we ‘just have to accept’ but are politically and socially constructed and can therefore be unmade by people through GPSM mobilisations. Only through organising effective mass-movement coalitions and asserting their counter-hegemonic interests in struggles over the long term can these crises be averted. Only then can a global, participatory-democratic regime replace the present situation of democratic deficit.

The degree to which the movements I refer can give rise to political change is not addressed in detail by existing scholarship due to the rapid rates at which networked informal political actors now change, innovate, grow and even dissipate (Castells 2012). It is important that empirical research be produced to interpret their successes and failures as they seek to build coalitions, transverse boundaries (legal, national, class, ethnic) and force society from its widely documented current trajectory toward ecocide and oligarchy (Klein 2014, Turner 2014 & Gilens 2014). Their efforts can be viewed as part of a widespread rise in the significance of civil society actors that through informal theatres of political contention are in many ways displacing the functions previously monopolised by State-oriented actors operating in formal theatres, in a new era of global political uncertainty and prefiguration. Forthcoming Spanish (2015) and US (2016) election campaigns outlined below as sites for participant observation will arguably serve as referenda on such crises, and they may be indicative of how popular rebellions evolve globally in the years ahead. The findings of this proposal thus will have significant bearing on scholars and practitioners in the fields of social movement studies, sociology, anthropology, political science and international relations.

2.0) Literature Review

2.1) Three GPSMs and the popular struggle against Three Global Crises

“If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer ‘leading’ but only ‘dominant’, exercising coercive force along, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

- Antonio Gramsci, (1935 pp. 275)
This proposal seeks to understand the consequences of three GPSMs against three current global crises (Indignados/Podemos; the austerity response to the GFC, CJM; climate change and BLMM; the democratic deficit represented by police militarisation and unaccountability, mass incarceration and the surveillance state). From their perspectives, the present moment in global politics can be characterised by a burning desire among the general population for systemic solutions to such systemic societal issues that are best addressed at a global level. Alperovitz et al (2015) catalogues these global problems and the increasingly obvious incapacity of existing institutional frameworks to address them. They propose that we break from the notion that “there is no alternative” to the false dichotomy of top-down capitalism and top-down socialism, and conduct a multiyear societal experiment in system change involving direct democracy, localism, worker-owned cooperatives, community ownership, participatory economics and “beyond growth” ecological approaches. Thousands of leading academics, activists, cooperatives, think tanks and allied politicos worldwide with concern for the failure to address these global crises have signed the Next System Project statement, pledging to diffuse and spread the practise of these ideas in their diverse fields in order to prefigure more democratic and ecologically sustainable futures for their communities. Supporting Picketty’s (2014) thesis of late capitalism reaching its limits, Hardoon (2015) shows that based on current trends the wealthiest 1% of the population globally will own more than the bottom 99% by 2016. Mohammed’s (2015) analysis highlights that since the Occupation of Wall Street in September 2011, the global inequality crisis has transitioned from a radical issue to a mainstream one, being taken seriously by formal state-directed actors such as the World Economic Forum. Perhaps characteristics particular to the US’s formal political system make it predisposed to the frustrations of oligarchy (Gilens 2014) wherein popular opinion, usually contrary to elite opinion, is ignored in terms of policymaking. Frustrations that arise from public apathy and disengagement with electoral politics appear to strengthen the US oligarchy where elite opinion, often diametrically opposed to popular opinion, sets policy. Rosenthal (2014) notably reflects this repulsion toward electoral politics: among the three largest states of New York, Texas and California, less than one third of eligible voters turned up to vote in November 2014’s midterm elections.

**Existing research on the Black Lives Matter Movement**

As regards police militarisation, very little has been written about BLMM, due to the movement being so new. This is one empirical field where this project has the potential to have a significant impact simply because it will be among the first major written works to explore the consequences of BLMM. Over the last year since the killing of unarmed eighteen year old Michael Brown in Ferguson Missouri by a police officer, BLMM has mobilised and inspired rebellions against intersectional oppression and violence across the world on a scale not seen since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Through the trends of police militarisation and selective rather than generalised repression enabled by the surveillance state, the ruling class has shown the lengths to which it will go to defend the New Feudalism which provokes these global crises (Robinson and Barrera 2012). It is worth emphasising that racism and anti-racist rebellions do not emerge in a cultural vacuum and significant reference will be made in the thesis chapter on BLMM to Hogsbjerg (2013) and to place the contemporary movement in the politico-historical context; to the successful slave rebellion of Haiti for instance discussed in ‘The Black Jacobins’ by CLR James, the national liberation struggles of the post-colonial era and the original Civil Rights Movement itself. Importantly, it should be emphasised that BLMM is not a parochial inward looking movement, but one that has diffused from its origins in a small town, then to an America-wide movement and now a global one. This shows how quickly
small acts of state violence and overreach during times of political instability can quickly escalate into much wider fields of contestation.

**Existing Research on the Climate Justice Movement**

Turner (2014) showed that based on current trends, resources which are critical to human survival are being consumed at a rate that will lead to depletion and societal collapse by around the year 2050. In their seminal book *Justice Globalism*, Steger et al (2013) state that “the Climate Justice Movement argue that, according to the primary tenants of globalist ideology, market globalization is a) inevitable, b) irreversible and c) all benefit from it. However, this elite cadre are the main cause of the crisis of injustice and environmental destruction wrought by capitalism. This can be seen in the fact that global emissions go down when global financial systems are in crisis.” Rootes (1999) demonstrated the difficulties in organising a global environmental movement given the absence of a central rallying agenda. Stilwell (2015) highlights that: “the UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009 is widely regarded as a turning point in the strength of the movement for an effective international agreement. Up to then the momentum had been strong. The Kyoto agreement of 1997 and the Rio + 20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development had their strong critics in the environmental movement, but nothing could quite compare with the shuddering halt in Copenhagen.” While Copenhagen’s immediate effect was the demobilization of the emergent and uncoordinated CJM, a central rallying agenda finally arrived for the movement in late 2014 when ‘Divestment Day’ rallies were held in cities across the world, with 600,000 turning up in New York alone to send a message to the gathered heads of state at a UN summit to pressure institutions to divest from fossil fuel companies. In Paris in November 2015 the COP21 delegates will meet again for what has been widely described as the most climate significant summit yet.

As Burgmann (2012) has shown, regarding the development of a global CJM: “as action critique, utopianism’s imperative is confirmed in the history of social movements. Reforms are more likely to be achieved when a social movement challenges the system by demanding a much better, different future. There are lessons here for the climate movement. Critiquing capitalism and demanding a much better, safe climate economy is more likely to result in governments enacting emissions reduction measures within capitalist parameters, in order to legitimize capitalism.” Klein’s popular book of 2014 also highlighted the need to think in utopian terms of critiquing capitalism, but beyond old dichotomies of reform versus revolution (instead suggesting the ‘united front’ approach) and calling for popular mobilization on a scale to match the crisis. Rosewarne et al (2013) however provide perhaps the most relevant ethnography of the climate justice movement to this proposal. With an emphasis on developments in the Australian arm of the movement, they catalogue how climate justice evolved out of the global justice movement of the late 1990s-early 2000s. They analyse the movement’s central concern ‘to translate climate science into climate politics’, ‘bridge the metabolic rift created by capitalist order, between society and nature’ (pp. 151) and consider how pragmatism and radicalism are manifest in different parts of the movement. They consider the roles of threat, hope and reconnection as key elements in the language with which climate change is addressed, and the forms of direct action. Climate activists are variously inclined toward economism, communitarianism and statism, so the challenge is to reconcile those disparate positions in time to beat the highly organised forces of climate denialism which have until now so effectively blocked any major action on climate change (Stilwell 2015).
Existing research on Indignados

