Devin Finn | Lehigh University Department of International Relations
October 2022

Trajectories of Civilian Encounters with Insurgency: Wartime Politics of Collapse, Resilience, and Fluidity[1]

Abstract

Decisions of ordinary people during war inform theories of civilian recruitment, targeting, and victimization during civil war. But how do civilians bring their political beliefs and experiences to bear on interactions with non-state organizations that seek to impose political programs locally? This study breaks open the civilian monolith in research on civil conflict by examining variation in people's political responses to armed rebels' attempts at mobilization. Three contexts in Peru and India illustrate a range of forms of participation in the context of insurgency. I draw on the concept of articulation – expressive coordination among social movements and civil society organizations that motivates people by emphasizing cross-cutting identity and interests – to show how communities confront armed actors in different ways. Differences in the nature and level of articulation help explain three distinct outcomes: civilians' collapse, resilience, and fluidity when confronting insurgent politics and violence.

Many existing studies fail to take seriously the historical, political, and social characteristics of the communities that insurgents seek to persuade, intimidate, and coerce. Ordinary people's beliefs about power, politics, and outsiders matter because they shape the organizations and institutions that have developed locally to pursue development, justice, and order. In turn, these ideas interact with the activities – influenced by specific ideological interpretations – that rebels carry out locally. The resultant civilian-rebel relationships affect the kinds of political mobilization that emerge.

———

[1] This is a draft prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed, academic journal. Please do not cite or circulate without permission. Please contact the author at dmf221@lehigh.edu with comments.

Introduction

Some non-state armed actors rely on the support of ordinary citizens to build political movements and military machines,[2] and in doing so, they exploit existing political and social networks and organizations.[3] Civilians may incur significant risks in undertaking this support,[4] and their assistance – which may take distinct forms – for instance, provision of information or material sustenance – may be subject to a continuous negotiation and renegotiation with insurgents and other political actors of the terms of their contract. Why, in some contexts, do civilians support the political programs of non-state organizations armed with ideology and weapons, and in others, they do not? Civilians' mobilization in existing political and social organizations shapes their responses to insurgents who seek to inspire and enforce their support. Examination of pre-war and wartime mobilization dynamics in two countries – Peru and India – shows that rebel-civilian encounters may yield a range of outcomes, including collapse, resilience, and fluidity.

With a few exceptions,[5] studies of rebellion and civil war fail to take seriously the political and social characteristics of the communities that insurgents seek to persuade, intimidate, and coerce. In fact, ordinary people's beliefs about power, politics, and outsiders matter because they have shaped the institutions and organizations that have developed locally to achieve shared objectives of development, justice, and order. These

---

[2] Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life During* War (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[3] Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1966; Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[4] Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[5] For instance, see Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Alpa Shah, *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

notions constitute the foundation on which people make political decisions, and the character and cohesion of the local organizations that catalyze those decisions is critical to the ways in which communities encounter insurgents.

Both local institutions[6] and informal networks[7] constitute some of the political conditions that exist in communities when outsiders seek to mobilize residents. I argue that the composition and content of extant political forces is essential to explaining how community members react and confront insurgents and their projects: these responses include collapse amid the enervation of local political and social institutions; resilience of civil society organizations in the face of insurgent efforts; and fluidity in mobilization, which reflects both openness in civilian networks and adaptation to insurgent strategies. The composition of local political forces reflects the structure of coordination among organizations, and the content of coordination invokes the substance of demands they make in their efforts to represent and mobilize a particular constituency.

Ordinary people's encounters with insurgent organizations set political processes in motion, and these processes affect battlefield dynamics and conflict outcomes. But understanding the ongoing operations and alliances of civil society – which is not a monolithic actor – helps integrate the study of violent and nonviolent political actions. It blurs the lines between what we consider legal, illicit, and legitimate, capturing a spectrum of actions during conflict that accords with the realities of everyday choices that aggregate

---

[6] Ana Arjona, *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[7] Diane Singerman, "The networked world of Islamist social movements," in Q. Wiktorowicz, Ed., *Islamic activism: A social movement theory approach* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004), 143-163; Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson, "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 418-432.

over time. People's participation in civic and associational organizations can, in some cases, catalyze the production of violence, directly or indirectly. For instance, in Peru, Sendero Luminoso insurgents drew on a handful of "front organizations" – licit groups that the insurgency created before the war as local mass movements – to generate participation in nonviolent street protests, distribute ideological literature, and catalyze workers' interests in revolutionary action. Sendero militants strategically maintained connections with these clandestine organizations during the conflict, which facilitated the rebel party's access to a realm of public and legitimate participation and debate in the streets without firing shots or throwing bombs. While militant organizations frequently rely on unarmed social organizations for access to constituencies and operational activities, individuals and groups that prefer to remain nonviolent or unaffiliated sometimes organize to preserve their security. Social mobilization can help people protect themselves and reduce violence perpetrated against them by building cohesion and institutions to avoid participation in conflict and demand accountability from armed groups.[8]

Political mobilization in response to insurgent action and indoctrination takes many forms, building on local experiences of politics and governance, and generates striking capacities for new and adaptive modes of mobilization. Both the structure and content of local, pre-war politics matter when an external force like an insurgency seeks to penetrate a local polity.[9] Arjona argues that some form of civilian resistance emerges against all rebel governance: whether resistance is partial or full depends on the quality and effectiveness of

[8] Oliver Kaplan, "Protecting civilians in civil war: The institution of the ATCC in Colombia," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 351-367.
[9] Evgeny Finkel, "Victims' Politics: Jewish Behavior during the Holocaust," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012). http://depot.library.wisc.edu/repository/fedora/1711.dl:SD5MZE4C7RTVG84/datastreams/REF/content.

local institutions in place before rebels' arrival to an area.[10] Varied forms of civilian participation matter not only for what they can tell us about collaboration with non-state actors and military outcomes – but for how ordinary people perceive their individual and political survival under conditions of distress and insecurity. While numerous studies point to the effect that rebel constituencies – civilians living in communities targeted by rebels – have on rebel behavior, this study places *historical* forms of political mobilization at the center of the analysis, from the perspective of *civilians* – without privileging their actions and incentives only for the consequences they have on armed actors' strategic choices.[11]

Diverse political organizations – in addition to competing insurgent and state actors – seek to generate support and mobilize citizens. How do groups that form part of "political society"[12] and armed actors combine – or clash over – efforts to demand change and fulfill their political objectives, when violence is employed as a fundamental means of contestation in democracies? In other words, how do we understand the role of civil society in connecting, confronting, or co-opting rebel projects and networks?

[10] Ana Arjona, "Civilian Resistance to Rebel Governance," in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly, eds., *Rebel Governance in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)*,*180-202.
[11] Stathis N. Kalyas and Matthew Kocher, "How "Free" Is Free Riding in civil wars? Violence, insurgency, and the collective action problem," *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 177-216; Reed M. Wood, "Rebel capability and strategic violence against civilians," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 5 (2010): 601-614; "Ana Arjona, "Wartime Institutions: A Research Agenda," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 8 (2014): 1360-1389. Arjona takes our approach to studying social and political dynamics in a productive direction, but perhaps not sufficiently far, since her focus primarily remains temporally limited to "wartime institutions under guerrillas and paramilitaries."
[12] Partha Chatterjee, "Democracy and the violence of the state: a political negotiation of death," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2001): 9-13, doi:10.1080/14649370120039425. In Chatterjee's interpretation, "political society" occupies the zone between the state on one hand and civil society on the other – with the latter, he argues, continuing to be an "energizing" "ideal." Political society catalyzes the negotiation of claims made by ordinary people – particularly those who are marginalized, considered "squatters," or lack effective representative in institutional politics with elites and the state. The conception of civil society I draw on in this study encompasses this sense of political society.

