

# “PROTEST PUBLICS” IN EGYPT AND TURKEY FROM 2011 TILL PRESENT DAYS: ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON POLITICAL CHANGES

Alexander Anufriev, Dmitry Zaytsev

## INTRODUCTION

Mass political protests of recent years, starting with the Arab Spring in 2010-2011 when protesters swept the Middle East and North Africa and up to the latest developments in Ukraine, are an important factor of political changes. Once emerged, protests go on and preserve their influence on political changes in the United States and Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, Turkey, Egypt, Thailand and many other countries all over the world. This allows some researchers to talk about the emergence of a new phenomenon – the phenomenon of protest groups of citizens or protest publics.<sup>1</sup> These publics can become not only a factor but also an actor of political changes in modern polities. This requires clarification of existing methodological approaches and research tools of political changes, as well as the roles of the different driving forces (actors and factors) in the process.

Despite the large amount of research and literature on the protests<sup>2</sup> few authors try to under-

stand their influence on political changes or formulate their research question this way. Among them is the work of Donatella della Porta and her collaborators who consider protests in the framework of democracy and social movements concept. At the junction of these two approaches lies the question of the role of protest movements in the democratization process, «as the relationship between social movements and democratization is not simple, a systematic cross-national comparison is needed to single out the conditions and mechanisms through which democratization is moved from below.»<sup>3</sup>

In this paper authors use theories of protest publics, democratization, and political changes to define different roles that Protest publics can

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and the Arab Spring. Springer, 2013; Bayram, Balci. Turkey's Political Crisis Undermining Democracy. New York: Pluto Press, 2010; Durac, Vincent. Protest Movements and Political Change: an Analysis of the 'Arab Uprisings' of 2011. New York: Institute of Human Relations, 2012; Howard, Philip N., Hussain, Muzammil. Democracy's Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013; Larbi, Sadiki, Heiko, Wimmem and Al-Zubaidi, Layla. Democratic Transition in the Middle East: Unmaking Power. New York: Routledge, 2012; El-Nawawy, Mohammed, Khamis, Sahar. Egyptian Revolution 2.0: Political Blogging, Civic Engagement, and Citizen Journalism. Palgrave Macmillan Series, 2013; Rand, Dafna. Roots of the Arab Spring: Contested Authority and Political Change in the Middle East. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

<sup>1</sup> See: Belyaeva, Nina. Public Action and Emerging of Protesting Public. Case of White Movement in Russia / Conference Session, 2011-2012. Mode of access: [http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/IMG/pdf/panel\\_53\\_s\\_1\\_belyaeva.pdf](http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/IMG/pdf/panel_53_s_1_belyaeva.pdf); Belyaeva N, Dzhibladze A. “Public” as a “Social Actor” vs “Public” as a “Target Audience”: Conceptual Connection Between “the Public” and “Civil Society” // XIV Апрельская международная научная конференция по проблемам развития экономики и общества: в 4-х книгах / Ed. by Yasin E. Moscow: National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2014, pp. 377-389.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Andersson, Thomas, Djeflat, Abdelkader. The Real Issues of the Middle East

<sup>3</sup> Della Porta, Donatella. Mobilizing for Democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011. Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2014.

play in the mechanisms of political changes. In order to do this we chose Egypt and Turkey for comparative analysis of contrasting cases since in these countries protest publics' activities led to controversial outcomes: the democratization of the state in Egypt on one hand and islamization, the growth of fundamentalism and further establishment of the authoritarian regime in Turkey – on the other.

The dates chosen are not the same for both countries. In 2011 Arab Spring hit Egypt and in 2013 protest started in Turkey. These are the key dates which are followed by the analysis of the events right until present days since the specific character of the research focuses on ongoing processes.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH DESIGN

The authors argue that *Theory of Publics* has more explanatory power to understand the impact of protests in the mechanism of political changes. Two conventional theories that are usually used by scholars and researchers to study protests are civil society theory and social movement theory.<sup>4</sup> They have little capacity to explain the role of protest in the mechanism of political changes.<sup>5</sup>

Civil society theory tends to be more familiar and the most obvious to use, however, and this is the main reason why it is not applicable in case of this research, theoretical concept of “civil society” presupposes an intense and long-lasting organizational work for societies prior to common action.<sup>6</sup> This is not the case of either Egypt or Turkey where it is hard to speak of any types of “pre-work” to organize protests.

<sup>4</sup> Della Porta, Donatella, Diani, Mario. *Social Movements: an Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Belyaeva, Nina. *Protest Public as a Social Actor: from Mosaic of “Issue-Based Groups” to the Unity of “the Other World Possible”*. Moscow: National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2012; Zaytsev, Dmitry and Gerasimov, Vsevolod. *Protest Public as the Drivers of Political Changes in Brazil: Role of Watchdogs* / ed. by Nina Belyaeva. Moscow: Korporatsiya INTELKORP, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Another theory, that seem to be adequate to be applied, is social movement theory. It gives a more dynamic look on civil participation and focuses on a core term – a campaign or, in other words, an “organized public effort, making a collective claim on the target audience”.<sup>7</sup> Social movements also imply a lot of prior organizational work, including creation of stable organizational structures, or “special purpose coalitions”, that can insure “a sustained and organized” manner of collective actions. Another important point – common identity that in social movements is very clear and easy to catch.<sup>8</sup> It is hard to speak about common identity in Egypt or Turkey protests and their emergence is still terra incognita if we analyze it within social movement theory. Protests in Egypt and Turkey emerged unexpected to both experts and scholars,<sup>9</sup> and there were no specially organized campaign, as well as prior-organizational work.

Therefore, mass political protests that have emerged in the wake of the crisis of recent years must be perceived as a new social phenomenon, a new political actor, which is characterized by a number of distinctive features. These features include *lack of organization as a basis for collective action; a variety of external public self-representation forms in the presence of a complex multi-layered identity; lack of a clear and pre-planned campaign with the prevalence of street forms of activity; lack of constant interaction with the authorities (target audience)*.