Indignados is perhaps the most widely studied of the three GPSM cases identified. Morell (2012) shows how suddenly theatres of contention in a national and regional context are changing with the advent of the anti-austerity movement in Spain. Populist movements are becoming mainstream in the wider EU particularly, showing the decay of legacy parties of the left and right in electoral politics, and the potential for ‘reformist revolutions’ in their wake. Fuster and Subirats (2012) showed that Indignados (referred to as 15M) changed the terms of opposition to the political and economic system, moving from single-issue movements (such as ecological or feminist) to a more meta-political frame of contestation. Of significance in this area, it is important to note the origins of the indignados movement in the ‘free culture movement’ described by Morell (2012). She notes ‘the Sinde Law on internet regulation of December 2010 generated widespread opposition with a “Manifesto of defence of fundamental rights” against the law generating more than 240,000 responses on Facebook in under 24 hours. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks shut down the connection points to all political parties who had voted for the law in the lower house of the Spanish parliament (Congress of Deputies), which was approved in February 2011. Activists responded with the “Do Not Vote for Them” campaign (in Spanish ‘Nolesvotes’), denouncing corruption of the political system and targeted to influence the municipal elections of May 2011. In short, the Sinde Law provoked a redirection of the free culture movement’s efforts away from merely cultural issues toward addressing political corruption systemically. After the May 15th occupations, other networks converged with this meta-politics frame.’ This highlights that even as the state exercises its power, information longs to be free, and civil society’s reaction repression can produce unexpected political formations that go on to challenge the hegemony of formal political actors.

A key gap in the literature on Indignados that my project will explore is its transition into the Podemos political party which is standing for National Spanish elections scheduled in late 2015. The morphing into a formal institution from its roots as an informal, rhizomatic social movement with principled opposition to ‘traditional politics’ and hierarchical organisation is proving to be a fascinating sociological experiment in terms of whether or not the state can actually be used for social-democratic or more ambitiously progressive ends in the material conditions of 2015. The popular commentary in the lead-up to the elections incessantly compares Spain to nearby Greece where an ambitious and anti-austerity left-wing government in Syriza has been brutalised by each round of humiliating national debt negotiations with the ‘Troika’ of the EU, IMF and ECB. It is suggested that should Podemos manage win the elections and form a government, its anti-austerity promises will prove difficult to implement, for the same reasons around the hostility and paranoia of the global New Feudalism regime they have proved so difficult in Greece.

2.2) What are some problems with the work others have done on GPSMs?

Social movement scholarship has substantially explored the origins of these ‘movements of the squares’ including but not limited to; Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring revolutions (which ultimately failed due to a mere ‘changing of the guard’ and the Yellow Umbrella pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. Social movement scholars have attempted to make sense of these rebellions through a variety of key concepts; democratic deficit and the view that parliamentary democracy and the very nation state itself had been through a period of decay, intergovernmental inertia, austerity, structural unemployment, through to ‘democratising’ technological advances such as expanding access to the internet and social media.
Few scholars have explored what the consequences, or to dare use the positivist term ‘impact’, have been of GPSMs in the aftermath of their peak. For example, do those that substantially adopt a ‘leaderless’ organisational structure ultimately have the greater consequence on cultures and political systems compared to more traditional hierarchical organisations? In other words should the revolutionary left adopt this ‘anarchist’ logic of networking and mobilisation as Juris (2009) argued? Or are Barker et al (2013) correct in suggesting that the idea of “changing the world without taking power” is effectively leaving space for a movement’s opponents to reorganise their forces and restructure their domination? That this anarchist sentiment seen in many social movements amounts to a ‘counsel of despair that fails to learn from past mistakes and anticipate the development of popular replacement power’? Perhaps the weaknesses of lacking a formal leadership structure such as the Civil Rights Movement had to give overt direction and purpose outweigh the benefits of puritanical emphasis on consensus processes, which some have accused undeclared central cadres in movements like OWS of using to silence dissent (Kang 2013)? But if that’s true, why does the rhizomatic/network form keep spontaneously reappearing time and again? And what to say for collaboration with the State? Do those that go down the path of institutionalisation such as the CJM have the greater success in bringing about desired social policy changes or do those that adopt a more confrontational, separatist and prefigurative approach such as BLMM end up achieving more, perhaps through increased recruitment and impact on cultures? Does institutionalisation necessarily demand co-optation by elites with an interest in manipulating the movement’s mobilisations to suit their own political agenda? These are some of the questions left open by the recent literature which this proposal will explore.

2.3) Theoretical gaps in the literature this research fills
This proposal is broadly situated in the theory of critical sociology, staking out strategic gaps in the literature, synthesising analysis on interconnected social phenomena; social movement impact theory, prefigurative politics, the spectrum of New Feudalism-New Democracy as a new understanding of hegemonic struggle and applying understandings of these to contemporary GPSMs that have yet to be significantly analysed by scholarship. I challenge the dominant paradigm of structural pessimism which portrays GPSMs and their informal political networks as ineffectual utopian anomalies, unable to materially better the lives of their members let alone offer anything worth fighting for to wider society. Scholarly debate is not as negatively predisposed toward GPSMs as the mass media or public discourse. But Aalbers (2013) shows the resilience of hegemonic discourse of New Feudalism (referred to as Neoliberalism therein) to, “like a creeping cancer show up in ways old and new”, long beyond anyone expected it to last given the scrutiny it has been under since the GFC of 2008. This Orwellian Thatcherte logic of “There Is No Alternative” even infects the minds of critical theorists, decaying their ability to see the ‘realm of possibility’ for GPSMs. This is particularly relevant in the lead-up to the 2015 Spanish and 2016 US elections where I plan to investigate the interface between formal and informal politics. Both arguably will be referenda on austerity and New Feudalism.

To illustrate how I seek to challenge structural pessimism, I expand on Edwin’s (1999) ‘collective goods criterion’ definition of movement consequence, which inclusively holds that any advancement in the general category of goods that the challengers demand as a success in contrast to Gamson’s (1975) narrower definition which exclusively measured only direct impacts on political systems.
Many movements might be increasing the wellbeing of their constituents or allies, but indirectly or in different forms to direct changes to formal political system. It is therefore timely that movement consequence be redefined (Giugni 1998). Perhaps Occupy Wall Street best illustrates this. They were ridiculed as ineffective and lacking in hierarchical organisation (Yen 2011). The Tea Party Movement, now debunked as embarrassingly astroturfed by dark money from the billionaire Koch brothers, was contrasted with them for getting libertarian Republican congressmen elected to implement their agenda. However allegedly insignificant Occupy’s direct impact has been on formal political systems, few could deny having heard the axiom “we are the 99%” and had the attendant injection of class consciousness so absent from contention before Occupy (Pickerill 2012). OWS’s indirect impact lies in their effective propaganda around inequality transitioning from a radical fringe meme perpetuated through cultural change, to a mainstream one, albeit sanitised of the Marxist overtones. In the lead-up to the 2016 US election, prominent candidates running in the primaries including Hillary Clinton have felt compelled to address inequality, by claiming to be populists who would if elected pursue white collar criminals and reform the tax-code along progressive redistributionary lines to “rebuild the middle class”. Prominent candidate ‘Bernie Sanders’ even goes so far as to call himself a ‘democratic socialist’ in arguing for a redistribution of wealth to correct the last 40 years of trickle-down economics failing to ever trickle down. Should these promises turn out to be hollow election bait, as establishment political press calmly predict (calling for a return to “realism” and the “sensible centre”), Occupy’s rhetoric being in this campaign speaks volumes as to how people power has forced the hand of elites to react barely four years after that fateful day in Zuccotti Park.

