Revolution and Democracy:

Sociopolitical Systems in the Context of Modernisation

Leonid E. Grinin and Andrey V. Korotayev

Abstract *The stability of socio-political systems and the risks of destabilisation in the process of political transformation are among the most important issues of social development; the transition to democracy may pose a serious threat to the stability of a respective socio-political system. This article studies the issue of democratisation. It highlights the high economic and social costs of a rapid transition to democracy for countries unprepared for it—democracy resulting from revolutions or similar large-scale events. The authors believe that in a number of cases authoritarian regimes turn out to be more effective in economic and social terms than emerging democracies, especially those of a revolutionary type, which are often incapable of ensuring social order and may have a swing to authoritarianism. Effective authoritarian regimes can also be a suitable form of transition to an efficient and stable democracy. Using historical and contemporary examples, particularly the recent events in Egypt, the article investigates various correlations between revolutionary events and the possibility of establishing democracy in a society.*

Keywords: democracy, revolution, extremists, counterrevolution, Islamists, authoritarianism, military takeover, economic efficiency, globalisation, Egypt

Introduction

It is not surprising that in five years none of the revolutions of the Arab Spring has solved any urgent issues. Unfortunately, this was probably never a possibility. Various studies suggest a link between

revolutions and the degree of modernisation of a society.[1] Our research reveals that the very processes of modernisation, regardless of the level of consumption and the rate of population growth, is closely and organically linked to the risk of social and political upheaval, which can easily escalate into devastating revolutions and civil wars.[2] Therefore, cases of crisis-free development in the context of modernisation and an exit from the Malthusian trap should be considered exceptions that need special explanations. True revolutions often occur in economically successful or even very successful modernising societies. However, this very success leads other, less economically successful, less modernised societies to have unrealistic expectations, which then become the ideological basis for social upheaval. In the 2010s, the situation in such countries as Egypt and Tunisia followed this model.

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Revolution and Reaction

The mood in Egypt in July 2013 was exultant. The revolutionaries were jubilant and their slogans demanded true democracy. They were triumphant because the Egyptian military had ousted the legitimate democratically-elected President.

Paradoxically, the Muslim Brotherhood's post-revolutionary political rhetoric sounded incomparably more advanced than their secularist opponents' archaic ideology. The secularists, as well as the military backing them, identified "the people" (in an absolutely archaic manner) with the crowd in Tahrir Square, while the Brotherhood appealed to formal legitimate democratic procedures. Why were the revolutionaries excited with the overthrow of the legitimately elected President? What was this? An absurdity? A paradox? A peculiarity of Egypt? In fact, it is simply a common outcome of revolutionary events. Thus, the major issue to be discussed is whether revolution and democracy are always closely related. 'Every revolution ends in reaction. It is inevitable, it is a law' wrote Berdyaev, who further explored this idea through serious intellectual efforts and personal political experience.[3] Berdyaev, of course, was limited by the early 20th century context and the past and the present century have shown that the stability of the democratic accomplishments of a given revolution depends largely on the phase of society's transition to modernisation and on its cultural traditions. Successful democratic revolutions tend to occur in countries with a high level of socio-cultural and economic development, and where a long period of fascination with, and disappointment in, democracy has

already occurred (including cycles of democracy and authoritarianism). After such revolutions stable democratic regimes are more likely. Some examples are the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal and the 1989 Velvet Revolution in the former Czechoslovakia.[4] These revolutions were largely non-violent and proceeded rather quickly.[5]

The history of such political overthrows starts in England, with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, though recent decades of human history have witnessed a large number of them.[6] If a society is not properly modernised (re: demography)[7]—if illiteracy is high, if the rural population constitutes a large percentage of the total population, if the strong influence of traditionalists is present, etc.—Berdayev's law, that a revolution will transform into a reaction, will likely come true.[8] After some time, the idea of democracy can again start generating a new revolutionary explosion. Still, there are many historical examples of democracy and authoritarianism alternating many times. It should be noted that in less-modernised societies, a revolution faces large-scale challenges, and its intensity can provoke a strong resistance. Extending his idea, Berdyaev wrote: 'The more violent and radical is a revolution, the stronger is the reaction. The alternation of revolutions and reactions makes a mysterious circle.'[9] A typical example here is China, which after the first revolution in its modern history—the democratic Xinhai Revolution of 1911—yielded to Yuan Shikai's dictatorship. Many times attempts were made to restore democratic institutions, but China eventually plunged into long-lasting anarchy and civil war.

The path to stable and sustainable democracy is rather long and complicated.[10] In any case, it requires a certain minimum level of economic, social and cultural development. Apart from a few known exceptions, liberal democracy, as a rule, will not endure long in countries with a largely illiterate population and a large rural population with low living standards. Modernisation in relatively large countries always proceeds unevenly. As a result, in modernising countries a rather modernised 'core' is formed, while the periphery (where the majority of the population lives) remains rather weakly modernised and prone to conservatism. Revolutionaries, who claim to care for the people, typically grow disappointed in the people and the people's conservatism, particularly when the people start voting in a way that is different from the liberals' and radicals' expectations.[11] This segment of the population often prefers order, stability and familiar forms of structure to some unfamiliar political ideology. Moreover, they prefer

the material and concrete to some ethereal freedom.