Empirical Contexts

This study examines how ordinary citizens participate in democratic politics and violence in three sub-national areas that experienced revolutionary insurgencies – *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) in Peru and the Naxalites in India. The juxtaposition of communities' experiences in different regions facilitates an understanding of the mechanisms that link existing organizational and political constellations with outcomes of collapse, resilience, and fluidity in the presence of insurgency. In both India and Peru, rebels adapted versions of Marxist and Maoist ideological commitments at different moments, which informed their political and military actions and relations with civilians. In both countries, struggles over land equality and ownership informed class-based mobilization, sometimes resulting in violence. Patterns of civilians' wartime responses to insurgency differed in two departments of Peru (1960s-1990s) – Ayacucho and Puno – and in Telangana (1946-1951), then a region of the state of Hyderabad in southern India.[13]

Sendero Luminoso, or *Partido Comunista Peruano-Sendero Luminoso* (PCP-SL),[14] emerged from a coterie of Left political parties that sought to enact land, education, and other social reforms in the 1960s and 1970s during the military regimes that governed Peru. By 1980, when its insurgency began, Sendero had embraced a violent ideology which it claimed derived from Maoism, Leninism, and the thought of Peruvian socialist writer and philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui. Sendero promised to bring down the revisionists in

[13] Telangana became a state, carved out of and separated from Andhra Pradesh in February 2014, after a decades-long struggle for autonomy. Telangana's history is complicated: While British colonialists governed much of India, the Muslim Nizam governed the princely state of Hyderabad. In 1956, Andhra state was formed out of Hyderabad state during the reorganization of Indian states along linguistic lines. Shortly afterward the Telugu-speaking region of Telangana and Andhra state merged to form the state of Andhra Pradesh.

[14] Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path.

government and oppose democratic elections, targeting primarily rural Andean communities as its base of operations and support. Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated that the civil war's violence caused 69, 280 deaths, and the PCP-SL was found to be responsible for 53.68 percent of the killings. The war disproportionately affected the indigenous, poor, less educated, and Quechua-speaking Peruvians who lived in the Andean highlands, including the departments of Ayacucho, Apurímac, and Huancavelica.[15]

The Telangana Peasant Rebellion, which began in 1946, was the culmination of a process of changing forms of mobilization – on a spectrum that includes legal, illegal, violent, and nonviolent actions – that intensified over a five-year period as Communist militants sought to construct a mass-scale movement, and later decided to pursue armed struggle. In Telangana and the state of Andhra, guerrilla squads and people's committees emerged gradually from participation in the Andhra Mahasabha, a massive nationalist and cultural organization. It was not initially the Communist party that was mobilizing peasants in Telangana to form armed squads; peasants' participation in the Mahasabha shaped how they viewed governance, politics, and their own position in the economic and social system. In addition, citizens' experience of participation in local village committees, indeed the "pleasure of agency"[16] of being a part of a struggle for change and social justice, shaped their willingness to take risks and sacrifice for the movement.

The Telangana rebellion combined several motives: the defeat of the ruling Nizam of Hyderabad; the preservation of Telugu cultural and linguistic independence; and

---

[15] Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación del Perú (CVR), *Informe Final: (Perú, 1980-2000)*, (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2004). Available at www.cverdad.org.pe
[16] Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action*, 18.

opposition to the repressive and exploitative practices of landlords. The communist militants developed alliances with many political actors, and eventually embraced Maoist ideology in 1948, after years of organizing. The movement was fairly successful: the Nizam was defeated, and some tribals and peasants actively supported the organization. In 1950, internal insurgent contestation over ideology intensified, and by 1951, they had decided to withdraw from armed struggle and prepare for electoral contestation.

Encounters and Outcomes

In Ayacucho, local political actors, marginalized and disarticulated by divisive pre-war mobilization by the Left, collapsed in the face of Sendero Luminoso pressure, and the rebels constructed support for their violent campaign in many districts of the department through both persuasion and intimidation. In generating and enforcing local participation, Sendero insurgents drew on their previous connections to civil society, but also enervated those ties through their ideological commitment to violence. In contrast, Puno's political and social organizations demonstrated resilience as they encountered Sendero cadre, which resulted in exclusion of the rebels from the local political scene. How do we understand the divergent responses to rebels' arrival? Integrated networks of activists and reformers helped catalyze peasants to express their political demands in ways that cut across identities, including indigeneity and class, in Puno. In the 1970s and 1980s, Ayacucho, on the other hand, lacked cross-cutting approaches to building a leftist front that articulated the needs of residents – for instance, a demand for universal, public education.[17]

[17] This interpretation draws on arguments made by Carlos Iván Degregori about the origins and evolution of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho, and José Luis Rénique about peasant and Left activism in Puno. I build on

In Telangana during the mid-1940s, local activists, including members of the Communist Party, mobilized tribals and peasants in a massive cultural and social organization, the Andhra Mahasabha. Subsequently, communist organizers drew on this organization to build local networks that were later repurposed for armed struggle against local landowners and the ruling Nizam of Hyderabad. The varied responses of local Adivasis (also referred to as tribals) and peasants generated fluidity in the mode of mobilization – between committed nonviolent action to behind-the-scenes support and outright armed struggle. From the perspective of civilians, the aggregated, iterative effects of providing support to a pro-independence and cultural autonomy movement at a moment of local and national state formation, which constituted the original and parallel motives of the Telangana armed rebellion, facilitated their participation in violent militancy as the movement evolved. Mobilization in Telangana, in contrast to both Ayacucho and Puno, exhibited a dynamism and ambiguity that originated in the multiplicity of motives for resistance and was sustained by the momentum of peasants' agency in building a movement, even as it crossed the boundary lines of violence.

Understanding civilian dynamics in civil wars and insurgencies requires that we study not only civilian support for armed organizations, but how local politics and social institutions shape ordinary people's opportunities for participation as individual citizens and members of communities and families. How does contextualizing mobilizational action in this way help us? A wider framework – expanded in temporal and political terms – yields a broader picture focused on mobilization *and* its antecedents, instead of a myopic focus on

their sociological and historical analyses by demonstrating specifically how political organization operated locally and how it intersected with the ideology and praxis of Marxist and Maoist militants, using concepts of articulation and networks to illustrate these processes.

wartime and violence-specific dynamics. If we are interested in the causes and consequences of violence, contemplating contentious politics historically illuminates relationships among actors, changes in those relationships over time, and how their actions combine to produce violent politics or alternative forms of contestation. The military and political dynamics that occur during civil conflict are not written on a blank slate; armed actors' strategies emerge from pre-war power configurations and struggles.

I show how wartime political dynamics unfold through an exploration of varied modes of civilian participation in three historical episodes of insurgency, which reveals that different kinds of mobilization in the face of rebel pressures may emerge from distinct permutations of shared causes and ideological commitments. I draw on the concept of articulation – expressive coordination among social movements and civil society organizations that motivates ordinary people by emphasizing cross-cutting identity and interests – to show how communities confront armed actors in different ways and equipped with distinct resources. Differences in the nature and level of local articulation helps explain three distinct outcomes: civilian collapse, resilience, and fluidity in response to insurgent politics and violence.

Through the identification of several mechanisms, the paper analyzes the spectrum of mobilization that emerges, and contextualizes ordinary people's responses to armed struggle as rooted in long-standing ideas about race, class, and power. In other words, what occurs prior to insurgent campaigns matters for explaining the kinds of participation that result from the interaction of ideas, social practices, and institutional entities that govern everyday life and participation during war.

