
REVOLUTIONS AND PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

GLOBAL POLITICAL DESTABILIZATION AND MODERN CIVIC PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Lyubov Sadovskaya

Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

Naila Fakhrutdinova

Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

Tatiana Kochanova

Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

The article is devoted to the modern civic movements in sub-Saharan Africa that in recent years have experienced the third wave of their activation, which coincided with the beginning of the Arab spring of 2011 (after the struggle for independence in the 1950–1970s and the establishment of the state democratic institutions in 1990s). The peculiarity of these movements is the large-scale street mobilization, the main driving force of which is urban youth, more exposed to mass unemployment than other age groups, while rural population is relatively inert. Street mobilizations are led by activists from the educated middle class, users of social networks, closely connected with each other in real time. Their leaders have sufficient knowledge in all areas of life in Africa and abroad. This gives them an understanding of the global disparities between African and developed countries in economic development, medicine, education, as well as in living standards and life expectancy. The purpose of mobilization movements is to demonstrate resentment towards the ruling circles' policies that are not aimed at improving people's lives and do not adhere to the principle of democratic rotation: rejuvenation of political elites and training alternative leaders. Protest movements are active in countries lacking public consensus, especially before and during presidential election campaigns. At the same time, the article draws attention to the fact that, being predominantly political in nature, civic protest movements in this macrozone are becoming an important part of the political process and even result in changes of leadership (Senegal and Burkina Faso). Being inherently anti-system, they are organizationally unrelated with

opposition parties, unions and their leaders. These movements are usually financed by Western foundations and international non-governmental organizations. The article shows the development dynamics of these protest movements and the role they may assume in transforming the political space of those countries where protest activities are particularly pronounced. In this regard, it is equally important to analyze how civic protest movements are treated by acting governments that try to neutralize them through increased political control. Already the trend to restrict freedom of press and media is getting increasingly visible, with the authorities hampering the use of Internet and overusing police force. One cannot exclude that these 'anti-system' movements will eventually transform into political parties, with their leaders turning into political actors.

Keywords: *civic protest movements, sub-Saharan Africa, popular uprising, electoral process, mobilizing groups, political destabilization, conflict dynamics, revolution.*

Introduction

The topic of African civic protest movements is scrutinized in scientific researches that focus on their new modern forms that in countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are mainly driven by the so-called 'street democracy' ('ruecratie'). The propensity of new protest movements to protest in the streets and squares with demands as daring as resignation of acting presidents created a neologism 'ruecratie' coined during the 2014 revolution in Burkina Faso and the popular uprising in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in January 2015, when street pressure turned out to be the key force that led to the termination of their acting presidents' office. This neologism gained popularity throughout the African continent (Bouquet 2017).

The newly found interest in the civil resistance problem owes to the appearance of 'yellow vests' and 'red vests' in a number of African countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Central African Republic). These new movements were inspired by protest actions of French 'yellow vests' that are considered to be revolutionary within the context of French history (Sannat 2018). It should be noted that the first manifestations of the new wave of civic protest movements in SSA countries fueled by violations of the basic democratic principles by the ruling class could be observed even before the Arab Spring, for instance, in Burkina Faso after the assassination of journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998, in Guinea Conakry in 2006–2007, in Madagascar in 2009. In 2007–2008 and 2011 food price spikes resulted in an increase in living costs and triggered social conflict manifesting itself in strikes, protest marches and riots (Polet 2016).

Since 2005 Africa has seen over 100 massive anti-government protests in over 40 countries with the majority of them taking place after 2012 (Strong 2018). Modern protest movements that intensified within the past few years (mostly since 2015) differ from those observed in the 2000s. They can be characterized by predominance of political motives over economic ones. Mobilization movements intend to demonstrate resentment towards the ruling circles' policies that are not aimed at improving people's lives and do not adhere to the principle of democratic rotation. They are mainly supported by 'urban lower and middle classes' (Strong 2018), unemployed or underemployed youth dissatisfied with their state's and government's policies, economic instabil-

ity, corruption and the establishment hindering young professionals to rejuvenate the institutions of state power, which leaves youth only two alternatives: either sea or desert, either emigration or radicalization (Sadallah, Porret and Paolini 2018).