While this proposal is situated in the field of political sociology, effort is to be exerted in tackling the claims of key theorists in adjacent fields such as international relations. For example in countering Waltz’ (2010) Neorealist notion of the “self-help system” and anarchic struggle between nation states, I seek to update to the contemporary context George’s (1994) seminal critique of the Realist rejection of transnationalism. Realist and ‘realpolitik’ perspectives should be noted for their blind spot of political activity that occurs among informal actors, and oriented not solely at the state but also in a fractal, networked way between different civil society actors (Castells 2012). New Feudalism is not a force of nature as most people assume, but was made by people; in an audacious power-grab by the global economic-political elite (Klein 2007), and can therefore be unmade by people (Hickel 2012). While this narrative has a lengthy genealogy told by others, this proposal looks to synthesise the outlined theories in a way that updates and applies them to GPSMs in the contemporary period, and it is anticipated that the theoretical contribution will solidify as data analysis begins.

2.4) **Empirical and Methodological gaps in the literature this research fills**

Social movement research (both the American Rationalist approaches of resource mobilisation and political process and the European Cultural and New Social Movement approaches) is heavily focused on the earlier stages of movement *formation* and *mobilisation*. Very few studies look at consequence and aftermath; what factors led to their success or failure, as mine does. In the limited research on movement consequence, efficacy has been defined according to narrow criteria that movements generally fail to pass. This research then fills a gap by picking up where other researchers left off. Building on Petras (2014) I counter the notion that political commitments and
scientific research are incompatible. This leads to the rationalist, objectivist portrayal of the scientist observing the world ‘out there’ and in a dehumanising way, explicitly emphasising the irrelevance and dangerousness of subjects and socio-political context in order to derive meaning from numbers; precise indicators and metrics that ultimately seek to impose the style and priorities of a quarterly stock performance report on the academy. Oliver (2000) argued that the abandonment of studying ideology and political economy in favour of framing as a focus of study in this area due to its pejorative “baggage” speaks to this phenomenon whereby social scientists feel compelled to self-censor any potential Marxist critique for fear of being labelled unprofessional.

Against this opinion, politically engaged scientists have argued that they are not contradictory as scientific work is embedded in a real socio-political universe, which practitioners may deny but not avoid. To address this problem of how to determine movement causation, my proposal, building on Bleiker’s (2000) theory of micro-activism and George’s (1994) rejection of Realist objectivism, holds that social constructs can be validated with empirical evidence. I don’t claim that the data I find from interviews and participant observation will be a final account of ‘objective reality’, but that the subjective interpretations of the interviewees – both activists and their opponents – offer a kind of cross-section of each movements consequences for their targeted institutions, cultures and political systems particular to time and place. The mixed methods approach outlined below seeks to selectively apply the positivist tools determined to be most readily useable for studying social movements in this way, while discarding the overarching ideological framework of objectivism, thereby more richly capturing the socio-political contexts in which both science and activism take place. In this endeavour my proposal builds on Wendt (1999) and Barkin’s (2003) efforts to reconcile the perennial tension between the two extreme methodological approaches of subjectivism and objectivism in developing constructivism. The overarching methodological goal therefore is to test what the relevant theorists have described about the nature of New Feudalism (under its many names), and to show what consequences the three GPSMs have had for institutions, cultures and political systems.

2.5) Social Movements and Counter-Hegemony: the spectrum from ‘New Feudalism’ to ‘New Democracy’
Part of this thesis’ theoretical and hermeneutical contribution will be to offer new terms that aim to more fully encapsulate the current hegemonic regime: New Feudalism and the alternative for which the GPSMs struggle: New Democracy. This is somewhat of an artificial dichotomy, but it is a useful frame with which to summarise the continuum of societal outcomes that emerge from the struggles I describe. Gramsci’s theory of counter-hegemonic struggle (Gramsci 1935) is of particular significance in this regard. Using Machiavellian terms ‘war of position’ and ‘war of movement’, he described how both cultural hegemony (discourse, the institutions which make up a society’s superstructure) and political hegemony (ultimately state power and the means of production) might be displaced by challengers to the dominant class (also see Pratt 2004 on civil society’s contribution to this pre-revolutionary situation). As noteworthy Marxist theorist Harman (2007) said of Gramsci’s concept:

“Anyone brought up in a certain society shares a ‘conception of the world,’ ‘mechanically imposed by the external environment,’ that is by the ‘social groups with which they are automatically involved from the moment of their entry into the conscious world’. Clearly thinking of Italian rural life, Gramsci
wrote they might be influenced by ‘the local priest or ageing patriarch whose wisdom is law’ or ‘the minor intellectual soured by his own stupidity and inability to act’. These different conceptions are what make up ‘common sense’—views that are taken for granted without more thought and which cause ‘people to “think”, without having a critical awareness, in a disjointed and episodic way’. Marxism begins by challenging such taken for granted conceptions of the world, with the aim, through polemic and criticism, of ‘superseding the existing mode of thinking’. It is ‘a criticism of “common sense”’ but it bases itself initially on common sense, renovating and making “critical” an already existing activity’. There is an ‘elementary and primitive phase’ of ‘consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness), ‘an instinctive feeling of independence’.

This research project adopts a Neo-Gramscian view that a diversity of tactics is required for counter-hegemonic struggle to succeed. It is worth pausing to reflect that counter-hegemonic forces by definition most often fail. The dominant order has vast advantages in the struggle; control over the flow of capital, state power and legislatures, the media and institutions responsible for socially conditioning individuals to accept the established social order such as schools. Against these arrayed resources the early 21st century Global Justice Movement in its agitation against neoliberal globalisation was widely seen as a counter-hegemonic force that failed to displace its opponent of the unaccountable global financial institutions pushing for neoliberalism. Whether the GPSMs which are descended from such movements can succeed where others have failed in the past is obviously a key question that the findings of this proposal will explore.