The stability of democracy does not depend on the extent to which a constitution is democratic, but on how political institutions and actors adapt to each other and are ready to play the game. French sociologist Raymond Aron notes in his study *Democracy and Totalitarianism* that 'stability and efficiency are supported not by the constitutional rules as such, but by their harmony with the party system, with the nature of parties, their programs and political conceptions.'[12] This naturally takes much time to achieve. Similar ideas on the high standards to be applied to a society, its leaders and bureaucracy were also explored by Joseph Schumpeter.[13]

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Thus, the people (or the majority of the people) can eventually and unconsciously betray the ideals of a revolution and the very notion of democracy. On the other hand, the populace's sensible pragmatism can prove wiser than the educated, radical, revolutionary minority's lofty ideals and aspirations. When people choose a leader by intuition—a leader with all his drawbacks, vices and egoism—they generally choose a moderate and more appropriate course for the country. At the same time, as we witness today in some Middle Eastern countries, it can happen that even the revolutionary minority itself can give up on democratic principles. Thus, the conservative majority can turn out to be more democratically-oriented. This is not surprising. As already stated, in the process of modernisation, a country's core is modernised more quickly and thus, the urban 'liberal-revolutionary' minority is surrounded by the conservative—though not necessarily 'counter-revolutionary'—majority in the provinces.[14] The increasing adherence to democracy on the side of the conservative, 'reactionary' majority is quite natural, as with fair elections their preferred candidates have a good chance of coming to power through an absolutely democratic procedure. Meanwhile, among the revolutionary, 'progressive' minority, the adherence to democratic ideals is often undermined when fair elections end with the defeat of their chosen candidates.

Even in societies where democracy appears restricted through the manipulation of the 'party in power,' quite a large part of the populace, perhaps even the majority, stays loyal to that power. Though they may be discontented in some respects, they remain conservative. The rulers can win even fair elections, but certainly in less dramatic fashion than they win rigged elections in which they garner 80-90% of votes. In theory, the incumbent party could do without election fraud, but this

is how the system of 'controlled democracy' functions. It forces local authorities to demonstrate their loyalty, because, to an authoritarian ruler, a slight or moderate majority at elections appears to be a show of no confidence.

As to the correlation between revolution and democracy, Lenin once stated that 'the key question of every revolution is undoubtedly the question of state power.'[15] In the early stages of modernisation, revolutionaries who are too devoted to their initial slogans inevitably fail, because their appeals, although attractive and inspiring to the masses, are still unrealisable under existing conditions. According to the logic of revolution, this is what makes the revolutionaries in power ignore democracy or even suppress it—as when the Bolsheviks dismissed the Russian Constituent Assembly. This continues the escalation of violence. In some cases, those who are too devoted to democratic revolutionary ideals are substituted (in a non-democratic or, less frequently, a democratic way) by those who are less democracy-driven but are more prone to radicalism. The French Revolution of 1789–1799 and the ascendance of Napoleon serves as a classic example.

Pitirim Sorokin, who studied the history and typology of multiple revolutions in the ancient world, pointed out that famine and/or war often trigger a revolution.[16] In Greek *poleis* and Roman *civitates*, intense socio-political struggle between citizens for power and rights was much more frequent than peaceful periods. Lenin also considered the 'aggravation of the masses' as one of the main attributes of the revolutionary situation. However, current research presents different findings: Revolutions are often preceded by a rather long period of rising living standards.[17] Such growth, however, often increases social inequality and stratification. This incceases social tensions in a society and brings to life the idea that the living standard achieved by a part of population should become the majority's property. At the same time, the modernisation of society allows a stratum of intellectuals to form who strive for higher living standards; students and recent graduates are its 'striking force.' Naturally, the number of lucrative positions adequate to their education level is always limited.

It is an important aspect of revolution theory that excessive expectations emerge when the growth of living standards fails to meet the expectations of the majority of the population. Increasing inequality and violent breaches of common justice on the part of men in power further fuels public discontent. The most volatile situation arises

when, after a period of substantial growth, there happens to be an interruption. This is often not the fault of the authorities; the path to modernisation is never entirely smooth. However, when this happens, people's expectations—including those of the elite—continue to grow by inertia, while the actual satisfaction level experienced by the majority decreases (the so-called Davies' J-Curve).[18] As a result, the gap between expectations and satisfaction reaches a critical level and triggers a social explosion. In respect to Egypt, this refers both to the Mubarak and Morsi eras. Immediately after the January 25 Revolution, metropolitan citizens' expectations grew immensely while their satisfaction drastically declined. This brought the 'difference of potentials,' which, in many ways, led to the dismissal of the first democratically elected President of Egypt. The same 'difference of potentials' may also turn fatal for subsequent Egyptian regimes.

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In what way is all this related to democracy? First, democracy can become the opposition's key idea, a magic wand that is thought to solve all social problems. The natural implication is that democracy is a system that will inevitably move the "right leaders," the oppositionists, to power. When a rigid regime is in power, especially a non-democratic or power- usurping regime, overthrowing it becomes a goal in itself. The regime embodies society's every evil, and it is believed that these evils will then disappear with the fall of the regime. The regime is seen as having no positive, valuable or advanced characteristics. Anything positive that may have occurred during the regime's tenure is thought to have occurred spontaneously and revolutionaries naturally assume that any positive developments would have been even more positive had the regime not been in place, suppressing all that is good.

However, in spite of the frustration that is widespread in society, the ideals of democracy actually penetrate only a small minority of minds. For most people, who have a limited cultural intelligence and relatively narrow vital problems, 'democracy' is a mere word (or something established by someone but not necessary for the population to take part in).[19] Under certain circumstances, the ideology-driven minority can attract the majority which is indifferent to democracy (but not to personal problems), and there can arise a revolutionary situation. But from this point it is a long way to a strong democracy.

There can be no doubt that the revolutionaries' activity, their good organisation, propaganda and persistence can play a great part in elections. Still, their effectiveness is less than it was when they, the rev-

olutionaries, were organising anti-government meetings and actions. Outcries do not lead to an easy victory. The defeat of revolutionaries is caused to a great extent by their internal disagreements, which might seem insignificant to an outside observer but are crucial to the parties themselves. As a result, democratic elections, for whose sake the revolution was actually undertaken, seem to bring victory to conservative forces. Then comes the moment of truth. Revolutionaries must ask themselves: What is more important? Democratic ideals or revolution itself? It becomes a question of whether the revolutionaries truly seek democracy or merely want to see constant overthrows and the escalation of changes in society.