These findings contribute to scholarship on the role of civil society in political mobilization during civil war, the importance of ideology in shaping insurgent-civilian relationships, and the involvement of ordinary citizens in what we sometimes characterize as battles over their hearts and minds. First, the role of ideology in shaping rebels' conceptions of membership and decisions about whether to form alliances with other organizations is essential to the nature of mobilization during insurgency and civil war. Political organizations' specific ideological interpretations – for instance, doctrine on the relationship between indigeneity and class – shape restrictions on rebel cadre, conceptions of membership, and quotidian practices, which have implications for "rebel-civilian social relations."[18] The social science literature on war has moved away from ideology to focus on social relations as drivers of political action. This study examines the effects of ideological beliefs on how rebels conduct themselves in communities, the activities through which they enforce discipline and enact violence, and how they communicate with the peasants whose support they seek.

Second, the study informs scholarship on how civil society may curtail or catalyze rebel inroads into civilian networks. These efforts may limit, legitimize, or facilitate the production of violence. In contexts like Puno and Telangana where communities draw on their own robust participation in an extant political movement, people could choose to resist rebel efforts to mobilize and enforce support. Integrated Left networks in Puno prevented meaningful penetration by rebels; in Telangana, many peasants who were embedded in the Andhra Mahasabha and the local *sanghams* (committees) continued to participate in these

[18] Alpa Shah, "The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed, or grievance in Maoist India," *Economy and Society* 42, no. 3 (2013): 480-506.

groups, even as Communist rebels exploited these cohesive networks simultaneously to catalyze armed struggle. While civic networks may help prevent and address tensions that arise between communities,[19] they may also connect armed actors with potential supporters by articulating their causes in ways that allow communities to identify common ground and changing opportunities for participation. Acknowledging the blurry nature of these interstices aids our understanding of how insurgencies draw on existing social ties.

Finally, comprehending ordinary people as agents leads to an understanding of the everyday actions that constitute politics and may facilitate and reproduce violence. Within civil war studies, macro-level theories typically treat civilians' reactions as a function of strategic behavior undertaken by states and armed groups.[20] But research on the contexts within which civilians live is critical to building theory on the mechanisms that shape their strategic choices.[21] James Scott characterizes ethnography as central to social scientific inquiry: "You can't explain human behavior behind the backs of the people who are being explained. If you want to understand why someone behaves as they do, then you need to understand the way they see the world, what they imagine they're doing, what their intentions are."[22] The paper also seeks to renew focus on peasant politics, which has long been critical for the study of participation in rebellion, but has suffered a loss in focus in

[19] Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond," *World Politics* 53 no. 3 (2001): 362-398.
[20] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 331-362; and Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436-455.
[21] For example, Arjona, "Civilian Resistance to Rebel Governance"; and Laia Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[22] David Glenn, "The power of everyday life: political scientists, taking their cue from anthropologists, try fieldwork," *Chronicle of Higher Education* Sept. 25:56, no. 5 (2009): B13-B14.

recent years due to a decrease in its observed empirical occurrence and a change in many scholars' interest to armed actors' behavior in civil war.

Evidence for the patterns described in the study come from interviews with former leftist militants, civilians, and Catholic Church-affiliated activists in Ayacucho and Puno; ethnography developed through field work in several communities of the two regions; and documents from regional and national archives. I examined multiple memoirs of insurgents and participants in the Telangana rebellion and relied on historical sources to trace the dynamics of articulation in that context. After briefly discussing theory on political mobilization before and during insurgency, I turn to the empirical evidence by presenting the mechanisms through which varied kinds of articulation link pre-insurgency conditions with outcomes of collapse (Ayacucho), resilience (Puno), and fluidity (Telangana). The paper's third section turns to ideology, and the fourth section focuses on organizations' strategies of alliance construction. The final empirical section examines the creation of solidarity and agency among participants in mobilization, followed by the conclusion, which considers implications of the paper's findings.

A theory of articulation

I suggest that the nature of mobilization – the kinds and extent of the connections among political actors that express and organize for a cause and set of interests – is central to our understanding of politics in war. To what extent participation is articulated – which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups – influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the state, and the insurgency interact. In employing the term, I intend for *articulated* to signify both "articulate," able to

speak for a cause and a group, and "articulated" to imply a sense of being "jointed." In combination, these two components—political expression and integration—define articulation.[23]

The level of articulation is assessed through a qualitative approximation of efforts by political actors in society to mobilize, both within the context of violent insurgency and outside it. It is not necessarily the amount of participation in existing institutions and elections, but rather *how* people's interests are expressed and organized through political actors and how these forms integrate with other bodies and structures of organization—for instance, how multiple political parties, or a party and a regional movement join forces to mobilize support for reform. This articulation is reflected not only in voters' participation in elections, but in people's engagement with reform movements and mobilization for access to land and education.

By looking closely at the strategy of alliance construction among organizations, ideological commitments, and the development of solidarity and shared agency among citizens, the following sections demonstrate how civil society connects – or fails to connect – citizens with insurgent organizations. These mechanisms illustrate how variation in the nature of articulation results in different kinds of civilian-rebel political encounters.

[23] In elaborating the concept of articulation, I seek to emphasize a *range* rather than a dichotomy. This descriptive range is intended to capture both the quality of expression and integration of political actors, and the potential for changes in the ways they are articulated. For me, the concept of articulation emerged clearly in a term more commonly and broadly used in Spanish than English, "*articular*" (meaning to join, bring together). This concept, however, is clearly comparable to Stuart Hall's "articulated lorry," which captures the organic, adaptable nature of connection through articulated sites, which can occur in varied contexts – political, discursive, and cultural. On Hall's theorization of articulation, see Jennifer Daryl Slack, "The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies," in *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*, eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996).

Civilian Confrontations with Insurgent Politics

Articulation strategies: structure of alliances among civil society organizations

Once Shining Path's armed struggle began in Peru, society as a concept and objective ceased to exist for Abimael Guzmán, the founder, ideologue, and cultish leader of the PCP-SL. As Sendero rebels undertook to execute the movement's political and military campaigns, the roles that the leadership envisioned for *campesinos* – and "the masses" more broadly – in the revolution determined the recruitment of youth and their responsibilities in violent attacks, particularly during the first few years of the war. Peasants were to be the executors of revolution through violence; this was their role in the alliance of classes that comprised the forces carrying out armed struggle. Their actions would ensure the advent of a utopian "new democracy," and Guzmán's writings specified that the Party would continue at the helm of power during the future "dictatorship of the proletariat." PCP-SL, then, viewed peasants as instruments of the necessarily bloody revolution that would break down Peruvian society and rebuild it. Over time, this interpretation led to a dramatic divorce of Sendero thought and mobilizing actions from those of other Left groups, many of which had decided to contest elections. This separation had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war. It broke down local institutions and social ties, and left people with few alternatives to participating in insurgency.

Ayacucho

In Ayacucho during the 1960s and 1970s, campesino communities in the northern-central provinces formed part of an interwoven social network characterized by very weak articulation to the state as well as to the market. For instance, communities in Víctor Fajardo and Cangallo provinces, nestled in the valley of the Pampas and Qaracha rivers, lived without access to basic services – medical posts, highways, water, and electricity. Residents had little experience or contact with the state, and traditional authorities were "named" by the community. For the residents of these rural areas public education was perceived as critically important, as the way to escape—through their children—decades of poverty and marginalization.[24]

Political mobilization in Ayacucho changed shape over the years prior to the onset of Sendero Luminoso's armed actions in 1980. Ayacucho residents experienced opportunities to participate and mobilize for education reform, led by peasant and teachers' associations and leftist activists. Some of those who rose through the ranks of Sendero Luminoso and other Left groups were professors instrumental in the struggle for education in Huanta province in northern Ayacucho, and in Huamanga, the capital city of the department.