Picketty (2014) demonstrated with his seminal study of wealth inequality that capitalism and democracy are incompatible. This is because the rate of return on capital is naturally higher than that on the overall economy (or notably labour). Therefore a scenario with limited state intervention naturally produces oligarchy, wherein those who own capital acquire exponential increases in wealth and political power, while those who have only their labour to rent to an investor experience decreasing living standards and alienation. He describes the present moment as being comparable to other historic peaks of inequality like the ‘Gilded Age’ and the ‘Roaring 20’s’, which notably served as the prelude to significant global conflicts. The major historic period in which this model of unbridled capitalism has been substantially challenged was the ‘Welfare State’ era of the 1930s-70s during which state intervention had redistributionary effects. This produced a golden age of ‘fairer’ capitalism where millions were lifted out of poverty and into the middle class. The 1970s marked a turning point in globalisation when the OPEC oil crisis and a severe recession resulted in the collapse of this Keynesian model. In its place, Klein (2007) highlights how elites began to seize such crises as opportunities to rush through permanent structural economic reforms in their own interests, what she terms the ‘Shock Doctrine’ such as offshoring industry to countries with comparably fewer environmental or labour regulations, leading to a ‘race to the bottom’ between nations for investment capital. This model of globalisation which has dominated from the 1970s onwards is normally referred to as Neoliberalism (Hickel 2012) or the corporate model of globalisation. Steger (2009) characterised it by a conceptualisation of Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman’s political economy as the “natural order” wherein there is no such thing as ‘society’, only individuals (as Thatcher once said). This began a period of anti-politics in which the State was blamed for all social ills and “free markets” (deregulation, privatisation and competition) were proposed as the panacea.
One problem of terming this Neoliberalism is that public debates about economic policy tend to ignore (either wilfully or not) the socio-political contexts and consequences of such reforms. Much like the social Darwinists of years gone by, Neoliberals misconstrue economics as some neutral set of laws akin to Newtonian principles of physics. However, like its long-estranged sisters, anthropology and sociology, it is embedded in contexts and produces consequences specific to time and place. A material ‘reality’ only so long as the oppressor can subdue the oppressed through state violence in authoritarian capitalist societies like China or escapist consumerism in Western states. In many ways the term Neoliberalism is outdated and fails to capture these socio-political dimensions, consequences and lived experiences of the reputedly benign free market economic reforms advocated by both ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ parties in the West. Within the Neoliberal paradigm, political parties, which must compete to raise the most donations in order to realistically win expensive election campaigns, are financially compelled to accept the ruling class’ underlying assumptions about how society should be run. The debate in electoral politics is then able to be directed towards cultural issues which do not threaten the status quo; immigration, law and order, gay marriage and of course trivia like personality traits of party leaders, sexual scandals and so forth. ‘Politics’ and economic policy are treated as though they were isolated and irrelevant from one another. New Feudalism is a system which in addition to the above attributes rebuilds some characteristics of medieval Feudalism and 20th century Fascism, incorporating free market ideology, the austerity response to the GFC, police militarisation and a return to public acceptance of oligarchy as a ‘natural order’ like that seen in the Gilded Age. The finer details of whether the classical versus the contemporary models of both feudalism and fascism can be portrayed as the more humane or just are no doubt contentious. This is a theme to be explored drawing on Foucault’s work on power and discipline in the relevant chapter of the full thesis.

By contrast, what I refer to as New Democracy is defined (along Alperovitz 2015’s lines); as an amalgam for all the alternative models of globalisation with a more direct model of participatory democracy in contrast to the ageing and decaying ‘representative’ one with economic justice and sustainability as its central aims, by the rise of civil society, by institutionalised, networked ‘rhizoid’ (distributed network rather than hierarchical) social movements (Castells 2012) and by opposition to intersectional oppression. These new terms represent my solution to Zizek’s (2001) problem that the politics of the 20th century is over, and its key political terms like communism, liberal democracy and so on have become increasingly meaningless since the Cold War ended and Francis Fukuyama famously proclaimed ‘the end of history’. Clearly events related to social movement mobilisations within the last several months alone from Baltimore to Athens show that such hasty conclusions are an anachronism of 1990s Neoliberal triumphalism. Even though there is no obvious apparent counter-hegemonic bloc in a geographical sense that the Soviet empire provided to NATO in that era, there is a palpable sense of internationalist resistance to neoliberal-austerity late capitalism. But if this opposition does not take the form of an allied powerful nation state or bloc as such, then ‘what’ constitutes such a seemingly amorphous political force? Indeed, what dividing lines (old or new) belong on a global map in an age of nation-state decay and system transition?

2.6) Structural Pessimism and the Optimism of Agency: Why bother trying to change things?
Much of the literature on globalisation and the extent to which alternative models can be advanced is voiced in what Yates (2014) described as structural pessimism. Giugni (2006) for instance argues that alternative-globalisation movements are ‘imprisoned in the cage built by the nation-state due to
the centuries spent in nation-state formation’. Thus their desire to disrupt and ultimately replace formal representative democracy with direct democracy led by civil society groups is doomed. Hirst and Thompson’s (1996) seminal work shares this scepticism for proclaiming anything too soon about the extent to which globalisation has functionally supplanted the more entrenched local and national scale institutional frameworks. At a time when globalisation was heavily scrutinised for its conceptual legitimacy in the Realist paradigm of anarchic, zero-sum power struggle between nation states (Waltz 2010), or at best narrowly viewed in terms of economic integration and consolidation, Beck (1992) foresaw that it would bring unimaginable risks and opportunities. While our scale of intervention in ecosystems has increased living standards for some, he showed, it has increased risks of resource depletion and ecosystem collapse to the point that new terms must be devised like ‘ecocide’ to describe the level of self-destructiveness inherent in late capitalism (Turner 2014).

Worse still, as a working paper from the IMF showed earlier this year, after-tax subsidies paid to the fossil fuel industry by governments worldwide now total $5.1 Trillion and are rising at a rapid annual rate of 6.5% (Coady et al 2015). This demonstrates the impossibility of formal state-centric political actors providing solutions to such crises. Governments earn too much of their tax revenue from the infinite expansion and exploitation of finite resources to wean themselves off this habitus without coercion or displacement of their power from external actors with no interest in maintaining the pre-existing dynamics which created the crisis. The public is acutely aware of the democratic deficit which fails to see their interests (eg action on climate change) translate into policy at the elite level. Despite the declining material conditions of life in late capitalist society for the general population, in their apathy and disempowerment, most have become resigned to the dominant discourses of New Feudalism. There is no such thing as ‘society’; only individuals (as Margaret Thatcher famously said), these slow-burning crises are ‘unfortunate inevitabilities’ and even what would have been termed tepid Keynesian reformist measures in the Welfare State era of the mid-20th century are seen as radical fantasy.

Thus the stakes are higher and the imperative for internationalism and an upsurge in individuals and civil society actors gaining a stronger sense of their agency is greater than in any previous era. The recruitment and participation of new members on a scale much larger than previous cycles of mobilisation is critical to their success. People who have never been to a protest and never voted need to be converted. While what is informative in the structural pessimist analyses cannot be ignored, this proposal seeks to challenge that orthodoxy with empirical evidence that there are reasons to be more optimistic about the potential for GPSMs to effect system change. For example, by interviewing activists who have only recently been politicised and begun to participate in the struggle against one of the three outlined global crises after a lifetime of political alienation and non-participation. In fact, this project places people who have been only recently become politically active (ie within the last 6 months) for the precise reason that their politicisation is key to understanding how the GPSMs can expand. Giving further reasons to be optimistic, Della Porta (2006) for instance suggested that the internationalisation of politics through the emergence of transnational actors and institutions means that globalisation itself makes room for the expression of international contestation by creating favourable opportunity structures and circumstances for the acts of the GJM. Apropos, Chatterji (2013) states that: “Globalization facilitates the establishment of conditions for citizens to be able to compare themselves to other groups and perceive themselves as being relatively deprived. It also broadens the range of factors and events
that may trigger a social movement in a society, and allows actors across social movements in different countries to exchange notes, watch out for successful strategies and adapt those of others’ into their own towards effective results.”

2.7) Approaches to Social Movement Research: Resource Mobilization, New Social Movements and others

Yates (2015) articulated some peculiarities of conventional ways of understanding social movement mobilisations;

“In popular commentary, protests appear unexpected and social movements unpredictable. They are ‘triggered’ by events, ‘explode’ on the streets and ‘escalate’ irrepressibly before slipping, just as quickly, back into seeming irrelevance. Part of this story is about media reporting: with mass mobilisations only making the news for as long as they keep visibly intensifying. Yet the roots of it, arguably, are analytical, revolting around the question of what the proper scientific objects are in understanding non-institutional political action. Politics has long been associated with visible, public, expressive and communicative action, normally revolving around the relation of the state to its citizenry. Similarly, protest itself is the main focus of social movements studies, operating at once as that which must be explained, (how do collective contentious actors form and persist), that which must be described (what is protest or political action like) and that which explains other phenomena (how does protest change things; what outcomes and consequences can be attributed to it). These are the core questions of movements studies, yet social scientific work shows how power and resistance operate beyond the interactions among states, citizens and movements, suggesting that much political activity and change happens either out of sight or in such plain view that it’s ignored.”

