MENA REGION: DEVELOPMENT AND THREATS

THE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIOPOLITICAL DESTABILIZATION IN MENA REGION IN COMPARATIVE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE[1]

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Much has been written about the destabilizing factors in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (and the Afrasian instability macrozone in general) since 2011; however, the characteristics of its destabilization dimensions have been little discussed. Our principal component analysis based on the CNTS, Global Terrorism and Center for Systemic Peace databases, shows that some MENA countries are the most violently destabilized in the entire world for the period of 1970–2018 compared to all other countries. These results are supported by the mean factor scores of the principal components of socio-political destabilization for four world-system regions for three observation periods which show that both for the 1970–2018 and post-2011 periods, the Afrasian instability macrozone in general, and the MENA region in particular, emerge as the areas with the highest mean values of bloody destabilization factor scores. Moreover, the tests conducted show that MENA is the only region where destabilization component of mass protest is associated with repressions both for the general observation period (1970–2018) and for the post-Arab Spring period (since 2011) while for other regions the correlation with the purges/repressions indicator is insignificant, albeit positive (South America and sub-Saharan Africa) or even insignificant and negative (Western Europe). This seems to imply that in the MENA region protests are much more systematically accompanied by mass repressions than in other parts of the world. On the other hand, for Sub-Saharan Africa we find the presence of a number of terrorist attacks among the significant contributors to mass protest destabilization, suggesting that mass protest destabilization in this part of the world is also of a rather special nature, with a very substantial violent component. Meanwhile, the principal component analysis of destabilization in the MENA region (considered as a semi-peripheral world-system area) in comparison with South America (another world-system area), Western Europe (considered as a part of the world-system core), and Sub-Saharan Africa (considered as a part of the world-system core) has yielded the following results. In general, we find that the highest percentage of destabi-

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lization variance is explained by the mass protest principal component for the world-system core (represented by Western Europe); on the other hand, the lowest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the bloody destabilization principal component precisely for this part of the world. We also find that the highest percentage of destabilization variance is explained by the bloody principal component for the world-system periphery (represented by sub-Saharan Africa); on the other hand, the lowest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the mass protest destabilization principal component precisely for sub-Saharan Africa. The world-system semi-periphery appears here between these poles. The MENA region (which is the core of the Afrasian instability macrozone) ranks second in terms of both mass protest and bloody destabilization, with very high levels of both (while South America occupies an intermediate position between MENA and Western Europe).

Keywords: *MENA, the Afrasian instability macrozone, the Arab Spring, the World System, principal component analysis, socio-political destabilization, repressions, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe, Latin America.*

Triggered by the Arab Spring, the global wave of socio-political destabilization resulted in a very significant increase in socio-political instability in absolutely all world-system zones in different ways and not entirely synchronously (Grinin and Korotayev 2012; Korotayev, Meshcherina *et al.* 2016; Korotayev, Shishkina, Issaev 2016; Akaev *et al.* 2017; Korotayev, Shishkina, Lukhmanova 2017; Ortmans *et al.* 2017; Korotayev, Meshcherina, Shishkina 2018; Korotayev, Romanov, Medvedev 2019; Khokhlov *et al.* 2021; Korotayev, Shishkina, Khokhlova 2022).

The factors of this socio-political destabilization of 2011 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have attracted serious attention from various researchers. The existing studies devoted to the analysis of socio-political destabilization in MENA have shown that the genesis of explosive sociopolitical destabilization in the Arab countries in 2011 was determined by a number of political factors (type of regime, intra-elite conflict, and ineffectiveness of instruments of power transfer), social factors (presence of inter-tribal, inter-confessional, and other social conflicts and contradictions), demographic factors (structural demographic risks, *e.g*., the 'youth bulge,' unemployment among young people with higher education, *etc*.), historical factors (major conflicts in the recent past), religious factors (in particular, the inclusion of Islamists in the legal political processes), economic factors (*e.g*., the second wave of agflation which led to an explosive growth in food prices), and some subjective (socio-psychological and cultural-historical) factors (Bilyuga 2017; Butenschøn 2015; Grinin and Korotayev 2012; Grinin, Korotayev, Tausch 2019; Hussain and Howard 2013; Korotayev *et al.* 2011; Korotayev and Zinkina 2011, 2022; Malik and Awadallah 2013; Slinko *et al.* 2017; Steinert-Threlkeld 2017).

At the same time, little has been said about dimensions of destabilization and their peculiarities for this region after the Arab Spring. Using descriptive statistical methods, we distinguished between destabilization periods of mass protest in MENA states, observing 19 countries (2011–2013 and since 2016) and destabilization period of terror (2013–2016), coinciding with the rise of radical Islamist terrorism in the region (Korotayev and Khokhlova 2022).

However, it still remains unclear whether MENA will emerge as the most destabilized region, which types of destabilization are typical for it, what are characteristics of

these destabilization types and what are their peculiarities in comparison with other world-system zones.

Types of Destabilization Processes

Much has been written on the problem of typology of socio-political destabilization. In general, researchers distinguish between internal and inter-state types of socio-political destabilization, while all acts of violence, conflict situations and contentious socio-political events are treated as destabilization processes (see, *e.g.*, Flanigan and Fogelman 1970; Hibbs 1973; Gurr and Lichbach 1986; Alesina *et al.* 1996; Benson, and Kugler 1998; de Haan 2007; Jong-A-Pin 2009; Celestino and Kristian 2013; Klomp and de Haan 2013).

The first attempts to apply principal component analysis to indicators of destabilization were made already in the 1960s and 1970s to highlight the main types of destabilization (Tanter 1966; Hibbs 1973). In these studies, limited to the period 1948–1967, researchers tended to identify the 'anomic violence' type of destabilization which includes anti-government demonstrations, strikes and riots, and the 'civil war' type as the second destabilization dimension, which includes armed insurgencies and assassinations.

Douglas Hibbs's (1973) analysis of aggregate data from 108 nations on the causal structures underlying mass political violence within nations (for the period l948–1967) showed that coups were positively correlated with previous coups experience, and defense expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure, and negatively correlated with level of development of (non-military) socio-political institutions. He defined the focus of his research as events of domestic violence that are non-systemic in nature, have direct and immediate political significance, and involve collective or mass actions. The variables that fit his theoretical dimensions are Riots, Guerilla Warfare, General Strikes, Assassinations, Deaths from Political Violence, and Anti-Government Demonstrations (Hibbs 1973: 19). Hibbs's (1973) analysis identified two dimensions (factors): the 'anomic violence', which included riots, anti-government demonstrations and strikes, and the 'civil war' that combined such forms of political violence as armed assaults, murders and assassinations.

Richard Jong-A-Pin (2009) defines the following four types of socio-political destabilization: mass civil protests (demonstrations, riots and strikes); political aggression (civil war, guerilla warfare, revolutions, assassinations, internal conflicts, ethnic conflicts); political institutions instability (strikes, fractionalization, ruling party incumbent period, society polarization, general elections number, governmental crises) and political regime instability (constitutional changes, coups, political regime changes, government change and religious factors).

Elena Slinko and others apply principal component analysis to identify the following four types of socio-political destabilization in their cross-national research using the CNTS database: mass protest destabilization (with the main contributions on the part of anti-government demonstrations, general strikes, and riots); abrupt regime change (predominantly due to coups); bloody destabilization (terror attacks *etc*.) and intra-elite destabilization (with the main contributions on the part of political crises, assassinations, purges and coups) (Slinko *et al.* 2018). Slinko and others' analysis of the relationship between socio-political and economic indicators with four types of destabilization shows that each type of destabilization has its own socio-political conditions that contribute to the risk of its occurrence (*Ibid*.). They also show that different dimensions of

socio-political destabilization have different effects on types of destabilization. At the same time, the chronological frameworks of the paper are limited to 2010 because, as they explain, of the 'structural shift' (Akaev *et al.* 2017; Korotayev, Khokhlova and Tsirel 2018) caused by the events of the Arab Spring.

