'ARAB SPRING' AND ITS DESTABILIZING EFFECTS ON THE WORLD

Sengulo Albert Msellemu
Dar es Salaam University College of Education

Esther Msaky
Mozambique-Tanzania Centre for Foreign Relations

These revolutions in the Arab world were made possible by the generation bulge of unemployed young men and women. There were other factors such as ineffective political systems based on corruption, state of emergency laws, the lack of free elections and freedom of speech. In addition, external factors such as the European Union policies based on trade and economic development, political reform, security cooperation and migration control as well as American interference fueled the revolutions. This situation shook the authoritarian leaders across the region which affected the other parts of the world. The revolutions had great impacts on social-political developments and democratic governance in the Arab world in particular and the world in general. The article focuses particularly on the North African and Middle East countries, where all these revolutions begun and their effects to the world. It should be noted that, we consider the Arab Spring to be a trigger of the global destabilization. The inability of the affected states to respond adequately to the growing demands of political inclusion played fundamental roles in awakening the people's consciousness.

Keywords: *Arab Spring, authoritarian regimes, corruption, revolution, youth bulge.*

Introduction

The Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave of both violent and non-violent demonstrations, protests, riots, coups, foreign interventions, and civil wars in North Africa and the Middle East that began in Tunisia on the 18th December 2010, with the Tunisian Revolution (Anderson 2011; Hollis 2012). This happened when the young unemployed Mohamed Bouazizi committed self-immolation in the provincial Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid. The rising wave of protests resulted in an unexpectedly rapid fall of the Ben Ali regime primarily due to the revealed intra-elite conflict between the non-privileged army and the privileged security forces who were under the special care of the President (Akaev *et al.* 2017: 316). As a result, the army sided with the protesters, which determined the fall of the authoritarian regime in Tunisia. The Arab authoritarian regimes which dominated the region from 1950 to the first decade of twenty-first century had a tacit deal with the people. The state would provide jobs and cheap support which in

return the people would not complain about the absence of freedom or demand the right to change leaders (Danahar 2013: 17). It is well noted that in the 'Arab world' the politics is between the 'legitimacy and consent'. A lot of governments in the region have a pretty low level of legitimacy but moderate level of consent. This is to say, many people for years received just enough from repressive states to keep them from taking active steps to bring down their governments (Bowen 2012: 202).

The effects of the Tunisian Revolution spread strongly to other Arab countries such as Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain, where either the regime was toppled or major uprisings or social violence occurred, including riots, civil wars or insurgencies (Akaev *et al.* 2017: 316). The people in these countries came out into streets demonstrating for freedom, dignity and justice which their authoritarian leaders had denied them. For instance, the fall of the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali in Tunisia pushed the secular leaders of youth movements in Egypt and other Arab countries to organize large-scale protests in their country by using social networks. In Egypt, it led to the fall of Mubarak's regime due to internal stress (*Ibid.*: 317). In the past decades the world also saw an increase in 'people's power' movements that use civil resistance to challenge authoritarian regimes. The ousting of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, demonstrated that citizens are able to overturn long standing dictatorships without violence. These movements struggle for regime change, are distinct from the 'classic revolutions' of the past, both in terms of their character and strategy (Nepstad 2011: 1).

The wave of destabilization throughout the Arab world and the scale of destabilization in specific countries depended primarily on the extent to which there were appropriate conditions, such as internal elite conflict, intermediate regime type (half-democratic/half-authoritarian), the presence of disadvantaged groups, a high proportion of unemployed young people (especially with higher education) and so on. In some cases external destabilizing actions (especially in Libya and Syria), played an important role (Akaev *et al.* 2017: 317). Moreover, many of these countries were also divided along ethnic, regional and sectarian lines. For example, before the revolution, Tunisia experienced a series of conflicts over the past three years. The conflict in the mining area of Gafsa in 2008 was the most notable one. The protests in this area took a form of rallies, sit-ins, and strikes. These resulted in an unspecified number of wounded, and dozens of arrests. Egypt also experienced Egyptian labor movement which was very strong for many years, with more than 3,000 labor actions since 2004.

In 2011–2012, the World System experienced a new state of global protest activity referred to as phase transition which bear some resemblance to other previous revolutions experienced in the early 1960s (Akaev *et al.* 2017: 316). The phase transition of the early 2010s was prepared by a new wave of growth of global informational connectivity, and the improvement of the means of protest self-organization due to the spread of various technologies (the Internet, satellite television, Twitter and other social networks, mobile telephony *etc*.) These revolutions had no a 'father figure' to direct the whole revolution what to do and where to go, instead it had several leaders and directors of the revolutions through internet. During the revolutions, the educated young people, who coordinated their actions with the help of the internet, were the fastest growing segment of Arab countries' populations (Niekerk, Manoj and Maharaj 2011: 1410). Citing (UNDP 2009) noted that, 'youth bulge' make the Middle East one of the

