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RETHINKING SOCIAL PROTEST MOVEMENTS' THEORIZATION: LESSONS FROM EGYPT, BURKINA FASO AND BOLIVIA

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Abstract. The primary observation of this paper is that the common definition of a social protest movement should be revised, following the large-scale popular protest witnessed in the last few years in different areas of the world. The traditional perception of social protest movements – as a phenomenon reserved to non-governmental actors alone, such as workers' unions, civil society and opposition movements – is deficient. While this perception concentrates on actors from outside of the formal establishment, the definition should focus on the behaviour and patterns of activity of the actors involved in protest, including official ones, such as the armed forces and other security apparatuses. Examples from Egypt, Burkina Faso and Bolivia examined hereinafter, suggest that security forces meet the criteria of a social protest movement, whether they initiate demonstrations against the regime or join a popular revolt.

Keywords: social movement, protest, Egypt, Bolivia, Burkina Faso

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1. Introduction

Normally, the main duties of the security forces (police, army, presidential guard) are to defend the state and its citizens from internal or external threats, authorized to use deadly force and weapons, in order to support the interests of the state and some or all of its citizens. The army, for instance, is usually perceived as the defensive shield of the ruler, if not the ruler itself (Perlmutter 1977). Looking back in history, Lenin was quoted saying: "no revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces that sustained the regime" (as cited by Russellm 2013: 3).

Historically, when the political situation in different countries often became unstable, the army, as well as internal security forces, took a clear position: standing by the incumbent regime or leading a coup d'état in order to maintain stability, sometimes by staying in power for decades. In most cases, the army stands behind the ruler and does not allow internal turmoil for long. Turkey, Chile, Argentine and Pakistan are examples from the second half of the 20th century.

However, examples from Egypt, Burkina Faso and Bolivia, especially between the years 2011–2015, examined hereinafter, suggest that official security forces also fulfil a social anti-regime role, being a part of a wide popular protest and even tipping its scale:

a) ***The Bolivian case study*:** an inherent involvement of the national police in social protests against the regime (1952, 1990s, 2003, 2007, 2014), mostly due to salary deprivation, based on social status. In addition, both in 1952 and in 2014, there is evidence of military involvement in popular protest, contrary to the army's usual loyalty to the president. In the most recent case, soldiers initiated the upheaval, but the mobilization converted into a vast social protest movement with broad-based support.

b) ***The Egyptian case study*:** In January 2011, the Egyptian Armed Forces had motivated Tahrir Square protest against President Husni Mubarak, when it declared its unwillingness to combat the protesters. In June 2013, the Egyptian Armed Forces followed millions of Egyptians' demand to remove elected the Muslim Brothers' rule, and ousted President Muhammad Mursi.

c) ***The Burkinabe case study*:** In 2011 military mutinies followed widespread civilian protests, indicating a crisis of confidence in President Compaoré. Putting this revolt into a historic context shows a pattern of interconnectedness between military revolts and civilian demonstrations in the country. Accordingly, in 2014, the Burkinabe Armed Forces had joined, declaratively and passively, the renewed civil protest against Compaoré forcing him to step down.

Our hypothesis is that in all case studies, armies and other state-owned bodies, such as the police, meet the criteria of social protest movements. In each case, a security force is a central social player, with a profound capacity to influence protest and bring about political change. Therefore, a social protest movement's definition should not be restricted to actors who have (or do not have) a legal-institutional position. A social protest movement should be analysed upon an actor's activity patterns. This kind of perception allows a wider definition of protest movements and a better understanding of the phenomenon.

The first part of the paper will review relevant theoretical literature on collective protest as previous studies have already analyzed. The second part will present the experience of security apparatuses' involvement in protest against the regime in Bolivia Egypt and Burkina Faso, examining whether the army/police/other

governmental institution was fully in support of the regime nor did it engage in protest. In the last part, we will draw conclusions from all three cases regarding the theorizing of social protest movements at large.

Methodologically, this study is a qualitative one. It based on previous studies and media reports. The research literature focuses on the political history of the country and the protests that existed in the past. These studies did not deal on the subject in question as this study discusses it. The media reports used in this study deal with the protests that have occurred in each of the three countries in recent years (Egypt 2011, Bolivia 2014, Burkina Faso 2011, 2014).