This research aims to contribute to this block of literature with typology study of the world-systems destabilization in order to determine the place of MENA and the Afrasian instability macrozone in the hierarchy of the most destabilized regions of the world for the observation period including 2011–2018 (in contrast to Slinko *et al.* 2018), and to investigate its specific destabilization dimensions peculiarities.

Research Design, Materials and Method

Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems approach is pivotal for the present study (Wallerstein 1974, 1979, 1980, 1987, 1988, 2004); according to him, this system consists of the following three components:

1) the 'core' (with respect to the modern World System, this component refers to the high-income OECD countries with developed industrial / post-industrial economics and strong state);

2) the 'periphery' – countries and regions that specialize in the resource extraction, have a predominantly agricultural economy and a weak state (the most underdeveloped and low-income countries of the Third World);

3) the 'semi-periphery' (modernized countries of the 'second wave'; socialist countries of the twentieth century, all the BRICS countries of the twenty-first century, middle-income countries of the Third World).

According to Wallerstein, the capitalist world-system is based on the non-equivalent division of labor and the exploitation of the periphery by the core (of course, today this point needs important qualifications [see, e.g., Grinin, Korotayev 2015; Korotayev, Zinkina *et al.* 2011; Korotayev, Goldstone, Zinkina 2015). The core countries force the periphery to supply raw materials at lower prices, which contributes to the prosperity of the center and the impoverishment of the periphery (Wallerstein 1974, 1979, 1980, 1987, 1988, 2004).

Thus, following Wallerstein, the countries of Western Europe are taken as an example of the world-system 'core', sub-Saharan Africa as the 'periphery', and South America and the MENA countries as examples of the 'semi-periphery'.[2]

We argue that the 'semi-periphery' regions are the most unstable among the three world-system zones mentioned above since the highest risks of socio-political instability are typical for the countries with intermediate values of GDP per capita which are typical of this world-system zone, and not the countries with the highest or lowest values, since it is observed that, up to a certain value of GDP per capita, economic growth predicts an increase in the risks of socio-political destabilization (Bilyuga *et al.* 2016; Korotayev, Bilyuga, Shishkina 2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Korotayev, Vaskin *et al.* 2017, 2018, 2021; Korotayev, Khokhlova and Tsirel 2018; Vaskin *et al.* 2018; Korotayev, Sawyer, Grinin *et al.* 2020; Korotayev, Sawyer, Romanov 2021; Korotayev, Medvedev, Zinkina 2022). At the same time, the destabilization period after the Arab Spring (2011) produced a serious effect on the socio-political dynamics of the MENA semi-periphery zone (Akaev *et al.* 2017; Korotayev, Meshcherina, and Shishkina 2018).

So our first hypothesis is as follows:

H#1: Latin America and the MENA region as semi-peripheral zones of the World System are the most unstable of the four for the period before the Arab Spring, while for the entire observation period as well as after 2011 the highest destabilization values are observed for the MENA region due to the Arab Spring effect.

At the same time, taking into account the phenomenon of the Arab Spring and the increase in the rate of terrorism in the MENA region in 2013–2014 with the expansion of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS – banned organization in the Russian Federation) (Korotayev and Khokhlova 2021), we hypothesize that:

H#2: The MENA region countries are the most violently destabilized among the four analyzed regions.

The total 1970–2018 dataset contains 10,133 observations, including 1,201 observations for MENA, 1,244 observations for Western Europe, 588 observations for South America and 2255 observations for Sub-Saharan Africa.

We use the Cross-National Time-Series Database (CNTS [Banks and Wilson 2020]) as the principal database for the present research.[3] In addition to the CNTS, we use the Global Terrorism Database (START 2020) for the *number of terrorist attacks* and the *number of people killed* in terrorist attacks variables; we take data on the *number of coups and coup attempts* from *the Coups d'Etat 1946–2017* database (Center for Systemic Peace 2020).

To identify the principal components (types of instability) for the whole world, we use a principal components analysis. To extract a sufficient number of principal component eigenvalues, we use a modified version of the Kaiser criterion, which requires the eigenvalue to be greater than 0.95, and Cattell's scree test (Cattell 1966). A detailed description of the principal component analyses that we have performed can be found in the online supplementary material.

Tests

Our principal component analyses identify the following main components of destabilization: (1) 'bloody destabilization' with the main contributions from the Number of Deaths in Terrorist Attacks, Number of Terrorist Attacks, and Guerilla Warfare; (2) 'mass protest destabilization' with the main contributions from Anti-Government Demonstrations, Riots, and General Strikes; and (3) 'elite destabilization' with the main contributions from Governmental Crises, Coups and Coup Attempts, Assassinations, and Purges (see the Online supplementary material for details). In what follows, we pay most attention to the first two main components.

To investigate which countries contribute most to the abovementioned components the most we use averages and provide the top-20 most destabilized countries in the world by mass protests and bloody destabilization factors, see Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Top-20 most unstable countries in terms of bloody and mass protests types of destabilization, 1970–2018

Bloody Destabilization			Mass Protest Destabilization		
Number	**Country name**	**Value**	**Number**	**Country name**	**Value**
1	Iraq	4.320	1	India	3.793
2	Afghanistan	2.808	2	South Africa	1.144
3	Pakistan	1.577	3	USA	1.139
4	India	1.090	4	China	1.025
5	Colombia	1.085	5	Greece	1.021
6	Ukraine	1.044	6	France	0.959
7	Nigeria	1.042	7	Bangladesh	0.829
8	Somalia	0.711	8	Pakistan	0.762
9	Syria	0.703	9	UK	0.754
10	Philippines	0.689	10	Spain	0.746
11	Yemen	0.564	11	USSR	0.738
12	El Salvador	0.499	12	Israel	0.713
13	Peru	0.467	13	Argentina	0.682
14	South Sudan	0.430	14	Italy	0.624
15	Sri Lanka	0.426	15	Korea	0.578
16	Turkey	0.376	16	Russia	0.553
17	Algeria	0.314	17	Egypt	0.499
18	Egypt	0.254	18	Nepal	0.498
19	UK	0.248	19	Bolivia	0.469
20	Libya	0.216	20	Chile	0.441

Note: The MENA region/Afrasian instability macrozone countries are highlighted with darker colors.

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 1.1 demonstrates that almost half of the world's most violently destabilized countries are in the MENA region: Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt and Libya. One should also note that Pakistan which is sometimes attributedto the 'Greater Middle East' and the 'Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA)' (see, *e.g*., Perthes 2004; Latif, Abbas 2011; Markakis 2015), and Nigeria, home to the radical Islamic movement Boko Haram (banned organization in the Russian Federation), which pledged its allegiance to ISIS in 2015, are also among the top-20 most violently destabilized countries. In addition, two MENA countries, Iraq and Afghanistan, occupy the top two spots, followed by Pakistan in the third place. Together, the scores for the MENA countries, which together with Pakistan, Nigeria, and Mali are part of the 'semi-periphery system' (see Table 1.2) account for more than 70 per cent of the total violent destabilization factor score points for the world's top-20 violently destabilized countries.

It should also be noted that Pakistan, Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, and South Sudan are all part of the African zone of instability (which, in addition to the Greater Middle East, includes, the Sahel macro zone of sub-Saharan Africa with Nigeria, and highly destabilized countries such as Mali, Somalia and South Sudan). This macro zone has been shown to be characterized by particularly high levels of violent destabilization (Korotayev, Issaev *et al*. 2016; Korotayev, Grinin, Malkov *et al.* 2021 *etc*.). Hence, this study provides additional support for this conclusion.