In the early 1960s, the first all-peasant congresses were held in Ayacucho; these movements included peasant leaders, lawyers, students, and trade union members aiming to recover lands from powerful local families who had seized them decades before. Later, when leftist parties made decisions to adopt divergent paths of political action (violent

[24] CVR, *Informe Final*, Tomo IV, Cap. 1.1, 41.

insurgency or electoral politics), the range of opportunities for participation shifted for citizens of Ayacucho. By the 1970s, the Maoist parties – *Patria Roja* (PR) and *Bandera Roja* (BR) – had fragmented. PR gained hegemonic control of most teachers' unions, including the massive *Sindicato Unitario de Trabajadores del la Educación del Perú* (SUTEP, the national teachers' union), and formed part of the United Left (IU, for its Spanish acronym) electoral alliance starting in 1980. BR, in contrast, was embedded in the peasantry, maintaining control of the national peasant federation, the CCP.[25] However, by 1974, BR proved incapable of channeling peasants' demands and withdrew its leadership. Other small left parties took over, strengthened the CCP, and later contested elections.[26]

During the 1960s and 1970s, in the absence of strong political parties, people participated in communal assemblies, primarily by democratic vote, to make decisions regarding specific local affairs.[27] Until 1980, local authorities – including governors, mayors, and town councilors – were appointed by the national government. These authorities possessed a considerable amount of power, and people in remote towns of Ayacucho were generally excluded from decision-making, which occurred mainly at the level of the central government in faraway Lima.

Before 1980, a range of Left political actors – leaders and members of parties, student movements, and unions – shared ideological lineages and radical mobilizing practices. Sendero formed part of this tangled family tree, but by the late 1970s, the organization had withdrawn from the political work of building social movements that it

[25] Confederación Campesina del Perú.
[26] Carlos Iván Degregori, *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso: Ayacucho 1969*-1979, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990), 164.
[27] Author interview with Ernesto Ortiz.* 26 June 2013, Hualla, Ayacucho. Names of all interviewees have been changed to protect their identities.

had once undertaken, going underground and abandoning popular organizations such as the FDPA and women's and workers' organizations. This withdrawal – and Sendero's subsequent clandestinity – had deeply damaging effects on Left networks of political mobilization.[28] Still, during the war, Sendero drew on the connections of the "generated fronts" (*organismos generados*) it had nurtured to carry out its mobilizing work in urban areas. In Lima, the MOTC[29] worked to distribute propaganda under its own banner – that of a legal, nonviolent organization. Sendero used these ties with front organizations strategically, with no intention of building a sustainable, long-term social movement.

During the early years of the conflict, Sendero became skilled at drawing on social and communal networks – most of all the networks in Ayacucho that they had cultivated during the 10-15 years prior to the conflict – to generate support and impose violent practices on communities. In many regions during the war, Sendero rebels' relationships with different civil society organizations affected the kinds of participation that were available to ordinary people. The nature of rebels' ideas about the exclusive identity of an insurgent and the movement's dire conception of militancy were reflected in their antagonistic relations with other leftist organizations. While it had formed an integral part of the fertile, if divided, Left for a decade, Sendero gradually closed its networks during the 1970s and early 1980s as it prepared to launch armed struggle, separating itself from political society in deliberate and significant ways. The disarticulation of Ayacuchano civil society that resulted led to its collapse in the face of Sendero imposition on their communities, many of which produced early and impressionable young recruits – first in

[28] Degregori, *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso*.
[29] Classist Laborers and Workers' Movement (Movimiento de Obreros y Trabajadores Clasistas).

their families to attend college, become exposed to radical Marxist theory, and who served as anchors in their hometowns – for the insurgents.

Puno

While in Ayacucho the weakening of peasant political networks coincided with Sendero's imposition on daily life in some parts of the central *sierra*, the tides of growing political mobilization in the high, desolate region of Puno permitted civilians to integrate forces and ultimately prevent Sendero from gaining a decisive advantage. First, the robust articulation of political movements and groups – that is, not only the simultaneous existence of disparate political actors in the region attempting to organize people – but these groups' capacity to express the needs and demands of peasants effectively generated a strong local defense. These demands during the 1970s and 1980s included more equitable access to land ownership and technological agricultural assistance from the state in the face of severe natural disasters like droughts and floods. Second, the concerted integration of leftist movements, including political parties, peasant federations, and Church organizations – was critical to preventing Sendero from establishing widespread support in Puno, which did not become the "second Ayacucho," as many people feared in the early 1980s.

The disappointing effects of a national land reform that the military government of Juan Velasco (1968-1975) designed and implemented created conditions for continued grievances among peasants in Puno. The reform replicated and preserved inequity in land ownership, transferring the problems from one system to another, even as one-third of Peru's land was expropriated. Despite expropriating around two million hectares and

destroying the landlords as a class, the reform failed to improve the economic and social situation of most rural peasants in Puno. By 1980, land, livestock, and capital became more concentrated because of the way in which the reform was implemented—for example, by combining multiple ex-haciendas into one unit. Less than 20 percent of rural families received any land.[30]

After 1969, then, unsatisfied expectations raised by Velasco's reform in Puno generated opportunities for newly established leftist groups to enter the region and take advantage of the weakened local political power of landholders in the countryside. Revolutionary Vanguard (*Vanguardia Revolucionaria*, or VR) was most successful in constructing support among peasants and became the driving force behind the CCP nationally; in Puno, VR activists started to draft recruits and organize people for land invasions in 1975. Ricardo Arias, a VR land organizer in Puno during this time, emphasized that "to take the land" (*tomar la tierra*) meant to redistribute it. The seizure was a symbolic action, and after the takeover, the members of the land cooperative would formally request a land title from the Agriculture Ministry.[31]

The changes in political organizing that resulted from efforts to reform the agrarian law were clear to participants even as they were experiencing them. "The agrarian reform changed land ownership, the *gamonales* disappeared, but a new form of organizing arose," one former PUM militant and organizer of land takeovers explained, referring to as early as the mid-1970s when broader movements, with more programmatic approaches, began to develop.[32] This novel kind of mobilization formed part of a national trend – a continued rise

---

[30] Enrique Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
[31] Author interview with Ricardo Arias*, 12 Jun. 2013, Lima.
[32] Author interview with Alvaro Gutierrez*, 3 July 2013.

in the role of the peasantry. As Cruz described it, "the struggle for the land was not only about land." "Democratization" was occurring in parallel to the mobilization for land, as well as a process of regional decentralization in Puno.[33] Awareness of these gradual processes among peasants, as articulated in successive regional and national peasant federation congresses, made their engagement in land reform meaningful, connected to a broader political change and movement. In addition to left party organizers, Church-sponsored training institutes and development NGOs supported their efforts.