2. Social protest movement – definitions and criteria

Through the years, scholars have tried to define social protest movement, focusing on different aspects. First, some of them had stressed the development process of the movement. Secondly, others focused on external circumstances that use as a relevant platform for emergence of this kind of movements (Blumer 1951: 166-222, Della Porta and Diani 2009, Eyerman and Jamison 1998, Tarrow 1982). Thirdly, scholars pay attention to the crystallization process of shared identity among a group's members, and Forth, they regard to the idea that the movement strives to promote. But even with these differences, most of them agree that social movements are informal networks, based on solidarity and beliefs that are in political confrontation with the regime, aspiring to change the socio-political status quo.

For the purpose of this study, I use a combination of Diani's definition for social movements and Fligstein and McAdam's theory of strategic action field. Diani defined it as: "networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, based on shared collective identities" (Diani 1992:4). This classical definition can be relevant for analysing social movements asking to protest in order to change social, cultural or political situation. However, this definition lacks any linkage to protest within the formal establishment. Almost twenty years later, they offer 'strategic action fields' (SAF hereinafter), which are the fundamental units of collective action in society. A strategic action field is a meso-level social order where actors (who can be individual or collective) interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purposes of the field, the relationships in the field (including who has power and why), and the field's rules (Fligstein and McAdam 2011: 3). In the case studies of this paper, the SAF was decided by informal protesters and well-established participants – security forces – or government units personal as SAF's theory defines them.

There are different approaches to the criteria of socio-political protest: First, *collective behaviour theory*, which is defined as the behaviour of aggregates whose interaction is "affected by some sense that they constitute a group" (Turner and Killian, 1965, 1957: 4). This approach meets Diani's definition and believes that a social movement is acting outside the establishment and looking to change the

current situation – politically and many times culturally. This attitude has also sought for cohesiveness among its members around the goals.

Neil Smelser's model contains six independent variables for explaining collective behaviour, as it starts with structural conduciveness and ends with mechanism of social control, i.e. whether the authorities allow the people to protest or do they have the will and the power to stop it, even by force (Smelser 1965). His model can explain what, why, when and how people coalesce, but it suffers a major lacuna. It does not take into consideration the possibility that protest can emerge from within the public-political establishment, usually supported by opposition forces, as happened in fact in more than one state.

Second, *resource mobilization theory*, which focuses on conditions that may urge social movements to act (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1217). This theory stresses that the odds to change reality increase, if there is an identified and agreed upon leadership inside the movement, and this leadership has previous political experience. This theory discerns between five different types of resources: material, moral, organizational, human and cultural (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). Material resources mean time, money and people who need to act for achieving goals. Moral resources refer to identification with the ends which are connected to moral and normative values in society. Organizational resources refer to the maximum extraction of the resources. What is important here is the strategic effort and coordination between the members of the movement to utilize the collective abilities. The joint activity around shared purpose must be carried out with full coordination (Pagnucco 1996: 11). Finally, resource mobilization theory asserts that the strategic targets of a social protest movement are changing the regime's policy and recruiting public support. The way to achieve that is by demonstrations, signing on petitions and sometimes even through violent action.

Third, *the theory of collective identity*. This approach emerged out of criticism against scholars who emphasized resources as necessary for social protest movements. Collective identity theory stresses that socio-psychological aspects and beliefs are the key to convince people to participate in protests or a violent action (Whittier 1995). It can be achieved through shared beliefs, symbols or language that bring people to cooperate when political situation allows it (Melluci 1989: 34). Identity is a combination of emotional, moral and cognitive contexts that an individual has with certain group, community or movement (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 284). Eventually, it does not matter whether these contexts are real or imagined. The group's identity is expressed by shared values, a common language and customs, agreement upon cultural symbols and signs, ceremonies and even identical dress style. When this collective identity is solid enough, members of the group may consider protest activity against the incumbent regime, especially if they express dissatisfaction with the social and political order within the state.

A fourth theory for explaining how, when and where social protest movements can act is *political opportunity approach* (McAdam 1982). This approach concentrates on the question whether the regime allows people to gather in the streets (or other central public places, such as squares) or not.

This theoretical introduction, although it does not cover all the theories dealing with the protest – for example *political opportunity approach*[1], provides a platform for characterizing civil protest movements in Egypt, Burkina Faso and Bolivia and for an examination of the role played by the armies in each of these cases. Was there actually a political chance for traditional protest players, such as opposition movements, workers' unions, students and liberal forces to bring about change and to influence the political and social sphere in each of these countries? What part did the army play in those protests – a guardian of the ruler against social protest or a prominent protester? By using all four grand theories mentioned above, we explore a number of case studies from recent years.