Analysis of the Reasons for the Growing Number of Civic Protest Movements

The rise of CPMs in SSA countries was to some extent connected with the events of the Arab Spring and may be regarded as one of the manifestations of its global echo (Korotayev, Meshcherina and Katkova 2019). However, the causes of these protests are to be found above all within the African societies themselves. The political landscape in many SSA countries increasingly demonstrates the crisis of participatory democracy: national assemblies have turned into registration chambers for government acts and decrees. As a rule, the judiciary power still tends to depend on the executive one. Corruption of political elites and their collusion with business circles are ubiquitous. Expensive election campaigns connected with vote buying and accordance of privileges to wealthy candidates over qualified but less well-off ones are observed everywhere. Therefore, elections in many SSA countries do not result in real change and leave common people dissatisfied (Koter 2017).

Multi-party system in such countries is unjustified. According to the authors of the research 'Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change', African countries have turned into 'democracies without choice' where citizens have formal voting power but there is little difference between parties (Branch and Mampily 2015: 9). In general, political parties do not represent public interests: on the contrary, they pursue their private ambitions or act for the benefit of coalitions that seek to have their share in the division of national wealth. As for the opposition, it comes from the same class against which it protests and, willingly or unwillingly, its aspiration to join the ranks of the disaffected is nothing other than a struggle against acting authorities for the power between fractions of the elite.

Furthermore, clientelism and ethnic preferences of the electorate do not propel democratic changes. The number of respondents who believe that politicians are forced to endorse their own circles more than the society as a whole varies from 5 per cent in Senegal to 50 per cent in Sierra Leone (Isakson and Bigsten 2017). Added to this are gerontarchical traditions inherited from previous generations that are particularly strong within the ruling parties, as party leaders retain their positions for decades.

This issue clearly manifested itself in Nigeria in the 2019 pre-election period. The election campaign was held under such slogans as 'Not Too Young to Run!' and 'Ready to Run!' The primary goal of the campaigners was to support young candidates for election to federal and local legislative assemblies. Apparently, the situation influenced the country's 75-year-old president M. Buhari who was constrained to sign a law reducing the age limit for presidential aspirants from 40 to 35, and for gubernatorial candidates – from 35 to 30.

The above-mentioned factors are partly responsible for the expansion of CPMs, especially in capital cities and depressed towns lying south from Sahara. They may be catalyzed by the aggravation of socio-demographic issues,¹ especially in Western African countries suffering from dramatic population explosion. More and more young people migrate from rural areas to urban centers every year.

The increasing problem of population growth control is intensified by high fertility rate. For instance, the average fertility rate in Africa is 5.5 births for a woman, and it is even higher – 6.7 – in Muslim countries (Zinkina 2016: 38–42). According to the statistics of the Population Division within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in 2019 the population of Nigeria – the most populous country in Africa – will surpass 200 million people. By year 2050, it is expected to double (Population pyramid 2019). Meanwhile, 60 per cent of African population currently consists of young people born after 1990. Given the so-called 'youth hump', the situation will continue to deteriorate.

Urban youth is more affected by such socio-economic difficulties as unemployment, inequality and social injustice. The average situation in Africa is even worse. Rapid demographic changes within the last 30 years account for the biggest and most fast-growing population of young people in the world: 70 per cent of the continent's overall population is under 30 (Strong 2018). Worse still, three out of five young workers in Africa lack the education required for the participation in the labor market, which leads to long-term unemployment that reached its peak (48.1 per cent) in 2014 (Strong 2018).

However, it must be taken into account that, while the older generation (over 35) was unable to adjust to new information technologies, the youth accepted progress as a given. Among other things, this new reality brought forth the erosion of information policy standards: as often as not, the approval of information by the audience becomes more valuable than truth, validity of facts and solving vital problems.