One of the overarching debates in social movement research is between qualitative and quantitative methods. The American rationalist, positivist schools of Resource Mobilisation Approach (RMA) (Tilly 1978), Political Process Approach (PPA) and Framing favour quantitative methods and the methodical measurement of indicators. On the other hand the European schools of the New Social Movement Approach (NSMA), Ideology and Prefiguration approaches are more interested in cultural, subjective data and thus favour qualitative methods. Gamson’s (1975) seminal study adopts the American rationalist RMA. Its main weakness is due to the overreliance on positivist objectivist methods that are more the province of physics than social movements. This reflects a common trend in the early days of a particular social science when the practitioners are almost compensating for lacking a history, by forcefully claiming objectivist, rationalist authority, and they imagine, respectability. Thus a narrow definition of movement success (the total implementation of the ‘challenger’s’ proposed program of social change in their relevant political system) is adopted. Edwin and Young’s (1999) “collective goods criterion” definition of movement success is a more inclusive one, that I will build on to overcome the weakness of excluding consequences and impacts that GPSMs contribute to indirectly. One strength of Gamson’s study though is the use of comparing movements along consistent criteria, which my method adopts. Byrd and Jasny (2010) on the other hand adopt the European cultural NSMA wherein they employ a political economy narrative approach to analysing whether the aspiration of participants at the 2003 WSF for autonomous democracy resulted in truly participatory democratic outcomes at the 2005 WSF. One weakness of
this approach is the lack of more diverse data inputs, meaning the findings are overly reliant on a singular indicator. I accept the logic of constructivism and will build on their approach by using a mixed-methods one, diversifying the findings with multiple forms of data.

An important technical concept in PPA literature is ‘political opportunity structure’; the broad range of external factors that affect the claims, tactics and ultimate impact of social protest. I share Maddison’s (2010) and Melucci’s (1984) reservations in this regard that due to the concept’s reductionism; “whatever provides incentives for collective action seems to be a political opportunity structure”. Furthermore, my research will seek to correct the overemphasis on State-oriented formal political action, which leads to missing the significance of prefigurative politics so intertwined with the habitus of GPSMs. Much of the literature is concerned with prefiguration and the practise of autonomous democracy in GPSMs. Prefigurative politics (Yates 2014) involves activists expressing the political ends of their actions through their means, where they create experimental alternative social arrangements and institutions. Thus GPSMs can anticipate and partially actualise their expressed goals, provide the “incubator” for others to follow.

Another debate relates to defining the nature of GPSMs given the convergence of social movement organisations with others operating in the same policy space. Saunders (2013) advocates the use of the term “environmental networks” consisting of formal and informal organisations with a common concern to protect or preserve the environment, using a variety of tactics. Saunders’ (2013) method of a 149 participant survey of environmental organisations, in-depth interviews and participant observations most closely aligns with mine, as this has been widely reviewed as a sound, diversified means of understanding the subject from multiple perspectives. Eggert (2015) suggests that movements directed towards cultural or redistributive issues attract different class compositions, and that hybrids emerge in groups touching on both. Giugni (2006) reflects structural pessimism, conceiving of the GJM’s ambition to substitute formal representative democracy of state systems with direct democracy and informal civil society led ones as ultimately doomed. GPSMs are ‘imprisoned in the cage built by the nation state’, due to the dominance of national theatres of political contention during the centuries spent in nation-state formation, impeding the transition to a global civil society. Böhm (2010) concludes that autonomy may never be realised as capital, the state and discourses of development seek to recuperate autonomy and make it work for their own purposes. Böhm raises questions around how an autonomous economy or environmental politics might proceed. While my research cannot answer such questions conclusively, the gap they create will be addressed in my interrogation of three GPSMs who are invested in taking power from State and private concentrations and distributing it to autonomous communities.

3.0) Methodology
3.1) Overview of approach
A mixed-methods approach comprising in-depth interviews, critical discourse analysis of interview transcripts and on-site protest event analyses is proposed. Data will be recorded through audio and annotated using a standardised form for both the interviews and protest event analyses (see Hutter 2014 and attached appendixes for further clarification of what these involve). It is suggested that because of the new and evolving nature of these movements, the method design specifications within the outlined parameters, should adapt in an iterative manner to changes that emerge in the organisations over the data collection and analysis period of November 2015 - September 2016. The
intention of this mixed-methods approach is to a) cancel out the weaknesses of more singularly qualitative or quantitative approaches and b) to articulate an ethnography of each GPSM and their strategies by gaining interesting and important observations, claims and insights from the activists that have as yet not been explored in the literature or popular discourse.

In-depth interviews will be conducted with 9 activists for each of the three GPSM cases identified (Indignados, BLMM and CJM). This number has been arrived at in consultation with my supervisory team and is determined a realistic quantity given time limits such as data analysis (nine months) takes three times as long as data collection (three months). Interviews will be timed to last approximately one hour (a modest standard found in the interview literature), collectively producing roughly twenty-seven hours of discussion for analysis. Three on-site protest event analyses will be conducted with one for each GPSM case in Paris, Madrid and Washington in late 2015 to mid-2016 - refer to Appendix 5.1 Proposed Timeline of ongoing work for detailed descriptions.

Prior contact with activists within each movement will be established by email, phone or social media in the months leading up to each event in order to coordinate, plan and gain insight into their perspectives during the mobilisation stage. There will be substantial contact with activists both before and after the main mobilisation to contribute as much detail as possible to the ethnographic profile of each subculture. Overall, these are methodological approaches which have been widely used (Tilly 1978, Giugni 1998, Wodak 2004 and Morrell 2012). In the literature on social movement methods they are considered effective to understand the nature of a particular social movement’s mobilisation and consequence. For information on Ethical Considerations see attached Appendix 5.7 and for the Participant Information and Consent Form for interviewees see Appendix 5.8.

3.2) Defining Social Movement “Consequence”, “Success” or “Impact” and what kind of “stuff” will I be looking for?

Yates (2015) provides some apropos definitions for social movement impact:

“The success of social movements was historically measured by the extent to which movements were acknowledged by opponents and their demands met by legislation. New work tends to address a further set of consequences, such as cultural change and innovation, the creation of new actors and ‘fields’ of activity, and how institutional environments are created or changed. The question of how movements emerge now relies less on explanations about structural strains or the ‘rational’ pursuit of goals, to acknowledge how existing networks – people sharing cultural affinity, aims and practices – overlap and are mobilised. Thirdly, descriptions and analysis of political action show what participants in social movements do in the name of – and beyond – protest. This identifies politically relevant activity beyond the standard survey battery of street demonstrations, occupations, strikes and boycotts, and contextualises political action in the rhythms of daily life.”

