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PUBLIC MASS PROTEST PROMOTIONS: FORMATION OF AN INCLUSIVE POLITICAL INSTITUTE

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Abstract. This article analyzes the formation process of a new inclusive political institution, which is represented by public mass protests of a non-violent nature. Such actions, the number of which is constantly increasing, take place in states with both authoritarian and democratic governments, and they have become an institutionalized repertoire of political action under all types of government regimes. The socio-information environment, where social and information processes are closely intertwined as a result of mass use of social networks, blogs and other Internet resources, as well as wide spread of mobile telephony and the mobile Internet, has become not only a favorable setting for preparing, organizing and holding mass protest actions without clear leaders and organizational structures, but also a catalyst for such actions. Ever improving information and communication technologies as well as the nature of social media and other Internet resources increase the inclusiveness of mass protests, expand the circle of their participants, simplify the organization process and improve its efficiency. Under authoritarian regimes, when all traditional institutions and mechanisms to influence the authorities and to publicly express attitude to their decisions and actions are blocked, mass protests provide certain opportunities to put pressure on the government, and also serve as an institutional factor in the transformation of such regimes. Under democratic regimes, when in the face of post-industrial civilizational transit, traditional institutions and mechanisms of political involvement and influence on the current government appear to be insufficiently effective, and there is a dysfunction of democratic political systems due to their delayed adaptation to new conditions, public mass protests act as a new inclusive political institution designed to compensate for the dysfunction.

Keywords: public mass protests, inclusive political institution, social-information environment, transformation of authoritarian regime, post-industrial civilizational transit, dysfunction of political system.

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ПУБЛИЧНЫЕ МАССОВЫЕ АКЦИИ ПРОТЕСТА: ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ИНКЛЮЗИВНОГО ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ИНСТИТУТА

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Аннотация. Анализируется процесс формирования нового инклюзивного политического института, в качестве которого выступают публичные массовые акции протеста ненасильственного характера. Такие акции, количество которых постоянно возрастает, проходят в государствах как с авторитарными, так и с демократическими режимами правления. В условиях авторитарных режимов протесты дают определенные возможности оказать воздействие на власть и служат институциональным фактором трансформации режимов. При демократических режимах публичные массовые акции протеста выступают в качестве инклюзивного политического института, призванного компенсировать возникшую дисфункцию политической системы.

Ключевые слова: публичные массовые акции протеста, инклюзивный политический институт, социально-информационная среда, трансформация авторитарного режима, постиндустриальный цивилизационный транзит, дисфункция политической системы.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of public mass protest promotions against the ruling powers emerged as early as in the ancient states. One of the first mentions of such actions dates back to the 14th century BC – this was the “Lagash children” uprising that took place in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash in ancient Mesopotamia. Similar events took place in many states as early as before Christ: in particular, in the Persian Empire (the Ionian Revolt of Greek cities in 499–493 BC), in Judea (the Maccabean Rebellion in 166–142 BC), in Ancient Rome (the first one in 135–132 BC and the second one in 104–100 BC, the Sicilian slave revolts, the Spartacus Revolt in 73–71 BC), etc. As shown by world history, mass protest campaigns have taken place in all epochs from Antiquity to the present time and in fact in all states of the world. Therefore, they may be considered as a phenomenon organically inherent in the functioning process of the state institution.

Until the early 20th century, such actions were predominantly of violent character and took the form of an uprising, revolt, rebellion, or revolution (in the extreme instance), which is generally defined as “mass armed action” [1, p. 81] usually committed against the existing power. After Mahatma Gandhi not only substantiated the concept of non-violent resistance which he called “Satyagraha” but also applied it in political practice, first in South Africa and then in India [2], at the beginning of the twentieth century, non-violent mass protest campaigns became widespread. At the same time, many contemporary researchers believe that non-violent protest acts are more successful today than violent ones. In particular, Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, American scientists, note that, according to their data, “large-scale non-violent campaigns were successful in 53% of cases, compared to the figure of 26% – violent resistance acts” [3, p. 8].

Since the 1960s, mass protest campaigns have been central to the study of social movements that are explored with pronounced interdisciplinary emphasis, while the empirical basis is provided by event databases and sociological surveys of participants [4]. It was also the time when systemic data on protest actions started to be collected and used in sociological and politological research initiated by the works of American sociologist Charles Tilly [5, p. 352].

At present, a large number of different databases on protest actions have been compiled, each containing individual characteristics of observation periods and territorial coverage, each having certain strengths and weaknesses [5, 6]. To date, the Global Nonviolent Action Database [source 1] and the Mass

Mobilisation Protest Data Database [7] are the most extensive in terms of temporal and geographical coverage. The Ebert Foundation study “World Protest campaigns 2006–2013” [8] and the Carnegie Endowment’s “Global Protest Tracker” [source 2] should be mentioned as data sources on recent-years mass protest campaigns.

