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**Organizational Structure and Class: Examining resilience in the Maoist Movement in India**

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Juhi Tyagi**

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Abstract of the Dissertation

**Organizational Structure and Class: Examining resilience in the Maoist Movement in India**

by

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**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**Sociology**

Stony Brook University

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What causes armed movements to last? I address this question by taking up the case of the Maoist movement in India. Through an ethnographic analysis and interviews of 127 current cadre, surrendered militants and non-movement village members in 77 villages, over a period of twelve months in 2013-2014 in three districts in Telangana, India, as well creating and analyzing a database on Maoist incidents (2000-2012), I find that non-violent armed group organizing best predicted movement resilience. Although state and political economy variables formed a base for armed rebellion, organizational structures in the villages determined the presence and sustenance of armed groups in a locale. The Maoists were able to enjoy persistent presence in villages where they focused and succeeded in creating relatively autonomous organizational structures outside formal party structures that could most effectively lead to class formation and build class-consciousness within each village. These village organizational structures, embedded in local socio-economic conditions, with support from the Maoists, were able to withstand state repression and circumvent economic logic, leading to continuous movement presence. This dual organizational structure of party and village organizations that were located outside the formal party structure, with a more open organizational logic, allowed the movement to function in sync with local level fluctuations—changing form and function according to local needs— which became most imperative in sustaining the Maoist insurgency.

## Dedication Page

For Michael, my mentor

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# Introduction

This research investigates what creates armed movement resilience.

Empirical evidence shows that some armed groups outlast others. Understanding the causes of this resilience in movements becomes crucial since outcomes are produced over long periods of time.[1] Movements that are sustained have a larger likelihood of impacting socio-political and economic systems.[2] This becomes more pertinent with guerrilla movements that rely on a strategy of "protracted war" to win outcomes favorable to movement goals.[3]

The question is what makes such groups last?

Macro level studies on violent movements have often relied upon an analysis of the political economy of local agrarian structures, differences in resources available to the state and local groups, external pressures on the state, disparities in military powers of the state and local groups, or existing cultures of resistance[4] to explain armed movement emergence.

Yet they have not successfully translated the implications of this to the local kinetics of such movements: which are far from being stable or unchanging even in the presence of the determining macro variable.

This distance from local level details has led to newer works in the field of conflict studies that have relied on creating large datasets by using the erroneous micro measure of the *number of casualties* to define the strength of insurgent groups, adding indicators such as climate, land distribution, skewed development and access to resources

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[1] See, Meyer, D.S. and Whittier, N., 1994. "Social Movement Spillover." *Social*

[2] See, Skocpol, T. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Tarrow, S. 1994. *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[3] Mao Tse-tung. 2005 (1936). *The Art of War.* El Paso: EL Paso Norte Press.

[4] See, Goodwin, J.,2001. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991.* Cambridge University Press: New York; Paige, J. M., 1978. *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World.* New York: Free Press; Skocpol, T., 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Wickham-Crowley, T. 1992. *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956.* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Wood. E.J. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

as independent predictor variables.[5]

On the other hand, micro studies have looked at caste and class dynamics, the role of intimate relationships built between people and the movement, the importance of networks, friendship, solidarity, and organizational ties,[6] but have been unable to tie this back to larger armed movement trends. They fall short at explaining, for instance, how an armed movement's exceptional governance style in a few villages is reflected in a macro analysis or in its chances of resilience. Similarly, larger perspectives cannot sufficiently address questions such as, what does the mass surrender of cadre in a region marked by unequal economic relationships mean for the movement on the ground.

To address this, I take up the case of the Maoist movement in India, using a mixed methods approach of creating and analyzing a large dataset through newspaper data coding of insurgent activity in India for the years 2000 to 2012, as well as conducting an in-depth ethnographic analysis, and 127 interviews across 77 villages in the state of Telangana. This method had the advantage of reciprocity, with quantitative findings aiding the selection of case studies, and case studies informing the interpretation of larger trends (such as mass arrests or surrenders) as reflective of a certain movement dynamics on the ground.

In the following section I lay out the scholarship in the field of armed movements, so far, and make a theoretical argument for the need to understand such movements as being the result of and directed by, interactions between political and economic superstructures, with local level substructures. That is, super structures of the state and economy alone are ineffective at determining armed movements. They provide a foundation for rebellion, which, however, translates into a movement only in combination with other particular local structures and organizations. In a sense, it boils down to the specific combinations of conflicting class organizations— representing the state, the capitalists and the collective action groups that determine the ultimate outcome of armed

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[5] See, Carter, T.A. and Veale, D.J., 2013. "Weather, terrain and warfare: Coalition fatalities in Afghanistan." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30(3): 220-39; Gleditsch, N.P., 2012. "Wither the Weather? Climate Change and Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 29(1): 3-9; Gohdes, A. and Price, M., 2013. "First Things First: Assessing Data Quality before Model Quality." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(6):1090-1108; Gomes, F.J., 2015. "The Political Economy of the Maoist Conflict in India: An Empirical Analysis." *World Development* 68: 96-123; Hallberg, J.D. 2012. "PRIO Conflict Site 1989-2008: A Geo-Referenced Dataset on Armed Conflict." *Conflict Management and Pease Science* 29(2): 219-32.

[6] Fantasia, R. 1988. *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action and Contemporary American Workers*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Hairgrove, F. and McLeod, D.M., 2008. "Circles Drawing Toward High Risk Activism: The Use of Usroh and Halaqa in Islamist Radical Movements." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31: 399–411; Shah, A., 2013. "The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed or grievance in Maoist India." *Economy and Society* 42 (3): 480-506; Mc Adam, D., 1988. *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press; Sharma, A.N. 2005. "Agrarian relations and socio-economic change in Bihar." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(10): 960-972.

movements and their resilience.

### 1.1 Macro structures and local organizing in armed movements

The existence of grievance has been acknowledged by all macro studies on revolutionary movements. What each study adds, however, is the pertinence of a series of factors, complementing grievance, to be determinative in turning the situation into a revolutionary one; since not all grievances produce revolutionary movements.