Therefore, a new theoretical concept is needed to explain this new phenomenon. N. Be-

<sup>7</sup> Tilly, Charles; Tarrow, Sidney. *Contentious Politics*. OUP USA, 2006; Клеман К. *Городские движения России в 2009–2012 годах: на пути к политическому*. Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2013. – 554 с. [Kleman K. *Gorodskie dvizhenia Rossii v 2009-2012 godah: na puti k politicheskomu* (City movements in Russia in 2009-2012: on the way to politics). Moscow: Novoye Literaturnoye obozreniye, 2013. 544 p].

<sup>8</sup> Tilly, Charles. *Social Movements, 1768–2004*. Boulder, Colorado, USA: Paradigm Publishers, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring // *Foreign Affairs*, July-August, 2011. Mode of access: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-africa/2011-07-01/why-middle-east-studies-missed-arab-spring>.

lyaeva in her works offers to call collective actors of mass political protests in 2010-2014 protest publics. "In order to grasp the essence of Bolotnaya movement and similar protests, we need a new theoretical concept which we offer to seek in the newly emerging 'theory of publics'. This theory provides the name of a particular type of audience - 'active audience' or 'agency public', which can be a social actor, with no organizational or institutional grounds or civil society organizations and organized social movements behind it. An important novelty of the proposed approach is that the term 'public protest' allows you to conceptualize the practice of civic participation that arise in the absence of any pre-organization, which is considered in previous theories necessary for their implementation"<sup>10</sup>.

In the theory of social movements, protests have been studied within an organizational or historical paradigm. Some have described «the causes of emergence, motives of participation, social composition, methods of organization, forms, methods and repertoires of actions, resources, goals and objectives» of movements<sup>11</sup>. Others tried to knit the movement in the broader historical and social context<sup>12</sup>. The theory of social movements perceived the relationship between democracy and protests as capacity to protest in given system of political institutions, not paying attention to how protest publics can change democratic practices and institutions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Belyaeva, Nina. *Protest Public as a Social Actor: From Mosaic of "Issue-Based Groups" to the Unity of "the Other World Possible"*. Moscow: National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Халий И. *Современные общественные движения: инновационный потенциал российских преобразований в традиционалистской среде*. Москва: Институт Социологии РАН, 2007. [Haliy M. *Sovremennyye obshchestvennyye dvizheniya: innovatsionniy potentsial rossiyskikh preobrazovaniy v traditsionalistskoy srede* (Modern social movements: innovation potential of Russian transformations in traditionalist environment). Moscow: Institut Sociologii RAN, 2007].

<sup>12</sup> Tilly, Charles. *Social Movements, 1768-2004*. Boulder. London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Limitations of the social movements theory to the analysis of the protest movements' role of the in the democratization process are well described in: Della Porta, Donatella. *Mobilizing for Democracy*.

Theories of democratization have paid little attention to the impact of protests on the political changes.

In many ways underestimation of the role of specific actors in democratization process happens because the transition to democracy in transitology is perceived as a linear process, a sequence of successive stages (liberalization, democratization and consolidation).<sup>14</sup>

Questions about the mechanism of democratic changes and the role of various mainly international actors in them were set by L. Morlino.<sup>15</sup>

D. della Porta has raised the question of the role of protest movements in the process of democratization.

We propose to clarify the research question, the wording of which would be more properly considered in the light of theoretical approaches, their capabilities and limitations, and the available empirical evidence about the protests. Firstly, we should speak not only about the role of protest publics, but also about the impact of protest publics. This has already been mentioned above. Secondly, in practice, protests often do not lead to democratization, sometimes they are even counterproductive, or lead to other unforeseen processes.

Therefore the authors proposes to define political changes as a multidimensional (non-linear) process which is not a straight transition from one political status to another with passing known in advance stages of changes, but complex process of moving on multiple trajectories which is unique for each country or polity influenced by diverse drivers which can

Comparing 1989 and 2011. Oxford University Press, 2014; *Spreading Protest. Social Movements in Times of Crisis* / ed. by Della Porta D., Mattoni A. ECPR: ECPR Press, 2014, pp. 9-14.

<sup>14</sup> Carothers, Thomas. *The End of the Transition Paradigm* // *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2002. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. P. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Morlino, Leonardo. *Changes for Democracy: Actors, Structures, Processes*. Oxford-NY: Oxford University Press, 2011; *International Actors, Democratization and the Rule of Law. Anchoring Democracy?* / ed. by Morlino, L., Magen A. UK: Routledge, 2008.

composed into unique for each country or polity combinations.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the theories of regime change,<sup>17</sup> policy change,<sup>18</sup> and institutional change<sup>19</sup> the authors uses generalization scheme where political changes divided into 3 parts: institutional changes (connected with establishing of “new” political institutions and evolution or devolution or collapse of “old” political institutions), situational changes (changing in hierarchy and balances of power of political actors) and policy changes, connected to the changes of public policies in different spheres (migration policy, education policy, health policy, etc.).<sup>20</sup>

Drivers of political changes are separated in this concept into actors and factors. Factors are all possible external social phenomena which can influence political changes: ideas, political institutions, socio-economic, political, cultural conditions, culture etc. Actors are all possible structures, individuals and groups which can influence political changes too: governmental and non-governmental actors, politicians, political parties, interest groups, social movements, NGOs, business associations and corporations, intellectuals.<sup>21</sup>

The conceptualization can be visualized with the figure below (see Figure 1). Starting point ( $X_n$ ) and ending point ( $Y_n$ ) as basic units for the country analysis have to be identified. There can be as many theoretical trajectories of political change as there are countries in the world, but the authors assumed that the trajectories can be clustered into more limited amount (Z), less than the existing amount of countries (N).

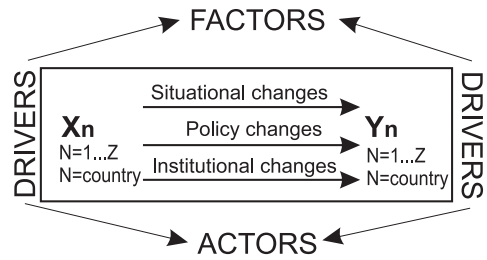


Figure 1. Political changes

In this work we assume that protest publics are drivers of political changes which mean that they can be both actors and factors. Consequently, the assessment of protest publics’ impact on political changes might be done through comparing the protests with other factors of political changes: economic (level of unemployment, poverty, economic development etc.); political (level of democratic development, trust to government, electoral preferences change etc.); cultural (values shifts in society, change of political culture etc.); social-demographic (level of education, social wellbeing, change in age structure of society etc.). The authors elaborated the complex of parameters which serve mainly to conceptualize the whole picture and make it more obvious and transparent.