At the same time, the formation of new databases on protest campaigns continues: there is no general approach to the standardisation of their description, coding, and categorisation to properly meet particular research trends, which stimulates the researchers’ need to create their own databases oriented at specific research objectives. The data collection procedure is the problem in their formation, since the primary source of these data is represented by traditional, electronic, as well as network tools of mass information backed mainly by English-language sources, which does not guarantee the due level of reliability and completeness of the obtained information and requires different methods of its verification.

Mass protest campaigns, which “include both ‘contestation’ and ‘denial’ of the entire social reality and the very principles of the social structure, as well as rejection of only several aspects of social and political life, indignation at the existing social orders and power institutions in general, along with protest campaigns only against certain trends in their policy” [9, p. 49], are mainly studied and analysed in modern sociological and political studies in terms of the social mobility paradigm. The social movement can be defined as “basically informal interactive networks based on shared beliefs and solidarity, mobilised around disputable agendas through frequent use of various forms of protest” [10].

Tilly notes that the social movement that emerged in the West after the year 1750 originated as a result of the innovative sequential synthesis of three elements.

1. Sustained organised public effort to submit collective claims to the authorities (let us call it a campaign).

2. Use of combinations of the following forms of political action: setting up specialised associations and coalitions, public meetings, marches, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petitions, media statements, pamphlet distribution (let us call this a varied ensemble of performance from the social movement repertoire).

3. Concerted public representations of *WUNC* participants¹ – dignity, unity, numbers and dedication

¹ *WUNC* demonstrations: agreed public perception of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitments by the participants and/or those represented by them.

of both the participants and/or their supporters (let us call this WUNC demonstration) [11, p. 3].

A number of theoretical approaches were developed in the course of research on social movements that gathered momentum noticeably since the 1970s, each explaining this phenomenon and each originally developed as a counter to previous ones; meanwhile today they are used together in various combinations within the framework of plural scientific theories [12, 13, 14]. The following approaches stand out as the most significant:

- collective behaviour theory which considers social movement as one of the types of collective behaviour, including the deviant behaviour of extra-institutional participants in social movements;
- collective actions theory, which focuses on the process of the formation, organisation, and expression of social protest in the form of collective actions, their cultural-civilisational, socio-psychological, and moral-evaluative foundations;
- new social movements theory based on the analysis of the interaction between social movements and social transformation trends in society;
- relative deprivation theory, which considers the manifestation of protest attitudes related to subjective and objective personal deprivation as the most important precondition for the emergence of social movements;
- resource mobilisation theory where the mobilisation of resources (people, finance, technology, communications, etc.) is viewed as the key task of the social movement;
- political opportunities concept, which focuses on the political environment as a determinant of conditions for collective protest actions and the potential for their realisation.

Not only violent but also non-violent mass protest campaigns were initially considered, within the framework of the mentioned theoretical approaches, as a deviant form of political behaviour, as political actions not related to “traditional” politics, based on regulatory tools of regular expression of interests [9, 12]. In 2006, Italian sociologists Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani proposed to consider protest campaigns as “non-routinised methods of influencing political, social and cultural processes” [15, p. 165], that is, as a phenomenon of extra-institutional nature, not permanently integrated into the political system.

However, against the background of the growing sustainable wave of public protests of a predominantly non-violent character, especially after the crisis of

2008, described by many researchers [16, 17, 18, 19] and called the phenomenon of “global political awakening” [20] by American political scientist and statesman Zbigniew Brzezinski, a tendency towards the institutionalisation of this phenomenon became noticeable [20]. Today, at the level of theoretical approaches, the “concept of social movements as an indispensable element of any political system, performing independent functions and quite explicable in rational terms” is becoming widespread [13, p. 26]. In addition, the view that “the protest has become an ‘institutionalised’ repertoire of political action” is becoming prevalent [21, p. 866].

Thus, the researchers’ question as to whether the new inclusive political institution (according to the terminology of economists Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson [22, p. 468]) is really taking shape seems to be extremely important and relevant.

METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH

In order to assess, using the method of event analysis [6], the rising trend of public mass protest promotions (PMPPs) in recent years and its dynamics, as well as the validity of consideration of this phenomenon in the institutional paradigm, without claiming to complete and exhaustive coverage of all such events, a PMPP database was formed covering the period from 2014 to 2020. This database was formed using the methodology applied in compiling the Global Protest Tracker [source 2], though in a slightly modified version.

The database encompassed PMPPs directed against decisions and actions of the authorities, as well as other political actors and the political, economic, and social situation in a particular state. The database did not include international protest campaigns, such as anti-globalists’ protests, climate protection campaigns, March for Science, etc., since the research is focused on the problems of institutionalisation of PMPPs into the political system at the national level, within the national political framework. The database did not include as well the mass protests against the restrictive measures introduced against the spread of the *COVID-19* pandemic by many governments after March 2020, as they have a special socio-psychological nature and motivation, different from other PMPPs.