This challenge is solved in different ways by different parties in different countries and situations. Some political forces are unable to reconsider the situation and to diverge from their absolutes. Thus, the Mensheviks during the Civil War in Russia hesitated to join either the Whites or the Bolsheviks, disappearing as a political force by 1922. Quite frequently, however, revolution is undertaken for the sake of rather vague revolutionary principles and, ultimately, the desire for power becomes of utmost importance.

In recent decades, in any situation where radicals have overthrown a government and their own party loses the subsequent elections, the elections are assumed to have been fixed. Thereafter, the revolutionaries insist on using force. 'Colour revolutions' in post-Soviet states, Serbia and other countries are a good example of this phenomenon. Democracy becomes of lesser importance than defeating the opponent at any cost. Revolution, as any type of politics, is hardly a fair fight. Provocations, disinformation, deceit and backstage dealings are what it takes to succeed. Enmity towards government and opponents is often stirred up through direct or indirect murder (shooting from within a crowd or something of this kind)[20] which can lead to the escalation of violence, the formation of military guards, etc. Violence and intimidation then become the norm. Consequently, the violation of democracy is not considered something terrible. This logic is quite clear and explicable and it is at this point where revolution and democracy diverge.

In short, a society with uncertain democratic values operates on the following principle: 'We will support democracy if our candidate wins elections. If he does not, we do not need such a democracy.'[21] The ability to lose elections, to acknowledge the value of the rules of the

democratic game, to wait for the next elections and to work hard to win—these are the essential signs of social readiness for democracy.

Why Do the Pathways of Democracy and Revolution Often Diverge?

Since revolutions often occur in societies unprepared for democracy, it often happens that at early and intermediate stages of modernisation the pathways of democracy and revolution eventually diverge. Their conjunction at relatively early stages is the exception rather than the rule. As previously stated, some exceptions include the 'velvet revolutions' in Czechoslovakia and some other Eastern European countries, the Glorious Revolution in England and the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. Of course, it would be highly desirable for all revolutions to follow the same scenario. However, at the initial stages of modernisation this can be hardly realised, as 'velvet' revolutions typically occur at the end of a long-lasting social and political development.

Political opponents can make more-or-less active attempts to turn the revolution to their advantage through reduction, renunciation or abolition of democratic procedures and institutions that were established during the revolution. Sometimes they succeed. In all cases, these attempts produce some effect—often the effect is a dramatic aggravation of the conflict. Thus, the genuine and full-scale democracy that the revolution is striving to achieve soon starts to contradict both the real purposes of revolution and other political goals and conditions. Democratically elected authorities, or even a transitional pro-democratic government, are either overthrown or separated—in full or in part—from democracy, transforming into a pseudo-democratic organization like England's Long Parliament. One should also keep in mind that the key issue of revolution is always one of power. Democracy is acceptable so long as it supports the domination of the most powerful group, party, social stratum, etc.

A large-scale and omnipotent democracy is not the typical outcome of a revolution. Due to the lack of necessary institutions and the inability (of some) to live according to democratic laws—and to the fact that revolution is always a struggle between opposing forces involving huge masses of people—in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period pure democracy is reduced and transformed in differing ways and degrees, depending on a society's peculiarities, results of political

struggle and other factors. In societies that are ready for democracy and where modernisation has been completed, this can be an insignificant reduction—for example, the prohibition to propose a candidate from among the former members of communist parties. It is worth noting that universal suffrage, taken as a model today, was not legalised in a day and there were often prerequisites to voting. Even in the US, whose comprehensive democracy fascinated Alexis de Tocqueville so much in 1831, democracy was not perfect. Native Americans, African Americans and women, among others, were deprived of voting rights. Moreover, presidential elections were not direct. In 1831 in Great Britain, the cradle of modern democracy, only a small percentage of population had the right to vote. In 1789 in France, the part of the Estates-General, which first called themselves the National Assembly and then the National Constituent Assembly, passed many important laws regarding the electoral process. But one should remember that these election rules had little, if anything, to do with current notions of democracy.

Just as an embryo passes through certain stages of development, non-democratic societies go through stages of evolution on the path to democracy, associated with democracy's limitations. However, in many cases democracy is limited, because it fails to function to its fullest extent due to the above-mentioned reasons. In the course of a revolution, these restrictions can be associated with attempts to secure political advantage; with revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence (both of which can be observed in Egypt); with the activity of a powerful ideological or any other type of centre (for example, in Iran); with a dictatorial body; with the introduction of property or political qualifications; with assassination or arrest of the opposition's leaders (as occurred in Egypt recently); with the curtailment of free speech; with the formation of repressive unconstitutional bodies; etc.

The post-revolutionary regime also tends to either restrict democracy or merely imitate it. In the contemporary world, some common ways of limiting democracy are the falsification of election results, the repression of political opponents (a recent example is Ukraine, where one of the opposition political leaders was imprisoned) and constitutional and legal tricks (Russia provides remarkable examples). There are some peculiar cases, such as Iran, when there is a non-democratic force, constitutional or unconstitutional, which enjoys supreme authority. The most widespread method, however, is still the military

coup or attempts at revolutionary overthrow (Georgia and Kyrgyzstan provide numerous examples). Military forces step in when a democratic government decays or degrades or when a state reaches an impasse. On the other hand, the military also cannot remain in power indefinitely, or even for very long, without legalising the regime. At some point, they must hand over authority to the civilian community and hold elections.

Thus, the general political course of modernising societies follows the democratic trend, increasingly approaching the ideal, though the path getting there can be severe and painful. Development can remain incomplete, oscillating within the controlled quasi-democratic system. In Egypt, for example, the last presidential election, held 26-28 May 2014, was much less democratic than the previous one, as the Muslim Brotherhood had been proclaimed a terrorist organization.

'Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others,' Winston Churchill once said. For societies just embarking on the path to democracy, the first phrase is of utmost importance. Democracy has numerous drawbacks, though mature democratic societies have found ways to mitigate them. In young democracies, however, these drawbacks can become severe. Acquiring immunity against such 'infantile diseases' of democracy is a long and painful process. As a result, a society can become unstable (as in the case with lack of immunity against private property and free markets—rather egoistic institutions if they are not restricted). It is clear that the introduction of formally democratic institutions is absolutely insufficient, because, despite including multi-party elections, they often conceal or even legitimise the actual existence of authoritarian rule.[22]

In conclusion, we should note that the transition from an authoritarian regime to democracy occurs in three main ways: through a revolution (quickly, from below); a military takeover or coup d'état; or a reformation (gradually, from above). In previous epochs, the reformative way was almost impossible, so the path to democracy was paved by revolutions and counterrevolutions. Still, some rather successful examples of a reformative transition to democracy—or at least steps in a democratic direction—can be observed as early as in the 19th century. For example, in Japan, the parliament was established from above in 1889. In Germany, Otto Bismarck introduced full male suffrage in 1867, while in Prussia the election system proper was established by the Revolution of 1848. Some Latin American states experienced transitions

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from military dictatorship to democracy, though democracy was never firmly established in this region, barring a few exceptions. However, in the 20th century, especially in its last decades, we can find numerous examples of the voluntary dismantling of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes by the military or other dictatorships. This occurred largely as a consequence of globalisation. Examples include Spain, Chile and other Latin American countries, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and the USSR. Some significant steps towards democratisation were also made by the Arab monarchic states. Paradoxical at first sight, on the eve of the Arab Spring, most Arab monarchies appeared much more democratic than the majority of Arab republics.[23]

Such a non-revolutionary transition to democracy, *ceteris paribus*, can turn out to be more direct and secure. This is especially important in societies where there is no significant positive correlation between democratic government and GDP growth rates. In authoritarian states higher GDP growth rates are more likely than in young democracies—let alone in post-revolutionary systems[24]—and in the context of modernisation, economic growth rates are of crucial importance.

Democracy, Revolution and Counterrevolution in Egypt: An Analysis of Conflicting Forces

Our young Egyptian friends (a sort of 'leftist liberal group of revolutionaries') consider the post 3 July events in their country to be 'counterrevolution.' We tend to agree with them—except on one important point. Almost by definition, revolutionaries regard the 'counterrevolution' as something unequivocally negative, whereas we believe that the present-day political regime has serious positive aspects. (Although, there is no doubt that its formation has led in the last two years to the significant growth of authoritarian tendencies.) It may fairly be termed a 'counterrevolution,' as it returned to power the very same military, economic and bureaucratic elite that had ruled the country before the 2011 Revolution. However, as we have already demonstrated,[25] this elite had ruled Egypt in a quite effective way. In the years preceding the revolution, they rather successfully (especially, against the global background) helped further the economic and social development of the country.

However, it would be quite wrong to say that Egypt has returned to precisely the state it was in before the revolution. Some newly emerging features are contributing very evidently to regime destabilisation.

Foremost among these is the radicalisation of the Muslim Brother-
hood coupled with the emergence of their very strong media support
in the form of Al Jazeera's satellite channel, *Mubasher Misr.*[26]

The revolution in 2011 was able to achieve a rather easy victory due
to the following two points: First, it was a very much a conflict among
the elite— a factor that is important for the success of revolutions in
general[27] and one that was especially important for the success of all
the Arab revolutions of 2011.[28] It was primarily a conflict between the
military ('the old guard') and the economic elite ('the young guard'),
a group of leading Egyptian businessmen headed by Gamal Mubarak.
Since 2004, the government had been implementing rather effective
economic reforms that led to the significant acceleration of economic
growth in Egypt.[29] The military was frightened by the ascent of the
'young guard,' who controlled the economic bloc of the Egyptian gov-
ernment. Over the past few decades, the Egyptian military has not lim-
ited its focus to security matters and has acquired valuable real estate
and numerous industries. The military elite controlled (and still con-
trols) not only the Egyptian armed forces, but also a major part of the
Egyptian economy. This includes large tracts of land; various real es-
tate; petrol stations; construction and transportation enterprises; and
various factories that produce not only military supplies and weapons,
but also goods such as TV sets, refrigerators, spaghetti, olive oil, shoe
cream and so on.[30] Estimates of the share of the Egyptian economy
controlled by the military range between 10 and 40 per cent.[31]

Before the events of 2011, Egyptian officers expressed concern about
President Mubarak's plan to appoint his son Gamal as his successor.
Many believed that if Gamal took office, he would implement priva-
tisation policies that would dismantle the military's business hold-
ings'.[32] Indeed, there was reason to expect that in the event that Gamal
Mubarak did come to power, the leading Egyptian businessmen from
his circle would establish effective control over the generals' economic
empire. This would be rather easy to justify due to the military's inef-
fective and exploitive handling of their economic assets.

The conflict among the Egyptian elite allows us to understand some
events of the Egyptian Revolution that may look mysterious at first
glance. For example, throughout the revolution, the army quite rigor-
ously guarded all official buildings, effectively blocking the protesters'
attempts to seize them. However, already on the first days of the revo-
lution (on 28 and 29 January 2011) the army allowed the protestors to

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seize, demolish and burn the headquarters of the National Democratic Party, the ruling party of Mubarak's Egypt. On closer inspection it does not seem so strange, as the real head of this party was none other than Gamal Mubarak; thus, the military elite delivered a strong blow upon its archenemy using the hands of the protestors.[33]

It is still rather fashionable to interpret the Egyptian events of January and February 2011 as a sort of 'confrontation between the masses of revolutionary people and the repressive authoritarian regime.' However, through this lens, one could hardly understand the enigmatic (but extremely famous) 'Battle of the Camel,' in which a motley crew of cameleers—workers of tourist services operating in the Pyramids area and engaged in renting horses and camels to tourists—attempted to disperse the Tahrir protesters. The cameleers attacked the protesters while riding camels and horses, which, incidentally, rendered an exotic colour to the events of 2 February and to the revolution in general. However, if this was indeed 'the confrontation of popular masses and the repressive authoritarian regime,' why was it necessary for the authoritarian regime to employ such strange, amateurish figures instead of a professional repressive apparatus?