Theoretically, we offer a new perspective regarding the question of the term social protest movement. Instead of focusing on the position of the social protest movement (which is traditionally outside of the formal establishment), we suggest to focus on the patterns of activity that are determined in the SAF, that the participants determine, whether or not those participants are part of the establishment. The formal (or informal) position of the participants in protest is secondary to the activity of this participant on the ground. Protest activity is simply a tactic to achieve socio-political change and it also a form to build collective identities and reach cultural change.

Our hypothesis is that security forces in general, and particularly armies performed a role that meets the criteria of a social protest movement, contrary to its traditional role of the defender of the state from external threats and the defender of the regime from popular unrest. In Egypt, Burkina Faso and Bolivia, for decades, the Armed Forces played a crucial role in maintaining the status quo and blocking popular uprisings. On the other hand, from time to time, especially since 2011, military personnel, Presidential Guards and policemen found themselves involved in social protest against incumbent rulers. This involvement stemmed from various reasons, due to relative depravation, for instance. In all cases examined below, the men in uniform used established-organizational resources to advance their goals. The common denominator of these case studies was a protest from within the establishment using patterns of activity like those of classical social protest movements.

3. Bolivia – national police as part of the popular unrest

Bolivia is a unique case study of inherent protest movement within the Bolivian establishment in general and inside the security forces in particular. Throughout history, Bolivia has witnessed a dynamic of constant popular resistance against the regime, especially when it strived to implement a neo-liberal policy (Arce and Rice 2009: 88-101). Over the past 40 years, Bolivia has experienced an average of one "social conflict" per day (Fontana 2012).

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Since its independence in 1825 until 1981, Bolivia had witnesses almost 200 attempts of military mutinies. These figures reflect what James Dunkerly calls 'chronic instability' (Dunkerley 1981). It also demonstrates a cultural political norm, in which the army has a major role in the socio-political life and in the public sphere. Joint protest by the traditional protest movements and the security forces, especially the police, is also typical for Bolivia. According to Merilee S. Grindle, the military is penetrated by civilian interests, making it hard to distinguish 'the civilian' from 'the military' (Grindle 1987).

One of the salient examples of that is the 1952 national revolution, led by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR), a broadly based party in opposition to the status quo. Denied its victory in the 1951 presidential elections, the MNR launched a hunger march through La Paz, which had attracted most sectors of society. The Bolivian military was severely demoralized, and the high command called unsuccessfully for unity in the armed forces; many officers assigned themselves abroad, charged each other with coup attempts, or deserted.

On April 9, The MNR tried to gain power by force, plotting with General Antonio Seleme, the junta member in control of internal administration and the National Police (Policía Nacional). In three days of intensive fighting, April 9–11, 1952, revolutionary forces captured the urban strongholds of power – La Paz, Potosi, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Oruro, and Tarija. Miners, factory and railroad workers, townspeople and carabineros, together with disaffected members of the military, defeated the government forces. Paz Estenssoro assumed the presidency on April 16, 1952 (Kohl 1953).

Analysing these protest events does not imply a military coup. The patterns of the activity on the streets encompassed calls for social and economic change and waving protest leaflets and not violent actions of an armed soldiers trying to seize strategic position of the regime (Presidential compound, Parliament House or TV and Radio stations). Some of protesters were well-organized and equipped, while others were amorphous. But they all met the criteria of collective identity against right wing policy of the government. In addition, some of them had participated in protest activity, while being at the same time part of the Bolivian establishment. They simply 'switched uniform' and parallel to their being part of the formal mechanism, demanded from the very same establishment a new distribution of public incomes.

In 1964, the Armed Forces took over the government, a step ushered by a prolonged period of authoritarian military rule. In most parts, the Bolivian army was loyal to the regime, and the soldiers recognized their unique constitutional obligation to "guarantee the stability of the legally constituted government" (Pion-Berlin, Esparz, and Grisham 2014). In the last three decades, they protected the incumbent regimes under the slogan of 'guarding national interests', during the 'water war' crisis in 2000, the conflict over ownership of natural resources in 2003-2004 and the 2011 struggle over a new highway project that was planned on indigenous lands (Rochlin 2007).