Scholars such as Goodwin have done an excellent job of pointing out the role of the State in understanding when and where revolutions take place.[7] Goodwin argued that revolutions were caused not by economic grievances (poverty and inequality) or class alone, but best explained by the nature of the State or the political context. States that allowed little room for people's opinions and were militarily suppressive were more likely to see the formation of revolutionary groups. In addition, weak or incapacitated states, being unable to control all of their territory, were more vulnerable to armed rebellions. In sum, there was an increased probability of a revolution in peripheral societies with authoritarian or repressive regimes, or disorganized states with limited power. The more flexible the state, the less likely there would be a revolution.

People revolted as a result of state sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements, repression of groups from state power or resources, indiscriminate (but not overwhelming) state violence, weak state policing capacities and infrastructural power, and corrupt and arbitrary personalistic rule.

In comparing the Russian, French and Chinese revolutions, Skocpol also stressed the effect of the external pressures on the State as creating space for groups with grievances to act.[8]

Wickham-Crowley combined the necessity of a regime or state weakness with an analysis of peasant support, for a revolutionary movement to arise.[9] Working off findings of scholars, such as Paige, who identified political economy variables as being primary in revolts, Wickham-Crowley discussed the role of specific agrarian structures in peasant support for revolutionary groups.[10] Peasant support also arose as a result of capitalism displacing old patron-client relations, leading to the moral economy argument, where peasants felt justified in their revolt,[11] or simply resulted from utility maximization[12]—

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[7] Goodwin, J, 2001, op. cit.

[8] Skocpol, T. 1979, op.cit.

[9] Wickham-Crowley, T. 1992, op. cit.

[10] When cultivators derived their income predominantly from wages, but also had the tactical mobility to act radically.

[11] Scott, J. C., 1977. The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press; Thompson, E.P., 1971. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century." *Past & Present*, 50: 76-136.

[12] Popkin, S. L., 1979. *The Rational Peasant*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

the rational self-interests of peasants, in the context of a weak state.

Military power was the final factor determining revolutionary movement formation. That is, internal financing or military budgets of the state and guerrillas, internal solidarity or each army's loyalty and external support received, ascertained whether there would be an armed movement to overthrow the state. Rebellious cultures or previous insurgent histories and pre-existing social ties[13] only further helped to give form to an already brimming rebellion under the above circumstances.

Although elite alliances and the interaction of the state with capitalism underlay all these studies, this dynamic came to be most overtly expressed in Tilly's work.

Tilly found *state making and capitalism* to shape the opportunity, type of organization, and interests of different groups in collective action.[14] He found 18th century France to be replete with conflicts over land, food, labor as a result of the growth of the state and development of capitalism that had occurred at the expense of ordinary people. Capitalists became fiscal agents of the state, playing an independent part in the accumulation of land and capital.

This concentration of capital, according to Tilly, led to a larger proletariat and a division of interests between capital and labour. The French state in 1661, unchallenged in it's own domain and feared by the rest of the world, was pressed into giving the national market and mobile capital priority over local claims of communities and property. This is what eventually led to a revolution in 1789. The French revolution was, in a sense, determined by an interaction of all people, in varied ways, with the market. It resulted in large-scale movements and the tactic of disruptive actions, of deliberate seizure of space, with groups demanding state concessions.

Tilly's work of examining different *processes*, although solidly grounded in macro factors much like the groundbreaking work on cotton tenancy farmers by Schwartz,[15] led to a series of works in social movement scholarship that became reduced to processes, sans the larger political and economic structures.[16]

Since then, some scholars have taken into consideration the role of superstructures, but in indirect ways. McAdam's work is most pertinent, which combined the need for available *political opportunities* with *cognitive liberation*, which McAdam defines as the process of coming to collectively define oppressive conditions as both unjust and amenable to change. Without this political process of cognitive liberation,

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[13] Such as, kinship, political party, minority or ethnic membership, language ties, educational (university), religious, family, political affiliations.

[14] Tilly, C. 1986. *The Contentious French.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[15] See, Schwartz. M., 1976. *Radical Protest and Social Structure: The Southern Farmers' Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890.* University of Chicago: Chicago.

[16] Such as the resource mobilization theory that held a very mechanistic view of movements. The RM theory developed by Meyer and Zald had no room for grievances, with their theory relying completely on a cost-benefit type of analysis for constituents.

political opportunity structures could simply provoke elites to confer social resources on aggrieved groups, curbing movements.

This is where I locate my research. I find that both macro structures and those which lead to the process of cognitive liberation can be examined through the analytical tool of their constituent class organizations. Class organizations aid in class formation, create class-consciousness and determine the form of class struggle undertaken.[17] Implying, all structures (macro and local) can be viewed through a class analysis, by examining various organizational configurations that act to build, uphold or contest power.[18]

Ultimately, although state capacities have been analyzed as influenced by the different class organizations acting upon it,[19] and create conditions for the production of rebellions, only in combination with other local economic and social structures, and organizations of collective action, can the essential factor of cognitive liberation, or class consciousness be generated and result in a resilient peasant rebellion.

Four terms, in the context of this research hence make a recurring mention and need to be defined more clearly at the outset.

- *Resilience* – Refers to the ability of the movement to continue to persist in spite of repression. Here persistence or a sustained presence, sometimes used interchangeably with resilience, is not reflected in continuous movement activity. Rather, it is evident in a continued understanding of ones class position by people organized by the movement in the villages, as well as the act by peasants of engaging in forwarding the interests of that position with the understanding of the crucial role of the movement in achieving their goals. Resilience can take the form of villagers supplying the movement with information that has the potential to resist the antagonistic class, through influencing the political ideology of a mainstream political party in a village in order to forward class interests, or even in enabling violent attacks against the oppositional class. This continued struggle

[17] See Eric Olin Wright for the relevance of class in all social analysis. (Wright, E., O.,1997. *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press).