The database included the PMPPs verified by the information of at least two to three world’s leading news agencies, media and news websites, including Russian-language ones, with the number of participants exceeding 10,000. The said numerical-

strength threshold was chosen in virtue of the fact “the national series of strikes and rallies are dominated by events involving at least 10,000 participants” [5, p. 353], while the given database, without claiming full coverage of all non-violent protest campaigns, is intended only to identify the main trends and patterns. The database additionally included PMPPs covering at least 1,000 participants, after which the authorities were forced to take specific actions meeting the protesters’ demands, and/or the action was extensively covered by the global information media. The accepted observation unit in this database, like in the Mass mobilisation database, is fixed in terms of protest-state-year [7], and the protests are recorded individually for every state and every year. Thus, if a protest in a state started in a particular year

and continued in the following year, then two different observation units are entered into the database.

The main quantitative data of the compiled base are summarised in a table where the states are ranked by the number of protest acts that took place therein in 2014–2020. The table also presents the Freedom House data on whether a particular state is an electoral democracy and what category – free, partially free or unfree – it falls within [source 3].

A diagram showing the dynamics of change in PMPP numbers is presented in the figure below.

The chart shows a fairly consistent trend towards PMPP numbers increment: the number of protests increased almost threefold from 2014 to 2019. In 2020, however, this trend was distorted by the *COVID-19*

Table. Quantitative indicators of the PMPP base, 2014–2020

State	Democracy	Level of freedom	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Spain	yes	free		3	1	4	4	3		15
France	yes	free		3	1	2	3	3	2	14
Russia	no	unfree	1	1		1	4	3	2	12
Germany	yes	free	2	3	2			1	3	11
USA	yes	free	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	10
UK	yes	free		2	2	1	1	1	1	8
Poland	yes	free	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
Brazil	yes	free	1	1	1	1	1	2		7
Greece	yes	free		1	1	1	2		2	7
Italy	yes	free			2	1	1	3		7
Belgium	yes	free	1	1	1		2	1		6
Hungary	yes	partially free	1	1		1	2	1		6
Venezuela	no	unfree	1	1	1	1	1	1		6
Haiti	no	partially free	1	1	1		2	1		6
Romania	yes	free		2		1	2	1		6
South Korea	yes	free	1	2	1	1		1		6
Austria	yes	free			2	1	2			5
Argentina	yes	free	1	1		2	1			5
Georgia	yes	partially free					2	2	1	5
Israel	yes	free		2		1	1		1	5
Indonesia	yes	partially free			1			3	1	5
Iraq	no	unfree		1	1		1	1	1	5
Mexico	yes	partially free	1	1	1	1			1	5
Ukraine	yes	partially free	1		1	1		2		5
Czech Republic	yes	free	1				2	1	1	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	no	partially free	1		2		1			4
Democratic Republic of the Congo	no	unfree		1	1	1		1		4
Iran	no	unfree				1	1	1	1	4
China (Hong Kong)	no	unfree	1			1		1	1	4
Morocco	no	partially free			1	1		2		4
Moldova	yes	partially free		1	1		1		1	4
South Africa	yes	free		2		1		1		4

