



Social Movements and the Global Order

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Who is the revolutionary class?



Marxist

Proletariat

Structural

Role in means of production

Vanguard political party →

State power

Liberal

Civil society

Contingent

Organized, clear demands

Moral suasion → Legislation

Occupy Nigeria, Lagos 2012



It has become clear to government and all well-meaning Nigerians that other interests beyond the implementation of the deregulation policy have hijacked the protest... These same interests seek to promote discord, anarchy, and insecurity to the detriment of public peace.

-President Goodluck Jonathan, 2012

Questions

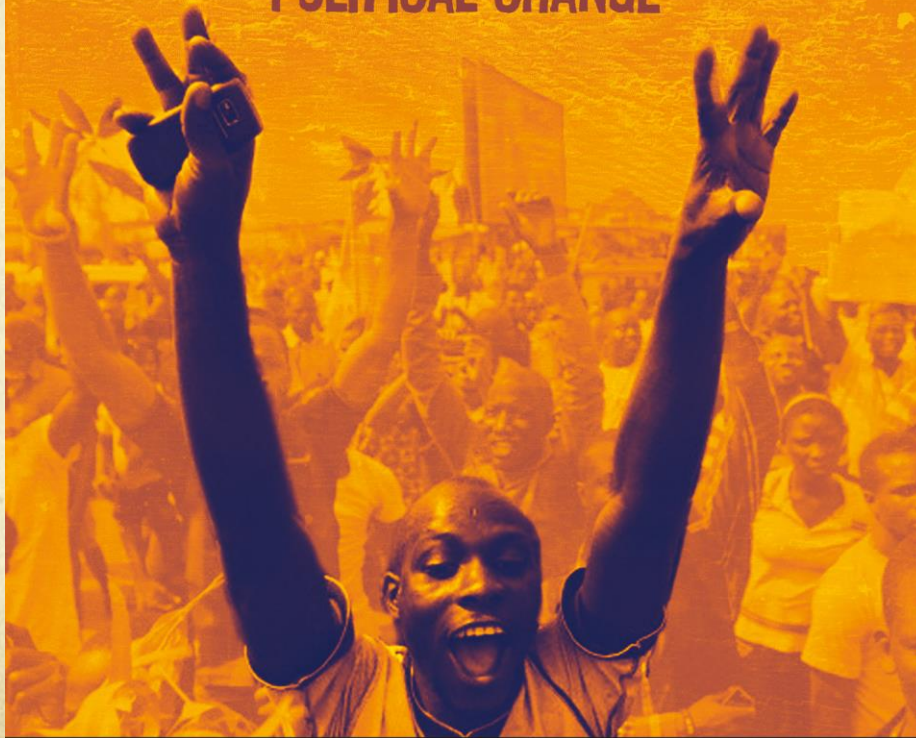
- How are changes in the global political economy impacting African opposition movements?
- Why did the social movement supplant the political party as the main vehicle of political change?
- Wither Civil Society?
- Who is the revolutionary class today?