The smartphone revolution completed the expanding of the gap with rural areas, thus political fermentation is the fastest in agglomerations. Its advent was hastened by the process of young activists' mobilization via social networks. For these young people, tweets replaced propaganda leaflets. There are no names – only Internet logins, such as a clenched fist emerging from a forearm made of strands of a broom for the Balai Citoyen movement, a hand waving a piece of red cardboard for Filimbi *etc.* These signs help ordinary Internet users make sense of these movements.²

One of the accessories distinguishing protest movements' activists in the SSA countries is a cap saying 'Amilcar Cabral'. These are all symbols used by new participants in the African political arena who claim to be champions of Pan-Africanism and successors to the most reputable African political leaders, such as Thomas Sankara and Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral and Kwame Nkrumah.

Modern movements based on social networks became 'not only an antistructure but a platform for the new protest policy, demonstrating a transition to a new type of opposition and political participation' (Smorgunov 2012: 159).

As, by contrast with parties and unions, CPMs are not institutional, they can be joined by any citizen, whether or not she has reached the voting age. They have neither membership cards nor fixed annual fees, but that does not prevent their members from raising and providing funds. They are not officially registered and communicate via social media and public platforms, using Facebook or Twitter (Rodger 2018). CPMs are led by young urban culture representatives – rappers, painters, journalists and writers. Rap, dancing and graffiti allow these movements to attract young people who 'speak their language'. In the opinion of the Senegalese politologist Hamidou Ann, 'rap brings a powerful protest message' (Hamidou 2018). Besides, it is performed in national languages. Growing popularity of Bobi Wine – the Ugandan pop star and aspiring politi-

cian – reflects this new trend, as young people disappointed in the current situation follow politicians who promise changes.

It is important to stress that most SSA countries' CPMs have a populist component (activists speaking on behalf of grassroots; simple solutions to complex problems *etc.*). They do not rely on legal democratic parliamentary procedures based upon political debates. Their distinctiveness lies in the fact that they match the traditional vertical party structure with a horizontal, network structure that uses modern communication technologies to bring together different segments of the population, including representatives of the educated class who worry for their future.

Socio-Political Destabilization Factors and Their Role in Transforming the SSA Countries' Political Space

It is worth noting that sub-Saharan Africa with its numerous cultures, languages and religions, as well as abundant natural resources is a vivid example of diversity and therefore arouses immense interest from major global powers (Abramova and Fituni 2018).

Considering the general picture of the global destabilization wave, one cannot rule out the possibility that Western nations are interested in using protest movements to trigger political turmoil with a view to manipulate the ruling class, especially in countries with recently discovered mineral deposits (DRC, Senegal, Chad, Mali, Guinea *etc.*). This may be facilitated by such common problems of the microzone's countries as transnational terrorism, impetuous population growth, endemic poverty and insuperable corruption, as well as the most challenging problem – ethnic separation and inter-ethnic tension.

The existence of ethnic and religious structures in African societies frequently impacts modern CPMs that are founded with due regard for these factors. For instance, Ethiopian movements are predominantly based on ethnic strife between the country's two largest ethnic groups – the Oromo (34 per cent of Ethiopia's population) and the Amhara (27 per cent). One of the Amhara's slogans is 'The Economic and Political Power of The Oromo is Inadequate'. According to Amnesty International researcher F. Tekle, the principle reasons for the emergence of protest movements are rooted in the country's history, as the Oromo people were always considered 'alien' (Gardner 2018).

Prior to the impending presidential election held on February 16th of 2019 Nigeria – Africa's biggest oil producer – witnessed growth in activities of pro-religious civic protest movements Shi'a and Biafra – a separatist group from Biafra. In their protest actions and demonstrations, they rally against corruption and financial crimes of the highest officials, and demand the release of their leaders – Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife, as well as Nnamdi Kanu from Biafra.

As modern protest movements in West Africa are mostly political in nature, their role normally increases during presidential campaigns and amounts to preventing constitutional changes that would allow to increase the number of presidential mandates (more than two), and the re-election of acting presidents who had not carried out commitments given to the people before inauguration.

Another important trend is for internationalization of modern CPMs. Their supporters constantly keep in touch with each other by moving from one country to another. During these meetings that have already been held in Dakar, Ouagadougou and Kinshasa their leaders arrange for concerted actions aimed at increasing their influence over

the electoral processes in the countries of the region in the months preceding presidential elections. French historian Severine Awenengo Dalberto calls such activities 'political entrepreneurship' (Rodger 2018).