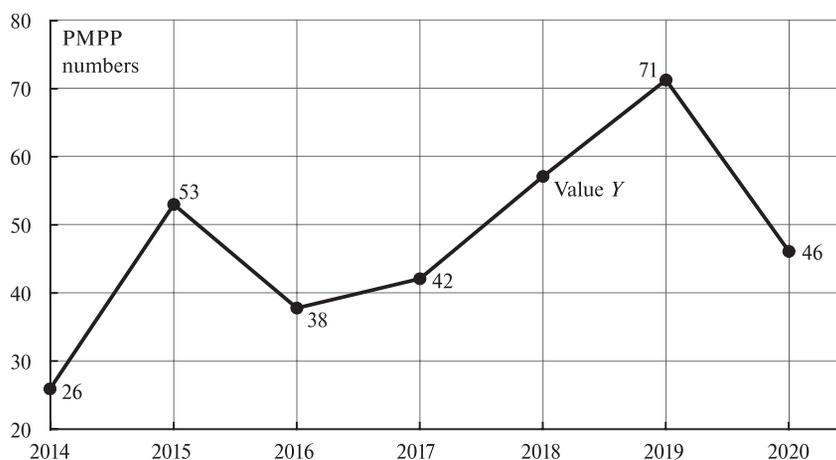
Continuation of the table

State	Democracy	Level of freedom	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Armenia	no	partially free		1			1		1	3
Belarus	no	unfree				1	1		1	3
Guatemala	yes	partially free		1				1	1	3
Egypt	no	unfree	1		1			1		3
India	yes	partially free					1	1	1	3
Colombia	yes	partially free						1	2	3
Lebanon	no	partially free		1				1	1	3
Nicaragua	no	unfree		2			1			3
Pakistan	no	partially free	1		1			1		3
Northern Macedonia	yes	partially free		1	1		1			3
Serbia	yes	partially free				1	1	1		3
Sudan	no	unfree					1	1	1	3
Turkey	no	unfree		1		2				3
Montenegro	yes	partially free						2	1	3
Chile	yes	free		1				1	1	3
Ecuador	yes	partially free		2				1		3
Australia	yes	free							2	2
Albania	yes	partially free		1				1		2
Bahrain	no	unfree	1		1					2
Gabon	no	unfree			1			1		2
Honduras		partially free				1	1			2
Zimbabwe	no	unfree				1	1			2
Ireland	yes	free	1	1						2
Kosovo	no	partially free		1	1					2
Malaysia	no	partially free		1	1					2
Mali	no	unfree						1	1	2
Malta	yes	free				1		1		2
Nepal	yes	partially free		1				1		2
Thailand	no	unfree	1						1	2
Tunisia	no	unfree			1		1			2
Eswatini	no	unfree						2		2
Japan	yes	free		2						2
Azerbaijan	no	unfree						1		1
Algeria	no	unfree						1		1
Bangladesh	no	partially free					1			1
Benin	yes	partially free						1		1
Bulgaria	yes	free							1	1
Bolivia	yes	partially free						1		1
Burkina Faso	yes	partially free	1							1
Burundi	no	unfree		1						1
Vietnam	no	unfree					1			1
Ghana	yes	free		1						1
Gambia	no	partially free						1		1
Guinea	no	partially free						1		1
Dominican Republic	yes	free				1				1
Jordan	no	unfree					1			1
Iceland	yes	free			1					1
Kazakhstan	no	unfree						1		1

End of the table

State	Democracy	Level of freedom	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Cambodia	no	unfree	1							1
Cameroon	no	unfree				1				1
Kenya	no	partially free				1				1
Kyrgyzstan	no	unfree							1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	no	partially free							1	1
Kuwait	no	unfree						1		1
Liberia	yes	partially free						1		1
Libya	no	unfree							1	1
Mauritius	yes	free							1	1
Mauritania	no	unfree				1				1
Madagascar	yes	partially free					1			1
Malawi	yes	partially free						1		1
Mongolia	yes	free					1			1
Myanmar	no	unfree	1							1
Nigeria	no	partially free							1	1
New Zealand	yes	free							1	1
Oman	no	unfree					1			1
Papua New Guinea	yes	partially free			1					1
Peru	yes	partially free				1				1
Portugal	yes	free							1	1
Republic of the Congo	no	not free		1						1
Slovakia	yes	free					1			1
Taiwan	yes	free	1							1
Togo	no	partially free				1				1
Uruguay	yes	free							1	1
Finland	yes	free						1		1
Croatia	yes	free						1		1
Sri Lanka	no	partially free					1			1
Ethiopia	no	unfree							1	1
Total	58/51	35/40/34	26	53	38	42	57	71	46	333

Compiled by the author.

**Figure:** Dynamics of change in PMPP numbers, 2014–2020.

Compiled by the author.

pandemic, as mass actions were officially banned in many states since March of that year. A similar tendency is also noted in the previously mentioned Ebert Foundation survey according to which the number of protest campaigns almost doubled from 2006 to 2013.

Many studies deal with the analysis of causes of emergence and substantiation of the role of PMPPs in the conditions of authoritarian regimes, proceeding from the assumption that this phenomenon is mainly characteristic of such an environment [3, 16, 21, 23, 24]. However, the data in the above table show that in recent years, PMPPs have also originated under the ruling democracies – not to a lesser, but rather to a greater extent. Such actions took place in 58 democracies and 51 non-democratic states. Moreover, the top 10 states in terms of PMPP numbers include not just electoral democracies but also the states that are categorised as free, i.e. characterised by a consistent trend towards exercising democratic political and state order. The only exception is Russia, which, according to Freedom House, is not classified as electoral democracy and ranks third after Spain and France. Russia's high position in the PMPP numerical rating is confirmed by the Carnegie Endowment's Global Protest Tracker, in which it ranks 4th (6 protest campaigns), following France (10), the USA (8), India and Turkey (7 protest campaigns each).

The increased PMPP numbers in recent years under both authoritarian and democratic regimes suggest, in the author's view, that today this phenomenon is driven by more fundamental causes than opposition to authoritarian rule, as used to be in the past in most cases.

It is important to note that the situation when mass protest campaigns are on the rise in more than 40% of free democracies is interpreted by some researchers, in particular by Russian economist Victor Polterovich [25], as a crisis of "Western democracy" caused by the declined efficiency of the existing political systems in the changing conditions of societal life. American expert Thomas Carothers reasonably argues that "the protests in most democracies characterised by large-scale protest campaigns do not reject democracy as an ideal in principle, but instead object to its current manifestation in a particular context" [18]. This discussion suggests that the reasons for the intensification of PMPPs worldwide should be sought in the theoretical framework of adaptive transformation of political and state regimes in the conditions of the emerging post-industrial civilisational transit [26].

LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR INSTITUTIONALISATION OF PMPP

The legal framework for mass actions of all kinds and forms is juridically defined for the states that recognise the primacy of international law on human and civil rights and freedoms – which constitute 90% of all sovereign UN member states – by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [Source 4]. This instrument establishes that "any person shall have the right to freedom of expression" (Article 19) and that "the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognised" (Article 21). At the same time, it notes that "the exercise of these rights carries with it special duties and responsibilities" and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions "that are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others".