most youthful regions in the world, with a median age of 22 compared to global average of 28. The Arab world has quicker in adopting 'mass media' technology and Egypt was perceived as a leader in the adoption of technology and also as the country with largest number of Internet users in the Arab world (Niekerk, Manoj and Maharaj 2011: 1410 cite Abdulla 2007). In Tunisia and Egypt the antigovernment protests were made possible through the use of social media. The protesters were informed and coordinated through social media. The internet, mobile phones, and social networking applications have transformed politics across North Africa and Middle East. Local and international civil society actors learned to leverage social media while autocratic regime nurtured information management strategies to control and co-opt these social movements. Multiple political actors use digital media and continue to shape emerging Arab media systems (Howard and Hussain 2013: 4).

The Internet and mobile phone became available to millions of people. Egyptians regarded themselves as the oldest civilizations on the Earth. They also regarded themselves as having the best religion in the world – Islam (Vasiliev 2011). The new media stimulated mass demonstrations organized by youth in a revolutionary process. In many respects, it has been the enthusiasm, dynamism and organizational abilities of young men that have driven the revolutionary process forward. It has also been noted that youths have played the greatest role in exploiting the new media that has emerged (Howard and Hussain 2013: 15). Youth being united by information technologies, Tunisia and Egypt successful overthrew their former rulers. Being facilitated by online social media and related information and communications technologies, in January 2011, the Tunisia government stepped down, followed by the resignation of Egyptian president due to unrest and protests (Niekerk, Manoj and Maharaj 2011: 1406). The people disgruntled with Col. Gadhafi's secular aspirations carried the banner of the revolution. He was a dreamer of creating a united Arab state. When Project failed, he began to dream of creating the United State of Africa.

All in all, information technologies have become a tool for gradually eroding centralized state power. In some countries ruling elite tolerated this erosion, thinking that it would not ultimately threaten their control. In other countries, ruling elites resisted the use of consumer communication electronic through regulation and censorship. But as the system of communication grew, the years leading up to the 'Arab Spring' were notable for a rising number of protests, fomented and organized online but also involving street actions (Howard and Hussain 2013: 12).

Numerous events of revolutionary unrest, from the July revolution in France under King Louis-Philippe to Chinese revolts of 1989 were to some extent facilitated by technological developments. These included everyday newspaper, cassette recorders, fax machines technologies which facilitated the 1848 Spring of Peoples, the Iranian Revolution, China revolts of 1989 respectively and so on (Toska 2015: 137). Internet-based communication technologies, satellite television channels; Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, and mobile telephony are assumed to have played the greatest role in the Arab Spring events and their global echo. Other ways that facilitated communications included: premodern movements based on the transfer of information by word of mouth, modern movements, based on print, radio, and TV and post-electronic age net movements, based on new communication systems, with the Internet and especially Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. The experience shows that, these technologies were gender mixed and youth

oriented as well as religiously open and politically inclusive (Khosrokhavar 2012: 150–151).

Why was the revolution in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) called 'Arab Spring'? It was a reference to the Revolutions of 1848 also known as the 'People's spring' when political upheavals swept Europe. Ever since, 'spring' has been used to describe movements toward democracy, for example, during Czechoslovakia's 1968 'Prague Spring,' also in 2011 the Western media began popularizing the term 'Arab Spring'. The first specific use of the term Arab Spring as used to denote these events may have started with the American political journal *Foreign Policy* (Massad 2012: 2). Also the term was used as a series of protests and demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa that commenced in 2010 and became known as the 'Arab Spring' (Hardy 2011: 1) or Arab awakening (Al Jazeera 2011). It was sparked by the first protests that occurred in Tunisia on 18 December 2010 (Akaev *et al.* 2017: 316). The major slogan of the demonstrators in the Arab world was 'the people want to bring down the regime' (Abulof 2011: 658).

The Arab revolution did not appear out of nowhere; neither had it spontaneously erupted from a peaceful and tightly controlled region (Goldstone 2014: 214). The Arab world considered changes as a distant but much desired dream. Desperate act of people, anger and frustrations sparked a series of extraordinary events that would change the lives of millions (Bowen 2012: 16). The world has experienced many revolutions occurring throughout the human history and greatly varying in terms of methods, duration, and motivating ideology. It is well understood that any revolution is a result of many events that completely change the nature of the society and its political life.