ADAM BRANCH AND ZACHARIAH MAMPILLY



AFRICA UPRISING

POPULAR PROTEST AND
POLITICAL CHANGE

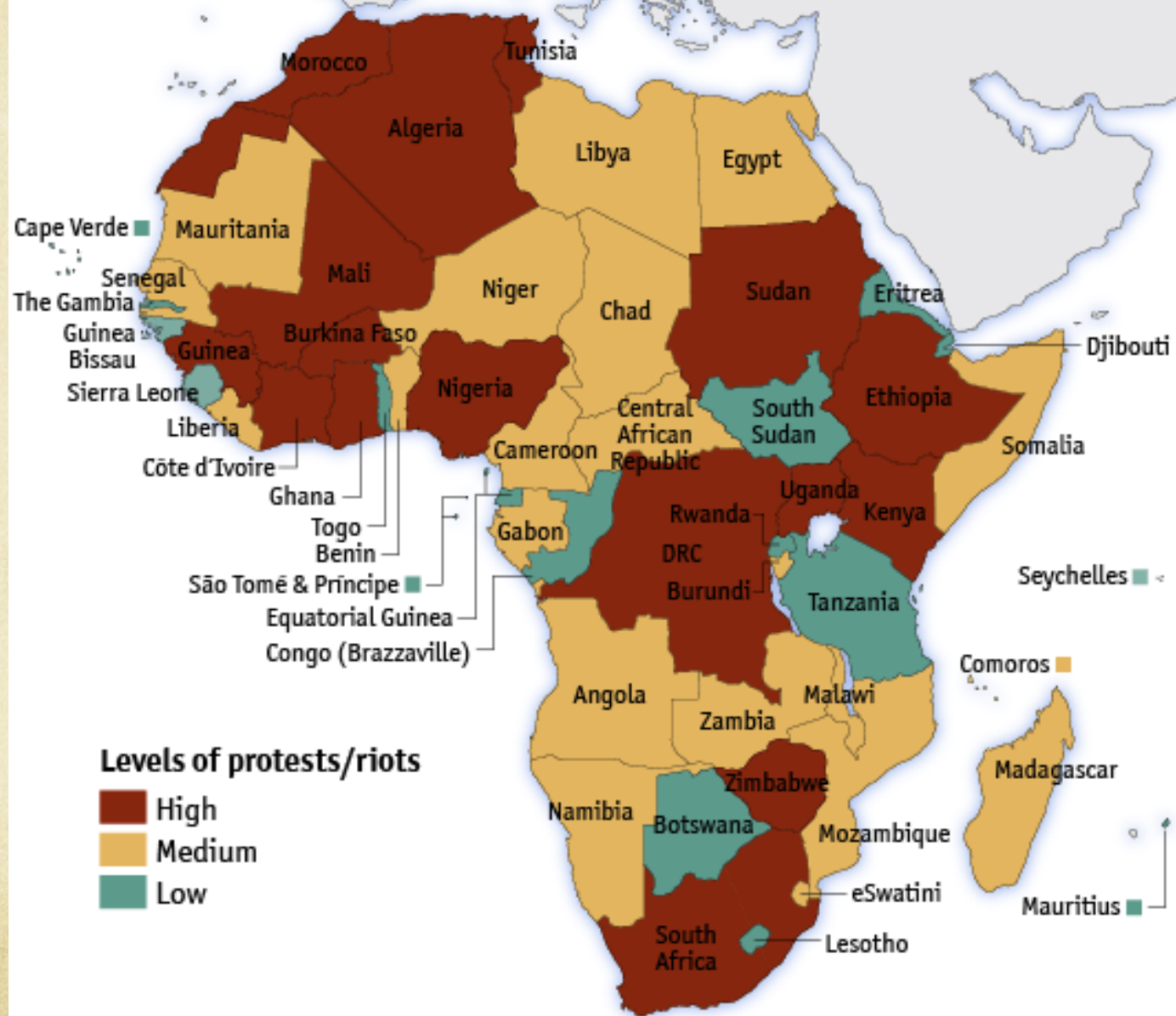


AFRICAN  ARGUMENTS

Wave III: Anti-Post-Neo-Colonial?

- 2005 to Present including recent protests in Algeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Sudan and beyond...
- >40 countries across every region including North
- Response to **electoral** or **economic** crises
- Fail to articulate clear agendas / dismissed as riots
- Africa too rural, too poor or too ethnic for popular protests?