On 2 February, Tahrir protesters were confronted not by a professional repressive apparatus controlled by the 'old guard,' which that took the position of friendly neutrality toward the protesters, but by a semi-criminal element employed by the economic elite to counteract the protesters, who were demanding the removal of Gamal Mubarak.[34] Thus, already in early February 2011, the protesters in Tahrir were being countered not by the authoritarian state, but by a clique of ultra-rich businessmen who did not control the repressive apparatus. This accounts, to a considerable extent, for the easy 'victory of the revolutionary masses.'

The second point that secured the unexpectedly swift success of the protestors was the formation of an unexpectedly wide opposition alliance, which united in a single rather coordinated front of diverse forces, including not only all the possible secular opposition groups—liberals, leftists, nationalists and so on—but also Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood.

The situation that we observe now is exactly the opposite.

First, the Egyptian Revolution made the Egyptian economic elite reconcile with the military, and in June 2013 they acted together in a well-coordinated front that allowed for a swift overthrow of President

Morsi,[35] whereas no serious cracks in the new coalition between the Egyptian military and the economic elite (which was formed in the first half of 2013) are visible yet. The economic elite understand that, for them, it would be extremely counterproductive to continue any serious attempts to get hold of any economic assets controlled by the military; it is much better for them to recognize the dominant position of the military in the ruling bloc, as well as the immunity and inviolability of the generals' economic empire (sometimes through direct constitutional amendments). The economic elite realise that any serious attempts on their part to get the dominant position in the ruling bloc may result in losing incomparably more than what they might gain[36].

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Second, the revolution and the subsequent counterrevolution led to an extremely deep split in the January 2011 opposition 'macro-alliance.' It is important to understand that this split took place along many lines. Within this macro-alliance, even the Islamist alliance was split, as the 3 July coup was supported by the second strongest Islamist party, the Islamist fundamentalists Hizb al-Noor, as well as by a number of prominent Islamic figures outside of it. Of course, the support of a secularist-military regime by the Egyptian Salafi Islamists needs special commentary. A special commentary is also needed to explain why, in July 2013, the archconservative Islamist Saudi Arabian regime acted as a faithful ally of an anti-Islamist alliance that included an exceptionally wide range of forces—liberals, nationalists, leftists, ultraleftists and even Trotskyists.[37] The main point here appears to be that Saudi Arabia acts as the main financial sponsor of Hizb al-Noor;[38] additionally, the Muslim Brotherhood pose a real threat to the Saudi regime. In 1937 in the USSR, it was much less dangerous to proclaim oneself a Slavophil than a Trotskyist (declaring oneself a Trotskyist in 1937 was a good way to get immediately executed), whereas for non-Marxists the difference between Stalinists and Trotskyists might look entirely insignificant. Similarly, for the Saudis, Trotskyists are a sort of unreal exotics, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood present a more realistic threat, being leftist Islamists who effectively question the basic legitimacy of the regime and may even take concrete steps to overthrow it.[39] Against such a background, one can easily understand the readiness of Saudi Arabia to ally with anybody—anti-Islamist liberals and Communists, the Egyptian military and economic elite—in order to weaken a homeland enemy that threatens the very survival of the Arabian monarchies.

On the other hand, for the Egyptian Salafis, the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from the legal political arena was objectively advantageous (irrespective of any connections with the Saudi interests), as it allowed them to significantly strengthen their own position as the primary legal Islamist party of the country. The secular leftist-liberal alliance has also been split, as the majority of its members were very frightened by a year Muslim Brotherhood rule; that is why they continue to support the present regime. However, the forces that continue to oppose the regime remain deeply split as well, as the anti-regime leftist liberal-revolutionary youth still consider any alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood out of the question. One of the youths' main slogans translates as: 'Down, down with all those who betrayed, be they military or Muslim Brothers!'

We believe that new revolutionary paradoxes in Egypt will continue to emerge. Revolutionary events often assume a paradoxical character. Revolutionary repressions often turn against those who were meant to benefit from the revolution. Those whose names were on banners when overthrowing the old power, often join the counter-revolutionary camp in masses. Zealous monarchists and the henchmen of authoritarianism suddenly turn into democrats, while those who considered democracy their highest value are ready to establish a dictatorship.

Conclusion

Revolutions have been observed for many centuries. The history of some regions, such as the Hellenistic states, Ancient Rome and many Eastern countries, can be presented in political terms as a struggle between social and political groups for the distribution of resources and power. Only from the early modern period, however, did revolutions become one of the major driving forces of historical processes. Advanced modernisation and profound transformations of society are usually associated with major social and political revolutions, such as have occurred in Britain, France, other European countries, North America and, later, in other parts of the world.

Starting in the modern era, most revolutions have been underpinned by seriously disproportional development, which occurs as the result of rapid modernisation. These disproportions become even larger due to rapid population growth and a sharply increasing share of urban population and youth, which further social tension.

Our study of a number of developmental models, applied to differ-

ent countries in different epochs, shows that regardless of consumption level and population growth rate, the processes of modernisation are intrinsically linked to social and political cataclysms, such as revolutions and outbreaks of violence. That is why one should consider cases of crisis-free development in the course of modernisation, and escape from the Malthusian trap, as exceptional rather than typical. Revolutions frequently occur in economically successful or even very successful societies. However, this very success leads to unrealistic expectations, which then become the ideological basis for other revolutions, as evidenced by the recent upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia.