A revolution is a historical process which refers to a movement to overthrow, often violently, an old regime, to effect complete changes in fundamental institutions in society that takes place in a relatively short period of time (Nietzel 2011: 5). Many people who rose up against the old regime in 2011 took action when they realized that not even death of their aging despots would free them. The demonstrations were organized by a generation of youth people who were more politically conscious and more aware of the outside world and better connected to it (Bowen 2012: 56). Throughout the recorded history, youth played an important role in political violence and led the existence of a 'youth bulge' (usually high proportion of youths 15 to 24 relative to the total adult population) (Ortmans *et al.* 2017: 28). The revolution in Tunisia, Egypt or Libya had not spread because of hunger or because of insufficient food but because of unemployment, injustices and hatred to the regimes. Nearly every country where the revolution happened had a massive 'youth bulge' with population under twenty-five years (Bowen 2012: 8). The Arab states faced economic problem leading to the decline of 'general well-being'. Well-being in economic aspect is measured by relative wages (Ortmans *et al.* 2017: 29). The decline of general well-being raised social pressure which fueled mass mobilization. The economic problem powered discontent but the Arab states subsidized with some staple food. However, as the prices rose, the pressure on people who were already discontented also increased. Food prices went up while unemployment rate increased (Bowen 2012: 16). For instance, Niekerk, Manoj, and Maharaj (2011: 1410) cite Hokayem (2011) by showing that many young people were unemployed, with 33 per cent of Egypt's youth staying at home. The large number of youth unemployment combined with nepotism, corruption and state repression, and this fueled

many people in different countries for revolution. The economies of many Arab countries had been hobbled by corruption and years of under-investment. In 2011, many Arabs felt that they had wasted enough time being oppressed, frightened and excluded in their own countries and finally called time out on their dictators (Vasiliev 2011).

The gap between the rich and the poor and a high level of unemployment in the Arab region also were seen as major sources of economic insecurity and destabilization of any political system. The lack of opportunities for self-actualization of the youth, lack of democratic rights and freedoms, and rising food prices were the causes of revolutions. It is also widely believed that the revolutions were caused by dissatisfaction with the rule of governments (local and national), and wide gaps in income levels (Korotayev and Zinkina 2011: 11). It has been noted that many 'Arab Spring' supporters as well as pro-government militias had been attacking one another in some occasions. The result of this was either the regime was toppled or major uprisings or social violence, riots, civil wars or insurgencies occurred. Sustained street demonstrations took place in different countries such as Morocco, Iran, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan and so on. Also minor protests occurred in Djibouti, Mauritania, the Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia, and the Moroccan occupied Western Sahara (Anderson 2011: 2).

Government corruption came to be another significant reason for the popular discontent. Corruption was the only reason that hampered Tunisians from investing in their own country, an economy that suffered from endemic unemployment, and it was fueling unrest. The revolution spread all over the country not only because of poverty but because of what the government was doing to its people (Vasiliev 2011: 16).

In the Arab world, women always lagged behind in most of the spheres in order not to upset men, but during the Arab Spring they acted differently. The revolution of 2011 in Egypt brought the women opportunities and avenues for participation in social and political reform. Most women were in the forefront of civil resistances. They fought for democracy and secular society since for decades they had been socially and politically oppressed (Al-Notour 2012: 59). Women came forward to protest, and they constituted more than half of the demonstrators. They suddenly realized they had the most to lose from the outcome of the first democratic process born out of the Arab Spring. Only the Tunisia women's rights were guaranteed by the law, the way that was unknown elsewhere in Arab World. Women's involvement in the Arab Spring went beyond direct participation in the protests to include leading and organizing protesters and cyber activism (*Ibid.*: 7).

Women played various roles in the Arab Spring which started in Tunisia and spread to a considerable part of the Arab world. They were specifically against authoritarian regimes. At this time women's political participation was expanding actively than before. They were participating in anti-government demonstrations and the protection of their rights for higher education by demanding a government to establish a higher education system. The Egyptian women have had a history of being active members of trade unions, organizations, informal networks, and online communities. Even though there are only a few women in politics in Egypt, those involved have advanced activism. Social media has enabled women to be able to contribute to demonstrations as organizers, journalists, and political activists (Arbatli and Rosenberg 2007: 18). The Arab women played a key role in changing the views of many. They were important revolu-

tionists during the Arab Spring, and many activists hoped the Arab Spring would boost women's rights, but its impact has not matched expectations. Women face discrimination in the Arab world and since expanding their roles and participation was not a priority for other revolutionary forces, they ended up sacrificing a lot with no gain in the end (Olimat 2014: 8).

Apart from internal factors that emerged within the Arab and Middle East countries, there were also external factors that sparked the revolutions in these countries. The regimes of North African states were supported by the West; the evidence seems to suggest that the latter was a real driving force for the insurgence in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The failure of these authoritarian leaders to tolerate active popular participation in the process of governance served as the drive force for the crisis they faced (Joffe 2011: 517). North African States and Middle East, where Arab spring started, adopted partial liberalization which was to prove to be sufficient to satisfy the Western sensitivity especially as security and secularization became dominant theme of inter-regional relations. The European Union members promoted political reform in neighbouring Arab countries and espoused democracy as one of their core values and its central facet of its policies towards these countries (Hollis 2012: 1).