[18] Read Mintz and Schwartz, for role of organizations in class formation and sustenance (Mintz, B and Schwartz, M., 1985. *The Power Structure of American Business*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

[19] Chibber, for instance, traces the path of India towards industrialization from 1947 to the 1970s by focusing on the role played by the Indian business class in influencing State policies. India, in contrary to Korea which succeeded in creating a 'development State' because of the absence of a strong business class and due to its policy of export processing industrialization, followed the policy of import substitution and demobilized labor. This was the result, Chibber shows, of adhering to the demands of a strong business lobby that the British State had left behind. (Chibber, Vivek. 2003. *Locked in Place: State building and Late Industrialization in India.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

along class lines combined with the belief held by peasants of the crucial contribution of the armed movement in achieving favorable results is taken as evidence of movement resilience.

- *Class* – A set of people whose material interests are impacted by the same forces of exploitation. A class is defined relationally and varies across villages depending on the particular configuration of groups in each village.
- *Class formation* – Working as a collective to pursue class interests, resulting from recognition of the advantages of collective action as opposed to individual action. Class formation is the link between class structures and class struggles. They however evolve constantly—being organized, disorganized, reorganized and are as much the product of class struggles as the cause of it.
- *Class-consciousness* – Having a true and consistent understanding of class interests. It is the result of the choices people have (limited by class location), but also the choices people make (practice).

Resilient armed movements, I argue, were the result of creating relatively autonomous collective action village organizations that were able to work towards class formation. This was achieved through forming class-centered organizations, which were capable of altering the demands and the structure of the movement according to the particularities of the local situation, to reflect the specific social and economic components of a locale.[20] This helped build class-consciousness by addressing local concerns and at the same time challenging state and capital systems.

**1.2 The Maoist movement in India**

In order to elaborate these dynamics, I focus on the Maoist movement in India.

The Maoist movement in India had its beginnings in the town of Naxalbari in West Bengal in 1967, where it was initiated by a small group of dissatisfied Communist Party of India (Marxist) (usually delineated as CPI (M)) members, immediately after the Comunists came into power in West Bengal. Later referred to as the Naxal movement, it brought together the ideals of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism in India for the first time, advocating for mass struggle and the seizure of power through guerrilla warfare. The CPI (ML) or the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) went on to be formed in 1969, with the stated aim of 'annihilation of class enemies.' Partly because of differences in emphasis, the movement was plagued by factionalism over the years. The most militant factions, People's War (PW) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), unified only in 2004 to form the current guerrilla organization, the CPI (Maoist).[21] From 1967 to 2010,

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[20] Proven to be the case with the Chinese revolution as discussed by Hinton (See Hinton,W. 1966. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press.)

[21] See Kujur, R., 2008. *Naxal Movement in India: A Profile*, New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies.

the Maoist movement had spread to over 223 out of 626 Indian districts,[22] with approximately 20,000 people fighting directly for the movement.[23]

Despite several iterations and setbacks, the groups' goal of an armed revolution has remained a challenge to the Indian state for nearly fifty years.[24] Their survival thus justifies a focus on this case as an exemplar of armed movement resilience.

Even before the Naxalbari movements started in the north of the country, in the southern State of then Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana), the Telangana Armed Struggle had taken place from 1948-52. Opposing the rule of the *Nizam* and atrocities committed by landlords, people from lower caste groups took up arms. The movement was soon curbed with promises for more equitable land distribution and the abolition of the *zamindari* system (landlordism) by the state.

A few years later, in 1967-68, a landmark incident took place – the Srikakulam movement – where sharecroppers, still having received nothing, rose against oppressive landlords. This was followed by the appearance of armed guerrilla squads.

The movement spread quickly through the state, with intellectuals lending support, and a voice, to the movement. Teachers, authors and poets coming from a long literary tradition in Andhra Pradesh joined, and the movement recruited students as well. Related organizations like the Revolutionary Writers Association (1970) and the Radical Students Union or RSU (1974) were formed. After a national emergency in the country in 1978 the students of the Radical Student Union succeeded in organizing their first large mobilization –'Go To The Village' campaign where activists divided themselves into small groups and visited villages, mostly in the Telangana region that faced severe inequalities, carrying out village surveys and radicalizing the most oppressed—lower caste or *dalit* youth and farmers.

In 1980, the People's War (PW) group was officially formed in Andhra Pradesh. By 1985, they began facing state repression, culminating in a ban in 1992. Facing severe constraints, by 1998, PW merged with its counterpart in Bihar (another State with large radical movement mobilization), CPI-ML (Party Unity). In 2004, they merged with the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) from the North, forming the now unified Communist Party of India (Maoist) or CPI (Maoist).[25]

In this research, I focus on the activities of the Peoples War group, who I will hereon refer to as the Maoists, in three provinces of Telangana: Warangal, Adilabad and Khammam. Amongst the first areas of Maoist organizing, they serve as a suitable case for the study of resilience, with the movement having witnessed and reintegrated through

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[22] http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ajaisahni/09AS-33LimesWord.htm(accessed 10/12/2012)

[23] http://worldfocus.org/blog/2009/07/09/naxalite-rebellion-menaces-the-heart-of-india/6237/(accessed 10/12/2012)

[24] Since 2006, the Prime Minister of India has consistently referred to the movement as India's gravest security threat.

[25] I use the terms PW and Maoist interchangeably through this chapter.

three cycles of repression. Until 1978, the state had already killed 335 *naxals*.[26] This was followed by a few years of decreased repression, with an increase in 1986 after the formation of a specially trained counter-insurgency Greyhound force.[27]

From 1992 onwards, with the ban on People's War, or Maoists, through the newly formed Andhra Pradesh Public Security Act, an additional strategy of counter-insurgency was adopted.[28] According to this law, associations perceived (however loosely) to be interfering with lawful administration were declared unlawful. Further, people who managed, assisted or attended meetings of such associations were culpable, with rigorous imprisonment, fines, or both.[29]

However, the Maoists have managed to remain resilient in several parts of Telangana, with the peace talks in 2010 creating a perfect opportunity to review and confirm this. In 2010, several villages organized meetings and erected *stupas* for the martyrs during the period of lax state policing, helping identify currently active Maoist villages, which have seen movement resilience.

### 1.3 Method

My research relies on a mixed methods approach of conducting interviews and ethnographic analysis, as well as creating and analyzing a longitudinal dataset through newspaper data coding of insurgent activity in India between 2000-2012.