The world's top-20 violently destabilized countries also include Colombia and Peru, the countries of the South American region, the second 'semi-periphery zone'. Other countries, namely, India, Ukraine, Philippines, El Salvador and Sri Lanka belong to the regions which we do not analyze in our study (except for the UK which is a Western European state).

Concerning mass protest type of destabilization, it is obvious that is not very typical of the 'semi-periphery' zones: only Pakistan, Israel and Egypt occupy the eighth, twelfth and seventeenth places respectively in the top-20 most non-violently destabilized countries. The largest share of this destabilizing factor belongs to Western European countries, India and China. At the same time, we find countries from South America in the world's top-20 non-violently destabilized countries; they are Argentina, Bolivia and Chile.

In the next stage, we divide the observation period into two intervals and analyze how the list of countries changes (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2

Top-20 most unstable countries in terms of bloody destabilization for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Number	**Country name**	**Value**	**Number**	**Country name**	**Value**
1	Colombia	3.148	1	Iraq	8.158
2	Iraq	3.008	2	Afghanistan	6.908
3	India	2.193	3	Pakistan	3.138
4	Peru	2.012	4	Nigeria	2.722
5	El Salvador	1.783	5	Somalia	2.205
6	Sri Lanka	1.655	6	Syria	1.895
7	Pakistan	1.305	7	Yemen	1.637
8	Philippines	1.235	8	Ukraine	1.527
9	Guatemala	1.235	9	Philippines	1.149
10	Afghanistan	1.162	10	India	1.083
11	Algeria	1.116	11	Libya	0.846
12	UK	0.948	12	Egypt	0.580
13	Nicaragua	0.869	13	Turkey	0.417
14	Turkey	0.861	14	Colombia	0.372
15	Lebanon	0.857	15	Thailand	0.346
16	Spain	0.781	16	DRC	0.232
17	USA	0.395	17	Cameroon	0.209
18	Russia	0.344	18	Mali	0.168
19	Italy	0.343	19	Burundi	0.152
20	Angola	0.336	20	Mozambique	0.086

Note: The countries of the MENA region/Afrasian instability macrozone are highlighted with darker colors.

Table 1.2 demonstrates that the MENA countries as part of the 'semi-periphery zone' account for more than a quarter of all the places in the list of the top-20 most violently destabilized countries in the world prior to 2011; these countries are Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Turkey and Lebanon (with Pakistan as the sixth country if we take into account the BMENA/Afrasian instability macrozone). Moreover, Iraq and Colombia virtually share the top spot as their pre-2011 scores are about the same (3.1 and 3 respectively), while other countries score at least 1.5 times lower.

The South American 'semi-periphery region' countries also make up a large proportion of the list: Colombia ranks first and Peru fourth.

After the Arab Spring, the scores for the first two countries (Iraq and Afghanistan) account for almost 45 per cent of all the countries scores. Overall, the MENA countries' score after 2011 account for about 66 per cent of all scores for the top-20 most violently destabilized countries. It should be noted that the first seven rows of the ranking are occupied by the MENA countries, Pakistan and Nigeria, and the list is interrupted by Ukraine, the Philippines and India, which are not included in the four regions of the world-system zones analyzed in this paper. Thus, we see that among the four regions analyzed, MENA is the most violently destabilized. On the other hand, if we consider the Afrasian zone of instability as a whole, we will find out that it includes most of the-top-20 countries.

Table 1.3

Top-20 most unstable countries in terms of mass protests destabilization for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Number	**Country name**	**Value**	**Number**	**Country name**	**Value**
1	India	2.91	1	India	7.393
2	South Africa	2.054	2	USA	2.751
3	USSR	1.714	3	Greece	2.301
4	Korea, Repu	1.585	4	China	1.944
5	Israel	1.472	5	France	1.569
6	Argentina	1.343	6	Egypt	1.358
7	Pakistan	1.214	7	UK	1.189
8	Russia	1.155	8	Bangladesh	1.151
9	Spain	1.069	9	Spain	1.134
10	Italy	1.02	10	Pakistan	1.087
11	Bolivia	1.029	11	South Africa	0.996
12	France	1.018	12	Nepal	0.92
13	Bangladesh	0.952	13	Italy	0.96
14	China	0.851	14	Brazil	0.864
15	UK	0.838	15	Venezuela	0.832
16	Haiti	0.771	16	Turkey	0.727
17	Poland	0.731	17	Mexico	0.657
18	Serbia	0.716	18	Sudan	0.64
19	Indonesia	0.655	19	Chile	0.633
20	Yugoslavia	0.6	20	Bahrain	0.617

Note: MENA region/Afrasian instability macrozone countries are highlighted with dark colors.

Table 1.3 demonstrates that, with the exception of Israel, none of the MENA countries appear in the top-20 most non-violently unstable countries in the world before 2011 (in addition to Pakistan from the Afrasian instability macrozone). Serious destabilization of the mass protest type in MENA occurs after the Arab Spring, and predictably affects Egypt, Turkey, Sudan and Bahrain, but together their scores explain 11 per cent of the list of 20 countries.

To sum up, the preliminary results of the factor analysis of socio-political destabilization on the world sample show that the MENA countries, belonging to the 'semi-periphery' world-system zone, are the most violently destabilized in the world for the period 1970–2018: together with Pakistan, Nigeria, Somalia and Mali (from the

Afrasian instability macrozone) their scores account for more than 70 per cent of the total scores of the top-20 destabilized countries. A serious escalation of bloody destabilization predictably occurs after 2011, when countries in this region account for more than two thirds of values of the world's top-20 violently destabilized states.

The next task is to identify what are the peculiarities of socio-political destabilization factors in the MENA region and which indicators each of the three mentioned dimensions include.

The Middle East and North Africa

In this section, we use principal component (PC) analysis to examine the characteristics of the dimensions of socio-political destabilization in MENA for 1970–2018 (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2).[4]

Table 2.1

Principal components (PC) eigenvalues for MENA (1970–2018)

Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained
1	2.966	29.66
2	2.205	22.05
3	1.205	12.05
4	1.024	10.24
5	0.777	7.77
6	0.648	6.49
7	0.583	5.84
8	0.294	2.94
9	0.237	2.38
10	0.061	0.61

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

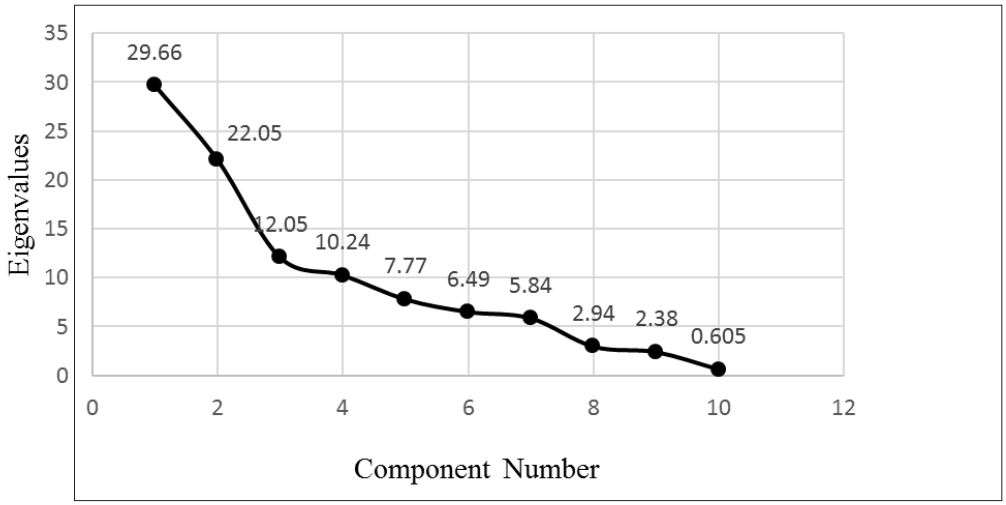

Fig. 1. Principal component eigenvalues. A scree plot for Table 2.1

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

The principal components analysis, with factors rotated by the varimax method, gives the following results for MENA in 1970–2018 (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Loadings of three principal components for MENA (1970–2018)

Political instability indicators	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 (Assassinations)	0.266	0.047	0.728	–0.016
Cnts_domestic2 (General strikes)	–0.096	0.691	0.204	–0.152
Cnts_domestic3 (Guerrilla warfare)	0.896	0.060	–0.037	0.008
Number of Terror Attacks	0.944	0.050	0.174	–0.006
Number of Killed	0.948	0.000	0.158	–0.021
Cnts_domestic4 (Governmental crises)	–0.022	0.124	0.821	0.119
Cnts_domestic5 (Purges/Repressions)	0.025	0.508	–0.062	0.551
Cnts_domestic6 (Riots)	0.125	0.829	0.080	0.078
Coups and Coup Attempts	–0.032	–0.090	0.132	0.883
Cnts_domestic8 (Anti-government demonstrations)	0.072	0.887	–0.018	0.079

Note: PC = principal component.