Indeed on occasion, individual Western states actually reinforced the hegemony tendencies of North Africa states by encouraging them to suppress incipient social movements that they believe to be threatening the European interest (Joffe 2011: 517). All the North African countries especially those where revolution had taken place had much in common, in particular, the police brutality and Western support which kept old leaders in power. They scared people into accepting the by-products of authoritarian rule especially corruption (Danahar 2013: 34). The acts of the authoritarian leaders encouraged by the Western countries created social pressures which led to mass organization to overthrow their leaders

In June 2005 in Cairo, Condoleezza Rice, then the US Secretary of State, stated, 'for sixty years the United States pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the Middle East and we achieved neither. Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people.' The sentiments were echoed by President Obama in Cairo in June 2009 (Bowen 2012: 16). The United States and European Union (the agent of democratic change) not only were silent but seem not knowing what to do in the situation and they were confused by what took place in these countries – the outbreak of the Arab Spring. They could assist or obstruct such revolutionary upheavals, but they could not determine their course. For instance, in Libya, without NATO's intervention, it would certainly have taken much longer to oust Col. Gadhafi.

The intervention of the West in North Africa and Middle East did not assist them to achieve the desired outcome but rather it became a substitute for a full action. For example, the introduction of the Barcelona Process into the Mediterranean in 1995, the Union was never sought seriously to enforce the requirement contained in all economic agreement that it signed with the South Mediterranean states for good governance and respect for individual right. The United States, in a similar fashion introduced bilateral policies with the same states after 2004 as part of its Greater Middle East Partnership Initiative which also emphasized good governance and respect for human rights.

In its formal pronouncements and new initiatives, the EU actually welcomed the 'Arab Spring' and proclaimed that it wanted to be on the side of people in their call for freedom. It even went so far as to acknowledge that its policies needed revisiting and that there should be more outreach to Arab civil society as opposed to government-to-government relations. However, on a closer examination it became evident that the EU had more to answer for, than its members were prepared to recognize and that the eruption of the Arab revolt actually demonstrated the failure of the EU policies (Hollis 2012: 16).

Therefore, the internal and external factors did play a role and in different ways ignited revolutionary upheavals in North Africa and Middle East. The Western intervention into these countries which led to revolutionary movements can be conceived from different perspectives. On the one side, one may claim that the intervention was well intentioned (from the European perspective) while on the other side, it intended to destruct those countries. An example can be drawn from NATO's involvement in the Arab countries conflicts. The NATO's involvement was abnormal or not usual for people aspiring to conduct a revolution and to seek and get support. With NATO's help after a United Nation security council decision to protect the civilian population of Libya, this body and citizen's army was able to keep Col. Gadhafi professional forces at bay as others revolts broke out in Misurata and Jabal Nafusa to contest power with the rump of the Jamahiriya, by then centered on Sirte the heart of Col. Gadhafi's territory and Tripoli (Joffe 2012: 12). What was so striking about Libya experience was the fact that the regime lost control of half of its territory so rapidly. In reality, the power in Libya was just a matter of geography. Libya's population is overwhelmingly concentrated around two towns – Tripoli and Benghazi, which are separated by a hundred of miles of desert (*Ibid.*). It is true that NATO played a crucial role in defense of civilian population and equilibrating the military balance in Libya but it has played no role in determining what the future political outcomes there will be (*Ibid.*).

The governments of the Arab states did not bless the revolutionary movements. On the contrary, they used various measures to suppress them since they were considered as a threat to the regimes. One of the measures was to prevent social media from trying to inhibit protests. In many countries, governments would close sites or completely block Internet service, especially in the times preceding major rallies. Governments would also accuse content creators of unrelated crimes or shut down communication of a particular society or group, for example, in Facebook (Euro news, May 25, 2011). In the news, social media were proclaimed to be the driving force of a swift spread of revolution throughout the world, as new protests appear in response to success stories shared from those taking place in other countries.

The Arabs are nationalists and they want to identify strongly with their own countries. It is a mistake to try to find commonalities in whatever happened, say in Libya in North Africa and Yemen in Southern Arabia. Every country had its own reasons for discontent. But the idea that people could bring down the regimes were spreading much more easily through that part of the world which share a language and culture. It was hard to believe that deeply unpopular regimes had started out with a lot of popular support (Bowen 2012: 23).

The Tunisian virus had spread to Egypt, the most populous Arab country. The wave of revolutions reached Libya and has grown into a civil war between the opposition and

supporters of the regime of Col. Gadhafi accompanied by a foreign military intervention. The Gadhafi regime in Libya was determined to smash the revolution. Col. Gadhafi, his sons and his other advisers had a simple strategy: to use force to the maximum because force works. The mistake made by Ben Ali and Mubarak was not using enough of it. It is not surprising that the first protest in Libya did not force their way into the global news circle, because Libya was almost closed. During Gaddafi's rule the biggest 'employer' was the Government; his edicts in his Green Book closed the private sector for most of the Libyans. The only people who were allowed to make money were his family members and their friends and some of his most ardent supporters (Danahar 2013: 14).