Protests/riots in Africa in 2019

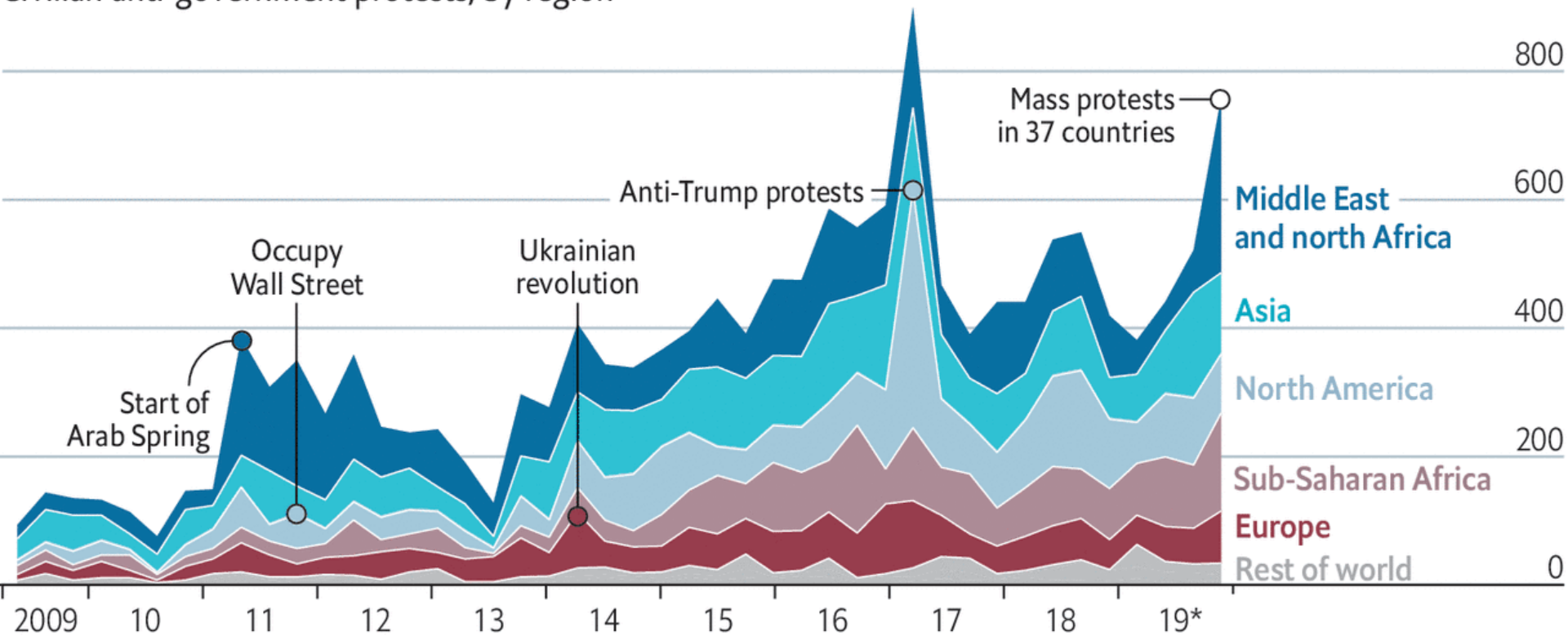


Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

A world of protest

Street politics

Civilian anti-government protests, by region



Source: "The Age of Mass Protests: Understanding an Escalating Global Trend", by S.J. Brannen, C.S. Haig and K. Schmidt, 2020

*Q4 estimate

A shifting economic order...

- **Asian Rise:** Since '90, exports to and imports from Asia have grown faster than any other region. Asia buys larger share of African exports than US or EU.
- **Commodity boom:** 80% of African countries have growth rates > 3% since 1995.
- **“Premature deindustrialization”:** “The share of value added of the manufacturing sector decreased at an average rate of 5.68% in Africa over the period from 1980 to 2009.”
- **Growth but no reduction in poverty** → Rise of inequality: 9 of 12 most unequal countries in the world are African

...leads to a shifting political order

- RIP Western Liberal Order, 1945-2001?
Political: Rule of law, “democratization”
Economic: Free markets, globalization
Liberal Internationalism: Global governance, democracy promotion, R2P
- **Current:** Rise of populist nationalism, Democratic backsliding, Isolationism

Demographic transformation

- **Urbanization:** 60% rural but dropping fast.
- **Youth bulge:** Approx 40% under age of 15. Fastest population growth in the world.
- **Age Gap:** Largest in world. Average age of ruler = 63 vs. average age of population = 20.

How has Africa's incorporation into global capitalism impacted opposition parties?

- **“Choiceless Democracy”**: Wave 2 produced elections and “democratic” institutions but no change in economic conditions.
- Opposition parties, regardless of background, espouse common economic agenda of free trade, open markets and privatization.
- Even where new leaders came to power, economic agenda remained the same.

Wither Civil Society?

- Civil society operates transversally by claiming to represent marginalized within elite discourses/practices.
- **Philanthrocapitalism:** Pushes African civil society towards reformist, techocratic positions.
- **“Civil Society Elites”:** Rise of “NGO-class” have replaced earlier spaces of African opposition (Workers, Students, Left parties).

The Rise of Political Society

Civil Society

NGOs, Parties, Unions

Formal Economy

Urban Renewal

Legal Politics

Rights Discourse

“Africa Rising”

Political Society

Urban poor, Migrants

Informal Workers

Shantytowns

Extra-legal Politics

Coercion

“Hopeless Continent”

Rural Quiescence

- Rural imagined as premodern, violent, anti-national and anti-development
- Few attempts to transform power of traditional authorities (Tanzania, Uganda)
- **“Decentralized Despotism”**: But most post-colonial governments relied on patronage through chiefs to control rural life.

Rural Radicalism

- Primary site of surge in foreign investment
- Shifting labor identities → Peasant to wage laborers
- Diminishment of traditional authorities → Increased power of central government
- But also increase in unarmed protest.

Africa's New Revolutionaries?

- Colonialism divided urban from rural
- Urban = Multi-ethnic (“Detribalization”)
- Rural = Ethnic patronage (“Tribalism”)
- Rural denied agency in national political questions.
Violence in rural areas viewed as spillover from urban conflicts.

Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide

- Rural questions → National questions
(Climate Change, FDI, Militarization)
- Circular migration between rural and urban and vice versa → Rural in the urban (political society)
- Urban counterprotest strategies require truly national mobilization

Anti-pipeline protests
Mtwara, Tanzania, 2013



Natural resources, regardless of the region where they are found, are the property of all Tanzanians.

-President Jakaya Kikwete, 2013

DR Congo "Lutte pour le Changement"



First, for us, dignity means to consider the person as a human being. For example, when we speak of development, humanitarian assistance or refugee settlements, it seems that the human condition is reduced to eating and sleeping. We need to respect and consider people in their human needs, such as the need for political decision-making, not just the economic or material needs.

-Micheline Mwendike

We only demand two things: for MONUSCO to leave and for the Congolese government to take its responsibility so that we can have peace.

-Clovis Mutsova



Sudan
“Just Fall,
That’s All”



“We are all Darfur!”

300,000 people were killed in Darfur and none of us realised it until right now during the protests. I mean, I was one of the people that had never read about Darfur in my entire life.

-Sudanese Activist