Thus, international law enshrines the right to protest, which is protected by the general right to freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly – one of the main forms of public mass protest; protesters are also protected by the right to personal liberty, the right to life and prohibition of tortures and cruel, inhuman treatment or punishment [27].

The constitutions of most states enshrine the right to peaceful assembly as the right of citizens to assemble peacefully, unarmed, without prior permission (constitutions of Denmark, Spain, Germany, etc.). The Russian Constitution additionally specifies the main forms of mass assembly, namely, "the citizens of the Russian Federation have the right to assemble peacefully without arms, to hold meetings, rallies and demonstrations, marches and pickets" (Article 31).

Many states have adopted and enforced special legislative acts governing the organisation and implementation of public events (rallies, demonstrations and marches).

In democratic states, such acts are based on international law and focus on securing the citizens' right to assemble peacefully. They establish an exclusively notifying procedure for holding public events and clearly delineate the responsibility of the organisers and the liability of those who cause unrest and commit other unlawful acts entailing administrative and criminal liability during the event. Sanctions in respect of riot organisers are imposed for infringement of the assigned event procedure, in particular in the case of breach of the set term of notice, discordant change of date, time and route of a march.

Such acts in non-democratic states only declare compliance with the norms of international law, while in reality, they establish administrative mechanisms that allow the authorities to rigidly control and prevent mass protest campaigns against their decisions and actions. A demonstrative example is the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Mass Events in the Republic of Belarus” No. 114-Z dated December 30th, 1997, as amended in May 2021. The law sets the regulatory approval order for the organisation of mass events; all public events must be held exclusively on the basis of local authorities’ decisions. The law prohibits any assistance in compensation of expenses arising from prosecution for violation of the procedure for holding mass events, as well as real-time coverage of mass events held in breach of the established procedure “for the purpose of their popularisation or propaganda”. The law sets the liability for public calls towards organising and holding mass events without permission, as well as the prohibition for journalists to act as organisers of or participants in such events.

The existence of the legal and regulatory framework for PMPPs is a basis for their consideration in terms of the institutional paradigm as based on the interpretation of the institution by American economist Douglass North. He defined the institution as “rules of the game in the society or, more formally, man-devised restrictions that structure human interaction comprising some formal rules (statutory law, common law, decrees), informal restrictions (conventions, norms of conduct and voluntary codes of conduct) and the ways to enforce both of them” [28, p. 97].

PMPP MOTIVATION AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL/INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

PMPPs originate as a result of social instability and political turbulence in some section of society; by the fact that deprivation moods, as well as aggravation of the individual’s and/or family’s material and social status, inequality, and social discomfort, become dominant, which is generally perceived as social injustice. It is this feeling of injustice in its various manifestations and interpretation in mass consciousness that forms the underlying motive, a “tectonic” driving force of PMPPs, although this is not always clearly and unambiguously articulated in public by protest campaign participants.

Various factors triggering the upsurge of discontent and resentment in the social milieu can motivate specific PMPPs. Depending on the above, the following conventional classification of PMPPs can

be proposed. The campaigns motivated by political decisions and actions of ruling and other political actors (struggle to gain and retain power) are deemed to be political. The campaigns motivated by state policy pursued by authorities in power (development strategy, including reforms in different spheres of society and the state) are classified as state/political. The campaigns motivated by particular decisions of the authorities in power in different aspects of their socio-economic policy (including pricing, social security, public health, education, tax policy, entrepreneurship, mass information sphere, science, culture, etc.) can be characterised as social/economic. It should be noted that PMPPs that originated as state/political or social/economic movements can transform into political ones quite quickly in the situation of the ruling government’s failure to react adequately to them, while some PMPPs can initially be motivated by combinations of political, state/political, or social/economic factors.

At present, another significant factor that can motivate PMPPs is the corruption of public administration. It can act as both the dominant motivating factor triggering PMPPs and one of the key messages in such campaigns, in combination with other factors. The analysis of the data presented in the compiled PMPP database shows that corruption has become the main motif or one of the keynotes in such actions in 20–30% of relevant cases, which is generally consistent with the results obtained through the Ebert Foundation [8] and Carnegie Endowment [source 2] studies. The significant role of corruption among PMPP motives is accounted for by the fact that this phenomenon is perceived by people belonging to different social strata and groups as a “cause of increment of social inequality and social injustice” [29, p. 211].

Before the mass-scale use of social Internet networks that originated in 2003–2004, the leading role in preparing and organising PMPPs, as well as in the mobilisation of their participants, was played by such public organisations as political parties, trade unions, various social movements, and other associations of people. These structures also provided informational support for PMPPs by placing information in traditional electronic and print media (TV, radio, newspapers) about their procedures, main objectives, demands, and slogans, and by organising the production of propagandist printed materials (leaflets, stickers, etc.). All this required considerable time expenditure, mobilisation of significant human, financial, and material resources on the part of the organisers of protest actions, which largely

predetermined the irregular and sporadic nature of such acts.