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With the acceleration of historical processes, the number of revolutions has increased. The 20th century witnessed many. Being quite familiar with the theory of revolutions, Lenin noted that the basic issue of any revolution is power. Even the most legitimate change of any political regime, be it monarchic or democratic, inevitably leads to considerable breakdowns in the functioning of administrative and political mechanisms. However, revolutionary overthrows cause much more dramatic breakdowns of a system's functioning, often bringing unpredictable consequences. In general, revolutions are, and have always been, a disruptive and devastating way of forging social progress.

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Notes

1   See, for example, Samuel P. Huntington (1968), *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
2   See, *e.g.*, Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev (2012b), *Cycles, Crises and*

Traps of Modern World-System, Moscow: LKI. In Russian; Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev (2012a), 'Does "Arab Spring" Mean the Beginning of World System Reconfiguration?' *World Futures* 68(7), pp. 471–505; Leonid Grinin (2013), 'State and Socio-Political Crises in the Process of Modernization,' *Social Evolution & History* 12(2), pp. 35–76; Andrey Korotayev *et al.* (2011), 'A Trap at the Escape from the Trap? Demographic-Structural Factors of Political Instability in Modern Africa and West Asia,' *Cliodynamics* 2(2), pp. 276–303, etc.

3   Nikolay Berdyaev (1990), *The Philosophy of Inequality*, Moscow: IMA-PRESS. In Russian, p. 29; see also Ted Robert Gurr (1988), 'War, revolution and the growth of the coercive state,' *Comparative Political Studies* 21, pp. 45–65.

4   In addition, scholars also tend to characterise as such some other revolutions/ revolutionary reforms in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the 1986 Revolution in the Philippines, as well as the revolutionary reforms in South Africa in the early 1990s: 'Until very recently, revolutions have invariably failed to produce democracy. The need to consolidate a new regime in the face of struggles with domestic and foreign foes has instead produced authoritarian regimes, often in the guise of populist dictatorships such as those of Napoleon, Castro and Mao, or of one party states such as the PRI state in Mexico or the Communist Party-led states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the struggle required to take and hold power in revolutions generally leaves its mark in the militarized and coercive character of new revolutionary regimes (Gurr (1988)). It is therefore striking that in several recent revolutions—in the Philippines in 1986, in South Africa in 1990, in Eastern European nations in 1989–1991—the sudden collapse of the old regime has led directly to new democracies, often against strong expectations of reversion to dictatorship.' – Jack A. Goldstone (2001), 'Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, p. 168; see also John Foran and Jeff Goodwin (1993), 'Revolutionary outcomes in Iran and Nicaragua: coalition fragmentation, war and the limits of social transformation,' *Theory & Society* 22, pp. 209–247; Sasha Weitman (1992), 'Thinking the revolutions of 1989,' *British Journal of Sociology* 43, pp. 13–24; Robert A. Pastor (1991), 'Preempting revolutions: the boundaries of U.S. influence,' *International Security* 15, pp. 54–86.

5   In a certain sense, even the French Revolution of 1870–1871 fits this model if one excludes the episode with the Paris Commune. At the same time, the experience of a number of successful countries, in particular South Korea and Indonesia (to the degree it can be considered successful at present), show that, at a certain stage of modernisation, authoritarianism may contribute to its expansion. However, in this case it objectively paves the way for its own limitation and consequent political democratisation. For detail see Anatoly Prosorobsky (2009), *A Political leader and Modernization in the East. The experience of Indonesia and South Korea in the Second Half of the 20th Century*, Moscow: IMEMO RAN. In Russian.

6   Jack A. Goldstone (2001), 'Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, p. 141.

7   The structural-demographic factors regularly generating social explosions in the modernisation process are thoroughly investigated in our previous publications—see, *e.g.*, Andrey Korotayev, Artemy Malkov, Daria Khaltourina (2006), *Introduction to Social Macrodynamics: Secular Cycles and Millennial Trends*. Moscow: KomKniga/URSS; Andrey Korotayev and Daria Khaltourina (2006), *Introduction to Social Macrodynamics: Secular Cycles and Millennial Trends in Africa*. Moscow: KomKniga/URSS; Peter Turchin and Andrey Korotayev (2006), 'Population Density and Warfare: A Reconsideration,' *Social Evolution & History* 5(2), pp. 121–158; Andrey Korotayev, Leonid Grinin *et al.* (2011), 'Toward the Forecasting of the Risks of Political Instability in the African Countries over the Period till 2050,' in Askar Akaev, Andrey Korotayev, GeorgyMalinetsky (eds.) *Project and Risks of the Future. Concepts, Models, Tools and Forecasts*, Moscow: URSS, pp. 337–356. In Russian; Andrey Korotayev *et al.* (2011), 'A Trap at the Escape from the Trap? Demographic-Structural Factors of Political Instability in Modern Africa and West Asia,' *Cliodynamics* 2(2), pp. 276–303; Andrey Korotayev *et al.* (2012), 'The Social-Demographic Analisis of Arab Spring,' in Andrey Korotayev, Julia Zinkina, Alexander Khodunov (eds.) *The Arab Spring of 2011. A Systemic Monitoring of Global and Regional Risks*, Moscow: LIBROCOM/URSS, pp. 28–76. In Russian; Leonid Grinin (2011), 'From the Malthusian Trap to the Modernization Trap. To the Forecasting of the Dynamics of Political Instability in the Countries of the World-System Periphery,' in Askar Akaev, Andrey Korotayev and Georgy Malinetsky (eds.) *Projects and Risks of the Future. Concepts, Models, Tools and Forecasts*. Moscow URSS, pp. 337–356; Leonid Grinin (2012a), 'State and Socio-Political Crises in the Process of Modernization,' *Cliodynamics* 3(1), pp. 124–157; Grinin 2012a, Andrey Korotayev, Leonid Issaev and Alisa Shishkina (2013), 'Women in the Islamic Economy: a Cross-Cultural Perspective,' *St Petersburg Annual of Asian and African Studies* 2, pp. 105–116; Andrey Korotayev, Leonid Issaev and Alisa Shishkina (2015), 'Female Labor Force Participation Rate, Islam and Arab Culture in Cross-Cultural Perspective,' *Cross-Cultural Research* 49(1), pp. 3–19; Andrey Korotayev and Julia Zinkina (2014), 'How to optimize fertility and prevent humanitarian catastrophes in Tropical Africa,' *African Studies in Russia* 6, pp. 94–107; Julia Zinkina and Andrey Korotayev (2014a), 'Explosive population growth in Tropical Africa: Crucial omission in development forecasts (emerging risks and way out),' *World Futures* 70(4), pp. 271–305; Julia Zinkina and Andrey Korotayev (2014b), 'Projecting Mozambique's Demographic Futures,' *Journal of Futures Studies* 19(2), pp. 21–40; Andrey Korotayev, Sergey Malkov and Leonid Grinin (2014), 'A Trap at the Escape from the Trap? Some Demographic Structural Factors of Political Instability in Modernizing Social Systems,' *History & Mathematics* 4, pp. 201–267. Hence, we will not describe them here.