The police, on the other hand, was more involved in protest activity against the regime, and it occurred when protesters in an official uniform expressed grievances,

most of the time over their personal financial conditions. One well-known example took place in 1997, when 880 policemen mutinied, pressing wage demands (Assies 2003: 14). The composition of Bolivia's police forces reflects the country's sharp ethnic and class divisions. These class divisions undermine the police's institutional coherence and deepen internal resentments (Ungar 2003).

During the 1990s, lower level police and judicial officials frequently engaged in, or threatened to engage in strike activities to rebel against low salaries and the enormous differences in pay between the rank-and-file and upper echelons. During this period, the annual salary for a police chief was approximately 20,000 US$, a mid-ranking officer about 3,200 US$ and a street officer a mere 1,300 US$. Differences in pay also map onto the ethnic composition of Bolivia's police; about 85 per cent of which are indigenous peoples, the remainder – the better paid officer class – are of European origin. Not surprising then that the events of February 2003 included striking police officers firing teargas canisters upon (far better paid) military troops.

In 2003, thousands of people marched in La Paz demanding President Lozada's resignation. The immediate issue was the government's budget and a planned increase in personal income taxes. The threatened tax cuts pitched approximately 7,000 striking police officers (themselves victims of the state's austerity measures) and civilian protesters against government troops. Bolivian television footage showed soldiers firing at police headquarters after police fired teargas at them. The immediate result was that the proposed tax increases were delayed, but this event sparked a chain of events that ultimately led to the ouster of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (Goni) later that year (Sheptycki 2005). Further, the National Police initiated a hunger strike in July 2007 to protest against a plan devised by the military to restructure the police force and to reduce their ranks (Rochlin 2007: 1338). In early July 2014, police protesters demanding a salary increase forced entry and shut down command centres in 8 of the 9 departmental capitals.

During 2014, Bolivia has witnessed more than one protest in the ranks of its national security forces, including the Armed Forces. In April, several thousand uniformed sergeants and non-commissioned military officers marched through the streets of La Paz and abandoned their barracks, calling for 'decolonization' of the Armed Forces. The military protest had its origins in a rank-and-file initiative to conform Bolivia's military code to the 2009 Constitution. The proposed legislative reforms would allow non-commissioned officers and sergeants, who are primarily indigenous Quechua and Aymará, to advance in rank by enrolling in elite military academies for professional training. Initiated by soldiers, the protest expanded to include other social sectors in their support. The mobilization converted into a social protest movement with broad-based support due to the military protest's focus on inequality and demand for decolonization, which resonated broadly with popular sectors.

The type of protest within the formal establishment in Bolivia is not surprising. As Mark Ungar (2003: 30) has observed, the police are: "not simply the instrument used to control unrest afflicting the much of the region. Amid record crime, political instability and social disintegration, they have become part of that unrest. This is

perhaps clearest in Venezuela and Bolivia, where the police are at the center of violent political struggles. Reflecting their societies, these police forces are severely divided by social class; pressure from top officials on poorly paid lower ranks sharpens these divisions and impairs effective policing."

4. Egypt – the armed forces determining the outcome of the popular protest

Crowd gatherings in the streets (or central squares) are not a rare sight in Egypt in the last decades (Shehata 2008). Different groups participated in protests, mainly workers' unions, students' movements, political activists from different frameworks such as parties or civil organizations, unemployed and intellectuals (Bayat, 2002; El-Mahdi, 2011). They always uttered grievances due to economic difficulties, sense of losing the national honour (mainly as a result of military collision with Israel), and lack of human rights.

Nonetheless protest activity often took on an etatist model in which the state leaves little room for protest movements to develop. This model organized labour along with other groups of society into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive and functionally differentiated categories. This pattern was based not only on repression but also on co-optation incentives (Schmitter, 1974). The regime also used force against popular protest. Restrictive laws were introduced on the level of syndical and union politics, at the country's universities, as well as on the level of local politics (Abdelrahman 2015: 12-13, Warkotsch 2014).

Despite persistent struggle of workers since 2006 and some successes, workers were either defeated or won only partial victories (Beinin 2013, Beinin 2012, El-Mahdi 2011). Student movements were also weak. This was as a result of long years of official efforts to contain and depoliticize the student movements, using educational techniques which discouraged independent thinking and research and a curriculum and official press which were often crudely propagandist in tone and content (Abdalla, 2008: 216-219). During the 1990s, the Mubarak regime adopted a confrontational approach towards students' activism (Shehata, 2008). Youth activism, such as The Kefaya movement and The April 6, was stimulated in the 2000s, breaking with many of the taboos that characterized Egyptian lives for many decades, but showed inability to crystallize a collective identity around the ends of the protest (Ottaway and Hamzawy 2011: 8, 11).