In Egypt long time ago the police ceased to be a national hero and instead they became notorious as a corrupt and brutal tool of President Mubarak. It is remembered that when coming to power in his first move to become the president, Mubarak imposed a state of emergence that he would never lift, which gave the police and security services sweeping powers and thirty years of impunity (Vasiliev 2011: 15). By 2011, the police and security services became secured and arrogant, confident that they were above the law. The Egyptians were hardly the supporters of protest; they always ask not to protest. By protests people wanted to change their own lives and those of their families for the better.

The military background of their dictator leaders was not something to scare the demonstrators, but instead it caused anger and courage. Ben Ali, Mubarak and Col. Gadhafi being dictators had nothing to do with military background but it says a lot about military commanding. It can be said that not all the dictators are soldiers, but all soldiers are likely to be dictators. Before President Ben Ali was ousted, his security forces were fond of using force and it fed the spiral of protest and violence. People did not care about anything else except for their country to be fixed (Bowen 2012: 11). For example, President Bourguiba left country with two important achievements in the spheres of education and healthcare. Although revolution is an unpredictable phenomenon, in Tunisia the degree of desperation was so great that people would tell the revolution must occur. The authoritarian regime and the police regime suppressed the opposition, especially Muslim extremists, and banned the activities of Islamist parties. The political tyranny and the government's restrictions on mass media led to the spread the idea of Islamic fundamentalism not only among the poor strata but also among part of the middle class.

The protesters everywhere in the world have three major goals: to create more participatory and representative political systems, a fairer economic system, and independent judiciaries. At the beginning, the success of protest movements in some Arab states ignited hopes for the achievement of these goals and that various groups which united against the ousted governments could develop democratic mechanisms to settle their disputes and reach consensus on key issues facing their respective countries.

A power struggle continued after the immediate response to the Arab Spring. While leadership changed and regimes were held accountable, power vacuums emerged throughout the Arab world. Ultimately, it resulted into intensive battle between a consolidation of power by religious elites and the growing support for democracy in many Muslim-majority states (http://en Wikipedia.org/wiki/arab spring#cite_note.) The protesters hoped that these popular movements would end corruption, increase political

participation, and bring about greater economic equity. But their hopes quickly collapsed in the wake of the counter-revolutionary actions supported by foreign state actors like in Yemen (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/arab#cite_note), the regional and international military interventions in Bahrain and Yemen and the destructive civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen (Fawcett 2005: 22). Little success has been achieved by these movements. Only the uprising in Tunisia resulted in a transition to constitutional democratic governance on May 2018. Tunisia and Egypt held elections that were considered fair by observers.

Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as Egypt's first president to gain power through an election on 30 June 2012; however, after protests against him in June 2013, as well as a 48-hour deadline by the Egyptian Armed Forces to respond to the protesters' demands that he did not comply with, Morsi was removed from office in July 2013. Morsi's Defence Minister, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who served as a general in the Egyptian Armed Forces at the time, was responsible for announcing the overthrow on state television. Recent uprisings in Sudan and Algeria show that the conditions that started the Arab Spring have not disappeared and political movements against authoritarianism and exploitation are still occurring. In 2019, multiple uprisings and protest movements in Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt were considered as a continuation of the Arab Spring. Libya was involved into a six-month civil war which brought about the end of Gaddafi's 41-year rule.

The uprising in Syria led to a full-scale civil war. Many other countries of the region are also calling for democracy and freedom, including: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait, Mauritanian protest, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Turkey. The next political crisis occurred in Yemen in 2014, when the long lasting problems of the North and the South again increased. The Houthi revolution in September 2014 took place by the model of 'peripheral advance.' As a result, in September 2014, the Ansar Allah movement seized power in Sana'a, leading to the flight of President Mansour Hadi from the country to Riyadh and the beginning of military intervention of a coalition led by Saudi Arabia. The Arab Spring also led to the emergence of the radical jihadist state 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant' (ISIL/Daesh [Korotayev, Meshcherina and Shishkina 2018: 4]).[1] The studies confirm that in general people in Islamic societies support democracy (Huang 2005: 109–137: 110).

Instability also increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the revolutions were sparked by the Western interference into the governments of Arab countries on the pretext of 'bringing democracy.' The American and Western foreign policy aimed at elimination of strong regimes in the Middle East including support of Islamists, the situation that created more crises. Any interference of these westerners to Arab countries ended with reactions. Up to 2019, destabilization was observed throughout the Middle East region. The ISIS was the response to Western (and especially American) interference (Grinin *et al.* 2019: 11). Dangerous situation developed in Libya. In 2014, a civil conflict erupted in Libya, which ultimately led to the disruption of the process of national reconciliation and a power vacuum. In Libya there was no hope of reunification since the two competing governments had different level of international recognition – in Tripoli there are more Islamists while the secularists are found in Tobruq but there are also some independent groups (*Ibid.*: 11, 195–201).