Sendero Luminoso insurgents understood that land mobilizations were critical to gaining the support of Puneño peasants. Beginning in March 1986, the rebels attempted to co-opt the process of land takeovers, offering armed protection for the lands that were taken over and directing its armed actions against the associative enterprises. The rebels showed up to a previously organized land invasion, offered weapons to participants, and in some cases forced them to burn the records of the cooperative or hacienda. These efforts were rejected by peasants, who suffered the consequences of these violent actions when the senderistas fled the scene and ran to the highlands, leaving the people to face arrest and torture by the authorities.[34] In contrast to the planned, structured process that the regional peasant federation organized, when Sendero attempted to co-opt the land takeovers, there was "chaos, disorder" – the rebels would come in, burn buildings, and give out livestock to whoever was there.[35] Sendero did not understand the mass action embodied in the *tomas de*

[33] Interview with Héctor Cruz.
[34] Author interview with Enrique Vallejo*, 25 July 2013, Puno.
[35] Author interview with Héctor Cruz.

tierra, VR and later PUM militant Arias said. This failure to understand that the tradition of mass struggle was not violent was detrimental to the rebels' strategy in Puno.[36]

A primary obstacle facing the insurgency in Puno was its political activity in the region for a comparatively brief period. Radical priests and PUM formed the strongest leftist forces there; as a means of constructing a base of support among peasant leaders and people, PCP-SL embraced using arms to reclaim lands and eliminate other leftist officials and activists. Sendero leaders misinterpreted the nature of the objectives and practices of campesino mobilization. Peasant leaders in Puno consistently seek to differentiate their historical struggle from that of Sendero Luminoso: "We were a democratic, organized, disciplined organization. We did not take up arms."[37]

Coordination among the FDCP[38] and party militants of VR and PUM resulted in a successful defense against the incursion of Sendero.[39] Evidence of leftist groups' mobilizing success came in the form of the rebels' responses: targeted attacks on *Izquierda Unida* (IU)[40] and PUM officeholders and peasant leaders. In April 1987, after issuing him several warnings, Sendero cadres assassinated Zenobio Huarsaya, FDCP founder and then-mayor of a district in Azángaro province, as he supervised the reconstruction of a bridge that had been dynamited by Sendero in the past.[41] The confrontation with federation leaders and leftist militants bred opportunities for clandestine armed action by non-Sendero political parties against Left actors like IU leaders and FDCP activists. In Azángaro in February

---

[36] Author interview with Ricardo Arias.
[37] Interview with Héctor Cruz.
[38] *Federación Departamental de Campesinos - Puno*, or the Puno Departmental Peasant Federation.
[39] José Luis Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: Conflicto agrario y Nación en los Andes Peruanos* (Lima: Casa de Estudios SUR, 2004).
[40] Izquierda Unida, or United Left, was a coalition of Left political parties that operated on a national level in the late-1980s.
[41] CVR, *Informe Final*, Tomo V, Cap. 2.17, 550.

1987, an arms cache was found in the home of a high-level APRA official in that province; police sources said the weapons were bought with regional government funds.[42] At the time, IU congressman Alberto Quintanilla asserted that APRA paramilitary groups in Puno were operating not only against leftist activists and politicians, but also against the Church and popular movements. Overall, the direct confrontation between specifically leftist party leaders and associates on one hand and senderistas on the other was unique to Puno. The targets of Sendero violence were mayors, town councilors, prefects, governors, NGO officials, and all APRA party representatives.[43] In addition to targeting leftist politicians, Sendero burned municipalities and agricultural cooperatives in multiple districts and destroyed the facilities of rural education institutes, like the IER-Waqrani in Ayaviri.

When Sendero began killing peasant leaders and trusted leftist activists and party officials, people turned actively against the organization in Puno.[44] "[Sendero] was…killing people, destroying the works that the people had built," peasant leader Héctor Cruz emphasized.[45] In 1988 and 1989, the senderistas confronted with force the popular backlash that this generated. The rebels had made some gains in the few universities in the region and among young Christian groups. Ultimately, the social mobilization that had succeeded in achieving a second agrarian reform for peasant lands in Puno and generated greater levels of participation and leadership among women in Quechua and Aymara communities helped prevent Sendero from establishing a genuine foothold in the department – and to keep violence as a revolutionary path from infiltrating their methods of organization.

---

[42] PUM-Puno, Untitled Press Release, *Los Andes*, Feb. 4, 1987, Puno Regional Archive. Periodical collection. Accessed 23 Aug 2012.
[43] CVR, *Informe Final*, Tomo V, Cap. 2.17, 559.
[44] Interview with Ricardo Arias*, 12 Jun 2013.
[45] Interview with Héctor Cruz.

Sendero cadre were considered illegitimate outsiders, who by assuming they could inspire violence among communities struggling for reform, showed their lack of understanding of local politics and social relations and an adherence to a struggle that transcended arms. As Héctor Cruz emphasized, the struggle for the land transcended defending rights to work and own land; it was about democratic participation and decentralizing decision-making power. In 1991 and 1992, PUM, IU, and the leftist parties in Puno crumbled due to internal divisions and disagreements among cadres about the nature of the revolutionary path – whether or not it should involve armed struggle. The retreat of Sendero from the region followed, not far behind the dissolution of the Left. But comprehension and promotion of social struggles and everyday processes of community, labor, and membership – as forms of belonging, joint sacrifice and effort, and shared identity had allowed the Left and its allies to organize democratically and without violence in Puno. These methods and strong articulation of peasant, indigenous, and urban worker demands throughout the 1970s and 1980s yielded resilience to Sendero in Puneños' direct confrontation with insurgents.

Telangana

In Telangana, the evolution of an anti-Nizam and pro-cultural autonomy movement into a class-based struggle yielded a structural and substantive dynamism that sustained the rebellion during changes in method from nonviolent to violent mobilization. Strategies of alliances among an array of social and political organizations, many of which were nascent bodies, at a political moment of anticipation for India's independence from Britain. The political organization that catalyzed the subsequent armed Telangana struggle had begun in the *sanghams* – committees that took up specific local issues and organized residents to

oppose unfair practices – and the Andhra Mahasabha. Activists and intellectuals had begun mobilizing to counter the political status quo for decades before the armed uprising began in 1946. With the formation of the Andhra Mahasabha in 1928, activists built an organization that would promote the discussion of problems that Telangana residents voiced and propose resolutions to demand reforms of education and civil rights policies under the Nizam's rule. Founded as a broad organization defending the social and cultural rights of Telugu-speaking people, the Mahasabha attracted diverse participation, including that of middle-class residents of the city of Hyderabad, peasants, and students. For instance, young Hyderabadi activists who had joined the noncooperation movements of 1930-32 and were arrested for their participation in these actions and Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha took part in the Mahasabha. Once released from prison, the activists emphasized political consciousness and change through their efforts in the organization, which became "a focal point for the rising democratic aspirations of the people."[46] Over the 1930s, as leading activists, including many who identified as Congress Party members and leaders, joined the Communist movement, the Mahasabha became an anti-Nizam coalition of mass organizations, including youth, peasants, traders, manufacturers, and middle classes.

Drawing on the strength of the *sanghams* and the Andhra Mahasabha as a hub, by 1945, the communists had waged a large-scale movement against the state. Initially, their tactics included boycotting local revenue collectors and government officials, and they later established their own *panchayats* (village councils) and courts.[47] The efforts of the Mahasabha – in conjunction with parallel organizations in two other regions of Hyderabad

---

[46] Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle*, 12. Sundarayya was a CPI leader and member of the Andhra Provincial Committee of the party, which organized in the villages of Telangana.
[47] Sherman, "The integration of the princely state," 506.

state, the Maharashtra Parishad and the Karnataka Parishad – led to the construction of village *sanghams* – committees that took up specific local issues and organized residents to oppose, for instance, *vetti* and unfair taxes. Starting in 1939, the communists helped organize *sanghams* to counter landlords, at first through nonviolent and non-cooperative action. The communists' resistance to the government's corrupt levy practices was an important factor in their ability to generate support among rural residents. Roosa found that the communists supported the levy as an anti-fascism measure in the war effort and a means of stabilizing prices, but insisted that revenue officials collect the grain according to the regulations and end their corrupt practices.[48]

The two factions active in mobilizing peasants and workers, the Communists and Congress Party members, agreed on the movement's principles and goals, but disagreed on how to achieve them: while the communists called for mobilizing peasants to engage in direct action against landowners and levy collectors, the Congressmen favored lobbying the government on behalf of the peasants. The Andhra Mahasabha split along communist and Congress lines, and the Communists attracted 15,000-20,000 people to their annual conference in April 1945. The Congress leaders' unwillingness to take action on economic and agrarian issues at a structural level prevented them from building a mass base.[49]

By 1945, peasants' struggles with landlords and retaliatory police actions intensified, and the *sanghams* began preparing for armed confrontation with authorities. At first, the communists advised peasants to defend themselves with slingshots and homemade weapons when the police approached. The transition from nonviolent refusal to pay unjust

[48] Roosa, "Passive revolution," 63.
[49] Ibid., 65.

taxes to "active defense" led to violent clashes with the Hyderabad state military and police.[50] The *sanghams* continued mobilizing in villages and demanding an end to *zamindari*, or landlordism. The linkage of unpaid labor and corrupt levy extraction to the system of landholding empowered the villagers and pushed out the officials and *deshmukhs* (landlords) who carried it out.