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 2.2 demonstrates that the PC1 of destabilization in MENA in 1970–2018 is the 'bloody' one, which, according to Table 2.1, accounts for about 30 per cent of all instability phenomena. We also see that the PC1 is mainly generated by *guerilla warfare, the number of terrorist attacks* and the *number of people killed in those attacks* and to a lesser extent by *assassinations*. The PC2 reflects mass protest destabilization which accounts for 22 per cent of the explained variance. It should be noted that in addition to the indicators typical of mass destabilization in the world sample,[5] such as *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations* indicators, the PC2 for MENA mass destabilization also includes *purges*/*repressions* with a load twice as high as that of the PC2 for *assassinations* in the world sample. This seems to imply that protests in the MENA region are associated with greater repressions than in other parts of the world. The elite destabilization for MENA is split into two components: PC3 and PC4, which together account for 22 per cent of the variance, comparable to the PC2 – mass protest destabilization component.[6]

Further we analyze the same components after dividing the observation period into two intervals: before and after 2011 (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 3.1

Principal components eigenvalues for MENA for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained	Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained
1	2.843	28.43	1	2.991	29.91
2	1.815	18.15	2	2.386	23.87
3	1.320	13.2	3	1.116	11.16
4	0.891	8.91	4	0.985	9.85
5	0.788	7.88	5	0.712	7.12
6	0.696	6.96	6	0.675	6.75
7	0.632	6.32	7	0.592	5.92
8	0.545	5.45	8	0.275	2.75
9	0.321	3.21	9	0.216	2.16
10	0.150	1.49	10	0.051	0.51

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 3.2

Loads of principal components for MENA for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

Political instability indicators	1970–2010			2011–2018			
	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 (Assassinations)	0.594	0.250	0.232	0.261	–0.008	0.690	–0.144
Cnts_domestic2 (General strikes)	–0.023	0.709	–0.054	–0.101	0.742	0.010	–0.283
Domestic3 (Guerrilla warfare)	0.304	0.115	0.523	0.903	–0.045	–0.029	0.072
Number of Terror Attacks	0.922	0.015	–0.038	0.944	–0.023	0.197	0.007
Number of Killed	0.922	–0.024	–0.025	0.954	–0.062	0.134	–0.043
Cnts_domestic4 (Governmental crisis)	0.324	0.525	0.345	–0.027	0.017	0.862	0.145
Cnts_domestic5 (Repressions)	0.018	0.028	0.727	–0.072	0.605	0.000	0.317
Cnts_domestic6 (Riots)	0.032	0.876	0.022	0.057	0.737	0.037	0.352
Coups and Coup Attempts	–0.092	–0.048	0.687	0.025	0.153	0.032	0.882
Cnts_domestic8 (Anti-government demonstrations)	0.106	0.792	0.046	–0.023	0.898	–0.024	0.057

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

As we see in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, the loadings of the MENA region's socio-political destabilization indicators before and after the 2011 turbulence have their own peculiarities. Although PC1 is 'bloody' for the both periods and PC2 for both periods describes 'mass protest' destabilization; PC3 represents 'elite destabilization' for both periods (in fact, PC4 for the 2011–2018 observation period primarily reflects elite destabilization), the results are different in terms of the component indicator sets. The *assassinations* indicator is significant for all of the three dimensions of destabilization with the highest eigenvalues before 2011. Before 2011, PC1 also includes government crises in addition to *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed in terrorist attacks* (which were typical of the1970–2010 period) and *assassinations* also includes *governmental crises*, while this is not the case for PC1 for the period after 2011. It is also possible to look at the growth of *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed in terrorist attacks* after 2011: the largest escalation is observed for *guerilla warfare* which grows from 0.304 to 0.903. Predictably, a strong escalation is observed for the loadings of the indicators *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed in terrorist attacks*. Thus, this implies a decline in the role of *assassinations* in bloody destabilization in the MENA region after 2010 and an increase in the importance of *guerilla warfare*.

The PC2 for MENA includes, in addition to *general strikes, riots* and *anti-government demonstrations,*[7] *assassinations* before 2011 and *repression* after the start of the Arab Spring. After 2011, the PC2 shows other changes: we see that the *assassinations* indicator is missing for the observation period 2011–2018. Moreover, the loading value for the *riots* indicator, which includes some violence (see Banks and Wilson 2020), is lower than before 2011. In general, one may observe a decline in the contribution of the *assassinations* to the mass protest destabilization after 2010 (note that we could observe the same above with the respect to the bloody destabilization component). After 2010, one could also observe the increasing contribution of *general strikes* and *anti-government demonstrations* to the mass protest destabilization and the emergence of *purges / repressions* as a significant contributor. This seems to be related to the fact that after 2010, mass protests in MENA became particularly closely associated with repression (this was not

observed, *e.g*., in Western Europe and South America and quite predictably, repression is not found among the contributors to the respective principal component [see below]).

It is important to note that while the percentage of variance explained for bloody destabilization before and after the Arab Spring barely changed (from 28.43 to 29.91 per cent), this increase in loadings for mass protest destabilization is very significant (from 18.15 to 23.87 per cent).[8]

As a result, the types of destabilization in the MENA region have their own specificities shown in the indicator sets. It can be observed that the role of *assassinations* in the bloody destabilization in the MENA region after 2010 declined while the value of *guerilla warfare* indicator increased. The same trend for *assassinations* is observed for mass protest destabilization before and after 2010 while the loadings for *general strikes* and *anti-government demonstrations* increased significantly. In addition, *purges / repressions* are observed as crucial contributors to mass protest destabilization after the start of the Arab Spring. It is also shown that the percentage of variance explained for bloody destabilization before and after the Arab Spring has hardly changed (from 28.43 to 29.91 per cent), this increase in value for mass protest destabilization is very significant (from 18.15 to 23.87 per cent).

Western Europe

In the next stage, we repeat the same tests for Western Europe. In Table 4.1 we identify the main components (types of destabilization for the region; we apply the same principal components analysis for 1970–2018 in order to further compare the results with the ones for MENA.