I used data on structural variables such as the existence of government welfare policies, percentage of forestland, rate of infant mortality, literacy, percentage of tribal people,[30] access to drinking water, electricity, paved roads, and primary schools from the National Census, 2001[31] to carry out a basic analysis of structural variables associated with Maoist incidents for the years 2000-2012.

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[26] APCLC Joint Report. 1997. Murders Most Foul: A Report on the Extra-Judicial Killings by the Police in North Telangana.

[27] The Greyhounds were an elite force, handpicked from the police forces, and put through intense guerrilla training matched with large cash incentives. They continue to work clandestinely in the state (The Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Bill, 2014 (Telangana)).

[28] Human Rights Watch. 1997. *Political Killings and Rural Violence in Andhra Pradesh*. New York: HRW.

[29] Other counter-insurgency measures involved encounter killings and creating attractive surrender policies.

[30] Members of communities listed in the Schedule of the Indian Constitution as possessing certain ethnic characteristics.

[31] I took an additional census time point (2011), building an average census score to factor for changes in districts over the thirteen years.

My results initially suggested a weak relationship between development indicators and movement activity. The number of hospitals, access to electricity, education and drinking water were not significant in explaining movement consistency.[32]

However, the percentage of schedule caste population[33] in a district was positively and significantly related to movement presence.[34] The presence of scheduled tribes or *adivasis* was also positively and significantly related to movement consistency.[35] A better indicator of movement consistency was, nevertheless, the area under forest cover.[36] Though highly correlated with tribal presence,[37] its inclusion in the regression model increased the explanatory power by eight per cent,[38] which indicated that populations in forest areas, irrespective of their status, were more likely to be associated positively with the Maoist movement.

This method of a basic macro analysis enabled the identification of larger structural patterns and guided my microanalysis by determining the choice of cases to

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[32] The beta coefficients for having electrical facility and higher percentage of educated people were positive. This suggests a positive relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. That is, an increase in the independent variable would also result in an increase in the dependent variable (movement consistency). These findings appeared counterintuitive since it is often assumed that movement bases were sustained amongst the most impoverished. However (as subsequently confirmed by lagging the development indicators and by my qualitative analysis), development in several districts had often been the result of consistent movement presence (as a result of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of the Government of India which set aside a separate budget for development activities in Maoist districts). The movement in its early years focused on working in impoverished areas. However over forty years later, the indicators suggested aiding development for the local population (directly or indirectly) solidified movement presence in the district rather than decreasing it.

[33] Scheduled castes or SCs are considered the lowest and most disadvantaged caste group within the caste system in India. They are usually associated with small to absent land holdings, high illiteracy and subject to social discrimination from other caste groups, all of whom occupy higher positions in the caste hierarchy.

[34] ß = .138; p=<.05. This is consistent with other research that suggests a greater mobilization of scheduled (or marginalized) populations to revolutionary movement activities (Kunnath 2008; Ahuja and Ganguly 2007).

[35] ß = .210; p=<.001

[36] ß = .420; p=<.001

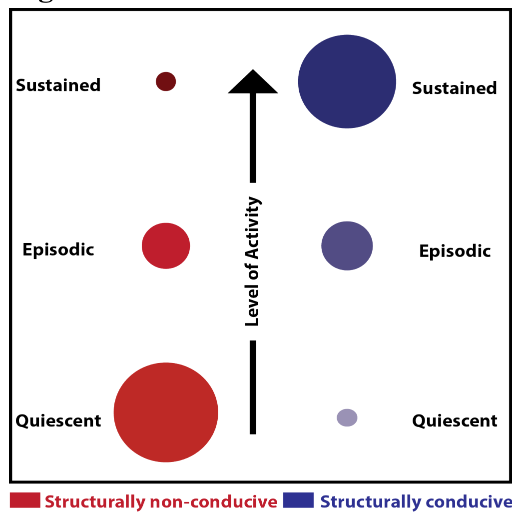
[37] Hence forest area and percentage of schedule tribes' variables were run in two different models.

[38] Final $R^2$ = .40; Average VIF=2.80

three districts of Warangal, Adilabad, and Khammam, in Telangana. The data analysis revealed these three neighboring districts to have different frequencies of Maoist presence. Despite their overlapping geography, political and economic contexts, what factors explained differences in movement activity between the three districts? Further, within each of these districts, what explained the differences in their administrative sub-units or blocks, with some blocks showing consistent movement presence over the thirteen years, some inconsistent and others no activity at all?

Although the basic quantitative data results guided my choice of the three districts, within each of the districts I selected villages that appeared to possess the necessary structural conditions identified from the quantitative analysis for resilient movement activity— those with a large scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population, forested areas, and areas with some local development. I similarly identified villages within the three districts that did not possess these characteristics. I then systematically compared villages within and across those two conditions along an additional dimension: those that had continuously experienced movement activities, or *sustained cases*, those that had inconsistently experienced activity, *episodic cases*, and those that had not experienced any movement activity, or what I call *quiescent cases*. The distribution of cases is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**: Distribution of cases




The size of the circle represents the density of villages with some form of continued movement presence. Villages with structurally conducive conditions make up the highest density of sustained cases. Using the *method of agreement*, I compared villages of sustained activity *across* the different conditions of structural conduciveness and structural non-conduciveness.

I similarly compared episodic and quiescent movement presence across the two structural conditions. Using the *method of difference*, I compared villages *within* the same structural condition (structural conduciveness or structural non-conduciveness), but which had different outcomes (some having sustained activity, some episodic and some no activity). This method enabled an isolation of factors and dynamics that were commonly shared among all villages that experienced sustained insurgency, irrespective of the structural condition. This level of analysis also generated information that could be

fed back into the archival dataset— to enable the development of a more robust matrix of movement strength and sustenance.

I conducted 127 interviews in 77 villages across the selected districts with current cadre, surrendered militants, and non-movement village members, over a period of sixteen months in 2013-2014. In addition I spent time observing village dynamics, contributing to ethnographic content. I also carried out village studies where I gathered information about the historical, socio-political, and economic aspects of each village and noted field observations (See Appendix 1 for brief description on villages and people interviewed).

Characteristics of the three districts where fieldwork was carried out are listed below and compared in relation to one another. Each of the districts varied on the consistency (and frequency) of movement presence they experienced.