Using this scheme we should be ready to face another possible outcome: protest publics being a driver of political changes might as well happen to be actors of changes meaning that their influence on the processes is strong enough to perceive them not only as a background for changes, but also as a valuable player in the game. Consequently, it is very important to evaluate capacity of protest publics to influence on political changes. This capacity depends from the “actorness”<sup>22</sup> of protest publics and their impact into specific areas of political changes (situational, policy, and institutional).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Zaytsev, Dmitry, Gerasimov, Vsevolod. Protest Public as the Drivers of Political Changes in Brazil: Role of Watchdogs / ed. by Nina Belyaeva. Moscow: Korporatziya INTELKORP, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. International Regimes. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

<sup>18</sup> European and North American Policy Change. Drivers and dynamics / ed. by Capano G., Howlett M. UK: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> See review of institutional change theories in: Morlino, Leonardo. Changes for Democracy: Actors, Structures, Processes. NY: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Belyaeva, Nina. Analysts: “Consultants” or “Independent Policy Actors” // *Politicka Misao*, 2011, Vol. 48, No. 5, pp. 125-140.

<sup>23</sup> Zaytsev, Dmitry, Gerasimov, Vsevolod. Protest Public as the Drivers of Political Changes in Brazil: Role of Watchdogs / ed. by Nina Belyaeva. Moscow: Korporatziya INTELKORP, 2015.

To consider protest publics as collective actors of changes we have to test them on the degree of political consolidation and the degree of political autonomy. The assumption is that only enough *consolidated* (with integrated interests, goals, and values, connected with its members through regular communication) and *autonomous* (self-organized, self-governed, self-sufficient, able to set goals independently from “third parties”, with more or less clear identity) political actor can influence on political changes.

Furthermore, it is important to note that systemic element of “actorness” is the capacity to influence on politics, policy and polity. To evaluate impact in political changes diverse parameters needed<sup>24</sup>: *the degree of influence of the protest public on the changes of the current political situation* (the change of the political leadership, elites of the country, limitation of power, change in the hierarchies and balance of power, change of the main political intrigue etc.); *the degree of influence of the protest public on changes in public policies* (social policy, economic policy, foreign policy, religious policy, population policy etc.); *the degree of influence of the protest public on institutional changes* (changes of Constitution, democratic institutions, increasing/decreasing of qualities of democracy etc.).

Using this framework we conducted research design, which allow the authors to collect data in 5 main categories: Significance of Protests (“factorness”), Degree of Protest Publics’ Creation (“actorness”), Political Changes, Protest Public as factor and its interaction with other factors, Protest Public as actor and its interaction with other actors.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research findings that will be presented below are based on various types of data collection, which can be divided into four general parts: expert interviews, statistics, sociological data, and event analysis. The first one refers to open unstructured set of interviews taken in leading Russian and Turkish institutes. More than 15 experts on Egypt and Turkey were being interviewed in order to gather soft

data on protests in the following countries<sup>25</sup>. It goes without saying, though, that for such research the amount of interviews is insufficient, therefore possible lacunas were filled with statistical data taken from World Bank,<sup>26</sup> CIA World Factbook,<sup>27</sup> UN Country Stats<sup>28</sup> and other sources. Sociological data at the same time is mainly represented by WVS,<sup>29</sup> Global Democracy,<sup>30</sup> Freedom House<sup>31</sup> and other institutions studying democracy. Event analysis is needed to grasp the full spectrum of events and follow the timeline of protests. In order to achieve this goal international media sources such as The Guardian,<sup>32</sup> The New York Times,<sup>33</sup> Al-Jazeera,<sup>34</sup> BBC,<sup>35</sup> etc. were monitored.

<sup>25</sup> Zhantiev Dmitry, Associate Professor, PhD in History, Institute of African and Asian Studies, MSU, Department of Middle East History; Ulchenko Natalia, PhD in History, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Kudryashova Irina, Associate Professor, PhD in Political Science, MGIMO University, Department of Comparative Political Science; Sapronova Marina, Professor, Dr. of Science, MGIMO University, Department of Oriental Studies; Altuğ Yalçıntaş, Associate Professor, PhD in Economics and Philosophy, Ankara University; Can Irmak Ozinair, Faculty Member, Ankara University, Department of Journalism; Dilara Peker, Researcher, Economic Policy Research Foundation; Coşkun Taştan, Associate Professor, PhD in Sociology; Agri Ibrahim, Cecen University; Ulku Doganay, Associate Professor, PhD, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara University; Hatem Ete, PhD in Sociology, SETA Foundation; Ilkay Kara, Research Assistant, Ankara University; Nur Betül Çelik, Professor, PhD in Political Science, Ankara University; Gül Ceylan Tok, Associate Professor, PhD in International Relations, Kocaeli University; Fabio Salomoni, Faculty Member, Koç University.

<sup>26</sup> Source: TheWorldBankData <http://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>27</sup> Source: CIA WorldFactbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

<sup>28</sup> Source: UN CountryStats <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Source: WVS <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

<sup>30</sup> Source: GlobalDemocracy <http://www.globaldemocracy.com>

<sup>31</sup> Source: Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/>

<sup>32</sup> Source: The Guardian <http://www.theguardian.com/international>.

<sup>33</sup> Source: The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/>

<sup>34</sup> Source: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

<sup>35</sup> Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.com>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Further on we are going to describe the main conclusions drawn from the analysis of the collected data we listed above.