Following the post-industrial civilisational transit of the 1950s and 1960s, brought about by the revolutionary changes in power engineering and technological development, in the first place information and communication technologies (ICTs), the social sphere underwent radical changes. The ICT revolution generates a qualitatively new info-communication environment with networked infrastructure providing the social system with a fundamentally new level of communication. Permeating the entire social sphere, it generates in fact a new environment referred to as a social/informational one, in which social and info-communication processes are inextricably intertwined. The key role in this process belongs to the Internet and the networks within it, which, owing to their impact on social interaction, got the name of social media that are incorporated in all spheres of social life. Indeed, today more than 60% of the world population – about 5 billion people – are Internet users [source 5], and almost half of the world population (3.8 billion) are social media users [30].

The modern social/informational environment is distinguished by the fact that its overall hierarchical structure is to a great extent blurred, although it preserves certain social strata and groups, and even gives rise to new ones generated by “segmentation caused by the introduction of social networks” [31, p. 12]. Meanwhile, the environment in which the networked info-communication infrastructure becomes its “nervous system” acquires a decentralised, distributed character. At the same time, interpersonal and intergroup info-communications take place beyond territorial, temporal, and social boundaries, and any person gets an opportunity to become not only a consumer but also a producer of information, which can be promptly distributed in all its types and forms among an unlimited circle of users.

The social/informational environment that originated as a result of the mass-scale use of social networks, blogs, and other Internet resources, as well as the mass-scale spread of mobile telephony and the mobile Internet on its basis, has become not only a favourable environment for the preparation, organisation, and implementation of PMPP but also a catalyst of such actions. Chris Ruijgrok, a Dutch political scientist, proves in his study that the use of Internet resources not only contributes directly to the emergence of protest actions but also promotes their spread under authoritarian regimes [32]. The comparative analysis of data presented in the PMPP database developed by the

author suggests that this trend also takes place under democratic regimes.

The modern socio-informational environment makes it possible to engage in the preparation and organisation of PMPP, mobilisation and coordination of their participants, simplifying these processes and noticeably reducing the costs of their realisation, even without explicit leaders and any concerned organisational structures [33, 34]. This environment, in the process of discussion of decisions and actions of public authorities and other events significant for society, engenders systematic requests for protest acts against social injustice generated by such events, as interpreted by mass consciousness; sets the subjects, demands, and slogans for protest campaigns. All this extends the possibilities for holding protest actions on a regular basis.

The continually improving technologies and the network-specific nature of social media and other info-communication Internet resources make it possible to strengthen the inclusive nature of PMPP and extend the circle of their participants. Along with such traditional participants in protest actions as members and supporters of political parties and political leaders, representatives of various public associations, and particular professional, social, ethnic, religious and other communities, the “institutionally non-structured” general public (according to the terminology of Carnegie Center’s Global Protest Tracker) is becoming another participant in protest campaigns. At the same time, in recent years, young people play a prominent role as the main driving force of PMPPs, since they, naturally, are better adapted to the modern social/information environment than older groups [13, 35].

It is important to note that some generic, and in a way replicable, strategies and schemes for PMPP preparation, organisation, and realisation through the use of social media and mobile telephony have gradually emerged since the early 2010s, [36, 37]; such campaigns are exhibiting the features typical of social institutions [38, 39], which is indicative of their gradual institutionalisation.

ROLE AND PLACE OF PMPPs IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

PMPPs evolve when, on the one hand, the decisions and actions of public authorities and other socially significant events provoke discontent and indignation in people, causing their protests, and, on the other hand, when people do not see other effective ways to influence the authorities, to convey their opinions and demands to the government.

The electoral institution and, as a rule, the referendum are constitutionalised as a direct expression of people's will in all modern forms of government, with the exception of absolute monarchies. Both of these political institutions can only be realised with the direct participation of the state represented by its bodies forming the system of public authority, which determines fundamentally different situations of their realisation in political practice under authoritarian or democratic regimes.

Authoritarian regimes, as a matter of priority, take administrative control of the electoral institution and all electoral procedures through legislative prescriptions, starting with the formation of the "election menu" – a limited set of political parties and candidates admitted to elections, in order to imitate their competitive nature – and ending with the vote counting procedure. Certain stages of the procedure are realised through a mode closed for external scrutiny, which allows for purposeful distortion of counting results. Administrative control of the election institution is needed by authoritarian regimes to maintain the current government and its plebiscitary legitimacy, for imitation of democratic legitimacy. The electoral institution in such a distorted form cannot serve for the free expression of voters' will, and hence, for political control of public authorities' activities on the basis of periodic rotation of political officials.

Authoritarian regimes establish legislative regulation for the preparation and realisation of referendums, which provides the acting government with the possibility to exercise administrative influence on these processes. This enables the authorities, on the one hand, to organise and hold referendums for their own benefit and purposes, primarily for the plebiscitary legitimisation of their decisions, and, on the other hand, to ban referendums that are not to their liking for a particular reason. Such referendums as an institution, being under full control of authorities, cannot serve to influence the power structures through a free expression of people's will and their attitude towards governmental decisions.