Some Western politologists (Polet 2016a; Rodger 2018) consider the leaders of civic movements to be potential political actors in the countries of West and Central Africa. In the opinion of Senegalese political analyst Gyles Yabi, they must strive for power and prepare to use it to achieve real changes that regrettably do not appear on the agenda of the acting political class (Yabi 2017).

Many civic movements in SSA countries have already gained sufficient experience in mass mobilization and currently play leading roles in political protests. They even managed to achieve certain successes. For instance, Nigerian movement Occupy Nigeria founded in reaction to the abolition of fuel subsidies in 2012 achieved partial response to the demands of Nigerians and substantially contributed to the defeat of the President Goodluck Jonathan at the 2015 election.

In 2011 the young Senegalese – journalist Fadel Barro and rapper Fou Malade from Keur Gui group – set up their movement Y'en a Marre in social networks.³ Its members supported the June 23 Movement (M23) that was created in Senegal in 2011 but ceased to exist prior to the 2012 election. Over the brief period of its existence it took a stand against A. Wade' third term of presidential office and organized protests throughout Senegal, especially in the capital city.

During the second round of voting in February 2012, activists of Y'en a Marre encouraged young people to register to vote and vote against president A. Wade.⁴ According to the Ministry of the Interior of Senegal, after their call to action the number of registered voters increased by 357,000 (CIIP 2018). One cannot deny that Y'en a Marre helped Macky Sall to prevail in the second round and become the country's president in 2012.

Le Balai Citoyen in the Centre of the Burkinabé Revolution

In October 2014 the Le Balai Citoyen movement from Burkina Faso brought about the resignation of the President Blaise Compaoré who had been aspiring to stay in power for at least 5 more years. Their supporters managed to lead into the streets of their capital city Ouagadougou over a million people. They drove around the city calling on people to gather near the National Assembly, where constitutional amendments were to be voted on. Along with other civil society organizations, they promoted political reform that would end the term of office of the President Blaise Compaoré who had been in power for 27 years.⁵

Due to the assertive actions of the protesters supported by a great part of the military corps they were able to take over the buildings of parliament and a broadcasting company. B. Compaoré was forced to stand down and leave the country.

Many researchers (Hagberg, Kibora, Ouattara and Konkobo: 200) qualify the Burkinabé uprising in October 2014 as a revolution 'achieved by mass mobilization (both civic and military) for the sake of social justice and rule of law, and the establishment of new political institutions'. According to modern political scientist specializing in studies of revolutions J. Goldstone, 'this very combination allows us to speak of a revolution' (Goldstone 2014: 4).

Thibault G. regards the generation that brought down Compaoré to be heirs of T. Sankara. According to rapper Smockey – one of the founders of Le Balai Citoyen, –

the events that took place in October 2014 in Burkina Faso were ‘the second revolution’, while the first one happened in times of T. Sankara in 1983. The other co-founder of the movement Sams’K le Jah divides the 2014 Burkinabé revolution into three stages: the realization of the need for the young people to unite in 2013; mass mobilization; and robust actions taken from 28 to 31 October 2014 (Romelot and Verriere 2018).

Unlike these researchers, Burkinabé scientist Moussa Diallo sees the events of 30–31 October 2014 in Burkina Faso not as a revolution but as an ‘uprising that failed’ (Sankara 2015). He claims that, within the first few days, its results (overthrow of president and government) were ‘confiscated by the army’ whose support was sought by the participants of the uprising. After Michel Kafando, who had been cooperating with B. Compaoré for ten years, was made transitional president, and I. Zida, former deputy commander of the Regiment of Presidential Security (although he was dismissed shortly before these events) was appointed prime minister, it became clear that there were no drastic changes in the country's leadership.

Moreover, exactly one year after the events of 2014, on September 16th of 2015, former associates of Compaoré attempted a coup d’etat with the purpose of ousting the transitional government. However, their attempt failed. The reason for this coup d’etat was the new elections code approved by the National Transitional Counsel (Le conseil national de transition). Article 135 of the code denied the supporters of ex-president the right to run at the election in October 2015.