> People of one village armed with sticks and slings would march to the neighboring village and rouse them. They would jointly hold public meetings before the *gadi* (brick-built strong house of the desmukh or the landlord), hoist the red flag and declare: "Sangham is organized here. No more vetti, no more illegal exactions, no evictions." If the landlord or the deshmukh did not carry out these orders, he was socially boycotted. None should work for him in the fields, no barber, no washerman, no house-maid, no domestic servant.[51]

By early 1946, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI) had revised the "reformist" policies that it had pursued during the Second World War, and decided to adopt a militant approach to developing mass struggle of both the peasantry and the working class. This decision was based on intensified popular mobilization and the post-war surge in people's desire for the British to make good on their promise of independence. As this upsurge occurred, rising tensions and ideological debate also heightened polarization between the Congress Party and the Communists.[52] The CPI and the Andhra Mahasabha began training small volunteer squads in wielding *lathis* (long bamboo poles used as weapons) for encounters with the thugs employed by both landlords. But the CPI tread carefully in bringing firearms, even country-guns to the fight; they feared that step would transform the struggle into a new phase and have consequences for all of India. A particularly creative form of militant struggle, Sundarayya recalls, developed when

[50] Roosa, "Passive revolution," 67.
[51] Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle*, 26.
[52] P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle*, 28.

the peasants, the Party cadre, and Andhra Mahasabha militants faced arrest by the Nizam's government. They were instructed to resist arrest, jump bail, and retreat facing a large police force. The kinds of mobilization that resulted were "spontaneous" and innovative.[53] At this point, large proportions of the rural population had organized to support the CPI, and the national-level Party remained divided over the question of offensive armed struggle.

The alliances that peasants, tribals, and workers built through the construction of civil society organizations in the 1930s generated the conditions for Communist militants to exploit and build on the processes of demand-making and organizing that the Andhra Mahasabha and sanghams had put in motion. The strong articulation of many groups – women, peasants, tribals, urban workers, and students – into social organizations laid the groundwork as significant changes took place, like the Nizam's refusal to step down from power, increasing repression by his paramilitary and police forces, and conflicts among movement leaders. Early civic and nonviolent organization provided ready networks that insurgents would later exploit for armed campaigns.

Ideology: interpretations and implementation "on the ground"

Existing configurations of social and political networks exert considerable effects on how members of communities receive and react to rebels' efforts to appropriate and exploit connections among neighbors and organizations. Empirical variation in localities' historical responses to rebel projects challenges us as students of politics to probe the

[53] Ibid.

motivations and conditions that facilitate changes in citizens' conceptions of legitimate authority and representation. An insurgent proposition for a new order signifies a dramatic – and often, foreign – shift in conceptions of power and legitimacy. In Ayacucho, Peru, for instance, it was not only a linguistic differentiation that obscured rebels' motives but a lack of residents' exposure to Marxist ideology. "What is Mao? What is socialism? If you aren't educated, you don't know."[54] Don Lucio Flores, a long-time schoolteacher in Hualla, a small community in Ayacucho, Peru, emphasized that without previous understanding of ideological principles such as those that the senderistas brought to town – including those of Lenin, Marx, and Mao – they were not able to comprehend what the movement's goals were. "The community did not understand." Armed actors present the option of mobilizing with guns and machetes, and they may also introduce unfamiliar ideas about equality, justice, and governance. How these ideas-in-action, as implemented by insurgents, interact with civilians' understandings of their community's and nation's own responses to historical challengers and battles for control, may create contentious encounters.

In Telangana, Communist activists and members of the Congress Party found common cause in nationalism, though their precise goals and methods, it soon became clear, differed sharply. The enslavement of the tribal and low-caste peasants and oppression by the Nizam's corrupt landowners made peasants' support for the communist movement a "matter of life and death."[55] Having advocated nonviolent strategies like refusal to pay taxes, roadblocks, and strikes, in 1950, the communists adopted a Maoist ideological line, intensifying the armed struggle. By 1951, communist leaders decided to withdraw from

[54] Author interview with Lucio Flores*, 8 Mar 2014, Hualla, Ayacucho.
[55] Lalita K. et al, *'We Were Making History…' Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 2.

armed struggle and continue mobilizing people through local-level organization and electoral contestation. These changes, I argue, exerted tangible effects on how militants viewed the struggle, allocated resources, and provided training for recruits. Shifts in ideology determined the mode of organization – whether militants operated underground, employed violence, and built a cross-class coalition.

Contrary to what some studies and interpretations of the movement purport,[56] Sendero did not speak for the peasant in Ayacucho nor did it seek to organize peasants to reclaim land and rights. "The perspective of seeing the small, arrogant nobleman expropriated may be able to arouse envy, the egalitarian spirit, or the desire of the people for revenge, but it is not enough to mobilize the whole of the campesinos, for whom investment in the Sendero insurrection is almost null, behind the banner of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought."[57] Sendero's dismissive attitudes toward constructing peasant organizations helps explain changes in the structure of its networks over time.

In fact, Sendero destroyed commercial networks, forcing residents to close weekly markets that formed the basis of commerce for rural Ayacuchanos, resulting in a return to the unequal economic relations that they experienced under abusive landowners. Senderista communications in the early 1970s did not address peasant concerns or the agrarian reform. Rather, their efforts were concentrated against the state and other political parties.[58] In "Desarrollar la Guerra Popular sirviendo a la revolución mundial" ("Develop the Popular War in the service of the global revolution"), a pamphlet published in 1986, Sendero argued

[56] Cynthia McClintock, for instance, characterized peasant support for Sendero Luminoso as the result of a subsistence crisis. See McClintock, "Why Peasants Rebel: The Case of Peru's Sendero Luminoso," *World Politics* 37, no. 1 (1984): 48-84.
[57] Henri Favre, "Perú: Sendero Luminoso y horizontes oscuros," *QueHacer* 31 (1984), 32.
[58] Poole and Renique, "The New Chroniclers of Peru," 183, fn. 51.

that peasant membership in the cooperatives established under the agrarian reform law constituted servile relations of production. This dogmatic assertion was unlikely to have been understood by peasants as a genuine extension of support to their long-standing and immediate struggle. Certainly, the rebels were not building a "pro-campesino"[59] force by helping peasants reclaim their rights through mobilization for reform. Instead, Guzmán's class analysis called for the destruction of the economy and the polity.