**Table 1**: Comparing characteristics of the three districts were ethnographic fieldwork was carried out

| Characteristics | Adilabad | Warangal | Khammam |
|---|---|---|---|
| % *Adivasis/*Tribals | high | low | high |
| Forest Cover | high | low | high |
| Irrigation | low | low | high |
| % landlords | low | high | high |

Source: Fieldwork 2013-2014

Finally, I used the findings on organizational factors from interviews and coded the 2012 dataset to reflect the organizational variables that were found to be crucial to Maoist resilience in Telangana. I analyzed Maoist activity in the year 2010 to re-validate the results.

The chapters are arranged in the following way.

In chapter one, I show the underlying economic history of the formation of class consciousness by certain groups and the significance of their organizational foundations in further interactions with the state and defining the trajectory of protest in the three provinces of Telangana. I find that economic factors created a basis for protest, but organizational foundations in village and the resultant creation of class formations among groups, capable of surviving cooptation under varied economic conditions were, instead, more decisive in determining the trajectory of armed movement participation.

In the following chapter, organizational structures for class-making in insurgent movements, I show that when the Maoists actually achieved the task of organizing along class lines and created a class consciousness within villages, such organizational structures helped uphold the movement through varied state actions, even repression, creating resilience.

The chapter on workers and women further adds to proof of the class motivation behind the organization of the Maoists in Telangana and it's impact on resilience.

Finally, chapter four, applies the findings of the micro analysis to a large dataset, for the years 2010 and 2012 to determine the organizational modalities of Maoist incidents for all districts in India, and identifies organizational structures that determine overall Maoist resilience.

I am not the first to show the importance of interactions between micro and macro processes in movements. What this research does do, however, is break down the

organizational forms accompanying armed movements, and assess their pertinence to a continued armed movement. Class-centered organizations formed in the context of specific larger economic and political, and local socio-economic calibrations, rather than any other organizing principle, I find, are better positioned to maintain continuous grievances, the agency to act, and mobilization of groups. Class formations in villages created the greatest leverage against the state, to pile up successes and further rejuvenate collective action organizations, resulting in insurgent resilience.

# Chapter 1
## Back to Class (Making):
## Economic and Organizational Conditions in Recruitment

This chapter addresses the question of who joins violent peasant struggles. Caste and development analyses are often used to explain recruitment into the Indian Maoist movement. Lower castes, and *adivasis* or tribals are considered most likely to join for two reasons: their highly depressed economic conditions[39] and their exclusion from national development.[40]

Through a systematic comparison of population groups in three provinces within the state of Telangana, India, with province proximity providing an anchor from which to compare similar groups *across* varying conditions—I show the advantages of a class analysis over a limited caste or development one in explaining who joins violent peasant movements. This compels us to investigate the role of class, even in what evidently appear as ethnic conflicts. However, I also demonstrate the powerful, but limited explanatory potential of economic conditions in explaining the trajectory of armed movement participation. While I find the foundation for the current upheavals to be laid by political economy variables traceable to the past decades, I argue for a more thorough examination of the combination of economic substructures with organizational/social superstructures in understanding which, and how, groups joined armed struggles.

In examining factors creating differential recruitment conditions, the mutual exclusion of state and class theories from one another in revolutionary movement literature has been detrimental to a more comprehensive understanding of violent movements' constituents and their organizational foundations.

State-centered explanations in understanding peasant rebellions find the presence of authoritarian and military states that create unpredictable hardships, and the presence of external pressures on states that weaken the state's ability to address internal dissent to be important in fueling, and sometimes sustaining, revolutionary movements.[41] Class

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[39] Gomes, F.J. 2015. "The Political Economy of the Maoist Conflict in India: An Empirical Analysis." *World Development* 68: p 96-123; Hoelscher, K., Miklian, J., Vadlamannati, K. C. 2012. "Hearts and mines: A district-level analysis of the Maoist conflict in India." *International Area Studies Review* 15 (2): p 141-160.

[40] Chandra, U. 2013. "Beyond Subalternity: land, community, and the state in contemporary Jharkhand." Contemporary South Asia 21(1): p 52-61; McDougal, T. L.2011. "Insurgent Violence and the Rural–Urban Divide: The Case of Maoist India." In Raul Caruso (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict, Civil War and Cost of Conflict (Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 17)*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, p.69 – 98.

[41] Goodwin, J. 2001. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Skocpol, T. 1979. *States and Social*

theorists, on the other hand, have demonstrated the likelihood that specific material conditions and classes can be crucial in creating violent peasant struggles.[42]

Jeffrey Paige (1975)[43] develops one of the most elaborate theories of the role of economic systems and class in peasant rebellions. In explaining why guerrilla war was restricted to some provinces, for example the south of Vietnam, rather than the rest of the country, he valorizes the presence of specific land and cropping patterns which enabled either more conducive (or non-conducive) agrarian organizational structures. Wage dependent share-croppers, concentrated in South Vietnam, had to rely on collective tactical organizational capabilities rather than individual strategies to better their economic conditions, unlike their landed contemporaries in the North, who would need to compete with other small cultivating farmers such as themselves in appropriating greater land— to make strides in their economic conditions. Since the Southern share-croppers were not tied to land—lacking any ownership or means of income other than wages, the unrestricted mobility combined with social connectivity generated opportunities for building collective political action (and perhaps organizations).

The other necessary structural factor Paige found was rigidity in economic transactions. Non-cultivating landowners who depended on earnings from their lands alone were characterized by such economic rigidity. Fixed rules for labour, often enforced through extra-economic means that were political and social in nature, were the only method by which such landowners could guarantee themselves consistent profits. Lacking economic flexibility, these extra- economic means also functioned as a mechanism to diminish the workers shifting into the alternative system, of large commercial farms. Large commercial farms were contrarily able to provide much more room for the economic bargaining of labour. Since their owners had diverse sources of profit available, and the ability to remain competitive despite potentially acquiescing to higher labour costs, they had the ability to increase wages without significant economic consequences to themselves. Ironically, as Paige finds, the very factor of economic rigidity to maintain economic dominance, on the part of land dependent non-cultivators, ended up fueling the most dissent from wage dependent sharecropping peasants— creating the conditions for a peasant rebellion.