This proposal seeks to challenge Gamson’s (1975) seminal definition of social movement success which narrowly describes it in terms of the targeted state reacting to the agitation by fully implementing the challenger’s proposed program of social change within a set timeframe. Naturally, with vast resources of state and capital power establishments arrayed against them, most movements fail this criteria. I challenge it by adopting a more inclusive definition referred to as the ‘collective goods criterion’ (Edwin & Young 1999). This holds that any advancement in the ‘general category of goods’ for the challenger is a success. Such an approach produces a lower ‘hurdle’ which is easier for social movements to go above and therefore a more optimistic assessment of civil society actors’ role in political change overall.
Specifically, this will include:

- impact on targeted cultures; discourse changes as a result of movement slogans/informal narratives/published documents eg manifestos, impact on collective behaviour; framing perspective of the challenger group being adopted by a significant contingent in wider society (eg use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media or critical discussion of police unaccountability in the mainstream media),
- increased recruitment (one difficulty is measuring this is due to the informal nature of ‘membership’ in social movements – should only the dedicated core activists count or does anyone who turns up for a single rally/social media post qualify – in line with the autonomist prefiguration approach with an optimism tone I err towards the latter),
- impact on targeted institutions; targeted institutions overtly reacting to challenger demands eg in the case of CJM – divesting company’s portfolio from fossil fuels, making communications to engage in debates raised by social movements in general terms (press releases, less formal statements made by leadership of institutions to the media that indicate the problems raised can’t be ignored and pressure is being felt)
- impact on targeted political systems; public comments made by politicians addressing issues raised by challengers, legislation being promised, legislation being developed, legislation being implemented in parliament or multi-governmental treaties to address issues raised by the challengers.

3.3) In-depth interviews Component

In-depth interviews are the most widely used technique within social science research in order to generate new empirical knowledge directly from the minds of targeted subjects in relation to certain themes. Della Porta (2014b) highlighted how in social movements the relative scarcity of systematic collections of documents and reliable databases gives in-depth interviews more importance. Only in-depth interviews provide information on and from the rank-and-file activists, on which little other source is available. With regards to sampling and the composition of interviewees, for each of the three movement cases, interviewees will be drawn from intellectual leaders with a public profile, long term rank and file activists and most significantly rank and file activists who have only recently become politicised. This project will place a particular emphasis on rank and file social movement activists who have only recently become politically active because these individuals help give empirical evidence to support my claim that we should be more optimistic about these GPSM’s capacity to grow and form a counter-hegemonic bloc and bit by bit tear down the walls of New Feudalism. This mix of interview candidates has been determined based on methodological standards in the literature (Della Porta 2014b), consultation with supervisors and critical discussion with activists. It is hypothesised that this nuanced combination will present an account of these GPSMs’ consequences that is richer in meaning and depth than merely sampling from any one of the above groups in isolation. See Appendix 5.4 Interview Questionnaire and Appendix 5.5 Tabulated Interview Data Analysis form. Additionally, Wodak’s (2004) and Fairclough (1995) critical discourse analysis methods have been identified for use in interview data analysis.

3.4) Critical Discourse Analysis of Interview transcripts
To analyse data gained from interviews this research proposal will apply a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method. Significant CDA theorists Fairclough (1995) and Wodak’s (2004) approach takes an overtly political approach to discourse. Observing the interface between discursive structures and social structures necessarily builds on the critical social theory of Marx, Gramsci and Foucault for example, thereby studying texts in their appropriate socio-historical context. Much can be gleaned from grammatical and lexical choices made in speech or written text. Such selections are not ideologically random, and are deliberately stitched into cohered narratives to portray particular ideas in such a way as to enforce an overarching framework for explaining the social world. Applied to the interview transcripts of 9 activists from each of the 3 GPSM cases, this will begin with coding of the text to identify the highest frequency words. Then it will employ Fairclough’s three levels of discursive context: micro (description of the text’s formal properties), meso (interpretation of the text in terms of its producer’s use of coded language; implications, subtext and so on) and finally macro (explanation of the wider socio-political context in which the text is written).

At this point before data collection has begun, it is noted that each of the three GPSM subcultures has a variety of critical narratives around their relevant global crisis. To illustrate this, BLMM activists in their protest chants and social media communications frequently reference “police brutality”, the absence of “police accountability” and critique the neutrality of the criminal justice system and the state generally while simultaneously declaring an intention to resist with phrases such as “no justice no peace”. In terms of the oppositional reaction to such discourses, the Ferguson Police Department was quite dismissive of them in the immediate aftermath of initial mobilisations after the death of Michael Brown in late 2014. However by early 2015 and notably the death of Eric Garner, significant discursive ground had been ceded, as public opinion had begun to turn to favour the protestors and police accountability was being debated with widespread adoption of ‘body camera’ devices in numerous police departments. Similar narratives are constructed by the CJM and Indignados. How these ethnographic subcultures challenge the ways in which they are portrayed in hegemonic discourse will unearth the unique contributions activists make as individuals and collective subcultures towards the formation of counter-hegemonic discourses directed overall towards social justice.

3.5) Participant Observation Component

This component of the method, which a growing number of scholars use in the study of social movements, will involve the collection of first-hand data through field work. Its inclusion stems from the ethnographic understanding that “progress in social movement theory originates in a deep interaction between firsthand data and existing theory enabling the researcher to capture fluid shifting conditions on the ground”, and that “the best way to understand what people do, mean, think or believe is to be as close as possible to them and experience alongside them” (Balsiger and Lambelet 2014). In line with the constructivist philosophy of research outlined, the symbolic dimension of events will be emphasised rather than more narrowly technical lines of enquiry. Three events are planned to be observed, with one for each of the identified GPSMs. In each of the three events a standardised tabulated form will be used by the researcher observing the activities: see Appendix 5.6 Tabulated Participant Observation Template Form. These samples were chosen due to two factors; logistics of overseas travel for data collection and significance within the relevant movement’s upcoming events. Each of the three events forms one of few spatial-temporal points in the ongoing campaign each are waging in the face of a global crisis with the CJM’s planned
mobilisations in Paris in November 2015 for the UN COP21 summit for instance being of particular historical significance.

4.0) References


Rowe, J. and Carroll M. (2014) Reform or Radicalism: Left Social Movements from the Battle of Seattle to Occupy Wall Street, Paper pending publication, Centre for Global, International and Regional Studies, UC Santa Cruz.


5.0) Appendixes

**Appendix 5.1 Proposed Timetable of ongoing work**

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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commencement</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Phase</td>
<td>January-July 2015</td>
<td>Review literature on the following major themes: globalisation, Neoliberalism, the Global Justice Movement, counter-hegemony, Neo-Marxist theory, intersectional oppression, austerity and social movement research methods.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop methodology: settle on an interview format and questionnaire, finalise the tabulated participant observation analysis form.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Submit and achieve HD result for research</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposal Draft Version</strong></td>
<td><strong>July-August 2015</strong></td>
<td>Prepare draft confirmation paper. Prepare and submit application for ethical approval to board.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmation</strong></td>
<td><strong>August 2015</strong></td>
<td><strong>Confirmation of Candidature Seminar</strong></td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Phase</strong></td>
<td><strong>September 2015-</strong></td>
<td>Incorporate feedback into revised research methodology.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to expand the literature review on themes outlined above. Refocus on core two or three themes that seem most appealing to supervisory team and confirmation seminar panel. For example should the philosophy be an ethnographic/biographical study of subcultures, a comparative study of different movements and their strategies or a hybrid of both?</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>September 2015</strong></td>
<td>Establish contact with potential interviewees and local activists in Madrid, Paris and Washington in order to ensure I have a guide/translator on the day of scheduled protest events.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>October 2015</strong></td>
<td>Prepare for fieldwork; organise flights, visas, translation service etc.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Early November 2015</strong></td>
<td>Submit an early chapter of the thesis based largely on an edited version of the literature review for publishing in a peer-reviewed academic journal.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork: data collection begins</td>
<td><strong>Late November 2015</strong></td>
<td>Travel to Paris for data collection of both interviews with 9 Climate Justice Movement activists and participant observation of the mobilisation for major UN COP 21 Summit.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Early December 2015</strong></td>
<td>Travel onward to Madrid for data collection of both interviews with 9 Indignados/Podemos activists and participant observation of major mobilisations in the lead up to the Spanish election.</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis begins</td>
<td><strong>January-October 2016</strong></td>
<td>Return back to Melbourne. Begin analysing data across the first two GPSM cases and three societal elements (cultures, institutions and political systems).</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>March 2016</strong></td>
<td>Submit another early chapter of the thesis for</td>
<td>Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
publishing in a peer-reviewed academic journal, this time focusing on either Indignados or the Climate Justice Movement after having recently collected the data for them and begun to analyse it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork: data collection completion</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Travel to Washington for data collection of both interviews with Black Lives Matter activists and participant observation of major mobilisations in the lead up to the 2016 US election. During the same trip there is the potential to attend a conference to present preliminary findings. Exact details to be advised in consultation with supervisory team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Candidature Review</td>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>Present findings from data collection and my analysis of them seen in preliminary chapters of thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Seminar</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>Present full draft at completion seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Phase</td>
<td>December 2017 – July 2018</td>
<td>Review feedback from completion seminar and consult social movement scholars for their feedback. Revise for final submission of thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Final Thesis</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Have thesis submitted by this date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 5.2) Method used in accessing Literature**