Political parties did not play a meaningful role in protest either. The Egyptian regimes ensured no viable challenger could emerge and participate in the electoral arena or to instigate a real social change (Albrecht 2005, Brownlee 2002: 6-14). By the turn of the century, the ability to call for protest as well as recruit resources for rallies and demonstrations was wrapped with significant risks.

While these different traditional social protest movements had failed to bring about change, through the five major civil protests known in the last six decades, The Egyptian Armed Forces had gradually developed into a decisive social actor whose behaviour fits the criteria of the aforementioned protest movement. Its role

has evolved from being the defender of the regime to the primary actor in state-society confrontation, the one that tip the scales of popular protest – formerly for failure, recently for success.

While during the February 1968 riots, the Armed Forced had no actual role in shaping the protest, during the 1970s student riots (1972-1973) and the food riots (1977), the army played its traditional role and restrained the protesters. Over the years, the Armed Forces has become closer to the people and acquired a growing economic interest, thus turning into an inciter of the January 25, 2011 uprising that led to Husni Mubarak's ouster, and into the leader of the June 2013 protest that ousted Muhammad Mursi.

In more detail, the defeat of 1967 generated widespread protest by students (Warkotsch 2014). The February 1968 riots caught the Egyptian Armed Forces in a vulnerable place, licking its wounds, hence playing no active role in restraining protests or as an inciter of them. With the army not siding with the protesters, they did not reach any meaningful and long-lasting achievements.

Sadat's political and economic policy *(infitah*) disproportionately benefited a mixture of the old bourgeoisie and a newly emerging openness bourgeoisie. These strata benefitted from increasing heterogeneity at the elite level, and particularly from a reduced role of the military (Warkotsch 2014). With the army's weakness, Sadat's reluctance to engage in a liberation war to regain the Sinai led to tumultuous student riots in 1972-1973 (Blanga 2014: 369). As soon as the students' protests were being echoed in the military units, Sadat ordered to suppress the riots, out of fear that an unrest in the military ranks would pose a series threat to the regime. Indeed, the security forces forcefully dispersed the demonstrators. The army played the role of constrainer of protest, defender of national interests, and maintainer of the socio-political status quo.

On 17 January 1977, when the government announced substantial cuts in subsidies on food products as well as bonuses for public sector employees, protests spread quickly. Political opportunity to protest was a possibility this time, as happened before, but once the Egyptian establishment, including the army, gauged that the protest may turn to a tangible threat to the regime, the protest was curbed quickly. The official death toll of their violent repression came in at 1973, even though it is widely estimated to be much higher (Warkotsch 2014).

In due course, the military, which had seen its political role diminish under Sadat, had started to produce goods as varied as motors, telephones, etc., in addition to having a share in producing varied food stuffs. Its economic activities penetrated into civilian markets and industries, building a powerful enclave within the economy, while remaining largely unaccountable to parliamentary oversight (Richards and Waterbury 1996: 340-341). Furthermore, this vast economic activity shifted the army from his traditional position to the social sphere, becoming perhaps the central player.

On the eve of January 2011, one of the main causes of popular unrest was the presidential succession. The most widely held assumption was that President Mubarak was grooming his son Gamal, who had no military background and who had

attempted to undermine the military's economic interests, to succeed him. This topic caused at least some tension between the Armed Forces and the Mubarak regime. Despite these frictions, the army did not take an active step against the President nor did he interfere in the public debate over the succession's question. This was not the sole issue of the public's interests, focused on economic grievances, the dominance of the security forces and the lack of human rights and freedoms. This socio-political and economic situation was the background for the 2011 mass protests.

Initially there was some uncertainty as to the military's approach to the protests, and activists set at least a few army vehicles on fire. But, soon after, there was fraternization between soldiers and protesters, with some military officers even joining the demonstrations on Cairo's Tahrir Square, which became the centre of anti-regime movement. When the Egyptian Armed Forces were deployed in different parts of the country to confront the massive demonstrations, they declared that the demands of the protesters were 'legitimate' and pledged to 'not use force against the Egyptian people'.