When the Tunisian and Egyptian uprising erupted in Northern Africa in the first two months of the year 2011, there was hope all over the continent that this rebellion would become art of a wider 'African Awakening' (Manji and Sokari 2012: 3). In this case, the events of the Arab Spring that led to the growing political instability in the Middle East and North Africa provoked an aggravation of the conflicts that had existed before. In 2012, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali were seriously destabilized. For example, in January 2012 the Tuareg uprising flared up against a background of the Libyan crisis, during which the rebels took control of the entire northern part of the country (Korotayev, Meshcherina, and Shishkina 2018: 333). In 2013, the youngest countries in the world, Southern Sudan faced uprising. This resulted in a full-scale civil war between two ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Dinka.

In 2011–2012, the world in general and the Arab world in particular were experiencing an unusually intensive surge of protests. The Middle East (especially the Arab countries) contributed the major part of this surge in 2011. However, the uprisings in the Tahrir Square in Egypt and other Arab Spring countries also had serious repercussions outside the Arab world. The Arab Spring influenced the rest of the world in which a very non-trivial upsurge of protest activities erupted, one of them being the numerous movements, from Occupy Wall Street to Occupy Abay (Goldstone 2011: 16).

The Occupy Wall Street (movement – derived from the title of the blog 'A million man March on Wall Street: how to spark people's revolt in the West,' published by Adbusters Media Foundation in February 2011 which was inspired by the spectacle of Tahrir square) initiated other 'Occupies' worldwide. The 'Occupy' protest activity in 2011–2012 had a truly global nature. This wave manifested itself in the USA (New York City, Detroit, Harvard University and so on), UK (London, Edinburgh, Glasgow *etc.*), Germany (Berlin and some other major cities), Norway (Oslo), numerous cities of Canada, Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), Australia (Melbourne and Sydney), New Zealand (Auckland and other cities), Nepal (Baluwatar), Cyprus, Ghana (Accra), Nigeria (Kano, Lagos, Abuja), Iceland (Reykjavik), South Africa (Johannesburg and Cape Town), Japan, Russia, India, Italy, Spain and so on.

The Occupy square was not only form of social mobilization in Europe in 2011 and 2012 but also mass-protests took place. The so-called anti-austerity movements rapidly spread starting from 2011 in various European countries. Anti-government demonstrators protested against economic stagnation, high unemployment, and harsh austerity measures. In February 2012, Europe witnessed mass protests against the anti-counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) a new international legal agreement that was considered as a threat to Internet freedom and communications privacy. In Germany alone, 25,000 people joined the protest against that agreement. During 2011, numerous protests against austerity sprang in the UK and Greece. In May 2011, people of 15-M Movement ('the Indignados Movement') came out into the streets in major Spanish cities, and influenced protests in many other parts of the world. Inspired by the Arab Spring, these demonstrations led to the idea of occupying squares not only in Spain, Greece, and other cities across Europe, but also the USA, Israel, and Chile (Kaldor *et al.* 2015: 3; Korotayev, Meshcherina and Shishkina 2018: 332). Anti-austerity activists demonstrated in big cities across Greece. In May 2011, 'the outraged Greek youth' took its lead from the Arab Spring and Spanish protests over unemployment. Similar square takeovers were organized in May 2011 through online social networks at least in ten

Italian cities. Another effect of the Arab spring was the 'Umbrella Revolution' in Hong Kong in late 2014 and early 2015 directed against electoral reform initiated by the Chinese government.

Anti-cuts marches were also held in 2011 in Portugal ('12th March Movement'), Great Britain ('The March for the Alternative'), and so on. The year 2011 also witnessed some of the UK's largest public-sector strikes in decades over proposed pension reforms (The Guardian 2011). The nature of the protests, including Twitter messages to alert supporters, echoed the prodemocracy uprisings that revolutionized Egypt. In Israel, the largest street demonstrations were organized by a Facebook protest group in the summer and autumn of 2011 (Korotayev, Meshcherina, and Shishkina 2018: 332). The wave of protests increased in 2012. In February, due to the protracted political crisis and after weeks of opposition-led protests, the president of the Maldives, Muhammad Nasheed, resigned. At the same time, resistance in the Syrian Kurdistan started, connected with the formation of the Kurdish Supreme Council. In 2012, protracted protests and civil manifestations took place in some cities in Romania (Korotayev, Meshcherina and Shishkina 2018: 333).