8   See, *e.g.*, Leonid Grinin, Andrey Korotayev (2016). MENA Region and the

Possible Beginning of World System Reconfiguration. *Comparative political and economic perspectives on the MENA Region* / M. Mustafa Erdogdu and Bryan Christiansen, editors. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference, 2016. P. 28–58.

9   Berdyaev (1990), p. 29.

10   Both in a particular country and in the world in general. It may seem paradoxical, but in 1990 democratic regimes were established in approximately 45.4 per cent of independent countries of the world—almost the same level as seventy years earlier, in 1922 (Huntington (1993)). On some factors affecting the genesis of democratic institutions see also, e.g., Andrey Korotayev, Dmitry Bondarenko (2000), 'Polygyny and Democracy: a Cross-Cultural Comparison,' *Cross-Cultural Research* 34(2), pp. 190–208; Andrey Korotayev (2003), 'Christianity and Democracy: A Cross-Cultural Study (Afterthoughts),' *World Cultures* 13(2), pp. 195–212.

11   See, *e.g.*, Andrey Korotayev, Leonid Issaev and Julia Zinkina (2015), 'Center-periphery dissonance as a possible factor of the revolutionary wave of 2013–2014: A cross-national analysis,' *Cross-Cultural Research* 49(5) (forthcoming).

12   Raymond Aron (1993), *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, Moscow: Tekst. In Russian, p. 125.

13   Joseph Schumpeter (1995), *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Moscow: Ekonomika. In Russian, pp. 378–385.

14   *E.g.*, Korotayev, Issaev and Zinkina (2015).

15   Vladimir Lenin (1958), 'On the Duality of Power,' in *Full Collected Works*. Vol. 31. Moscow: Politizdat, p. 145. In Russian.

16   Pitirim Sorokin (1992), *The Sociology of Revolution*. Moscow: Politizdat. In Russian.

17   See, e.g., James C. Davies (1962), 'Toward a Theory of Revolution,' *American Sociological Review* 27(1), pp. 5–19; Andrey Korotayev (2014), 'Technological Growth and Sociopolitical Destabilization: A Trap at the Escape from the Trap?' in Kasturi Mandal, Nadia Asheulova and Svetlana G. Kirdina (eds.) *Socio-Economic and Technological Innovations: Mechanisms and Institutions*, New Delhi: Narosa Publishing House, pp. 113–134; Korotayev *et al.* (2011); Korotayev *et al.* (2012); on the Egyptian revolution see Andrey Korotayev and Julia Zinkina (2011a), 'Egyptian Revolution of January 25: A Demographic Structural Analysis,' *Middle East Studies Online Journal* 2(5), 57–95, available at: <http://www.middle-east-studies.net/archives/9425> (accessed 12 May 2015).

18   Davies (1962); see also Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev (2012b), *Cycles, Crises and Traps of Modern World-System*, Moscow: LKI. In Russian.

19   Voting abstention in Russia, even when mass voter turnout could be decisive, is quite a typical example. Moreover, a large number of voters (especially the young) almost immediately upon gaining the right to vote, develop an ideological skepticism. 'Why vote? What is the use of it? Nothing will ever change. My vote means nothing.' It seems easy to go and vote, but it is somewhat difficult, as one must make a choice. On the other hand, there is some

truth in this skepticism. Some part of the Russian population is accustomed to voting: 'They say we should, so we will vote.' This explains how political apathy may, in a democratic way, support certain forces in power.

20 With respect to the Revolutions of 1848 and some other revolutionary events, see Sergey Nefedov (2008), *The Component Analysis of Historical Process*, Moscow: Territoriya buduschego. In Russian; recent examples can be found in Brazil or Ukraine.

21 An illustrative example is elections in Caucasian territories such as Karachay-Cherkessia and South Ossetia, when the opponents renounce the win of the other party, thus triggering a political crisis.

22 Larry Diamond (1999), *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

23 See, *e.g.,* Konstantin Truevtsev (2011), *The Year 2011:New Democratic Wave?* Moscow: HSE. In Russian.

24 Eckstein (1982); Eckstein (1986); Zimmermann (1990); Weede and Muller (1997); Goldstone (2001), p. 168; Polterovich and Popov (2007).

25 See, *e.g.*, Leonid Grinin (2012b), 'The Arab Spring and Reconfiguration of the World-System,' in Andrey Korotayev, Julia Zinkina and Alexander Khodunov (eds.) *Systemic Monitoring of Global and Regional Risks*. Moscow:LIBROCOM/URSS, pp. 188–223; Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev (2012a), 'Does "Arab Spring" Mean the Beginning of World System Reconfiguration?' *World Futures* 68(7), pp. 471–505; Grinin and Korotayev (2012b), pp. 251–289; Korotayev and Zinkina (2011a); Andrey Korotayev and Julia Zinkina (2011b), 'Egyptian Revolution: A Demographic Structural Analysis,' *Entelequia. Revista Interdisciplinar* 13, pp. 139–169; Korotayev *et al.* (2012).