On 10 February 2011, the military issued Communiqué No. 1, stating that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) was in 'open-ended session to see what measures and procedures can be taken to protect the homeland and the achievements and the ambitions of the great people of Egypt'. The issuing of such a communiqué, which mentioned neither the president nor the vice-president, is usually the first sign of a military coup. But, as Lutterbeck stresses, the ousting of Mubarak cannot be described as a 'military coup', as the uprising against him was neither initiated nor spearheaded by the Armed Forces. However, it was the siding of the military with the protesters, which ultimately led to Mubarak's downfall (Lutterbeck 2013: 44).

As in Bolivia, people decided that the SAF and the army joined the popular protest. At this point, the army moved from a position of defender of the regime to the position of the protector of the people's will, acting as the main social protest movement, only in a uniform. Though the army itself was passive, this was sufficient condition for the ousting of the 30 years long authoritarian regime. The fact that the Egyptian army is a conscript force drawn from all segments of society also seems to have contributed to its identification with the demands of the protesters.

After Mubarak's downfall, the SCAF took the reins of political power for a year and a half until handing it to the elected president Mursi in June 30, 2012. Since the beginning of 2013, there have been many reports in the Egyptian and Arab media of tension between the Mursi regime and the military leadership concerning security, social and political policy. In the public arena, there was growing criticism of the regime, who had granted himself extending powers, stressing that Mursi serves only Muslim Brothers' interests. Concurrently, fears arose in the military and in the Egyptian street regarding the intentions of Mursi to replace the top echelon of the military with one loyal to the Muslim Brothers. Although regime circles denied any such intentions, the rumours were enough to spark protests in support of the military and against its being turned into a tool of the Muslim Brothers.

In fact, months before Mursi's ouster, Egyptian citizens acknowledged their inability to bring about another major change such as Mubarak's downfall and asked

for an intervention of the Armed Forces. Citizens throughout Egypt began signing petitions calling for Defence Minister Abd al-Fattah Al-Sisi to replace Mursi. In effect, turning to the army's help is an admission of failure by the informal social groups, which were unable to unite as an alternative to the regime. Although the *Tamarrud* movement managed to take to the streets millions of protests against the Muslim Brothers' regime, the army was called up to back the citizens' protest. This time, the Armed Force played an even greater and more obvious role typical of a protest movement.

On July 1, 2013, Defence Minister Al-Sisi announced, on television, a 48-hour ultimatum for Mursi to meet people's demands. Following Mursi's refusal to meet the protesters' demands for his resignation, the Egyptian Armed Forces removed Mursi from office and appointed a civil president in his place.

5. Burkina Faso – reoccurrence of joint military-civil anti-government protest

Burkina Faso was under French colonial regime until it gained its independence in August 1960. As a nascent state, Upper Volta (which became Burkina Faso in 1984), had witnessed political instability due to corruption, large scale of poverty and inability to provide public services to various sectors in society. Burkina Faso is one of the poorest states in the world. The economic situation in the country and the social-political structure had created since the independence the conditions for potential protest over various topics: lack of social equality; high rates of unemployment; ambiguous future for the young generation; lack of fundamental human and democratic rights; and non-prosecution of criminal offenders (Engels 2015a).

Already in January 1966, a popular civil protest backed by silent military involvement led to the first President, Maurice Yameogo's fall. Although Yaméogo's constitution provided for a multiparty system, He had established an authoritarian regime with a de facto single party, the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), which dominated francophone Africa at that time (Elischer 2013: 208). Combined with unpopular economic measures, widespread corruption and attempts to rein in the traditional chiefs, Yaméogo's authoritarianism provoked a national revolt, organized by trade unions, traditional chiefs and intellectuals (Phelan 2016). The army chief of staff, Sangoulé Lamizana, took over. From an historical perspective, it was the first sign for a joint civil-military protest. Lamizana's deeds were intended to return the power to a civilian government, as finally happened in 1970.

In the first half of the 1980s, Burkina Faso had experienced a series of military coups (1980, 1982, 1984), the last of which ended in the establishment of Marxist Minister of Information, Thomas Sankara's regime (Otayek 1985). Sankara was assassinated in October 1987, and his successor, Blaise Compaoré, who ruled the state until October 2014, faced several serious civil insurrections, often in the sense of a joint military-civil protest.

The first occurred in December 1998 following the alleged assassination of acclaimed investigative journalist Norbert Zongo. At the time of his death, Zongo, whose charred remains were found in a burnt vehicle outside of Ouagadougou, was investigating the unresolved death of the driver of the president's brother and special adviser, François Compaoré. An estimated 15,000 Burkinabes attended Zongo's funeral procession in the capital amid a climate described as tense and revolutionary (Engels 2015b).