### PROTEST PUBLICS AS A “TRIGGER” FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF EGYPT

Protests were able to gather up to 2 million people across Cairo, Alexandria and other big cities during 2011-2013.<sup>36</sup> The majority of protesters were people of working age, those who shape economy.<sup>37</sup> Protest responded to current political issues like political censorship, food price rises, corruption, police brutality in 2011<sup>38</sup> and frustration with Mursi's policies if talking about 2013.<sup>39</sup> Some of the demands were achieved. If we put this together with other indicators such as geography of protests, amount of people participated in protests, reactions to protest publics, this allows us to say that *protest public has a significant importance in Egypt*. Protests took forms of demonstrations, marches, occupations of plazas, riots, non-violent civil resistance, acts of civil disobedience and strikes all over big cities like Cairo and Alexandria; up to 2 million people participated in protests in different periods of time.<sup>40</sup>

In Egypt, we can observe *the emerging and establishing of a new influential actor in country's political arena*.

While developing this research we concluded that Protest Public in Egypt formed in response to political actions and acted periodically with the emergence of new discourses. The first one referred to frustration with Mubarak, another discourse was formed around Mursi's policies. Altogether these points to the fact that protest publics as actor is consolidated enough to form on a periodic basis in response to social and political challenges.

Changed leadership in Egypt (twice!) led to major changes on *political landscape*: enhance of military elites' powers, diminishing role of Muslim Brotherhood and religious organizations, shift towards leftist political values. Among other things, rethinking of Islam's role in Egypt's life. Islamic groups and organizations are being persecuted and the government is pushing its hardest to lower its influence. Consequently, the existing for a long time breach between traditional Islamic paternalistic and pro-Western ways of living has become tremendously big. The outcomes caused by the cleavage of values can be unpredictable.

In terms of *policy changes*, economic changes are the main goal. Sisi's government has stressed that the only way out of the crisis is through private investment.<sup>41</sup> Investment-friendly macroeconomic reforms started in the areas of fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies, as well as legal reforms aimed at redefining relations between the state and the private sector.<sup>42</sup> What is more, there is a clear switch in Foreign policy: negative view on Hamas and consequently, Egypt's traditional role of mediating between Hamas and Israel change. Moreover, Egypt elaborated new Water Policy, which is about smoothing Egyptian-Ethiopian Conflict and seeking for cooperation.

Transition of leadership is tightly connected with another track where major changes occurred – the constitution of Egypt. When Mo-

<sup>36</sup> Counting Crowds: Was Egypt's Uprising the Biggest Ever? // BBC, 16 July, 2013. Mode of access: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23312656>

<sup>37</sup> Beissinger, Mark R; Jamal, Amaney; Mazur, Kevin. Who Participated in the Arab Spring? A Comparison of Egyptian and Tunisian Revolutions. Princeton University. Mode of access: <http://www.princeton.edu/~mbeissin/beissinger.tunisiaegyptcoalitions.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Egypt Embraces Nationwide Protests // *France 24*. Mode of access: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110201013309/http://www.france24.com/en/20110125-egypt-braces-nationwide-protests>

<sup>39</sup> Morsi Defends Wide Authority as Turmoil Rises in Egypt // *The New York Times*, 6 December, 2012. Mode of access: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/07/world/middleeast/egypt-islamists-secular-opponents-clashes.html>

<sup>40</sup> Two Million Protested in Around Tahrir Square in Egypt // *CNewsWorld*. Mode of access: <http://www.cnewsworld.com/world-news/middle-east-world-news/estimated-2-million-people-protest-in-around-tahrir-square-in-cairo-egypt-mp4/>

<sup>41</sup> Re-Engineering Egypt's Economy // *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 2015. Mode of access: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/re-engineering-egypts-economy-1443385766>

<sup>42</sup> Adly, Amr. Will the March Investment Conference Launch Egypt's Economic Recovery? // *Carnegie Endowment*, 03/05/2015. Mode of access: <http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/03/05/will-march-investment-conference-launch-egypt-s-economic-recovery>

ammed Morsi came to power, he adopted new constitution. The Constitution and the circumstances of its adoption have been criticized by the Egyptian authorities and the opposition during numerous protests. Before the referendum the opposition accused Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in the usurpation of power and demanded the resignation of Morsi. After the referendum there were allegations of falsifications of the results, but Morsi signed the Constitution after all.

Under the new Constitution, the President ceases to be an all-powerful figure and a strong parliament is proclaimed. It contains provisions aimed at the prohibition of torture and detention without trial. However, it also gives the Egyptian generals more power and privileges than they had during the period of Hosni Mubarak.

Article 81 stated that no law may restrict the essence of the rights and freedoms enshrined in the constitution, but said that “these rights and freedoms are exercised in so far as they do not contradict the principles set out in the chapter about the state and society in the constitution.” The provisions in this chapter include article 10, which stated that “the state and society should be entrusted with the preservation of the true nature of the Egyptian Family”, and article 11, which states that “the state is there to protect ethics, morality and public order.”<sup>43</sup>

Article 45 protected freedom of expression without specifying what legal restrictions are permissible and how to balance that right with Article 31, which states that “individuals cannot be abused,” and Article 44 prohibited “insulting the prophets.”<sup>44</sup>

It guaranteed freedom of religion only to believers of any of the three Abrahamic religions – Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Specifically, Article 43 on freedom of religion gives the right to practice religion and establish a place of worship for Muslims, Christians and Jews, but excluded the followers of other religions, including the Egyptian Baha’is, as well as non-believers.<sup>45</sup>

After the overthrow of Mohammed Morsi July 3, the suspension of the constitution has been

announced. As part of the “road map” to get the country out of the crisis a special commission was formed and began developing the text of the new constitution. The commission included 50 people, including politicians, military representatives and two representatives of “Muslim Brotherhood.”<sup>46</sup>

The text of the new constitution, which was held on the adoption of a referendum was submitted for adoption by the interim Egyptian President Adly Mansour on December 3, 2013. The text of the new basic law contains articles limiting the role of Islam in the life of the country and the growing influence of the military and members of parliament. The draft says the establishment in Egypt of “civil government” and limiting the application of the Sharia. Military constitution provides the right for the duration of the two future presidents to nominate the minister of defense. At the same time parliament gets the power to remove the president. This will require two-thirds of votes of deputies, as well as the positive outcome of the respective referendum.<sup>47</sup>

Official results of the referendum were announced 72 hours after the polls closed. According to them, the draft constitution of Egypt was supported by 98.1% of voters. The turnout was 38.6%.<sup>48</sup>