Table 4.1

Principal components eigenvalues for Western Europe (all years)

Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained
1	2.954	29.54
2	1.531	15.306
3	1.363	13.63
4	0.997	9.97
5	0.803	8.03
6	0.655	6.55
7	0.557	5.57
8	0.539	5.39
9	0.336	3.36
10	0.267	2.67

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

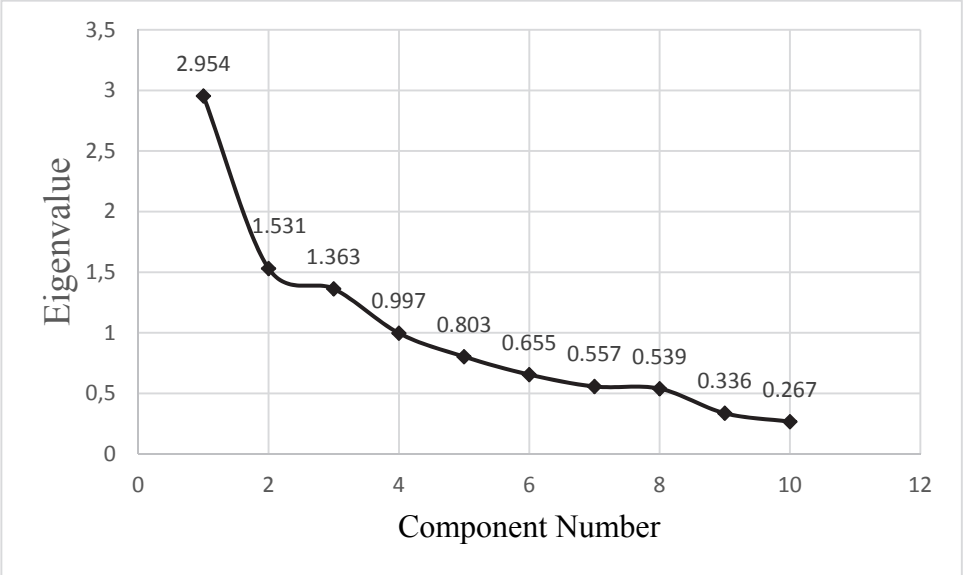

Fig. 2. Principal components eigenvalues. A scree plot for Table 4.1

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

The principal components analysis, with factors rotated by the varimax method, yields the following results for Western Europe in 1970–2018 (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Loadings of principal components for Western Europe (1970–2018)

Political instability indicators	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 (“Assassinations”)	–0.007	0.572	0.003	0.538
Cnts_domestic2 (“General strikes”)	0.748	0.015	–0.043	0.210
Cnts_domestic3 (“Guerrilla warfare”)	0.535	0.463	0.144	–0.125
Number of Terror Attacks	0.178	0.878	–0.034	0.100
Number of Killed	0.073	0.835	0.022	–0.093
Cnts_domestic4 (“Governmental crisis”)	0.176	–0.061	0.057	0.802
Cnts_domestic5 (“Repressions”)	0.037	–0.025	0.881	–0.111
Cnts_domestic6 (“Riots”)	0.825	0.143	0.037	0.074
Coups and Coup Attempts	0.013	0.065	0.674	0.445
Cnts_domestic8 (“Anti-government demonstrations”)	0.848	0.069	0.021	0.018

Predictably, the world-system core represented by the Western European countries, so far is much more vulnerable to ‘mass protest destabilization’ type (30 per cent) than to ‘bloody destabilization,’ which accounts for half of the first component (15 per cent). It is predictable that the ‘bloody destabilization’ is particularly typical of Western Europe before the twenty-first century, as is elite destabilization type after the last democratic transitions in the region in 1975.[9] These hypotheses can be tested after splitting the sample into the two periods before and after 2011 (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

Table 5.1

Principal components eigenvalues for Western Europe for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Component number	**Eigenvalue**	**% of Variance explained**	**Component number**	**Eigenvalue**	**% of Variance explained**
1	3.094	30.94	1	3.191	39.88
2	1.477	14.77	2	1.278	15.98
3	1.095	10.95	3	1.122	14.02
4	0.941	9.41	4	0.814	10.18
5	0.876	8.76	5	0.588	7.35
6	0.637	6.37	6	0.451	5.64
7	0.622	6.22	7	0.316	3.95
8	0.571	5.72	8	0.240	3
9	0.443	4.34			
10	0.243	2.43			

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

The principal components analysis, with factors rotated by the varimax method, yields the following results for Western Europe in 1970–2010 and 2011–2018 (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

Loadings of principal components for Western Europe for the periods before and after the Arab Spring[10]

Political instability indicators	**1970–2010**			**2011–2018**		
	PC1	**PC2**	**PC3**	**PC1**	**PC2**	**PC3**
Cnts_domestic1 (‘Assassinations’)	0.522	0.295	0.091	–0.027	–0.119	0.866
Cnts_domestic2 (‘General strikes’)	0.147	0.710	–0.072	0.817	0.166	–0.123
Cnts_domestic3 (‘Guerrilla warfare’)	0.615	0.166	0.129	0.367	0.712	0.281
Number of Terror Attacks	0.880	0.163	–0.058	0.302	0.430	0.638
Number of Killed	0.844	–0.035	–0.040	0.093	0.789	–0.108
Cnts_domestic4 (‘Governmental crisis’)	–0.089	0.690	0.123	0.569	–0.484	–0.088
Cnts_domestic5 (‘Purges’)	0.018	–0.042	0.829			
Cnts_domestic6 (‘Riots’)	0.338	0.594	0.102	0.759	0.222	0.372
Coups and Coup Attempts	0.061	0.230	0.745			
Cnts_domestic8 (‘Anti-government demonstrations’)	0.304	0.658	0.148	0.720	0.256	0.395

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

In fact, Tables 5.1 and 5.2 suggest that before the Arab Spring, PC1, although not as obvious as for the MENA sample, represents bloody destabilization with the highest loadings for *assassinations*, *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks*, *number of people killed in terrorist attacks*, accompanied by *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*, this component explains 30 per cent of variance. The indicator of mass protest destabilization is represented by PC2, which explains less than 15 per cent of the variance and is accompanied by *assassinations* and *governmental crisis* indicators in addition to *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*.[11]

The results for the post-Arab Spring period are different as PC1 apparently blends with PC2, so that the highest PC1 loadings reflect mass protest destabilization, contrib-

uted by *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*. The bloody destabilization component for Western Europe for 2011–2018 splits into two while we do not observe a pronounced elite destabilization PC for the region after 2011.

All in all, Western Europe is predictably more unstable than MENA in terms of mass protest destabilization which is accompanied by governmental crises while no *purges/ mass repressions* are observed for the region after 2010 while this indicator emerges as the key contributor for MENA (and the Afrasian instability macrozone, in general) after the Arab Spring.

South America

In the next stage, we repeat the same tests for the South American region. In Table 6.1 we identify the main types of destabilization for the region using the principal components analysis for 1970–2018.

Table 6.1

Principal components eigenvalues for South America (1970–2018)

Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained
1	2.198	21.99
2	1.956	19.56
3	1.336	13.36
4	1.034	10.34
5	0.896	8.96
6	0.785	7.85
7	0.725	7.25
8	0.648	6.48
9	0.295	2.95
10	0.127	1.27

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

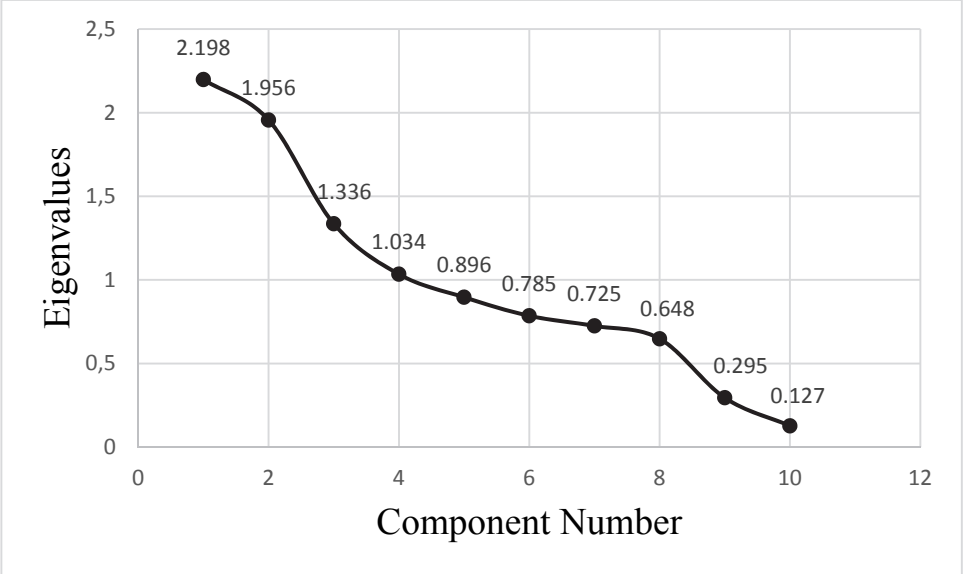

Fig. 3. Principal components eigenvalues. A scree plot for Table 6.1

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 6.2

Loadings of principal components for South America (1970–2018)