Conclusion

There is nowhere in the world the people poured out in such big number or multitude than during the Arab Spring. There are grounds to suggest that the Arab Spring acted as a trigger for a global wave of socio-political destabilization, which significantly exceeded the scale of the Arab Spring itself and affected absolutely all the World System zones. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, explosive global growth was observed for the overwhelming majority of indicators of socio-political destabilization: antigovernment demonstrations, riots, general strikes, terrorist attacks/guerrilla warfare, and purges, as well as for the global integral index of socio-political destabilization.

Significant growth was detected for assassinations and major government crises. Moreover, for such an important indicator of global sociopolitical destabilization as the number of coups and coup attempts, there was a statistically significant decrease. In 2011, the number of major antigovernment demonstrations increased in a particularly dramatic way (by eleven-and-a-half times, that is, by more than an order of magnitude). At the same time, there was a noticeably less intensive (approximately six-fold) increase in the global number of riots, while the number of major terrorist attacks in this year 'only' doubled. The global number of major antigovernment demonstrations in 2012–2013 slightly decreased, while the global intensity of riots continued to grow, coming close to the intensity of antigovernment demonstrations. The global number of major terrorist attacks in 2011–2014 grew exponentially, exceeding in 2014 the number of both major antigovernment demonstrations and riots.

In general, the growth of the global number of riots followed the growth of the number of antigovernment demonstrations with a certain lag, and the increase in the number of terrorist attacks lagged relative to both. There are grounds to suggest that the Arab Spring played a role as the trigger for an unusually intensive wave of global sociopolitical destabilization that began in 2011. We would like to emphasize that we consider the Arab Spring to be a trigger off the global destabilizing wave after 2011. The fundamental causes of both the global wave and its trigger off are beyond the scope of this article. We limit ourselves to mentioning some of them. One of these causes appears to be the

neoliberal monetarist economic policy, which the world's leading countries have systematically pursued since the 1980s. This policy has led to a significant increase in economic inequality and socio-structural tension in the countries of the World System core, which caused in many ways the global destabilizing wave in 2011. On the other hand, the explosive growth of financial capital associated with this policy, coupled with its progressive deregulation, led to the financial and economic crisis in 2008–2009.

This crisis had a global destabilizing impact, but not so much direct as through the attempts (in some ways, quite reasonable) in the spirit of neoliberal monetarist theories to get out of it through a policy of quantitative easing. The consequence was an unprecedented global increase in food prices, which, in turn, destabilized the World System periphery and semi-periphery.

At the same time the phase transition of the early 2010s was prepared by a new wave of growth of global informational connectivity, as well as the improvement of the means of protest self-organization due to the spread of various technologies of the Fifth Kondratieff cycle (the Internet, satellite television, Twitter and other social networks, mobile telephony, YouTube, *etc*.), Taking into account the fundamental factors that led to the global wave of socio-political destabilization at the beginning of 2010, it is not surprising that, it was realized mainly in the form of mass destabilization (such as demonstrations, riots, general strikes) rather than in elite destabilization forms (such as coups and political assassinations).

The Arab Spring has not occurred because of information technology alone but were driven by the same forces that have repeatedly incited the revolution, that is hatred of corruption, autocracy and secret police, frustration of growing middle class, the hopelessness of the poor and inability of the rulers to carry out real reforms (Danahar 2013: 34).

The lesson from these revolutions that could be learnt in Sub-Saharan Africa is that some leaders have stayed too long in power over 20, 30, or even 40 years. Societies which they are ruling have changed dramatically, and they have simply lost touch with people they are ruling. In many cases the situation in the region remains unstable and there is more than enough 'inflammable' material. For African leaders who have ruled for long, whatever merits they may have had in the past, this situation lead to political stagnation and inability to rule. Tight control over the movement of personnel in government and business structure limits the opportunities for the youth. There is a dramatic increase in the number of discontented and potential protest to increase, especially among educated youth who find themselves in adverse condition in terms of professional and public life and self-actualization.

Peace and stability in African countries is based mainly on fidelity and often unstable inter-regional, inter-religious clan, tribal, and inter-personal compromises. There is no better way of breaking stability than an ill-conceived, arrogant foreign interference, especially under the banner of protecting democracy, human rights and freedom. Therefore, the lesson we can learn from Libya, is that NATO intervention has served to speed up awareness in Africa that the African Union must be strengthened to be able to meet the political, diplomatic and military requirements to resist external military mission and also Africans must dictate the pace and rate of the unification and freedom of Africa (Campbell 2013).

NOTE

[1] These organizations are banned in the Russian Federation.

REFERENCES

Abdulla, R. A. 2007. *The Internet in the Arab World*. Peter Lang Publishing.

Abulof, U. 2011. What Is the Arab Third Estate? *Huffington Post*. Archived from the original on 7 June 2011. Retrieved 1 May 2011.

Akaev, A., Korotayev, A., Issaev L., and Zinkina, J. 2017. Technological Development and Protest Waves: Arab Spring as a Trigger of the Global Phase Transition? *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 116: 316–321.