Although implementing of new constitution and presidential elections might actually cause question concerning the involvement of protest public in these processes, there is a one aspect that proves the influence of protesters who demanded free and fair elections and in the resulted got themselves democratic practices to observe the elections. According to new constitution there must be The Presidential Electoral Committee looking after the elections. Notably,

<sup>46</sup> 22 Key Points in Egypt’s New Draft Constitution // Al-Monitor, 08/23/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/08/egypt-draft-constitution-guide.html>

<sup>47</sup> Mansour to form committee in charge of constitutional amendments // *Egypt Independent*, 07/18/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/mansour-form-committee-charge-constitutional-amendments>

<sup>48</sup> El-Sisi Wins Egypt’s Presidential Race with 96.91% // *Ahram Online*, 06/03/2014. Mode of access: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/102841/Egypt/Politics-/BREAKING-PEC-officially-announces-AbdelFattah-ElSi.aspx>

<sup>43</sup> Egypt Referendum: 98% Back New Constitution // BBC, 01/19/2014. Mode of access: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25796110>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

there should be 80 domestic and 6 international Civil Society Organizations to monitor the elections. Among the international organizations, there are the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the African Union, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. Democracy International also monitored the elections and launched a huge campaign for supporting democratic practices in Egypt:

“Democracy International is currently implementing a two-year project to observe the ongoing electoral processes in Egypt. The upcoming parliamentary elections represent the culmination of Egypt’s post-transition roadmap after the constitutional referendum in January 2014 and the Presidential election in May 2014. At the invitation of the Egyptian election commission, DI conducted comprehensive international observation missions for the January 2014 Constitutional Referendum and May 2014 Presidential Elections. In January 2015, the High Election Commission invited DI to observe the upcoming parliamentary elections, which are scheduled to begin in late March and continue through early May.”<sup>49</sup>

In Egypt together with economic, social, cultural and political *factors* protest became a significantly important factor of further changes. Responding to these factors the government is chapping its’ policy in accordance to the demands aroused on the basis of these factors. Economic decline, unemployment especially among young generation, low wages influenced by growing breach of values in the society and the changed perception of political elites all together shattered political system and together with protest publics’ activity caused above described political changes.<sup>50</sup>

In Egypt protest publics interact with one of the main *actors* – the army. While creating a sort of coalition with such consolidated actor like Egyptian army protest publics risked losing

their own subjectivity. Another risk would be the possibility of military forces to take advantage of protests. However, the development of events showed that the publics are capable of new forms of consolidation and mobilization for active action in case when “coalition partner” (Army) begins to change the common interest.

It is also necessary to say that Protests Publics were not homogeneous. Some joined in a coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood, and pushed the country towards Islamization or those who took the side of President Mursi. Others participated in coalition with military elites and advocate the westernization of the country, for example, supporting the President Sisi. In the period under review the second ones won due to traditionally stronger role of the military, who were able to rely on Publicsin which “Westernized” part of it also proved to be stronger than “Islamic”.

The role of protest publics as triggers of democratic changes is explained in the scheme below together with how it has developed, in conjunction with some actors and factors (See *Figure 2*).

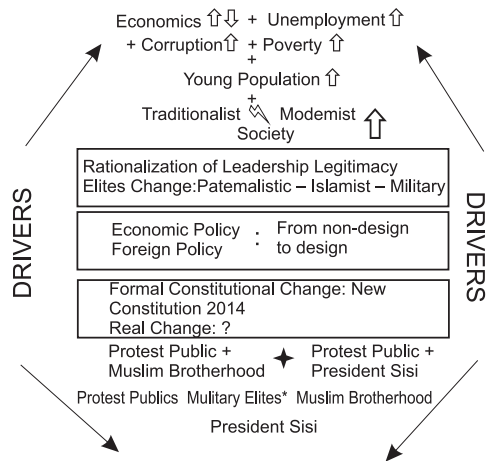


Figure 2. Case of Egypt

**PROTEST PUBLICS AS “DEMOCRATIC INNOVATOR” IN AUTHORITARIAN ENVIRONMENT: CASE OF TURKEY**

Protests in Turkey involved all kinds of social organizations of environmentalists<sup>51</sup>,

<sup>49</sup> Egypt International Election Observation Mission // *Democracy International*, March, 2013 – June, 2015. Mode of access: <http://democracyinternational.com/projects/egypt-international-election-observation-mission>.

<sup>50</sup> Source: Trading Economies <http://www.tradingeconomics.com>.

<sup>51</sup> Gezi Parkı’nda öfke kardeşliği // *Aksiyon*, 06/10/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.aksiyon>.



nationalists,<sup>52</sup> libertarians<sup>53</sup> and others and managed to gather up to 3 million people in about 90 locations in Turkey in 2013<sup>54</sup> but 63% of them was below 28,<sup>55</sup> protests were not recurring in response to governmental actions. On this basis, we assume that the significance of protests is lower than in Egypt where 2 million crowd was mostly formed by professional middle class, primarily working age – 59% of participants were between 25 and 44 years old.<sup>56</sup> The most important feature is that Publics in Egypt was gathering regularly unlike Publics in Turkey, where there were more participants, but they were unable to make it a regular and thus more influential thing.

Demonstrators were brought together by their reaction to political activity of a ruling party, to a “limited understanding of politics identifying democracy solely with the ballot box whilst remaining oblivious to people’s concerns and demands, to the polarizing discourse of political authorities and to the way economic and political interests have become intertwined within the networks formed around the ruling party.”<sup>57</sup>

Ideological discourse was a keystone to protests: politically engineered rise of religious conservatism that marginalized those whose

com.tr/aksiyon/haber-35735-173-gezi-parkinda-ofke-kardesligi.html.

<sup>52</sup> How the Protests Will Impact Turkey at Home and Abroad // *The Atlantic*, 06/02/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/06/how-the-protests-will-impact-turkey-at-home-and-abroad/276456/>.