In the following sections, I present ample evidence that points to the criticality of class dynamics, not dissimilar to those that Paige discusses, in explaining the presence (and absence) of armed peasant mobilization across three districts of Telangana. However, a systematic comparison of varying conditions in the three provinces also points to the role of the state in not only aiding elite classes (as has often been demonstrated)[44] but in shaping specific dynamics among the subaltern classes, creating

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*Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[42] Wolf, E.R. 1969. *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row; Stinchcombe, A. L. 1961. "Agricultural Enterprise and Rural Class Relations" *American Journal of Sociology*, 67: p 165-176.

[43] Paige, J.M., 1975. *Agrarian Revolution*. New York: The Free Press.

[44] See Goodwin 2001; Chibber 2003; Reinhard 2001.

the organizational foundation for collective action. Hence rather than remaining limited to a macro-analysis of the role of the state in creating a cause for dissent, I show how political compulsions of democratic regimes, along with political economy variables, create consequences for peasant class unity and action.

## 2.1 Three provinces and their characteristics

I chose to study three predominantly agrarian[45] neighbouring provinces in Telangana with a long history of political conflict, to examine mobilization patterns in the insurgent movement. Like much of Telangana, all three chosen provinces, Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad, also witnessed varying lengths and intensity of violent peasant struggle. Geographical contiguity between the three provinces, however, permitted the control of comparative peasant groups *across* provinces, with all constituting similar caste and *adivasi* groups;[46] and the only differences observed spurring from the conditions of the provinces themselves, and their consequent impact on each of the resident populations.

Table 2 below shows the distribution of *dalits* and *adivasis*, historically the most likely groups to join armed rebellions, in Telangana. The three chosen provinces had the largest *adivasi* population in Telangana; of which Khammam on the far-east had the highest (27.27%), followed by Adilabad (18.09%) in the north and Warangal (15.11%), the central province. They had an average of 17% of the population belonging to *dalit* groups.

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[45] 55.49% of the population in Telangana relies on agriculture for income (Government of Telangana, 2015), with agriculture contributing to 24% of the GDP of the state (Reddy and Bantilan, 2011).

[46] Since *dalits* or *scheduled caste (SC)* is a broad category with several different groups coming under its umbrella, geographical containment to the three provinces restricts the comparison to the same groups. The same is the case with the category *adivasis* or *scheduled tribes* (ST), caste categories of *backward castes (BC)* or *other castes (OC)*. Scheduled castes constitute 16.6% of India's population (over 166 million), and ST 8.6% (8.4 million people) (Census of India, 2011).

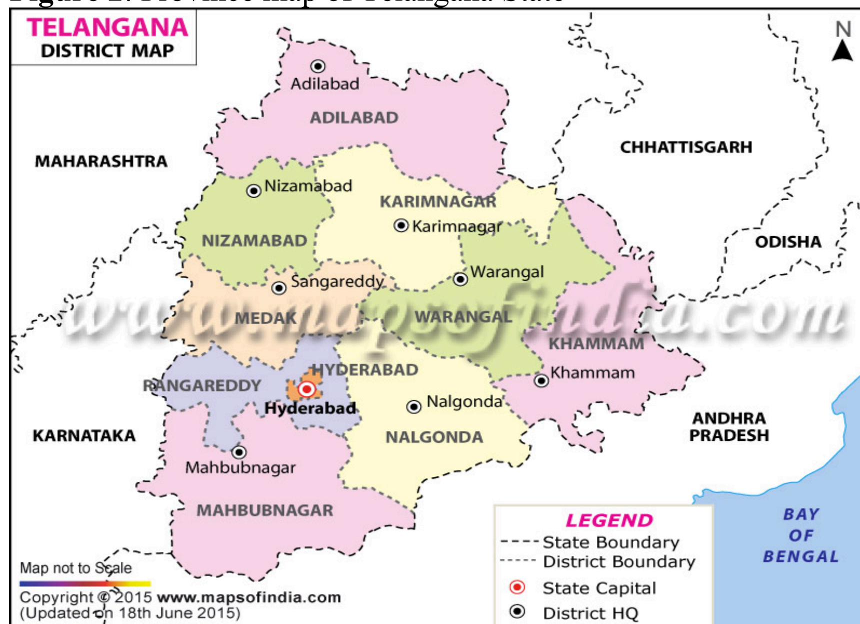
**Table 2**: Percentage of *dalits* and *adivasis* in Telangana, 2011

| | District | % of dalits (SC) | % of *adivasis* (ST) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mahabubnagar | 17.49 | 8.99 |
| 2. | Rangareddy | 12.31 | 4.13 |
| 3. | Hyderabad | 6.29 | 1.24 |
| 4. | Medak | 17.73 | 5.57 |
| 5. | Nizamabad | 14.54 | 7.56 |
| 6. | Adilabad | 17.82 | 18.09 |
| 7. | Karimnagar | 18.80 | 2.83 |
| 8. | Warangal | 17.54 | 15.11 |
| 9. | Khammam | 16.55 | 27.37 |
| 10. | Nalgonda | 18.27 | 11.30 |
| | Telangana | **15.44** | **9.34** |
| | All India | **16.64** | **8.62** |

Source: Census of India, 2011

Figure 2 below shows a map of Telangana with its nine provinces or districts.