Creation of shared agency and solidarity among participants

A lack of shared identity and mobilization independent of Sendero insurgents' efforts in Ayacucho ensured that social and political organizations remained isolated, weak, and subordinated. But the absence of solidarity and shared values that civilians' encounter with insurgents created eventually ignited resistance to Sendero in some areas of the department. Scholars of Peru's civil war argue that human needs undermined Sendero's constructed order.[60] At first, particularly in the southern provinces that were the rebels' first targets, the population's unmet economic needs permitted the political work of constructing ties in these communities. People who sympathized with the senderistas were attracted to its constructive responses to the population's problems in ways that the state and capitalism had not achieved.[61] But as rebels removed authorities and formed popular committees, peasants began to see that classist and revolutionary values prevailed over family ties, the

[59] José Luis Rénique, *La batalla por Puno: Conflicto agrario y Nación en los Andes Peruanos* (Lima: Casa de Estudios SUR, 2004).
[60] Ponciano del Pino, "Family, Culture, and "Revolution": Everyday Life with Sendero Luminoso," in Stern, *Shining and Other Paths*, 158-192.
[61] Nelson Manrique, "Violencia e imaginario social en el Perú contemporáneo," in *Violencia politica en el Perú: 1980-1988*, vol. I, (Lima: DESCO, 1989).

demands of feeding and educating sons and daughters, and a culture of communal labor and value. By the mid-1980s, some militant recruits and peasants who initially carried out violence on behalf of the PCP-SL resisted the mechanisms of social and productive control.

The role of the Catholic Church in Ayacucho also sets it apart from the experience of articulated mobilization in Puno before and during the internal armed conflict. While the Church had a strong presence in many districts in Ayacucho, the clergy lacked a proactive orientation toward initiatives that supported the peasantry in their social and political struggles. During the armed conflict, the absence of the Church's attention to human rights and the local effects of violence in Ayacucho was striking. The archbishop of Ayacucho famously refused to "attend to" human rights complaints, and posted a sign conveying this message to the people of Huamanga outside his office at the church.[62]

By refusing to offer solidarity and condemn military abuses, the Catholic Church contributed to the disarticulation that characterized the 1970s and 1980s in Ayacucho. Church officials were allied with conservative causes in Ayacucho, to a greater extent than in other regions; they were among the more powerful landowners who held onto considerable territory. The region's bishops pursued a political struggle with the University of San Cristóbal in Huamanga during the 1970s, revoking its radio license and accusing it of "attacking the faith."[63] In contrast, the Church in Puno fostered a shared sense of identity and struggle among indigenous peasants. Following Vatican II, many priests returned to seeing the mission of the Church as "helping people live human life more fully—having access to good education, enough to eat, being proud of their culture, customs, language."

[62] Author interview with Father Roberto Hoffman. 5 August 2013, Puno.
[63] Degregori, *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso*, 134.

This new understanding of the Church's mandate, Hoffman believes, permitted priests and sisters working in the Southern Andean Church (Iglesia del Sur Andino, or ISA) to redirect the focus of their efforts to support peasants; foreign clergy who worked in Puno studied Aymara and Quechua, "so they could speak *with* the people."[64] Laypeople were involved in the process of making the "revolutionary discourse" embodied by the Velasco reforms and that emerged from the Church in Puno a reality. A human rights defender in the region emphasized the work of several Catholic laypeople who chose "the political option"[65]—by becoming leftist leaders, party militants, and NGO workers in vulnerable rural areas—due in part to the Church's heightened emphasis on social justice. Efforts to serve the poor brought priests and activists legitimacy, and the fact that the Church was targeted by both Sendero and the armed forces allowed it to serve as a mediating force in society.[66] In addition, in Puno, leftists and peasant activists' commitment to democratic struggle and unarmed actions like *tomas de tierra* reinforced their ability to remain cohesive and articulate in the face of Sendero's attempts to penetrate local practices.

Beyond the pleasure of agency, the creation of solidarity among Telangana rebels and supporters generated path-dependent reinforcement of status quo practices and allegiance, even, as the supporters of the Telangana movement experienced, a precipitous change in the method of struggle – from nonviolent to defensive, then, to armed – took place. While the communists redefined collective identities of peasant and tribal participants in accordance with the movement's goals,[67] they retained support even as the

[64] Ibid.
[65] Interview with Javier Salazar*.
[66] Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943-1989: Transnational Faith and Transformations* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).
[67] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129-131.

risk of participation was heightened. Reciprocity, shared ownership, and the agency of making demands on behalf of rights and community generated durable commitment amid risks of violence and repression. Rural insurgents of the Telangana CPI were strengthened by remaining in the villages as Congress activists departed in anticipation of intense fighting. As the Telangana movement grew in numbers and spread geographically, the *sanghams* played a critical role in fulfilling state functions. In about two thousand villages and an area which included half the population of the state, "the government simply ceased to exist."[68] At the movement's high point in mid-1948, sanghams operated in two to three thousand villages; while their reach and reforms varied, the space they created for "local agency"[69] was significant. Peasants experienced the tangible effects of landowners' absence and access to communal fields and forest resources.

> I was so proud of the Sangham. Then they said that the Sangham meant that the poor would be equal and their kingdom would come…For all that fight, I didn't get back all my fields. Many people took them and sold them…Oh, what injustice…we struggled so much, and this is all that is left. These patches of dry land remained, this little field remained.[70]

The experiences of Chityala Ailamma, whose words describe years of fighting against a prominent local landlord's exploitation, was an important "spark" for the Telangana agrarian rebellion, in particular its entry into armed struggle.[71] In late 1945, Ailamma, a washerwoman, rented nine acres of wetland in a village in Nalgonda, near her own village. The landlord Visnur Ramachandra Reddy demanded that Ailamma pay a tax for the right to continue cultivating this land, despite the fact that he did not own it. With Ailamma's husband and son in jail for their involvement in a previous dispute with Reddy, her

[68] Gour et al, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, 102.
[69] Kennedy and Purushotham, "Beyond Naxalbari," 838.
[70] Lalita K. et al, *We Were Making History,* 22.
[71] Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle*, 35.

recourse was to a government official, a *taluqdar*, in protest of the tax, which she was not willing to pay. The Andhra Mahasabha defended her fields from the landlord's men who were sent to seize the harvest.[72]

> The land was there before the Sangham came. The land was there. We had leased it somehow. We had had it for nearly twenty years. When we kept it they couldn't bear it and took it away from us… So when it all came to a head, we said we won't give it up, but they wouldn't give it up either. 'You should leave the Sangham,' the landlord's men said. We said we wouldn't.[73]

Five of the Andhra Mahasabha activists were arrested and tortured; they harvested Ailamma's crop, transported it to her house, and guarded it there for four months. Ailamma describes how she housed and fed the Sangham members for that period; her home became the center of the movement. The women, she recalled, were united in their efforts in the organization, defending and supporting one another in the face of the authorities. The struggle brought loss and tragedy to the Telangana communities that organized for their lands and crops: people were thrown in jail and tortured, houses and villages burned, and peasants' crops were looted by thugs hired by landlords. "When all this was happening, how could we think, 'why this struggle?' It was in our hands already – how could we give it up?"[74]

As civilian participation in the Andhra Mahasabha and Telangana armed struggle shows, the blurred boundaries of political action are evident in people's participation in various groups. People belong to and contribute to the efforts of what are considered "legal" political organizations and parties, and this engagement is not mutually exclusive of

---

[72] Roosa, "Passive revolution," 66.
[73] Lalita K. et al, *We Were Making History,* 37. The quote is from an oral interview with Ailamma, a member of the sangham.
[74] Ibid.

participation in “illegal” organizations that employ violence. In fact, *sangham* members participated seamlessly in the armed communist movement. Joining a political struggle is a process that affords the participant a kind of agency and solidarity that may catalyze the creation and continuity of other movements and parties, even if those organizations adopt different forms and methods.