Al Jazeera. 2011. The Arab awakening: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain: A Roundup of the Popular Protests that have Swept the Region over the Last Few Months. *Al Jazeera News*, February 22. URL: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/2/22/the-arab-awakening.

Al-Natour, M. 2012. The Role of Women in the Egyptian 25th January Revolution. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13 (5): 5976.

Anderson, L. 2011. Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. *Foreign Affairs* 3 (90): 8–16.

Arbatli, E., and Rosenberg, D. 2007. *Non-Western Social Movements and Participatory Democracy: Protest in the Age of Transnationalism*. Springer International Publishing.

Bowen, J. 2012. *The Arab Uprisings: The People Want the Fall of the Regime.* London: CPI Group.

Campbell, H. 2013. *Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya: Lessons for of Africa in the Forging of African Unity.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Danahar, P. 2013. *The New Middle East: The World after the Arab Spring.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Fawcett, L. (ed.) 2005. *The International Relations of the Middle East*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Goldstone, J. A. 2014. *Revolutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldstone, J.A, 2011. Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies. *Foreign Affairs* 3(90): 8–90.

Grinin, L., Korotayev, A., and Tausch, A. 2019. *Islamism, Arab Spring, and the Future of Democracy.* Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Hardy, R. 2011. Egypt Protests: an Arab Spring as Old Order Crumbles. *BBC,* March 22. URL: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12339521. Accessed March 9, 2017.

Hokayem E. 2011. A Universalism to the Pleas from Cairo's Streets. *The National*. URL: http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/common/a-universalism-to-the-pleas-from-cairos-streets.

Hollis, R. 2012. No Friend of Democratization: Europe's Role in the Genesis of Arab Spring. *International Affairs* 88 (1): 81–94.

Howard, P. N., and Hussain, M. M. 2013. *Democracy's Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Huang, M. 2005. Islam and Democracy: A Global Perspective. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 1 (2): 110.

Joffe, G. 2011. The Arab Spring in North Africa: Origin and Prospects. *The Journal of North African Studies* 16 (4): 507–532.

Kaldor, M., Selchow, S., Deel, S., and Murray-Leach, T. 2015. The 'Bubbling Up' of Subterranean Politics in Europe. Project Report. In Kaldor, M., Selchow, S., and Murray-Leach, T. (eds.), *Subterranean Politics in Europe* (pp. 1–58). Springer.

Khosrokhavar, F. 2012. *New Arab Revolution That Shook the World*. Boulders CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Korotayev, A., and Zinkina, J. V. 2011. Egyptian Revolution: A Demographic Structural Analysis. *Entelequia: Revista Interdisciplinar* 13: 139–169.

Korotayev, A., Meshcherina, K., and Shishkina, A. 2018. A Wave of Global Sociopolitical Destabilization of the 2010s: A Quantitative Analysis. *Democracy and Security* 14 (4): 331–357.

Manji, F., and Sokari, E. (eds.) 2012. *Africa Awakening: The Emerging Revolutions*. Oxford, Nairobi: Pambazuka Press/Fahamu.

Massad, J. 2012. The Arab Spring and other American seasons. *Al Jazeera*. Archived from the original on 30 August 2012. Retrieved 29 August 2012

Neitzel, L. 2011. *What is a Revolution?* Department of History Brookdale Community University. New Jersey: A Spectrum Book.

Nepstad, S. E. 2011. *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century*. Oxford University Press.

Niekerk, B. V., Pillay, K., and Maharaj, M. 2011. Analyzing the Role of ICTs in the Tunisia and Egyptian Unrest from an Information Warfare Perspective. *International Journal of Communication* 5: 1406–1416.

Olimat, M. 2014. *Handbook of Arab Women and Arab Spring: Challenges and Opportunities*. Routledge.

Ortmans, O., Mazzeo, E., Meshcherina, K., and Korotayev, A. 2017. Modelling Social Pressures Toward Political Instability in the United Kingdom after 1960: A Demographic Structural Analysis. *Cliodynamics: The Journal of Quantitative History and Cultural Evolution* 8: 23–69.

The Guardian. 2011. Strikes over Public Sector Pensions Hit Services across UK as 2 Million Walk out. *The Guardian,* 30 November. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/nov/30/strikes-public-sector-pensions-impact.

Toska, S. 2015. Protest Mobilization in the Age of Twitter. In Al Sumait, F., Lenze, N., Hudson, M. (eds.), *The Arab Uprising, Catalyst, Dynamics and Trajectories*. Lanharm MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

United Nations Development Programme-Regional Bureau for Arab States. 2009. *Arab Human Development Report: Challenges to Human Security in Arab Countries*. Retrieved from http:www.arab-hdr.org.

Vasiliev, A. 2011. The Tsunami of Revolutions: New Geopolitical Realities. *Insight on Africa* 3 (2): 117–128.