**Figure 2**: Province map of Telangana State



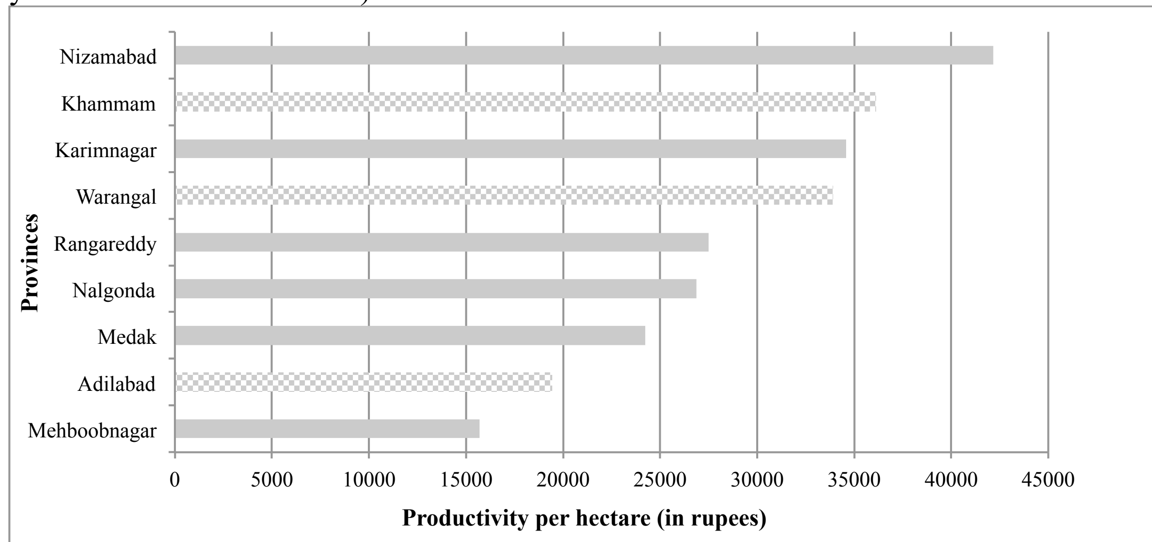

Source: Maps of India

While there were some differences in the economic conditions of the lowest castes—*dalits*, and *adivasis* across the three areas—variations in economic prosperity *across* the three regions as a whole were much greater. Khammam, although originally a part of Warangal until 1953, had the highest percentage of irrigated lands, and bordered two wealthy provinces of Krishna and East Godavari (in Andhra Pradesh). As a result Khammam had higher agricultural productivity compared to the other two provinces,[47]

[47] The high correlation between irrigation facilities and agricultural productivity is well established (Reddy et al. 2012, Reddy and Bantilan, 2011, Vamshi 2004)

followed by Warangal.[48] Adilabad reported not only the lowest agricultural productivity among the three provinces, but also among the lowest in the country.[49] Figure 2 shows the average agricultural productivity of the provinces for the years 2003-04 & 2004-05. The average production per hectare (in rupees) for Adilabad was 19,436, Warangal 33,895 and Khammam 36,108. The India average, for the same period, was 28,763 rupees per hectare (Ibid.).

**Figure 3**: Average agricultural productivity in Telangana districts/ provinces (average for years 2003-04 and 2004-05)




Source: Chand et al., Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), 2009

Concomitantly, commercial non-food crop production, that is, the production of cotton and chillies—which formed non-consumption goods exported out of the state—were the highest in Khammam, followed by Warangal and Adilabad.

Table 3 shows the cropping pattern of the three provinces in relation to the other provinces in the state of Telangana for the years 2013-14 (for change in overall cropping pattern in Telangana, see Appendix 2).

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[48] Although in comparison to other provinces in India, both Khammam and Warangal fall in the category of average productivity (per hectare) (ICAR, 2009).

[49] Chand, R., Garg,S., Pandey,L. 2009. *Regional Variations in Agricultural Productivity: A District Level Study*. Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

**Table 3:** District-wise yield of important crops (Kg/Hectare), 2013-14

| District | Rice | Maize | Bengal Gram | Cotton (lint)* | Chillies | Turmeric |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adilabad | 2745 | 3771 | 1371 | 369 | 2386 | 6721 |
| Khammam | 2994 | 5500 | 1716 | 533 | 4179 | 5078 |
| Karimnagar | 3591 | 5463 | 1352 | 492 | 2710 | 6303 |
| Mahabubnagar | 2839 | 4749 | 1842 | 352 | 3232 | 5078 |
| Medak | 3653 | 3720 | 1587 | 416 | 800 | 2869 |
| Nalgonda | 3061 | 1675 | 1716 | 393 | 3196 | 5078 |
| Nizamabad | 4004 | 5352 | 2046 | 338 | 3941 | 4178 |
| Rangareddy | 2284 | 3554 | 1253 | 399 | 3490 | 3216 |
| Warangal | 3141 | 4984 | 837 | 472 | 3249 | 4521 |
| **Telangana** | **3297** | **4685** | **1716** | **423** | **3544** | **5078** |

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Hyderabad

Thus the province of Khammam had the highest agricultural productivity per hectare, as well as the highest yield of commercial crops. The per worker productivity was also highest in Khammam province (at 17,335 rupees per worker) as compared to the other provinces.[50] In terms of land holdings as well, Adilabad and Khammam had a larger percent of semi-medium and medium land holdings with Warangal having among the largest percentage of marginal landholdings in the state of Telanagna, and among the three provinces. However, the average land holdings in the provinces were comparable. Table 4 shows the land holding patterns.

**Table 4:** Percentage distribution of holdings and area by size of holding, 2010-11

| | Holdings | | | | | Area (ha) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **District** | **Marginal** | **Small** | **Semi-Medium** | **Medium** | **Large** | **Marginal** | **Small** | **Semi-Medium** | **Medium** | **Large** | **Average size of holding (ha)** |
| Adilabad | 49.8 | 27.7 | 17.5 | 4.6 | 0.4 | 16.9 | 28.3 | 31.9 | 18.1 | 4.8 | 1.4 |
| Nizamabad | 67.5 | 23.8 | 7.3 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 33.9 | 36.1 | 20.6 | 7.9 | 1.5 | 0.92 |
| Karimnagar | 67.5 | 21.9 | 8.4 | 2 | 0.2 | 30.9 | 31.8 | 22.9 | 11.8 | 2.6 | 0.96 |
| Medak | 67.9 | 21.7 | 7.8 | 2.3 | 0.3 | 29.9 | 31.3 | 21.1 | 13.2 | 4.4 | 0.97 |
| Rangareddy | 58.3 | 25.7 | 12.1 | 3.5 | 0.4 | 23.5 | 29.4 | 26.1 | 15.8 | 5.2 | 1.22 |
| Mahbubnanar | 57.9 | 25.4 | 12.6 | 3.7 | 0.4 | 22 | 29.5 | 27.2 | 16.8 | 4.5 | 1.23 |
| Nalgonda | 58.8 | 25.3 | 12.1 | 3.5 | 0.3 | 23.1 | 29.9 | 26.9 | 16.5 | 3.6 | 1.9 |
| Warangal | 67.1 | 21.4 | 8.7 | 2.5 | 0.3 | 28.6 | 29.7 | 22.8 | 14.2 | 4.7 | 1.01 |
| Khammam | 62.2 | 22.6 | 11.6 | 13.3 | 0.3 | 25.6 | 27.6 | 26.7 | 15.8 | 4.3 | 1.14 |
| **Total** | 62 | 23.9 | 10.8 | 3 | 0.3 | 25.3 | 30.2 | 25.5 | 15 | 4 | 1.11 |

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Hyderabad.