Political instability indicators	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 ('Assassinations')	0.566	0.019	0.076	0.338
Cnts_domestic2 ('General strikes')	0.099	0.479	0.416	–0.369
Cnts_domestic3 ('Guerrilla warfare')	0.199	0.413	0.093	–0.176
Number of Terror Attacks	0.930	0.057	–0.018	–0.100
Number of Killed	0.918	–0.009	0.011	–0.100
Cnts_domestic4 ('Governmental crisis')	0.079	0.119	0.768	0.004
Cnts_domestic5 ('Repressions')	0.008	0.116	0.155	0.839
Cnts_domestic6 ('Riots')	–0.040	0.876	–0.033	0.182
Coups and Coup Attempts	–0.056	–0.091	0.777	0.177
Cnts_domestic8 ('Anti-government demonstrations')	–0.083	0.852	–0.018	0.132

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show that as well as for MENA, PC1 for South America reflects the bloody type of destabilization with typical 'bloody' indicators[12] such as *assassinations*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed* in them. PC2 also includes 'typical'[13] indicators of mass protest instability, including *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*, so this component may be called the 'mass protest destabilization' type. 'Elite destabilization' in South America is divided into PC3 and PC4 and has its own atypical features due to the region's history.[14]

In the next stage, we look what happens when we divide the observation period into two parts – before and after the Arab Spring.

Table 7.1

Principal components eigenvalues for South America for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Component number	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	Component number	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained
1	2.530	25.30	1	2.656	29.52
2	1.931	19.31	2	2.069	22.97
3	1.286	12.86	3	1.304	14.49
4	0.988	9.88	4	0.994	11.05
5	0.829	8.29	5	0.648	7.2
6	0.705	7.05	6	0.583	6.47
7	0.693	6.93	7	0.441	4.9
8	0.5	5	8	0.257	2.86
9	0.417	4.17	9	0.050	0.553
10	0.121	1.21			

Source: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 7.2

Loadings of principal components for South America for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

Political instability indicators	1970–2010				2011–2018			
	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 (Assassinations)	0.515	0.102	–0.024	0.500	0.087	0.001	0.858	–0.065
Cnts_domestic2 (General strikes)	0.134	0.610	0.280	–0.273	0.285	0.645	–0.241	–0.300
Cnts_domestic3 (Guerrilla warfare)	0.488	0.056	0.500	0.367	0.772	0.237	–0.131	–0.032
Number of Terror Attacks	0.925	0.030	–0.026	–0.050	0.955	0.003	0.007	–0.024
Number of Killed	0.920	–0.040	0.023	–0.084	0.950	–0.057	0.102	–0.030
Cnts_domestic4 (Governmental crisis)	0.089	0.316	0.733	0.069	–0.029	0.084	–0.081	0.956
Cnts_domestic5 (Repressions)	–0.108	0.023	0.145	0.800	–0.100	0.235	0.751	–0.002
Cnts_domestic6 (Riots)	–0.004	0.784	0.024	0.256	0.058	0.853	0.207	0.066
Coups and Coup Attempts	–0.113	–0.059	0.785	0.044				
Cnts_domestic8 (Anti-government demonstrations)	–0.043	0.828	0.017	0.017	–0.062	0.834	0.221	0.209

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

After dividing the observation period in two (before and after the Arab Spring), we see that the 2011 phenomena had an effect on the socio-political dynamics of South American countries: the percentage of variance for all three types of destabilization increased sharply. As for the MENA countries, PC1 is defined for the both periods as the bloody destabilization component which accounts for 26–30 per cent of the explained variance, mass protest destabilization (PC2) accounts for 19–23 per cent of the variance and 'elite destabilization' (PC3 and PC4) accounts for 13–24 per cent of the variance explained.

Prior to 2011, the most heavily loaded indicators in PC1 are the same as in MENA: *assassinations*, *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed* in terrorist attacks (see Table 2.2). PC2 includes a typical set of indicators[15] consisting of *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*.

Since 2011, PC1 for South America which reflects bloody destabilization is accompanied by *general strikes* instead of *assassinations*; one could also observe some growth in *assassinations*, *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed* in terrorist attacks indicators values, the largest escalation is observed for *guerilla warfare* (from 0.490 to 0.771). There was a small increase in the PC2 (mass protest destabilization) key indicators (*general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations*) is observed. It should be noted that although South America is the 'semi-periphery' zone of the World-System, like the MENA region, its PC2 does not include the 'purges/ mass repressions' indicator, which the MENA PC2 ('mass protest' destabilization component) does.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In the next stage, we replicate the same tests for Sub-Saharan Africa. In Table 8.1 we identify the main principal components (types of instability) for the region for 1970–2018.

Table 8.1

Principal component eigenvalues for Sub-Saharan Africa (1970–2018)

Component number	Eigenvalue	% of Variance explained
1	3.209	32.09
2	1.653	16.52
3	1.395	13.95
4	0.970	9.7
5	0.765	7.65
6	0.703	7.03
7	0.654	6.54
8	0.289	2.89
9	0.197	1.97
10	0.164	1.64

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

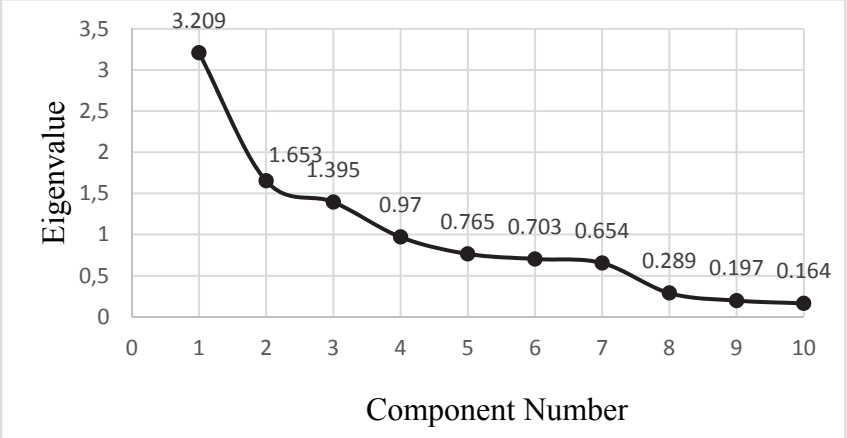

Fig. 4. Principal component eigenvalues. A scree plot for Table 8.1

Source: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 8.2

Loadings of principal components for Sub-Saharan Africa (1970–2018)

Political instability indicators	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4
Cnts_domestic1 (“Assassinations”)	0.139	0.003	0.731	0.222
Cnts_domestic2 (“General strikes”)	0.039	0.700	0.048	0.154
Cnts_domestic3 (“Guerrilla warfare”)	0.918	0.123	0.047	–0.020
Number of Terror Attacks	0.888	0.280	0.071	–0.033
Number of Killed	0.939	0.048	0.038	0.019
Cnts_domestic4 (“Governmental crisis”)	–0.031	0.184	0.022	0.773
Cnts_domestic5 (“Repressions”)	–0.022	0.103	0.844	–0.022
Cnts_domestic6 (“Riots”)	0.105	0.856	0.084	–0.028
Coups and Coup Attempts	0.002	–0.067	0.146	0.757
Cnts_domestic8 (“Anti-government demonstrations”)	0.283	0.835	–0.006	–0.008

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

From Tables 8.1 and 8.2 it becomes clear that among the four analyzed regions, sub-Saharan Africa is the leader in the percentage of the variance explained by bloody destabilization type for 1970–2018, accounting for 32 per cent of the variance explained, 2 per cent more than for MENA. PC1 includes the highest loadings for *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks* and *number of people killed* in terrorist attacks indicators which are 'typical' of this type of destabilization for the world sample.[16]

Mass protest destabilization (PC2) explains only 16 per cent of the variance which is the lowest result for all the four regions. PC2 includes the highest loadings for *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations* which are 'typical' of the mass protest type of destabilization for the world sample.