Under this article, 6 out of 22 candidates for the presidency were excluded from the electoral lists, including Eddie Constance Komboïgo – the candidate of the party Congress for Democracy and Progress and one of the closest associates of Compaoré. Besides, the Commission on National Reconciliation and Reform proposed to dismantle the Régiment of Presidential Security formed by Compaoré in 1995 and to exhume T. Sankara's body. The exhumation was necessary to the investigation of his assassination which was allegedly organized by Brigadier General Gilbert Diendéré, future organizer of the 2015 military takeover.

During the military coup he and his supporters from the army took transitional president M. Kafando and prime minister I. Zida hostage. They were released only owing to the involvement of Senegal's president M. Salle and Head of the United Nations office for West Africa Mohamed Ibn Chambas, as well as the actions of protesters who answered the call of Le Balai citoyen civic movement to gather at the Republic Square in Ouagadougou.

Within a week after the beginning of the takeover its participants were forced to capitulate. M. Kafando, who was reinstalled as president, declared restoration of the transitional government for the term of one year. General Diendéré was arrested for mutiny. The transitional period concluded with the presidential election held on November 29th of 2015 that ended with the victory of Rock Marc Christian Kaboré in the first round.⁶

Professor Luc Marius Ibriga and his colleague Moussa Diallo do not view the 2014 events in Burkina Faso as a revolution. Ibriga is convinced that after the resignation of B. Compaoré ‘the power was lying at the feet of the rebels, and no force, be it civil society or a political party, was able to lift it’ (Sankara 2015). To prove his point, he refers to the overly short transitional period – only one year. In his opinion, ‘a revolution lasts not a year but several years while full regime change takes place’ (Sankara 2015).

However, the 2014 revolution brought forth some positive change in the country's political life. Professor of cultural anthropology of the University of Koudougou Vincent Ouattara thinks that the country achieved freedom of speech: 'the possibility for intellectuals to speak freely, to voice their opinion, to criticize governments.' Nevertheless, in his opinion, 'no fundamental changes occurred' as regards to the governance. Corruption still influences many areas of life (Diallo 2018) because those in power originate from the previous regime. They have retained the economic connections with former coterie of Compaoré – even with those of them who left the country with him. Moreover, many of the ruling elite want the deposed president to return.

It has been four years since the revolution, and the people still crave for justice. The rebels have realized that it is vital not only to depose the president, but to dismantle the whole machinery of government, and that takes time. The generation of politicians who came to power in the 1980s – 1990s must make way for young actors.

The declaration 'I vote, and I remain... vigilant' made by Souleymane Ouedraogo, who is an activist of Le Balai Citoyen, is a warning to the Burkinabé ruling elite (Romelet and Verrier 2018). It draws attention to the fact that civil society remains vigilant: the people remain a 'vigilant citizen-watchman' and, if necessary, 'will take to the streets again' (Thibaul 2014).

Researcher Honko Roger Judicaël Bemahoun is convinced that Burkina Faso is currently undergoing a crisis of institutional trust, also called incivism. On a scale of 0 (low level) to 3 (highest level), in 2008 the index of institutional trust amounted to 1.87, in 2012 – 1.67; in 2015 – 1.52 and in 2018 – 1.75 (Bemahoun 2019). From these indexes, he draws a conclusion that 'if the nation is to survive, it is essential to restore the broken trust by allowing citizens to influence political decisions that concern them' (*Ibid.*).

The Role of CPMs in the 2015 Revolutionary Riot in Democratic Republic of Congo

In DRC, there are two movements that enjoy the most popularity among the youth – Lucha and Filimbi. Both are inspired by the movements started by young Senegalese and Burkinabese citizens who freed their countries of undesired by the majority of the population presidents in 2012 and 2014. The activists of Lucha and Filimbi come from a sufficiently privileged social class and remain in touch through social networks. They appear to be 'carriers of democratic radicalism that is completely foreign to traditional civic and political organizations' and are often compared with 'a stone in the boot of the authorities' (Polet 2016b).