Australian and international social movement literature in relation to movement consequences and aftermath were searched, with an emphasis on peer-reviewed political journals.


The literature search focused on the following sources:
Electronic Databases: Palgrave Connect, IGI Global, RMIT Library Database and Google Scholar.

Relevant Websites and Grey Literature: Websites of relevant American and EU Government departments, those of the three GPSMs: the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM), Indignados / Podemos and the Climate Justice Movement (CJM), the World Social Forum (WSF), World Economic Forum (WEF) and the US Democratic Party.

Bibliographies of published research: Snowballing techniques were used to cross-reference bibliographies of selected literature to identify any material that was not provided by database and website searches.

Searches were limited to literature published after 2000, although seminal earlier studies have been included in the review to frame long-term literature. Initial searches identified a large volume of potentially relevant literature, with more than 5000 papers and academic books being identified. From an initial scan of titles and abstracts, 50 papers were identified as being most relevant to the research question.

Because the GPSM cases are so new, over the coming three years before submission of the thesis, it is anticipated that much will be written about them. Automated search engine updates of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books and media coverage will keep the researcher alert to developments regarding the movements in real time.

Appendix 5.3) Glossary – Abbreviations and Key Terms
Abbreviations of movement and institution names are essential to the drafting of this proposal for brevity's sake. For your convenience and reference, definitions of key terms are listed below.
BLMM – the Black Lives Matter Movement – a new civil rights movement, led by African Americans against police militarisation, the surveillance state, police brutality, criminal justice system corruption, systemic class and race based discrimination. Gains its name from a Twitter hashtag (#BlackLivesMatter) created by anti-racism activist Alicia Garza.
CJM – Climate Justice Movement – the most organised and mobilised wing of the broader environmental movement
GFC – Global Financial Crisis of 2008
GJM – Global Justice Movement – a broad network of local, national and transnational groups lobbying for triple bottom line justice at the global level.
GPSM – Global Populist Social Movement
IMF – International Monetary Fund
Indignados / Podemos – Spanish anti-austerity movement, also known as ‘15M’ – currently institutionalising itself into the Podemos political party.
MNC – Multi-National Corporation
Neoliberalism – The dominant model of globalisation, promoted by the major global financial institutions like the IMF, World Bank, WTO which were targeted by the WSF. Also favoured by its main beneficiaries the Transnational Capitalist Class described in Robinson (2012). Characterised by a simplistic re-conceptualisation of liberalism, incorporating Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman’s
political economy as the “natural order” and the anti-politics of blaming government regulation for all social problems and proposing “free markets” (deregulation, privatisation and an increase in competition) as the panacea.

*New Democracy* – a participatory global democracy which prioritises social and environmental needs over Capital. Contrasted with the old framework of representative democracy which is portrayed as outdated due to its interconnectedness to the nation state.

*New Feudalism* – The oligarchical political economy resulting from increasing global wealth inequality, which concentrates wealth and with it political power in fewer and fewer hands.

*NSMA* – New Social Movement Approach – European school of social movement studies, characterised by emphasis on culture and qualitative methods.

*OWS* – Occupy Wall Street – anti-capitalist network seeking to address global wealth inequality

*PPA* – Political Process Approach

*RMA* – Resource Mobilization Approach – American rationalist school of social movement studies, characterised by an emphasis on positivistic technical quantification.

*Structural Pessimism* – The apathetic cynical defeatism sentiment which says: “what’s the point in voting”? It dominates in decaying representative democracies.

*WTO* – World Trade Organisation

**Appendix 5.4) Interview Questionnaire**

Please state your name, age, occupation and ethnicity for the record.

- What is your role in relation to Black Lives Matter/Climate Justice/Indignados? (Select relevant GPSM case)
- How long have you been a member of that movement/organisation?
- Is this the first time you’ve been involved in a political group?
- How do you feel about wealth inequality/police militarisation/climate change? (Select relevant crisis to the GPSM case).
- What provoked you to join this movement?
- What would you describe as your organisation’s main goals in effecting social change?
- How would you measure success / consequence / impact as a movement?
- Do you think that what you’re doing has had any impact so far?
- Do you think that what you’re doing will have any impact in the future?
- What do you think your organisation has been successful at so far and what could it have been better at?
- How would you describe the process with which you might impact on institutions and ultimately political systems?
- What do you realistically expect your group can change about the local political system?
- What do you think stops you from achieving your goals as a movement/opposed political organisation?
- Beyond these protests, what else do you think you could be doing?
- If your fellow activists are doing this, what’s stopped you from joining in?
- Are there particular cultures that your organisation wants to speak to and perhaps change?
- When you think about your local division of the movement, how would you describe that subculture?
- How do you relate to one another differently compared to how you would interact with strangers?
- What consequences do you think your organisation has had for cultures so far?
What would you hope it to change about cultures in the long term?

Given what we’ve talked about, if you had to assess your group’s impact on a scale from 1-10 on cultures, institutions and political systems, what would you give your movement?

Is that what you would have said back before x/y/z recent mobilisation?

Occupy Wall Street is famously criticized for failing to achieve anything 5 years ago when they were in the news. Despite this, their intervention raised the issue of inequality, which is now getting mass media coverage and actually having to be addressed by state-centric actors in formal political systems on a consistent basis. Given Occupy has had those indirect impacts over the long term, how do you think people will look back on what this movement did and what will it have changed?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

---

**Appendix 5.5) Tabulated Interview Data Analysis Form**

**Social Movement Case Subject table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Movement Case Study (tick applicable box to describe relevant case)</th>
<th>Climate Justice Movement</th>
<th>Black Lives Matter</th>
<th>Indignados</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Subject Individual:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Movement Recently joined Rank and File Member</th>
<th>Social Movement Rank and File long term Member</th>
<th>Social Movement Leader/Organiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Significant quotes and general comments drawn from audio recording and notes annotated during interview:**

a) ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

b) ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

c) ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

d) ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

e) ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
Table for documenting Level of Consequence for each societal element (to be completed in consultation with each interviewee):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences of this GPSM for society generally</th>
<th>No consequences whatsoever</th>
<th>Insignificant consequences</th>
<th>Some substantial consequences</th>
<th>Extremely significant consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of this GPSM for cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of this GPSM for political systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of this GPSM for institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Discursive Analysis form for transcribed text from interview (preliminarily based on Wodak 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key word, slogan or longer phrase 1: (e.g., climate crisis)</th>
<th>Key word, slogan or longer phrase 2: (e.g.,)</th>
<th>Key word, slogan or longer phrase 3: (e.g., global justice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of occurrences in this interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the interviewee construct the discourse they seek to challenge with this term?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is this used to frame the issue by the movement (climate change, austerity, police brutality/militarisation)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the interview transcript, what does the use of this term imply about the way this individual views their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
movement’s subculture?
From the interview transcript, does this interviewee feel their side is “winning” the public debate as relates to this term?