For the second time, Burkina Faso's citizenry displayed publicly their dissatisfaction with the government. This anger was harnessed by the opposition and civil society which, for once, worked together. The opposition parties joined the Burkina Human Rights Movement, the trade unions, the coordinating body for intellectuals and the student movement, to form the Collective of Mass Organizations. The security forces responded violently against the popular protest and confirmed the continuation of Compaoré's presidency (Harsh 1999).

Compaoré would face another popular uprising in February 2011 when the extrajudicial killing of Justin Zongo, a student in Koudougou after being detained by the gendarmerie several times, sparked successive weeks of anti-government unrest, which spread like wildfire across the country. This was the beginning of three months of extreme tension and a multifaceted crisis. Shopkeepers, peasants, magistrates, lawyers, cotton growers and soldiers, all protested in turn, without at any point forming an alliance or seeking to create a mass movement. Apart from its sheer scale and duration, the uprising was unprecedented in the fact that it included an insurrection by the Burkinabe Armed Forces, including those serving in the president's Praetorian Guard. A series of military mutinies took place parallel to civil protest, led by all sectors of economy, from peasantry to administration and the mining sector (Chouli 2015: 326).

This civil protest created for the rank and file, who rarely voice their day-to-day problems or express their discontent, the opportunity to demand even trivial issues, such as food. This fuelled frustration among the troops, and it was no surprise for the Burkinabes to see soldiers protest. Under President Compaoré, the army had already left the barracks to protest in July 1999, when soldiers gathered in Ouagadougou to successfully demand payment of bonuses. This time, the President's response came in two forms. During the first hours of the mutinies, he opted for a dialogue, receiving representatives of all the different military units. Then he dismissed most of the senior officers at the head of the military. 566 members of the army and air force and 136 police officers were suspected of participating in the unrest (Dwyer 2016).

The 2011 events were clear evidence that soldiers, in a uniform, see themselves as part of the protest, despite being, at the same time, a part of the establishment. As Maggie Dwyer (2016: 220) puts it: "The complaints of mutinying soldiers often mirrored the grievances of the protestors, suggesting that the soldiers were drawing some of their inspiration from the demonstrations. Interviews with soldiers show that many of the tensions that provoked mass protests were also applicable to the military as an institution. The same concerns around corruption, injustice and inequality

that were the centre of civilian mass protests were also at the forefront of military mutinies." This hybrid pattern of activity demonstrates the constant inherent conflict between serving the state and being part of a society, which seeks to protest against a tyrant ruler.

The trigger for the last and crucial upheaval in October 2014 was a popular response to President Compaoré's plan to amend a clause in the Burkinabe constitution. The clause in question was Article 37, a constitutional regulation which limited the number of presidential terms a Burkinabe president could serve. By successfully amending the article, Compaoré would have been able to stand for re-election in the country's next presidential elections which was tentatively scheduled for October 2015.

Since October 28, hundreds of thousands of Burkinabes have taken to the streets of the capital, Ouagadougou, and the city of Bobo-Dioluasso, demanding that Compaoré disband his plans. The leading group of the protest was identified at once. The Le Batai Citoyen (The Citizen's Broom or the Civic Broom) is a socio-political grassroots movement that was co-founded by two musicians, in the summer of 2013. They organized several protests in early 2014, for example, hosting a joint rally with the newly formed Movement of People for Progress, filling a 35,000-capacity sports stadium to its rafters (Trowe 2014).

The army had listened to the will of the people by forcing Compaoré from office. Obviously, this protest required sources, collective identity and political opportunity. All three theoretical variables were in this case study. Witnesses that day in Burkina Faso's Capitol attested: "We saw the army was not keen on fighting for him. He was quite alone apart from the presidential guard. The army was not behind him and there was no will for an escalation of violence with the protesters" (Power struggle … 2014).

Following international pressure to have a civilian lead the transition, Michael Kafando was selected as president, while Lt. Col. Zida was appointed prime minister until elections could be held in October 2015. Less than a month before the election date members of the privileged Presidential Guards obstructed the transitional process by taking hostage the president and prime minister. As in 2014, civilians responded to this elite political interference with mass demonstrations. Long-standing divisions within the military culminated in 2015 when the regular army attacked the Presidential Guards to force surrender. The army published an apology message for the military coup and promised to deliver the regime to the civilians. The popular protest had led eventually to the first democratic elections in December 2015. By that the army had joined, declarative and passively, to the civil protest and its pattern of activity proved, as in Egypt, that establishment members can be part of a social and popular power demand for political change.