<sup>53</sup> Libertarians in Turkey Support Protests // *Students for liberty*, 06/11/2013. Mode of access: <http://studentsforliberty.org/blog/2013/06/11/libertarians-in-turkey-support-protests/>

<sup>54</sup> Devrimci Müslümanlar da ‘marjinal’ oldu! // *Yurtgazetesi*, 09/20/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.yurtgazetesi.com.tr/gundem/devrimci-muslumanlar-da-marjinal-oldu-h42055.html>

<sup>55</sup> Source: Konda GeziReport [http://konda.com.tr/en/raporlar/KONDA\\_Gezi\\_Report.pdf](http://konda.com.tr/en/raporlar/KONDA_Gezi_Report.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Beissinger, Mark; Jamal, Amaney; Mazur, Kevin. Who Participated in the Arab Spring? A Comparison of Egyptian and Tunisian Revolutions. Princeton University. Mode of access: <http://www.princeton.edu/~mbeissin/beissinger.tunisiaegyptcoalitions.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> Turkey: What Lies Behind the Nationwide Protests? // *Open Democracy*, 08/06/2013. Mode of access: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ayse-bugra/turkey-what-lies-behind-nationwide-protests>

lifestyles were not deemed to be in conformity with the government authorities’ understanding of the principles of Sunni Islam, anti-abortion policies, paternalistic view on a Turkish family which determines the amount of children and restricts gender roles. “A recent piece of legislation seriously restricting the sale and the use of alcohol, which was approved by the president while the protests continued, served to confirm and enhance the concerns about government interference in personal life. The slogans written on the walls included one which said “You shouldn’t have prohibited that last beer.”<sup>58</sup>

However, politically, the protesters were highly heterogeneous; protest public consists of libertarian environmentalists, social democrats and left-wing radicals, “anti-imperialistic” secularist nationalists. Besides that, the CHP (Republican People’s Party) and the pro-Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) were also represented in the protests.<sup>59</sup> A significant amount of people surveyed can be categorized as libertarian democrats. 15% categorize themselves as libertarian, 5.8% as social democrat, 5.4% as secularist, and 3.4% as democrat. If we add democratic socialists will get the total 57.2% of democrats. Another group consists of secularists, Western-oriented national republicans such as Atatürkists (11%), Kemalists (3%), secular nationalists (2.6%) or nationalists (3%).<sup>60</sup> In other words, people very close to nationalist party. There were also communists and anarchists represented during the protests, but their amount was not very significant. The main outcome, however, is that *the majority of protest public belongs to democrats* in their worldview or political/ideological preferences which shows a certain community of interests and values.

We can also speak about common goals and motivation. In spite of diverse structure of participants there is a very traceable demand for freedom, the complaint against legal restrictions, and the rejection of dictatorship. It is interesting that only 9.5 per cent of the protesters saw the removal of the government

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Aydın, Yasar. Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey – Socio-Political Factors and Subjective Motives, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

as their most important priority in the protest actions.<sup>61</sup>

We will not stop precisely on the degree of political autonomy of Turkish protest public since there is no reason to assume that it is anyhow different from what can be observed in the case of Egypt. The concept of protest publics itself determines their actions and the level of their independence from third parties. At the same time, a systemic element of actorness is the capacity to influence on politics, policy and polity. Protest publics, according to the interviews taken with international scholars studying Turkey, could not manage to do much.

At the same time there were certain institutional changes after the protest, although they were caused not by the protests themselves, but by a corruption scandal when the government changed significantly.<sup>62</sup> The 2013 corruption scandal in Turkey refers to an ongoing criminal investigation that involves several key people in the Turkish government; most people involved being members of the ruling Justice and Development Party. In a speech to the press on the evening of 25 December, Prime Minister announced the reshuffle of 10 members of his cabinet in light of the scandal, saying that the reshuffle was to replace the three ministers who had resigned earlier in the day and others who were planning mayoral runs in the local elections in March 2014.<sup>63</sup>

Another sufficient change is connected with the Islamist part of Turkish society and can be hardly associated with the actions of protest public. Islamist forces had shown the level of internal differentiation in Turkey in the sense that certain image failures gave rise to the Islamist movement and gave an opportunity to distance themselves from Erdogan and to join in opposition. This is certainly a new element of political and institutional situation changes in Turkey.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Turkey Rocked by Corruption Scandal // *Deutsche Welle*, 12/26/2013. Mode of access: <http://www.dw.de/turkey-rocked-by-corruption-scandal/a-17324458>.

<sup>63</sup> Source: Intimated <http://intimated.com/turkish-pm-says-he-is-target-of-graft-probe/>.

<sup>64</sup> Pierini, Marc. How: Far Backward Is Turkey Sliding // *Carnegie Europe*, 03/03/2014. Mode of access: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2014/03/03/how-far-backward-is-turkey-sliding/h29v>

Concerning democratic institutions, there were some attempts aimed at minimize the protests. Recent changes have affected social media – a lot of pressure on journalism, some restrictions of prohibitive nature relating to freedom of action of alleged initiators of protest movements. Professor Ultchenko notices, however, that “it doesn’t look so repressive by the government. Erdogan tries to fight with windmills, but he cannot help it. It is a pretty deadlock trend – to search for the causes of the problems outside oneself.”

According to expert Can Irmak Ozinair: “Regime became even more authoritarian than it was before the protests. There is intention to change the constitution, but these changes towards strengthen of Erdogan’s personal power. Some pro-government politicians claim that last elections were democratic as president was elected by public. I do not think that this point proves democratic character of the Turkish system as it proves that there is no political pluralism in Turkey.”

Some political changes have happened in Turkey since the beginning of Gezi Park protests, although there were not so significant as, for instance, in Egypt. For example, presidential and local elections were held in Turkey in 2014. Recep Tayyip Erdogan won presidential elections with the 51.79%<sup>65</sup> of votes, his opponents Ekmeleddin Insanoglu and Selahattin Demirtas took 38.44% and 9.76% respectively.<sup>66</sup> As far as local election, results are the following: AK – 42.87%,<sup>67</sup> CHP – 26.34%; MHP – 17.82%. Peoples’ Democratic Party – 6.29%. AKP even gained more voters in comparison with 2009.<sup>68</sup>

As far as the changing of constitution, Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan said that forging a new constitution after a parliamentary election (2015) would be a priority for Turkey. There is an intention to create an executive presidency.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçim sonuçları // *Secim Haberler*. Mode of access: <http://secim.haberler.com/cumhurbaskanligi-secimi/>.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Source: Rethink Institute <http://www.rethinkinstitute.org/turkish-elections/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Turkey Rocked by Corruption Scandal. Turkish president Erdogan calls for new constitution // *World Bulletin*, 10/01/2014. Mode of access: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/145503/turkish-president-erdogan-calls-for-new-constitution>.