Coding form for Critical Discourse Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequentely used terms</th>
<th>Frequency of term in this interview</th>
<th>Frequency of term in interviews with all 9 activists in this GPSM</th>
<th>Frequency of term used in all interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 5.6) Tabulated Participant Observation Template Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case: BLMM/ Indignados/ CJM</th>
<th>Description at the beginning of the event</th>
<th>Description at the end of the event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the scene: numbers, density, mood, colours, sounds, prominent visual features, symbols.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics: class background, ethnic mix, ages, gender, sexuality, educational background, any activists travelled from outlying regions or overseas etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is on stage and who isn’t?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do the leaders thank and not?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What interplay is there between different individuals and group factions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What obvious, intentional, unintentional and subtle messages are being conveyed by leaders?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What obvious, intentional, unintentional and subtle messages are being conveyed by rank-and-file members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are decisions about tactics made before and after the public display portion of the day's events?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do passers-by interact with the activists? Indifferent, hostile, supportive? Do any spontaneously join in?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 5.7 Ethical Considerations**

The outlined mixed methods approach of interviews and participant observation poses no increased level of risk to participants. Refer to Appendix 7.6 for tailored version of RMIT ‘Participant Information and Consent Form’. Milan (2014) points out that

“This students of social movements face a constant tension between objectivity and subjectivity, detachment and full participation. With the progressive institutionalisation of social movement research, scholars have increasingly concentrated on theory development, partially at the expense of a fruitful connection with their research subjects. As a result, “movement theorists often speak to themselves the field often produces work that is distant from, and irrelevant to, the very struggle it purports to examine. The consequence is an artificial divide between the practice of social change and the study of such efforts.”

Milan outlines key themes that social movement scholars should reflect on in designing research methods that take account of ethical considerations particular to this practise. In addition to the artificial divide between the study and practise of social change (asymmetrical relation between interviewer and interviewee, observer and the observed), which demands reflection as to whether you are conducting “research with” or “research about” (mine is the former), of particular note is the risk associated with surveillance, repression, cybersecurity, privacy and the perception that “social science is police science”. There is a perception Milan encountered among radical activists that researchers are perpetuating unequal social relations likely to inform the State and foster repression. Finally there is also the need for consideration of accountability made up of; knowledge sharing, making scientific knowledge accessible to activists through open access arrangements and reciprocity in order to foster trust-based relationships between activists and researchers. All of these ethical concerns are being considered in the design of the method. This proposal aspires to do “research with” activists, not merely about them. Open data sharing techniques will be explored closer to data collection in order to allow activists to have a sense that the research can be trusted and will be accountable to them.

**Appendix 5.8) Participant information and consent form**
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Project Title: New Feudalism and New Democracy; What are the consequences of global populist social movements agitating for system change?
Investigators: Alexander Waters, Paul Battersby and Robin Cameron.
Contact: alexander.waters@rmit.edu.au; 9925 0000

Dear ____________,
You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

- The researchers are myself Alexander Waters, the postgraduate student who designed the project and is collecting the data, and supervisors Paul Battersby and Robin Cameron.
- This research is being conducted as part of my Doctor of Philosophy degree at the Centre for Global Research at RMIT University.
- This project is pending approval by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

Why have you been approached?
You have been selected due to your ongoing participation in the populist social movement Indignados/Black Lives Matter/Climate Justice Movement [circle appropriate one]. You were not approached randomly. Your name and contact information was obtained through targeted searches of social media, email and over the phone discussions with other activists in order to identify suitable candidates for interviews as part of this project. People from all backgrounds are being approached with the opportunity to participate in order for us to ensure we obtain a representative sample and make sure as many people as possible get to share their story.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?
I am here today studying social movements in order to understand the effects they have on their local political systems, cultures and institutions. I’m meeting with both members and political opponents of the Climate Justice Movement, Indignados or Black Lives Matter. These are groups that the media tends to ignore and people tend to not know about as a result. So it’s really important that researchers find out about these events and what they mean for society, if it looks like they can change anything, how they might plan to do that and so on.
In order to do this I am interviewing a number of people today. I’m interviewing a total of 27 people over the next few weeks. Today I may speak with roughly 9 individuals.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?
If you agree to participate you’ll be asked to have a conversation about these political issues that’s audio recorded. Interviews take roughly one hour. Before you commit to anything please feel free to think about the following sample questions which give you an idea of what the interview will be about:
How do you feel about wealth inequality/police militarisation/climate change?
What do you expect your group can change about the local political system?
What do you think stops you from achieving your goals as a movement?

**What are the possible risks or disadvantages?**
- There are no risks or disadvantages involved in the interview that would interfere with your ongoing day-to-day activities, however the researcher will attempt to avoid causing you emotional or psychological distress in your discussion of relevant topics.
- In the event you are concerned or distressed about your responses during your involvement in the study you may contact me or either one of my supervisors directly as soon as convenient. Myself or one of them will discuss your concerns with you confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up if necessary.

**What are the benefits associated with participation?**
- There are no direct or financial benefits for example that may accrue to you as a result of participating.
- However there is some benefit from the point of view of your political organisation getting its message heard in wider society. Interviewees from each social movement will have their answers transcribed and potentially quoted in academic publications which will be read by numerous people with an interest in what you have to say.

**What will happen to the information I provide?**
It will be published in the findings section of a thesis project in the RMIT Repository. This is a publicly accessible online library of research papers. The research data (i.e. the raw information and/or images) will be kept securely at RMIT for 5 years after publication, before being destroyed. Whereas the final research paper will remain online. Safeguards have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of the information you provide, but not total anonymity. Identified data will be seen directly by a small number of people within RMIT University who are operating in the same field such as the project supervisors, panels who are reviewing the work and so on. Participants need to be identified in the research records in order to explain their position in relation to the social movement being studied. Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) if specifically required or allowed by law, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

Should you prefer the report not mention your name, you have the option of us using a pseudonyms and other de-identifying techniques to allow you to speak frankly.

**What are my rights as a participant?**
- The right to withdraw from participation at any time
- The right to request that any recording cease
- The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- The right to be de-identified in any photographs intended for public publication, before the point of publication
- The right to have any questions answered at any time.

**Whom should I contact if I have any questions?**
Alexander Waters, email alexander.waters@rmit.edu.au or alternatively by phone supervisor Robin Cameron (+613) 9925 2721.

Please sign, name and date here to indicate that you have read and understood the above information and consent to participating in the interview process:

Signature:_______________________________
Name (Print):____________________________
Date:___________________________________

Yours sincerely
Alexander Waters, Robin Cameron and Paul Battersby.

Complaints:
If you have any concerns about your participation in this project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, then you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476V VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email human.ethics@rmit.edu.au