6. Conclusion

The mass protest waves around the world in the last few years caught most experts and analysts by surprise, including social movements, scholars and military experts (Goodwin, 2011). One of the reasons for the failure to predict these outcomes might be the lack of attention to the effect of security forces as a prominent actor in social mobilization and popular protest (Benski et al. 2013).

In all three case studies of this study the events within the SAF reveals different situation. In all cases, the 'traditional' protest movements took the streets for various reasons, mostly to demand basic needs, reform or pride. In all three cases protest movements suffer severe limitations. It is not always an organized, cohesive movement. Rather, labour groups, ethnic communities, rural population, youth organizations and bloggers, political parties, and religious movements have different constituencies, demands, and organizational styles. There has even been a deliberate attempt by various groups not to allow their agendas to converge and particularly to keep socio-economic and political demands separate.

In all three countries, army and police forces had a central role in socio-political protest. In Egypt, only recently, after decades of standing beside the regime, the Armed Forces have taken on an antagonist stand, siding with the masses' demand of socio-political change. The slogan "The army and the people are one hand" was the primary theme of the period following Mubarak's ouster and Mursi's. In Bolivia, there were numerous protest events, throughout the last decades and not just in recent years, demonstrating that policemen are reflection of society, identifying with the masses demands in reoccurring demonstrations against the regime. In Burkina Faso too, in past years and before, problems of protestors often mirrored those of mutinying soldiers. Although each of the three countries examined above has a history of military coups, all the case studies chosen are of military or police involvement in uprisings against the regime, parallel popular unrest, leading to the establishment of a civil rule, rather than a military dictatorship.

In the examples detailed above, the Egyptian and Burkinabe armies and the Bolivian Police, meets the prominent criteria of a successful protest movement striving to change the regime's policy, to recruit public support and mobilize the masses: collective behaviour, resource mobilization, shared identity and political opportunity. There is no doubt that the army/police have an identified and agreed upon leadership with previous political experience, all types of resources required (material, moral, organizational, human and cultural) and strategic and coordination capabilities. All these elements turn the army/police into an efficient organization and give it a distinct advantage over civilian protest organizations.

The scale of the security force's involvement in protest is a diapason which contains violent revolution on the one hand to passive neutralism on the other hand. Furthermore, this scale of involvement should be tested in a cultural-political context of each specific state that had been examined. In the Egyptian case, the Armed Forces went through a gradual process of growing interest in social and economic life, turning it into the arbitrator of popular protests against the regime, while in

Burkina Faso, army's involvement in mass protest was more sporadic throughout history. Bolivia's police participation in protestation was more consistent, but not constant either.

Focusing on these three states, although each of them is characterized by different background and circumstances, it seems that social protest needs redefining. The traditional approach of informal dialogue between the authorities and the protesters cannot explain the case studies of civil, police or military protest in Bolivia, Burkina Faso or Egypt. The pattern of overlapping military revolts and popular protests demonstrates the linkages between civilians and rank-and-file soldiers' protest. This article has argued for the need to view governmental security apparatuses' disobedience in the context of wider societal tensions. Theoretically, this study suggests a new and different perspective when trying to identify who takes the streets. The crucial variable is the types of action, meaning what people do, and not what is their formal or informal position. In conclusion, social protest against the regime can be carried out by elements from within the establishment itself.

Looking ahead, formal security forces in all three states have many reasons to protest, such as an excessive use of force against oppositionists and critics of the regime, torturing civilians by security apparatuses, unemployment, wage conditions, or the regime's intent to reopen the constitution and expand president's powers. In Egypt for instance, the protest could turn into another shock wave after the earthquake of January 2011, if the Armed Forces would once again turn against the president. Same forecast regarding regime stability can be delineated in the cases of Bolivia and Burkina Faso. The combination of enduring presence of the army (and other security apparatuses) in the social sphere and the permanent poverty of crucial percentage of the population in both states, maintain structural discontent that can deteriorate into protest or violence sooner or later. In general, wherever there is an inherent linkage between those in uniform and the citizens, and these two groups strive to improve their conditions, blaming the regime of their grievances, a combined (civilian-security) protest is not unlikely, and the prospects of such a joint mobilization raise. These actors within the formal establishment or out of it determine the SAF using resources and collective identity to bring political, social and cultural change.

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