At the same time, authoritarian regimes considerably restrict the freedom of mass distribution of information, impose severe constraints, up to complete prohibition of activities of autonomous mass media not controlled by the regime, and impose censorship implicitly or sometimes explicitly. Lately, attempts to impose such restrictions have also been made with regard to Internet resources. Mass petitions, public statements, and people's appeals to public authorities do not have any real impact on the government's activities and decisions; in many cases, they are simply ignored, but sometimes are

purposefully inspired by the authorities in power to show the public demonstration of their support.

Under authoritarian regimes, when all traditional institutions and mechanisms of influencing state power and expressing public attitudes towards its decisions and actions are blocked, the protest in the form of PMPPs has definitely become "an 'institutionalised' repertoire of political actions" [18, p. 866]. For instance, between 2014 and 2020, almost two-thirds of PMPPs in the states with authoritarian regimes represented political actions. Many of the protests that originated as state/political or social/economic campaigns evolved into political ones involving the general public, as a result of the openly negative treatment of such acts by the government and their suppression, up to the use of physical violence. A typical example is the protest acts in Venezuela, which commenced in 2014 as students' social/economic protest campaigns against high prices and food shortage, with anti-corruption slogans. However, subsequently, they evolved into political protest campaigns with the participation of the general public and the demand for the resignation of President Nicolas Maduro, which ended in the victory of the opposition at parliamentary elections in December 2015.

Many political PMPPs in the conditions of authoritarian regimes are driven by presidential elections and can be either pre-elective or post-elective. The desire of the acting government to be re-elected for another presidential term is a trigger of pre-elective protest campaigns in some cases, which may require a constitutional amendment to allow the rulers to run for another term. For instance, the 2015 political protests in Burundi broke out after President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his intention to run for a third five-year term because he had been elected for his first term in 2005 by the parliament instead of the national vote. In 2018, Burundi's constitution was amended to increase the presidential term from five to seven years, allowing Nkurunziza to run again in 2020.

In addition, post-election protest campaigns are triggered by voters' suspicion of falsification of election results. For instance, political protests erupted in Belarus in 2020 following the presidential election whereby President Alexander Lukashenko was declared the winner with nearly a plebiscitary result of 80.1%, which caused numerous voters' suspicion of falsification. This led to nationwide protest campaigns continuing from early August 2020 until the end of March 2021, which were violently suppressed.

Crucially, during the period under review, PMPPs that took place in more than two dozen states with authoritarian regimes served as catalysts for significant,

if not dramatic, regime changes involving officials' resignations and leadership reshuffles. As an example, the following landmark resignations of long-standing dictators can be cited: Blaise Compaoré in Burkina Faso in 2014, who ruled for 27 years; Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe in 2017 after 30 years in power; Omar al-Bashir in Sudan in 2019, who ruled for almost 26 years; Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Algeria in the same year after 20 years in power. At the same time, it should be noted that the results of protest actions under authoritarian regimes largely depend on the reaction of political elites [40]; the army's position towards protest acts has been one of the key factors [23, 35].

The fact that in recent years virtually not a single significant political event in authoritarian regimes has taken place without protest campaigns or attempts to organise them, like the military coup in Thailand in 2014 or the power transition in Kazakhstan in 2019, makes it possible to view PMPPs as an inclusive political institution. The latter, in the conditions of the government's obstructing the traditional institutions and mechanisms of exerting influence on power structures, offers some opportunities to achieve such impact, and at the same time acts as an institutional factor in the transformation of authoritarian regimes.

The situation with PMPPs in the conditions of democratic regimes is different, primarily because all traditional institutions and mechanisms for influencing the ruling authorities and confirming the public expression of attitudes towards their decisions and actions work for the most part as intended and with proper quality. In particular, elections are free, fair, and competitive, held in line with at least a minimalist approach to democracy.

The political PMPPs under democratic regimes held between 2014 and 2020 accounted for only about one-third of all such campaigns. At the same time, their participants, as noted earlier, "do not principally reject democracy as an ideal" [18] and therefore did not call for a radical change of the regime.

Protest campaigns demanding the resignation of senior political officials (presidents, prime ministers, ministers) constituted a significant part of political PMPPs; in most cases, corruption in top government echelons was their main leitmotif. The most striking and well-known examples of protest campaigns are: in Brazil in 2015 and 2016, which ended in the impeachment and resignation of President Dilma Rousseff; in South Korea in 2016 and 2017 – the impeachment and resignation of President Park Geun-hye; in Malta in 2019 – the resignation of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.