It should be noted that these movements played a major role in the events of January 19–21, 2015. In those days DRC witnessed major social unrest unprecedented since the times of Mobutu. The protests spread not only to Kinshasa, but to 24 other cities of the country. This popular explosion was detonated by the impending review of Article 220 of the Constitution that limited the mandate of the head of state to two terms.

During the protests that lasted for three days, the protesters, many of whom were students from the University of Kinshasa, collided with the police and the republican guard who opened fire. The rebels offered resistance: they built barricades, burned tires and threw stones at policemen. Popular unrest resulted in casualties and prevented the senators, some of whom were against the review of the Constitution, from amending it.

The pressure of the streets turned out to be decisive, and the review of the country's legal basis was suspended. The 2015 events in DRC showed that 'the street's reaction' has become the main variable in the national political equation (Polet 2016c: 13) and prevented president Kabila from getting an opportunity to stay for the third term. In the opinion of F. Polet, it was a 'revolutionary' riot.⁷

Civic Movements and Power: Declining Trajectory of Conflict Dynamics

Protest movements are not equally intensive throughout SSA countries. For instance, they are particularly influential in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ghana, Congo, Nigeria and Ethiopia, while in Rwanda their activities are much less significant.

These discrepancies in the dynamics, as well as the constituencies of protest movements are predicated upon national differences in methods of political control over the society. It is imperative to keep in mind that, despite the multi-party system established in the 1990s, African political elites never allowed political intervention outside of institutional opposition. According to F. Polet, state restrictions on protests 'are largely dependent on international pressure exerted on governments' (Polet 2016b). For instance, Joseph Kabila's regime found street protests unacceptable, although it allowed limited freedom of expression to mass media, opposition parties and some non-governmental organizations recognized abroad, whose supporters strived to assert their rights.

These international protest restrictions are much more severe in those regimes that are politically or economically dependent on Western countries. Strategic dependence helps them to preserve internal control over their opponents. The current Rwandan political climate often referred to as 'political terror' is intrinsic to the regime of P. Kagame who uses it as a way to sustain the image of the country, 40 per cent of whose budget comes from foreign aid.

The same goes for Ethiopia. This country's geostrategic role on the continent allows its leaders – first Zenawi, then Desalegn – to abuse the controversial anti-terrorism law with impunity, remaining the second biggest recipient of the United States aid in Africa (Polet 2016b).

It is apparent that the more or less limited policy of repression largely determines forms of mobilization. For instance, street demonstrations in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) or Kampala (Uganda) are much more dangerous than in Accra (Ghana) or Dakar (Senegal). This prompts activists to choose other means of action, such as 'dead city' protests when citizens are urged to express their protest by staying at home throughout an appointed day, or sit-down strikes. Such self-restrictive protest actions help to avoid police brutality. In 2016, mobilization took on the most unusual form in DRC, where fan marches celebrating the victory of the national football team turned into a protest against president Kabila.

However, political mobilizations do not always proceed peacefully. Fearing that civic protest may break out across the whole country, authorities frequently resort to violence, arrests and repressions. Such was the example of Lucha – a civic protest movement of young Congolese founded in 2012. Between 2012 and 2018, 1475 of its supporters across the country were either arrested or detained. In accordance with the DRC's criminal legislation, many of the detained faced with criminal charges, such as sedition, participation in a criminal organization etc. Some of them were tortured and deprived of the right for legal representation (Criminalisation des mouvements 2018).

In March 2015, Congolese authorities arrested citizens of neighboring countries Senegal and Burkina Faso. Those were the leaders of the Y'en a Marre and Le Balai Citoyen who came to Kinshasa to support their sister civic movements Filimbi and Lucha. Many of them spent several months in custody and were freed after Senegalese president Macky Sall's personal intervention.

Congo-Brazzaville's president Denis Sassou Nguesso, who had been in power for 32 years before being re-elected in 2016 as a result of constitutional changes (removal of term and age limits), resorts to repressions against leaders and supporters of such well-known in his country civic movements as Ça Suffit and Ras-le-bol, as well as the United Associations organization that backs the 'Tournons la page' ('Let's turn the page!') campaign.⁸ The persecution was brought about by the announcement made by supporters of these movements who acted as observers at the latest election that, in fact, only 8 per cent of electors voted for Sassou Nguesso (Duarte 2016).