Consequently, Erdogan’s power will be subsequently expanded.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, expert from Economic Policy Research Foundation Dilara Peker reported that “from those days to today, the police have gained wider authority and power on people.” “Turkey’s parliament passed a piece of legislation, a bill that broadens police powers and increases penalties for people participating in unauthorized demonstrations. Under the bill, the police will be permitted to use firearms against demonstrators who are armed with firebombs or other injurious or similar weapons. They will also be able to detain people for up to 48 hours to uphold public order. Protesters wearing masks or partly covering their faces will face up to five years in prison if they are deemed to be spreading “propaganda for a terrorist organization.”<sup>71</sup>

Along with it, another researcher Altung Yalcintas reported that “after Gezi, an ongoing process of political restructuring took place. First and most importantly, the project of building a convention center and shopping mall in place of Gezi Park and a mosque in Taksim Square was shelved. Bülent Arınç, a government spokesperson, officially apologized for the destruction and terror that the police forces exercised against the environmentalist occupiers of Gezi Park on 28 May. The parliament decided to withdraw a legal charter granting permission to the government to transform many forests around Istanbul into residential areas. While protests spread to 67 cities around the country mentioned channels CNN Türk airs its now-infamous penguin documentary, but later NTV and CNN Turk, two of the most popular television news networks, also accepted their faulty policy of broadcasting NTV History, a magazine of popular history, owned by NTV group, was shut down after its special issue on the Gezi protests and social movements in Anatolia since Byzantine times.”

Figure 3 gives a diagrammatic representation of the role of Protest Publics in the mechanism of political changes in Turkey in 2013 and 2015 (See Figure 3). Economic growth after the financial crisis of 2008 was replaced by a slowdown

in economic growth, together with high levels of corruption on one hand and a cleavage between traditionalists and modernists in Turkish society. All these factors led to protests and the changes that have occurred. Namely the tightening of authoritarian tendencies, concentrating more power in the hands of Erdogan together with the deterioration of his international image. Moreover, as a consequence, Turkey faces harsher information policy, press freedom restrictions and higher level of censorship. Strictly speaking, we can observe the change from parliamentary republic to super-presidential republic with limited civil rights.

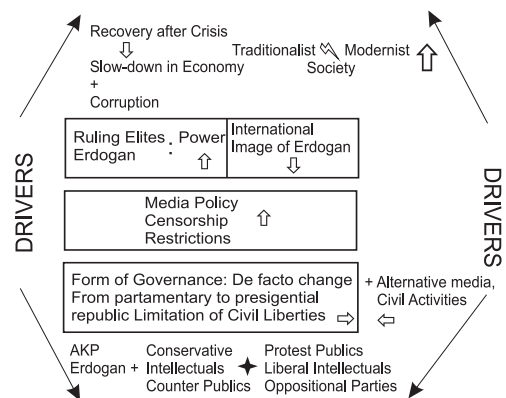


Figure 3. Case of Turkey

In spite of that, we cannot ignore counter-tendencies – the emergence of alternative media and emergence of practices of civic participation. One of the alternative online media is called Capul TV, named as such after Erdogan called the protestors *capulcu* – looters, which was immediately embraced by the protestors. The word has become synonymous with resisting in an alternative, youth-driven, peaceful way.<sup>72</sup>

Erdogan, the AKP, conservative intellectuals and counter publics<sup>73</sup> move democratic changes back. Nevertheless, protest publics, liberal intellectuals and opposition parties play role of democratic innovator. Despite the strength of the conservative coalition, there are signs of its weakening. In the general election held on 7 June, the AKP gained 40.87% of the vote. It still remains to be the biggest party

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> The New York Times. Mode of access: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/28/world/europe/turkish-parliament-expands-police-powers-and-cracks-down-on-demonstrations.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Source: Yenimedia. <https://yenimedya.wordpress.com/tag/alternative-media/>.

<sup>73</sup> Source: FOX. <http://archive.is/UlxFA>.

in Turkey, but this time the AKP lost its status as party that represents the majority and thus, the power to form a single-party government.

### **PROTEST PUBLICS IN EGYPT AND TURKEY: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

It is important to point out the religious part of conflicts in Egypt and Turkey. In both countries traditional, fundamental ideas and values are still very strong and as we have seen influence the politics. In both cases we can observe the cleavage between a more democratic westernized part of the society willing to become an active part of a global community and a more conservative majority that still sticks to traditional values and perceives a ruler as a father of the nation.

Moreover, one can observe dichotomic nature of Protest Publics in both countries. We have proven that Protest Publics are a significant factor of changes in Egypt in Turkey and together with economic, social, political, cultural and other factors caused certain outcomes, but it is also an important actor of changes at the same time. The analysis of Protest Publics' actions depends on our perception of its role, but the very core of the phenomenon implies two possible roles that can be played simultaneously.

However, different set of drivers leads to different outcomes. When it comes to differences between two cases, the first thing to mention is that Egyptian Protest Publics operate in a situation of social and economic crisis whereas Turkish ones experience a certain slowdown in economy after recovery from crisis. This allows us to presume that the harsher situation in socio-economic sphere demands harsher reactions from political actors. Some of these actors sometimes have the ability to decline a choice being made and have preferences over public policy outcomes. So-called veto-actors (political actors that are different from and are capable of stop the ongoing tendencies of political development and shift the vector of changes current political elites stop the current trends of political development and expand the vector of changes in the other) are quite strong in Egypt. It might be Muslim Brotherhood that managed to use protests for its' own interests or Army, for instance, which is traditionally very strong in Egypt. Turkey on

the contrary doesn't have such strong players or they are still being uninvolved.

For the case of Egypt where we observe certain democratic development with a strong role of traditional veto-actors Protest Publics is a "trigger" of political changes capable of changing their direction. In Turkey, however, where authoritarian growth is quite obvious, but it manages to coexist with democratic alternatives Protest Public stands as a democratic "innovator" in the situation of general authoritarian growth.