The test results with the observation period divided into two are presented in Tables 9.1 and 9.2.

Table 9.1

Principal components eigenvalues for Sub-Saharan Africa for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

1970–2010			2011–2018		
Component number	**Eigenvalue**	**% of Variance explained**	**Component number**	**Eigenvalue**	**% of Variance explained**
1	2.625	26.25	1	3.339	33.4
2	1.486	16.82	2	1.790	17.91
3	1.270	12.70	3	1.511	15.11
4	0.972	9.72	4	0.971	9.71
5	0.866	8.66	5	0.783	7.83
6	0.762	7.62	6	0.541	5.71
7	0.738	7.39	7	0.462	4.63
8	0.677	6.77	8	0.289	2.9
9	0.396	3,96	9	0.154	1.54
10	0.208	2.08	10	0.129	1.3

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Table 9.2

Loadings of principal components for Sub-Saharan Africa for the periods before and after the Arab Spring

Political instability indicators	**1970–2010**				**2011–2018**			
	PC1	**PC2**	**PC3**	**PC4**	**PC1**	**PC2**	**PC3**	**PC4**
Cnts_domestic1 (Assassinations)	0.059	0.123	0.638	0.224	0.261	–0.026	0.759	–0.051
Cnts_domestic2 (General strikes)	0.412	0.391	0.073	0.331	0.015	0.801	–0.050	0.011
Cnts_domestic3 (Guerrilla warfare)	0.005	0.232	0.707	–0.170	0.920	0.163	0.056	–0.028
Number of Terror Attacks	0.369	0.779	0.059	–0.032	0.919	0.229	0.067	–0.035
Number of Killed	–0.076	0.848	0.098	–0.034	0.951	0.047	0.035	0.011
Cnts_domestic4 (Governmental crisis)	0.142	0.085	0.104	0.736	–0.029	0.120	–0.021	0.944
Cnts_domestic5 (Repressions)	0.065	–0.143	0.682	0.207	–0.043	0.105	0.791	–0.202
Cnts_domestic6 (Riots)	0.908	0.085	0.077	–0.009	0.127	0.869	0.072	0.064
Coups and Coup Attempts	–0.052	–0.042	0.094	0.750	-0.053	–0.077	0.640	0.227
Cnts_domestic8 (Anti-government demonstrations)	0.923	0.072	0.027	0.070	0.302	0.819	–0.015	0.072

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 demonstrate that after dividing the observation period into two parts (before and after the Arab Spring), the percentage of variance explained by bloody destabilization reaches its all-time high of 33 per cent for the 2011–2018 period for the Sub-Saharan African countries. The differences in the percentage of the principal component values for the region before and after the Arab Spring show that the 2011 phenomena for the Sub-Saharan region resulted predominantly in the escalation of bloody destabilization while a relatively small mass protest destabilization escalation is observed.

It should be noted that before 2011, the PC1 for Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest loadings of indicators of mass protest destabilization (which is not typical of the MENA region, the MENA's PC1 reflects bloody destabilization) and includes *general strikes*, *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations* accompanied by the *number of terrorist attacks* indicator, which is a unique feature for the Sub-Saharan region (where, in fact, the first PC turns out to be a mixture of the mass protest and bloody destabilization). One may say that the presence of the *number of terrorist attacks* among the significant contributors to mass protest destabilization for Sub-Saharan Africa before 2011 suggests that the mass protest destabilization in this part of the world was of a rather special type, involving a rather substantial violent component.

The second principal component prior to 2011 is the bloody destabilization with the highest values for *guerilla warfare*, *number of terrorist attacks*, *number of people killed* in terrorist attacks and *general strikes*, which is also not typical of other regions.

After 2011, the principal components for Sub-Saharan Africa coincide with those for MENA, with bloody destabilization type coming as PC1, followed by mass protest destabilization as PC2. After 2011, there is sharp escalation in the loadings of the bloody destabilization indicators, which also include assassinations and anti-government demonstrations after 2011, but no longer include general strikes.

It is interesting to note that the PC2 indicators set after 2011 are the same as before the Arab Spring for the Sub-Saharan Africa region (of particular interest is that the number of terrorist attacks remains a significant contributor to mass protest destabilization).[17]

Discussion

Using the results of the above tests on the percentage of variance explained by each type of socio-political destabilization factor for the above four world-system regions in 1970–2018 (see Tables 2.1, 4.1, 6.1 and 8.1), it is possible to provide the next general comparisons (see Figures 5 and 6).

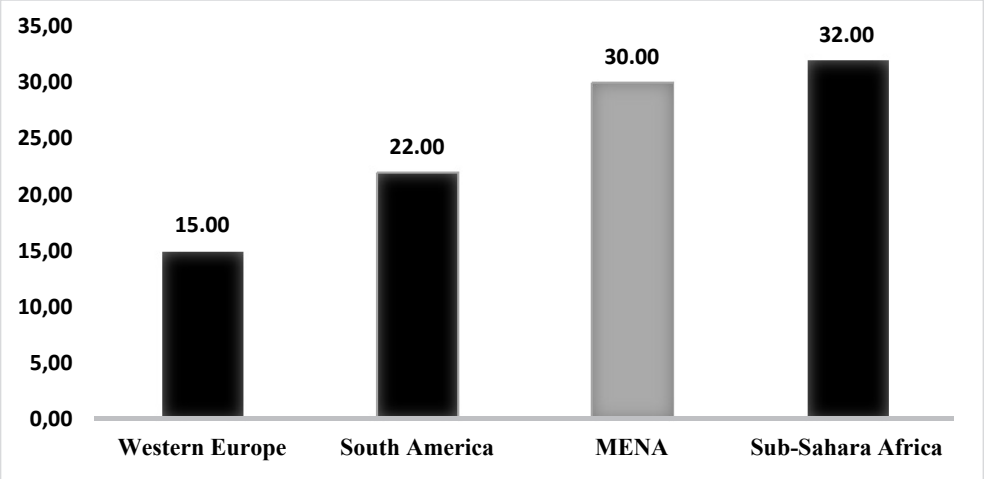

Fig. 5. Bloody destabilization type, percentage of variance, 1970–2018

Data sources: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

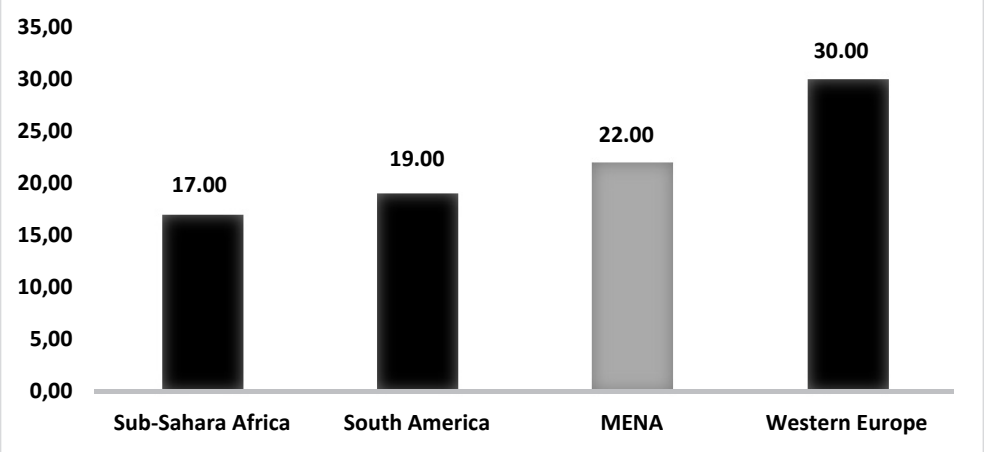

Fig. 6. Mass protest destabilization type, percentage of variance, 1970–2018

Data source: Banks and Wilson 2020; START 2020; Center for Systemic Peace 2020.