In Chad, the declared pluralism did not prevent the regime of Idriss Déby Itno, who was re-elected for the fourth time according to the results of fraudulent election in April 2016, from banning peaceful protests on numerous occasions and substantially limiting freedom of expression throughout the country. Despite the bans, three platforms of civil society organizations – Yana, Ça Suffit and C'est Trop – were created before presidential election in Chad. Their very names reflect their supporters' unwillingness to see Idriss Déby as president.

To prevent robust actions endeavored by the supporters of these platforms immediately preceding the election in the end of March of 2016, their leaders Mahamat Nour Ibedou, Kaina Nadjo, Yunous Makhadadjir and Celine Narmadji were arrested and detained for the duration of the election. However, by the end of 2016 the coalition of these three civic movements launched the 'Let's turn the page!' campaign (Duarte 2016).

The Nigerian authorities' treatment of CPMs was more severe. For instance, during protests that took place on 29–30 October of 2018, divisions of Nigerian military forces used weapons and tear gas to break up a demonstration that demanded the authorities to free Ibrahim Zakzaky, the spiritual leader of Shi'a who was arrested in 2015. At least 42 people were killed. A year later, the high court declared his detention illegal and ordered his release. However, the verdict still has not been executed.

As for the Fees Must Fall student movement that mobilized young Africans to protest against the increase in student fees, it spread throughout Africa (Gribanova 2018). and it even gained support from Liberia's incoming president George Weah. Faced with growing pressure from Liberians (Bah 2018), in 2018 he drafted and passed a bill declaring all public universities in the country tuition-free. However, his hopes to appease students failed to realize, as protest actions continued.

Unwilling to ruin their country's image as a 'facade of democracy' in Africa, Senegalese authorities display more reserve towards protest movements that express their unwillingness to see M. Sall who had not kept his electoral promises in presidential office after the 2012 election. Avoiding direct confrontation, the political authorities apply administrative pressure. The conflict between president M. Sall and the Y'en a Marre movement began in the end of 2018, after the Ministry of the Interior of Senegal withheld financial provision of international non-governmental organization Oxfam.⁹

Almost simultaneously with this decision, representatives of president Sall's ruling coalition Benno Bokk Yaakaar demanded that Y'en a Marre be dissolved for alleged

‘illicit activities’. They claimed that the movement were a non-profit institution and therefore had no right to receive financial assets from foreign entities, including non-governmental ones. In their opinion, supporters of Y’en a Marre should raise funds largely by collecting membership fees.¹⁰ The increased tension between the movement and Senegalese authorities is directly related to the country's presidential election in February 2019. While in 2012 its activists urged their supporters to vote for M. Sall, this time they are against his nomination, also claiming that their movement is ‘equidistant from both the authorities and the opposition’. Their leader F. Barro urged citizens to come to the election, as anyone who does not vote ‘helps’ the acting president to stay for one more term.¹¹

It should be noted that Senegalese online community is one of the most active in Francophone Africa. The success of Y’en a Marre in observing and controlling the 2012 election demonstrated that citizens who lined up behind a handful of activists were able to influence the results of the election. They organized an alternative count of votes, were present at many voting stations and announced their results via mass media and social networks. It is absolutely clear that global acceleration of information transmission will increasingly lead to betterment of tools of self-organization and growth in protest activities, especially in countries where the principle of democratic rotation is violated.

In our opinion, it is not unlikely that these movements will eventually turn into political organizations similar to Spanish party Podemos (We Can). In 2014, this party evolved from the Indignados (The Indignant) civic protest movement initiated in 2011 by journalists and cultural figures.

Fadel Barro, the leader of the Senegalese Y'en a Marre movement, claims that in due time his own movement may follow the example of the Podemos, but that would have to wait until Senegalese democracy reaches much higher level (Sadallah, Porret and Paolini 2018).