### **CONCLUSION**

Protest Publics can be not only factors but also actors of political changes. Their actions go beyond proving legitimacy of changes; protest publics might also be capable of making changes.

Therefore, the Theory of Protest Publics has more explanatory power (to understand the mechanisms of political changes and the role of protests) than Theory of Social Movements.

Protest Publics' actions may lead not only to democratization but also to strengthening authoritarian regime, like in Turkey. Nevertheless, even there it creates the contra-tendency of accumulation democratic practices. Therefore, the novelty of the research lies in the attempt to change linear perception of democratization and the role of social movements in democratization. There is an attempt to replace it with a more complex modeling of processes – simultaneous existence of several tendencies of development and changes in different combinations.

Protest Publics in coalitions with other actors and in certain conditions can change political regime (situational changes), policies and institutions. Therefore, the Theories of Political Changes have to be developed with this kind of analysis. They have to conceptualize the mechanisms of political changes

Protest Publics may become a driver of political changes in case a) there is a certain combination of factors and b) protest public contributes in coalitional actions together with other actors. The first point is getting transparent after reviewing the interviews of the experts for both countries. There is no doubt that Egypt faces an uncontrolled growth of population, the

extent of which, in fact, it is difficult to assess. The bottom line is that the process of population growth never stopped. It started in the 1950s and continues until now. Another factor for Egypt is the disastrous situation in the economy. This is one of the poorest Arab countries; Egypt in general is included in a group of the poorest countries in the world in terms of GDP per capita based on consumer prices according to the data of the World Bank. Another important factor for the protests in the country was a different image and perception of power, of the ruler himself among representatives of diverse generations. Another combination works for Turkey: economic factors were also influenced the situation, but they were not decisive. This division of the lifestyles is crucially important for understanding the nature of protests in the country and it dates back to the history of Ottoman Empire. Traditionally paternalistic state of Turkey did exist, but at the same time there was another trend for the Europeanization.

The second point is easily traced while comparing Egypt and Turkey's protests. The interconnection of protest publics and the army in Egypt became a crucial point of changes in the country, whereas Turkey's protest public was not able to enter in a coalition with any significant actors and therefore, could not achieve such substantial results.

It is important to point out the religious part of conflicts in Egypt and Turkey. In both

countries traditional, fundamental ideas and values are still very strong and as we have seen influence the politics. In both cases we can observe the gap between a more democratic westernized part of the society willing to become an active part of a global community and a more conservative majority that still sticks to traditional values and perceives a ruler as a father of the nation.

In this diversity one can observe the conflict between Westernization and Traditional values, conflict caused by the globalization and disregard of traditions. The root of this conflict and the way it is evolving is extremely interesting and might be a basis for another research.

As for the further development of this research, we see our premiere goal in creating typology of main characteristics for protest publics based on case studies. Analyzing more cases of countries where protest publics emerge we believe that it is possible to come up with a list of main types of publics or models that would be able to explain and predict changes. We can already assume that Protest Publics in Turkey is very similar to the one in Russia – in both cases publics becomes a democratic “innovator”. The emergence of protests on post-soviet space, in such countries as Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine only raises the importance of the research and highlights its importance for both scientific community and possible stakeholders.

## “Protest Publics” in Egypt and Turkey from 2011 till Present Days: Assessment of Impact on Political Changes

**Alexander Igorevich Anufriev**, MA in Public Policy, National Research University “Higher School of Economics”

**Dmitry Gennadievich Zaytsev**, Cand.Pol.Sc., National Research University “Higher School of Economics”

*Abstract: The article suggests a theoretical framework to analyze the impact of protest publics on the mechanism of political changes. An analysis of protests in Egypt and Turkey shows the non-linear nature of the political changes. It also highlights different roles that*

*the protest publics could play in the mechanism of political changes: depending on the prevailing conditions and the actions of other actors, protest publics can build coalitions with other actors and provide democratic changes (“triggers” of democratic development) or protest publics can provide democratic alternative by developing democratic practices of civil participation. This trend is marginal, though, comparing with the dominant tendency towards strengthening of authoritarian regimes (“democratic innovators in authoritarian environment”).” Authors raise further research questions of modeling the mechanisms of political changes in the conditions of the growing wave of democratization – in embedded democracies, as well as in consolidated democracies, in hybrid and authoritarian regimes, – on the one hand, and the crisis of traditional democratic institutions – representative democracy, political parties – on the other.*

**Keywords:** protests, Arab Spring, Middle East, Egypt, Turkey, protest publics, political actors, political change.

## “Протестная публика” в Египте и Турции с 2011 по настоящее время: оценка влияния на политические изменения

**Александр Игоревич Ануфриев**, магистр публичной политики, Национальный исследовательский университет «Высшая Школа Экономики»

**Дмитрий Геннадьевич Зайцев**, к. полит. н., Национальный исследовательский университет «Высшая Школа Экономики»

**Аннотация:** Данная статья предлагает теоретическую базу для анализа влияния протестной публики на механизмы политических изменений. Анализ протестов в Египте и Турции показывает нелинейный характер политических изменений. Он также выдвигает на первый план различные позиции, которые протестная публика в этих странах может потенциально занимать в механизме политических изменений: в зависимости от условий и действий других субъектов, протестная публика может создавать коалиции с другими участниками и обеспечить демократические перемены (т.е. являться «триггером» демократического развития) или же обеспечивать демократическую альтернативу путем развития демократической практики гражданского участия. Хотя эта тенденция и незначительная по сравнению с доминирующей тенденцией к усилению авторитарных режимов («демократических новаторов в авторитарной среде»). Авторы поднимают дальнейшие исследовательские вопросы моделирования механизмов политических изменений в условиях растущей волны демократизации – в имитационных демократических режимах, а также в консолидированных демократиях, в гибридных и авторитарных режимах, – с одной стороны, и кризиса традиционных демократических институтов – представительской демократии, – с другой.

**Ключевые слова:** протест, Арабская весна, Ближний Восток, Египет, Турция, протестная публика, субъект политики, политические изменения.