In several cases, elections served as a catalyst for political PMPPs. Out-parties were the main organisers of pre-election protests, seeking to engage the general public in campaigning and to extend their own electoral support. The examples include the protest campaign in the run-up to the 2015 parliamentary elections in Israel against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu under the slogan "Israel wants change", and the protests in the lead-up to the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil against the candidacy of Jair Bolsonaro, an extreme right-wing politician. There have also been post-election protest campaigns motivated by distrust of the electoral system and election results, specifically: in Hungary in 2018 after the victory of the ruling Fidesz party at parliamentary elections, when the party leader Viktor Orbán was re-elected Prime Minister for a fourth term; in Serbia in 2017 following the election of incumbent Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić as President; in Bolivia in 2019 following the re-election of the acting President Evo Morales for a fourth term, after which he resigned and the election results were cancelled. The dissatisfaction with election results on the part of a certain segment of voters was also observed in the USA in 2016, after Donald Trump's election as President under the slogan "Trump is not my president!". It should be noted that post-election protests in democratic countries are mostly characteristic of regimes tending to the "dominant power system" [41] in which a certain political force dominates the public power and seeks irremovability.

More than half of PMPPs under democratic regimes are state/political protest campaigns against the decisions and methods of their realisation used by the authorities to implement the pursued governmental policy. The greatest number of state/political protests have been caused by the reforms in the sphere of retirement insurance and social security, education and public health, along with the introduction of austerity and related changes in the domain of labour relations and agricultural policy, as well as migration and environmental policy (which is more specific of EU countries and the USA).

The analysis of PMPPs in democratic regimes enables a researcher to treat such protest campaigns as the institutionalised repertoire of political action.

It seems that the increase in the number of PMPPs since the early 21st century and the trend towards their institutionalisation is predetermined by the following circumstances. Such factors as the post-industrial civilisational transit that originated in the second half of the 20th century and the transition to global holistic civilisation caused by the tectonic technological shifts are fundamental, along with the

continuous technological revolutions in such areas as the use of new types of energy, biotechnology, mass-scale application of robotics, creation of artificial intelligence, especially in the sphere of ICT [26]. The post-industrial transit has not only generated a new social/information environment, as noted above, but also accelerated the political/historical duration of all political, economic, social, and info-communication processes, significantly changing their dynamics and quality. This requires an adequate response in the field of politics, including the sphere of public authority and governance.

However, the political practice shows that even the democratic systems providing for political and state orders ensuring freedom of choice, rotation and controllability of public authority have not so far adapted properly to the dynamically changing conditions of post-industrial transit and cannot react quickly and adequately to the continually emerging problems and crisis situations caused by new challenges and threats specific of post-industrial development.

Under these conditions, the traditional institutions and mechanisms of political participation and influence on the government through the public expression of attitudes towards its decisions and actions prove to be insufficiently effective. Indeed, the electoral institution designed to ensure political control of public authority represents a mechanism of cyclical action working with the periodicity of electoral cycles; therefore, it is objectively unable to respond quickly to the dynamic changes and bifurcations of the national political processes. Moisey Ostrogorsky, a Russian political scientist and sociologist, wrote in his famous work *Democracy and Political Parties* published for the first time in 1912 that the absolutisation and unreasonably frequent use of the electoral mechanism provides the ruling social groups with broad opportunities for manipulating citizens' will and public opinion and creates a favourable ground for using administrative coercion under the guise of democracy. The excessive use of the institution of referendum and extension of the range of issues submitted to it may also lead to negative consequences, since the optimal solutions to numerous specific tasks of administering a modern state require special professional training and knowledge. Although the Internet has extended the possibilities for filing petitions, applications, and appeals to public authorities, the efficient institutional mechanism of the government's prompt response has not yet been formed.

Possibly, the future of solving the above problems lies in e-democracy, but so far, this future is quite vague, and the current situation may be viewed as a manifestation of the dysfunction of the political system in the present environment. The migration crisis, which emerged in the EU by the end of 2014 and which is presently not as severe as it used to be due to the palliative measures, is a typical example. As a result of this crisis, a wave of protests swept across a number of European states between 2014 and 2019 – anti-migrant campaigns, on the one part, and anti-xenophobic ones, particularly in Germany.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research has confirmed the hypothesis that the world is facing now the formation of a new inclusive political institution represented by non-violent public protest actions. The number of such campaigns has been growing since the beginning of the 21st century; they have been taking place in many states governed by both authoritarian and democratic regimes.

The social/informational environment representing an inextricable entanglement of social and info-communication processes based on the mass-scale use of social networks, blogs, and other Internet resources, as well as the mass spread of mobile telephony, has become a catalyst and a favourable environment for preparation, organisation, and implementation of protest campaigns.

Under authoritarian regimes, when all traditional institutions and mechanisms for influencing power structures and public expression of attitudes towards governments' decisions and methods of their realisation are deliberately blocked, PMPPs provide certain opportunities to exert such influence and act as an institutional factor in transforming authoritarian regimes.

Under democratic governance, when the traditional institutions and mechanisms of political participation and influence on power structures are not sufficiently effective in the conditions of post-industrial civilisational transit when a certain dysfunction of democratic political systems can be observed, caused by their delayed adaptation to the new conditions, PMPPs can be viewed as a new inclusive political institution designed to compensate this dysfunction.

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