Conclusion

The analysis of socio-political situation in sub-Saharan Africa shows the growing activity of CPMs that have been persistently asserting themselves in recent years and frequently arousing concern in the current government. The leaders of these movements are substantially different from those who fought primarily for independence and then for democratization in their countries. It is important to note that the majority of modern protest movements’ activists are young people. This determines their motives and modus operandi. They do not have life experience and ideology of previous generations, they are free from outdated stereotypes, less charismatic, but more active and better informed by virtue of social networks, and that gives them the understanding of global inequality between African countries and developed ones in terms of economic development, quality of living and life expectancy.

Besides, youth bulge – the key factor of Africa's demographic situation – urges this movement to vigorous action. Prolonged political instability in SSA countries, corruption, resistance of ruling elites to the renewal of economic and political spheres of life, and exacerbation of clientelism and inter-ethnic issues during elections will undoubtedly result in expansion and activation of protest movements.

At the same time, due to their original forms of communication and operation, and aims to improve citizens’ lives, these movements bring hope to many of their support-

ers. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that populace's involvement in politics may lead to tension and pose a threat for political stability. It is not unusual for those candidates who lose elections to try to take advantage of civic movements' mobilization and challenge the unfavorable voting results.

On the whole, one can conclude that CPMs in SAA countries fit into the big picture of global destabilization wave and frequently become harbingers of revolutions. Sometimes they are even qualified as their alternative model. And 'the quest for social justice is inherently connected with how people define their attitude towards revolution and what course of action they choose' (Goldstone 2014).

NOTES

¹ Theorist of modern revolutions Jack Goldstone identifies demographic factor as the reason for revolutions. This approach is known as structural-demographic theory (Goldstone 2006).

² Y'en a Marre (Enough!) – Senegal, Le Balai Citoyen (The Civic Broom) – Burkina Faso, Fulimbi (The Whistle), Lucha (The Struggle for Change) – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Jeunes et Forts (Young and Strong) – Cameroon, Ras-le-bol (Enough is Enough!) – Congo-Brazzaville, OT Jeunes de la Côte d'Ivoire (The Youth of the Ivory Coast Working Group), Fees Must Fall – Nigeria, Ethiopia etc., Occupy Nigeria, Shia (The Shi'a) – Nigeria, Ça Suffit (That's Enough!), C'est Trop (This is Too Much!), Yana (Enough!) – Chad.

³ This movement triggered the creation of similar movements in other SSA countries.

⁴ Their slogans were: 'Don't Touch my Constitution!'; 'My Electoral Card is my Weapon!'

⁵ The protesters embraced such slogans as 'Power Belongs to the People!', 'Homeland or Death!', 'We will Prevail!', 'We have Liberated Ourselves from our President!'

⁶ Rock Marc Christian Kaboré is a former prime minister of Compaoré's government. Shortly before the fall of Compaoré, he joined the opposition to the then-acting regime.

⁷ Kabila did not run for president at the DRC election in December 2018. The opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi was elected to the presidency.

⁸ The 'For Alternative in Africa!' international campaign launched in 2014 through the 'Tournons la page!' ('Let's Turn the Page!') social network

⁹ In 2013 Oxfam concluded a cooperation agreement with Senegalese authorities. Shortly before its expiry, in the end of 2018, the Ministry of the Interior notified Oxfam's representatives of termination of cooperation and deprived it of NGO status in Senegal because it violated obligations stipulated in Decree No. 2015-45 from February the 4th of 2015. The same procedure was applied to NGO Leading Africa – international network non-governmental organization with headquarters in Dakar that was the administrator and financial manager of Y'en a Marre. Fadel Barro's movement was to obtain funds amounting to 350 mln francs CFA, including 150 mln in 2017 and 200 mln in 2018 from Leading Africa, through Oxfam and Enda. <https://www.leral.net/Retrait-de-l-agrement-de-l-Ong-Lend-Afrique-L-Etat-traque-350-millions-F-Cfa-presumes-de-Y-en-a-marre-et-met-en-demeure237> (accessed: 05.01.2019).

¹⁰ https://www.leral.net/Affaire-Lead-Africa-Benno-Bokk-Yakaar-veut-la-dissolution-de-Y-en-a-marre_a237904.html (accessed: 05.01.2019).

¹¹ M. Salle was re-elected for the second term in February 2019.

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