Conclusion

Through articulation strategies, interactions with ideology, and solidarity, civilians, grounded in their conceptions of politics and the institutions in which they participate, confront insurgent organizations that seek their support. Interactions of local political structures with insurgent efforts to enact ideological movements led to distinct experiences of violence during wars in the three contexts. In addition to varied levels of violence, distinct kinds of mobilization resulted from these interactions: collapse, resilience, and fluidity. What explains variation in the integration of militants into local politics? How does status quo political mobilization shape the ideologically-driven actions of insurgents who seek to build violent movements? Rebel-civilian and rebel-civil society encounters and relationships generate divergent paths in Ayacucho, Puno, and Telangana, the course of which, I argue, depends on the nature of articulation of political organizations before rebels began their political campaigns – whether local actors were integrated with other Left forces that provided them with a narrative linking their own agency in land struggles with a broader yearning for citizenship. Ideology also plays a role in explaining differences in rebels’ strategies and relations with civilians as they interpreted political realities and opportunities for exploiting existing networks. The ease with which networks adapt their

practices and beliefs to violent or nonviolent mobilization help us understand changes in movements' strategies and expressions and the outcomes of their mobilization efforts.

While many scholars view the relationship between violence and non-violence as dichotomous, social and political actions do not fall neatly into one category or the other. The boundaries of actions that seek to change the political status quo often bleed and blur, shifting over time and drawing on varied forms and meanings of participation. Extant empirical investigations and theories often fail to account for these messy, ambiguous processes and outcomes. Instead, violence is perceived as an aberration, rather than a manifestation of political action, ideas, and impulse. Scholarly studies frequently interpret violence as a deviation from the practice of "normal" functioning politics and a result of the failure of political institutions and processes.[75] In fact, participation constitutes a continuum of acts that may emerge as violent, illicit, licit, and non-violent at differing moments and in different social and cultural contexts.

[75] Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein, "Violent Pluralism: Understanding the New Democracies of Latin America," in *Violent Democracies in Latin America*, eds. Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

Bibliography

Arias, Enrique Desmond, and Daniel M. Goldstein. "Violent Pluralism: Understanding the New Democracies of Latin America." In *Violent Democracies in Latin America*, edited by Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Arjona, Ana. "Civilian Resistance to Rebel Governance." In Arjona et al, *Rebel Governance in Civil War* (2015): 180-202.

_____. "Wartime Institutions: A Research Agenda." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 8 (2014): 1360-1389.

Arjona, Ana, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly, eds. *Rebel Governance in Civil War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Balcells, Laia. *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Chatterjee, Partha. "Democracy and the violence of the state: a political negotiation of death." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2001): 7-21.

_______. *Lineages of Political Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación del Perú (CVR). *Informe Final: (Perú, 1980-2000)*. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2004. Available at www.cverdad.org.pe

El Comité Central del Partido Comunista del Perú. *Desarrollemos la Guerra de Guerrillas*. Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, 1982.

Degregori, Carlos Iván. *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso: Ayacucho 1969-1979*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990.

del Pino H., Ponciano. "Family, Culture, and "Revolution": Everyday Life with Sendero Luminoso." In *Shining and Other Paths*: *War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, edited by Steve J. Stern, 158-192. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

Favre, Henri. "Perú: Sendero Luminoso y horizontes oscuros." *QueHacer* 31 (1984), 32.

Finkel, Evgeny. "Victims' Politics: Jewish Behavior During the Holocaust." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012. ProQuest (3518545).

Fitzpatrick-Behrens, Susan. *Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru, 1943-1989: Transnational Faith and Transformations*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011.

Glenn, David. “The power of everyday life: political scientists, taking their cue from anthropologists, try fieldwork.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 56, no. 5 (2009): B13-B14.

Goldstein, Daniel M. and Enrique Desmond Arias. *Violent Democracies in Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Gorriti Ellenbogen, Gustavo. *The Shining Path: a history of the millenarian war in Peru*. Translated by Robin Kirk. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999. Originally published as *Sendero: Historia de la guerra milenaria en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990).

Gour, R. B. “Hyderabad People’s Revolt against Nizam’s Autocracy.” In *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle,* Gour et al. New Delhi: Communist Party of India, 1973.

Hultman, Lisa. “Attacks on Civilians in Civil Wars: Targeting the Achilles Heel of Democratic Governments.” *International Interactions* 38, no. 2 (2012): 164-181.

Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy Weinstein. “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436-455.

K., Lalita, Vasantha Kannabiran, Rama S. Melkote, Uma Maheshwari, Susie J. Tharu, and Veena Shatrugna. *‘We Were Making History…’ Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People’s Struggle*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

———. “The Ontology of “Political Violence”: Action and Identity in Civil Wars.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (2003): 475-494.

Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Matthew Adam Kocher. “How “Free” is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem.” *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 177-216.

Kaplan, Oliver. “Protecting civilians in civil war: The institution of the ATCC in Colombia.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 351-367.

Kennedy, Jonathan, and Sunil Purushotham. “Beyond Naxalbari: A Comparative Analysis of Maoist Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Independent India.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 832-862.

Kopstein, Jeffrey S., and Jason Wittenberg. “Deadly Communities: Local Political Milieus and the Persecution of Jews in Occupied Poland.” *Comparative Political Studies* 44, no. 3 (2011): 259-283.

Lyall, Jason. “Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 331-362.

Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Manrique, Nelson. “Violencia e imaginario social en el Perú contemporáneo.” In *Violencia politica en el Perú: 1980-1988*, vol I. Lima: DESCO, 1989.

Mariátegui, José Carlos. *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad Peruana*. Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1979. Originally published in 1928.

Mayer, Enrique. *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

McClintock, Cynthia. “Why Peasants Rebel: The Case of Peru’s Sendero Luminoso.” *World Politics* 37, no. 1 (1984): 48-84.

Moore, Barrington, Jr. *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.

Morley, David and Kuan-Hsing Chen, Eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Parkinson, Sarah Elizabeth. “Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War.” *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 418-432.

Poole, Deborah, and Gerardo Renique. “The New Chroniclers of Peru: US Scholars and their ‘Shining Path’ of Peasant Rebellion.” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 2 (1991): 133-191.

PUM-Puno, Untitled Press Release, *Los Andes*, Feb. 4, 1987, Puno Regional Archive. Periodical collection. Accessed 23 Aug 2012.

Rénique, José Luis. *La batalla por Puno: Conflicto agrario y Nación en los Andes Peruanos.* Lima: Casa de Estudios SUR, 2004.

Roosa, John. “Passive revolution meets peasant revolution: Indian nationalism and the Telangana revolt.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 28, no. 4 (2001): 57-94. doi:10.1080/03066150108438783.

Shah, Alpa. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

_______. “The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed or grievance in Maoist India.” *Economy and Society* 42, no. 3 (2013): 480-506.

Sherman, Taylor C. "The integration of the princely state of Hyderabad and the making of the postcolonial state in India, 1948-56." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 44, no. 4 (2007): 506.

Singerman, Diane. "The networked world of Islamist social movements." In Q. Wiktorowicz, Ed., *Islamic activism: A social movement theory approach.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004, 143-163.

Slack, Jennifer Daryl. "The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies." In *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*, eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen. London: Routledge, 1996.

Staniland, Paul. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Sundarayya, P. *Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd., 2006. First published by Desraj Chadha on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Dec. 1972.

Tuesta-Soldevilla, Fernando. *Representación Política: las reglas también cuentan.* Lima: Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 2005.

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics* 53 no. 3 (2001): 362-398.

Weinstein, Jeremy. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

_____. "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008): 539-61.

Wood, Reed M. "Rebel capability and strategic violence against civilians." *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 5 (2010): 601-614.