26 http://mubasher-misr.aljazeera.net/livestream/.

27 *E.g.*, Goldstone (2001).

28 see, *e.g.*, Sharon Erickson Nepstad (2011), 'Nonviolent Resistance in the Arab Spring: The Critical Role of Military-Opposition Alliances,' *Swiss Political Science Review* 17(4), pp. 485–491; Sergey Malkov, Andrey Korotayev *et al.* (2013), 'Methodology of monitoring and forecasting of political destabilization. The Arab Spring,' *Polis* 4, pp. 134–162. In Russian; Leonid Issaev, Andrey Korotayev *et al.* (2013), 'Toward the development of methods of estimation of the current state and forecast of social instability: a quantitative analysis of the Arab Spring events,' *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 7(4), pp. 247–283.

29 *E.g.*, Korotayev and Zinkina (2011a); Korotayev and Zinkina (2011b); Andrey Korotayev and Julia Zinkina (2011c), 'The Egyptian Revolution of 2011: A Sociodemographic Analisis,' *Istoricheskaya psikhologia i sotsiologiya istorii* 2, pp. 5–29. In Russian.

30 Note that military factories (virtually possessed by Egyptian generals) have a clear competitive advantage, as they can exploit virtually free labor of the conscripts—see, *e.g.*, Sherine Tadros (2012), 'Egypt Military's Economic Empire,' *Al Jazeera In Depth*, 15 February, available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/ indepth/ features/ 2012/ 02/ 2012215195912519142.html> (accessed 09 January 2015).

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31   Delwin A. Roy (1992), 'The Hidden Economy in Egypt', *Middle Eastern Studies* 28(4), pp. 689–711; Nepstad (2011), p. 489; Tadros (2012); Shana Marshall and Joshua Stacher J. (2012), 'Egypt's Generals and Transnational Capital,' *Middle East Report* 262, available at: <http://www.merip.org/ mer/ mer262/ egypts-generals-transnational-capital> (accessed 15 January 2015). However, the latter estimate appears to be clearly exaggerated.

32   Nepstad (2011), p. 489; see also Roy (1992); Tadros (2012); Marshall and Stacher (2012).

33   See, *e.g.*, Leonid Issaev and Andrey Korotayev (2014), 'Egyptian Coup of 2013: An Econometric Analysis,' *Azija i Afrika Segodnja* 2, pp. 14–20. In Russian.

34   See Gamal Essam El-Din (2011), 'NDP's Battle of the Camel,' *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17-23 March, № 1039; Issaev and Korotayev (2014) for more detail.

35   See Issaev and Korotayev (2014) for more detail.

36   Emergent cracks in the ruling coalition are rather connected with the participation in this coalition of some leftist secularists (first of all, Hamdeen Sabahi and his Egyptian Popular Current [*al-Tayyar al-Sha`biyy al-Misriyy*]), whereas the continuation of the cooperation of this part of the ruling alliance with both military and economic elites can in no way be guaranteed. One would rather expect to see the eventual split between the left-wing and right-wing secularists in Egypt. See, e.g., Gulf News (2014), 'Sabahi fears return to autocracy,' *Gulf News*, 25 February, available at: <http://gulfnews.com/ news/region/egypt/sabahi-fears-return-to-autocracy-1.1295222> (accessed 27 April 2015); Barzou Daragahi (2015), 'Former presidential hopeful decries repression in Sisi's Egypt,' *Financial Times*, 25 January, available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9afaa5ec-9f1b-11e4-ba25-00144feab7de.html#axzz3fi51Z2Nw> (accessed 11 July 2015).

37   Sharif Abdel Kouddous (2013), 'What Happened to Egypt's Liberals after the Coup?' *The Nation*, 01 October, available at: <http://www.thenation. com/ article/ 176445/ what-happened- egypts-liberals- after-coup#> (accessed 10 July 2015); Robert Baer (2013), 'Why Saudi Arabia is Helping Crush the Muslim Brotherhood,' *New Republic,* 26 August, available at: <http:// www.newrepublic.com/ article/114468/why-saudi-arabia-helping-crush-muslim-brotherhood> (accessed 10 January 2015); Vali R. Nasr (2013), 'Islamic Comrades No More,' *The New York Times* 29 October, available at: <http:// www.nytimes.com/2013/10/29/opinion/ international/nasr-islamic-comrades-no-more.html?_r=0> (accessed 07 March 2015); Irfan al-Alawi and Stephen Schwartz (2013), 'Saudi Arabia Moves against Muslim Brotherhood amid Increased Pressure for Reform,' *The Weekly Standard,* 09 October, available at: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/saudi-arabia-moves-against-muslim-brotherhood-amid-increased-pressure-reform_762334.html> (accessed 12 January 2015); Madawi Al-Rasheed (2013), 'Saudi Arabia Pleased with Morsi's Fall,' *al-Monitor* 7, available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ originals/2013/07/saudi-arabia-glad-to-see-morsi-go.html#> (accessed 29 January 2015).

38   Marc Daou (2012), 'How Saudi petrodollars fuel rise of Salafism,' *France24*, 29 September, available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20120929-how-sau-

di-arabia-petrodollars-finance-salafist-winter-islamism-wahhabism-egypt/> (accessed 27 June 2015); Anna Lavizzari (2013), 'The Arab Spring and the Funding of Salafism in the MENA Region,' *International Security Observer*, 22 May, available at: <http://securityobserver.org/the-arab-spring-and-the-funding-of-salafism-in-the-mena-region/> (accessed 12 April 2015).

39   Baer (2013); Nasr (2013); al-Alawi and Schwartz (2013); al-Rasheed (2013).

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