From the figures above we may conclude that bloody and mass protest destabilization types in MENA for 1970–2018 together account for the largest percentage of variance explained among the four regions analyzed (52 per cent), which proves our first hypothesis that the MENA region as the world-system 'semi-periphery' zone turns out to be the most socio-politically unstable region in the world. The MENA region is followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (49 per cent), Western Europe (45 per cent) and South America (41 per cent), which shows that South America, on the contrary, as a 'semi-periphery zone' like MENA, is the least unstable region of the four regions mentioned above.[18]

The characteristics of socio-political destabilization in the MENA region may be described by a relatively high level of bloody destabilization accompanied by a relatively high level of mass protest destabilization. For Sub-Saharan Africa, the highest level of bloody destabilization type is accompanied by the lowest level of mass protest destabilization rate. On the contrary, for Western Europe, the highest level of mass protest destabilization is accompanied by the lowest level of bloody destabilization type. Finally, South America is characterized by an intermediate level of bloody destabilization as well as an intermediate level of mass protest destabilization.

Conclusions

The present paper aims to determine the place of MENA (and the Afrasian zone of instability, in general) in the hierarchy of the most destabilized regions of the World System for the observation period including the post-Arab Spring phase (2011–2018) as well as before 2011 and to examine the region's unique destabilization peculiarities.

Our analysis based on the CNTS, Global Terrorism and Center for Systemic Peace databases shows that some MENA countries, belonging to the world-system 'semi-periphery' MENA zone are in the list of the top-20 most violently destabilized states in the world for the period of 1970–2018: together with Pakistan, Nigeria, and Mali (belonging to the Afrasian instability macrozone), their scores account for more than 70 per cent of the total scores. In the MENA region, the serious escalation of bloody destabilization predictably occurred after 2011, when countries of this region account for 66 per cent of the factor scores of the world's top-20 violently destabilized states.

In addition, our principal component analysis allows defining the following important patterns in the development of socio-political destabilization in the MENA region.

First, with regard to bloody destabilization in the MENA region, we observe the decline in the role of the *assassinations* indicator for the region after 2010 and the increase in importance of the *guerilla warfare* indicator.

Second, with regard to peculiarities of the mass protest destabilization in the MENA region, it is found that after 2010 one could identify the increasing importance of *general strikes* and *anti-government demonstrations* compared to the pre-Arab Spring period and emergence of *purges / repressions* as a significant contributor to the above-mentioned component for the region after 2010. The high values of *purges*/*repressions* indicator loadings are typical both for the general observation period (1970–2018) and for the period after the Arab Spring (since 2011), while for other regions the values of this indicator loadings are insignificant (South America and Sub-Saharan Africa) or even insignificant and negative (Western Europe for the observation periods 1970–2018 and 1970–2010; for 2011–2018 this indicator is equal to 0). This seems to imply that in the MENA region (and in the Afrasian instability zone in general) protests are accompanied by mass repressions much more systematically than in other parts of the world. On the other hand, we find the presence of a *number of terrorist attacks* among the most significant contributors to mass protest destabilization for sub-Saharan Africa, which suggests that the mass protest destabilization in this part of the world is of a rather special kind, involving a very substantial violent component.

Finally, it is also important to emphasize that for MENA, while the percentage of variance explained by bloody destabilization before and after the Arab Spring has hardly changed (from 28.43 to 29.91 per cent), the increase in value for mass protest desta-

bilization is very significant: from 18.15 to 23.87 per cent. For Western Europe, the mass protest destabilization component explains much more of the variance than the same factor for MENA for 1970–2018 (30 and 22 per cent respectively), while Sub-Saharan Africa's bloody destabilization component explains slightly more of the variance than for MENA for the same observation period (32 and 30 per cent respectively); however, MENA turns out to be the most destabilized region when the mass protest and bloody destabilization factors are taken together (52 per cent of the variance explained) for 1970–2018. South America's mass protest and bloody destabilization dimensions are both smaller than MENA's for 1970–2018.

In general, we find that the highest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the mass protest principal component for the world-system core (represented by Western Europe); on the other hand, the lowest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the bloody destabilization principal component precisely for this part of the world.

We also find that the highest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the bloody principal component for the world-system periphery (represented by sub-Saharan Africa); on the other hand, the lowest percentage of the destabilization variance is explained by the mass protest destabilization principal component precisely for Sub-Saharan.

The world-system semi-periphery appears here in between these poles. The MENA region (which is the core of the Afrasian instability macrozone) ranks second in terms of both mass protest and bloody destabilization, with very high levels of both (while South America occupies an intermediate position between MENA and Western Europe).

NOTES

[1] This research has been supported by the Russian Science Foundation (Project No. 19-18-00155).

[2] The lists of countries included in each of the four regions can be found in the online supplementary material (see Part 1 of the online supplementary material).

[3] The CNTS database description is provided in Part 2 of the online supplementary material.

[4] See para 3 of the online supplementary material to investigate our method of indicators sample formation.

[5] See Table 3.2 of para 3 of the online supplementary material.

[6] PC3 consists of *cnts_domestic1 (assassinations)* and *cnts_domestic4 (governmental crisis*) indicators, while PC4 is presented by *coups and coups attempts and repressions.* The division of these indicators into two deserves a separate study, so we decided to concentrate only on mass protest and bloody destabilization in this paper. The elite destabilization for all the regions will be discussed in another article.

[7] These indicators are of the typical mass protest destabilization according to the tests results for the whole world sample, see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of online supplementary material para 3).

[8] As elite destabilization factor is divided into two components after 2011 (PC3 and PC4) with its own features as PC3 contains only assassinations and governmental crisis indicators while PC4 – repressions, riots and coups and coup attempts, we consider the problem of elite destabilization factor to be a topic for a separate research.

[9] Obviously, 'elite destabilization' type is represented by a high value of coups and coup attempts as the chronological framework embraces the third wave of democratization in Europe of 1974–1975.

[10] Because purges and coups and coup attempts indicators are equal to 0 for Europe after 2011 we have to exclude these indicators from the model for 2011–2018 observation period.

[11] Concerning elite destabilization type (PC3) in Western Europe in 1970–2010, it is important to note that it consists of high loadings for repressions and coups and coup attempts indicators – those variables which are absent for the same observations for 2011–2018.

[12] See Table 3.2 of para 3 of the online supplementary material.

[13] See Table 3.2 of para 3 of the online supplementary material.

[14] Where the third principal component is responsible for 'regime change' elite destabilization type while PC4 more defines 'regimes response or its sanctions' destabilization as it consists of assassinations and repressions. These results are interesting and deserve a separate research.

[15] See Table S3.2 of part 3 of the online supplementary material.

[16] See Table 3.2 of para 3 of the online supplementary material.

[17] Elite destabilization for both observed periods is divided into two and has its own features.

[18] We consider these discrepancies to be investigated in a separate study.

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