The provinces fared similarly on human development indicators, although the highest percentage of rural poor was in Adilabad (26.10%) and the least in Warangal (0.90%). Khammam is 13.10% (See Appendix 3 for human development indices across the provinces). Assembled together, overall data indicated the highest inequality in

[50] Warangal is 14,531 rupees per worker and Adilabad 15,431 rupees per worker.

Khammam, which despite having the highest agricultural productivity and production of commercial crops also had a larger percentage of rural poor than Warangal. Adilabad with larger land holdings, but poorer productivity, possessed the largest percentage of rural poor, among the three provinces.

The next sections deal with understanding what factors led to divergent economic conditions in the three provinces and their resultant impact on armed peasant movement mobilization.

### 2.1.1 Historical trajectory to economic disparities

Existing patterns of agricultural productivity and land holdings correlate with historical trends set in motion in the early 1900s. These trends become important to trace in order to understand contemporary economic disparities *within* and *across* the three provinces; and differential armed movement recruitment potential, even a century later.

The Nizam–Hyderabad state (containing the three provinces of concern) was governed differently from most of British India. Instead of direct colonial rule, it was run as an autonomous princely state. One key consequence of this difference in administration was that land revenues collected from Nizam's areas were much higher than those in British areas (as a percentage of the yield). The then Director General of Statistics, O. Connor, observed that a reduction in land revenue by as much as 25% - 30% in the Nizam's areas would significantly improve the condition of the heavily taxed peasants.[51] Industrial workers conditions were similarly burdened; the Trade Union Act was applied to Nizam-Hyderabad in 1945, almost 20 years after its passage in British India.[52]

Under the Nizam's governance, there came to be, broadly, five ways of gain land ownership, and to therefore accumulate wealth. One, since 83% of the land in the Suba or administrative region was owned by the state (called *diwani* or *khalsa* land),[53] a system of revenue collection had to be set up to collect taxes from peasants in the villages. Of the state owned land (land over which the state had revenue rights), 75% fell under the *ryotwari* system—of direct tax collection from the peasants who worked in the fields, although they lacked any rights over it. Others who paid taxes were *pattedari tenures*—cultivators who directly worked on their fields and as long as they paid the assessed tax—got to retain their lands.[54] In order to maintain a steady steam of revenue from peasants, an elaborate administrative rung was set up in each village.[55] Within this elaborate

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[51] Ganu, L. G. 1937. *Land Revenue and Rural Indebtness* (In Finance Department, English Branch, File NO. 1 of 1937) The Hyderabad Bulletin, 28-8-1937, p 14.

[52] H.E.H the Nizam's Government, *Report on Labour Census 1935*, (1344 Fasli) (Hyderabad-Dn 1937): 67.

[53] Report of the Royal Commissioner on Jagir administration and reforms. H.E.H. the Nizam's government, 1947, p 37.

[54] Reddy R.V. 1987, op.cit.p 87

[55] Positions in each village included, i) *mali patel* for revenue collection; ii) *police patel*

structure, three administrative positions accrued the most power: that of the *mali patel*, the *police patel,* and the *patwari*, who were responsible for collecting revenues, maintaining law and order, and keeping land and revenue accounts respectively.[56] Contemporary accounts of peasant struggles in Telangana cannot be analyzed without reference to how these officers' functioned in the villages. They often extended themselves to giving money for crop damage (*talafmal*), distributing government loans to farmers for cultivation and equipment (*taccavi*), and collecting the food grain levy. The *patels* and *patwaris* soon became engaged in collecting illegal and extra fees, putting away loans and money of farmers (*taccavi* and *talafmal*), and grain levy amounts.[57] In Samasthan or Peshkash areas, those of the former Hindu states,[58] the *patels* and *patwaris* started to collect revenues for the *rajas* (kings) at their own discretion. In such areas such as forest *mandals* in central Khammam, they collected, apart from land tax, a fire tax, house tax and flower tax from the Koya tribes. The situation became so dire for the many tribals living there that by 1945 most cultivable rain fed rice land had shifted hands from the Hill Reddis and Koyas to the *patwaris* and merchants.[59] Tribals became labourers.

There remained widespread corruption among officers in the revenue and village departments,[60] such that even though there were provisions for peasants to file a written complaint to the district *tehsildar*, and appeal to the higher courts—they had to wait years to get justice.[61] In fact, the first *taluqdar* (lowest provincial level revenue officer) had the

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for maintaining law and order; iii) *patwari* for maintaining and keeping accounts on land revenue and holdings; iv) *talari* village peon for actual collection; v) *setsindhi* village watchman for every 50 houses; vi) *neri or neredu* for maintaining irrigation works and water supply to the fields; vii) *dheir* low caste man used as a watchman, messenger; viii) *begari* from whom forced labour, mostly unpaid, was extracted by government officials and village landlords.

[56] Moulvi Cheragh Ali, *Hyderabad (DN), Under Sir Salar Jung*, Vol. I, (Bombay: 1884), p. 124

[57] The Deccan Chronicle 13-5-1950

[58] Who after losing their independence to the Mughals, could retain it's governance and profits if they paid a certain amount to the Nizam. Palvancha was one such place.

[59] Haimendorf, C. V. F.1948. The Raj Gonds of Adilabad- A Peasant Culture of the Deccan. (Aboriginal Tribes of Hydrebad, 3(1)). London: Macmillan. p 8.

[60] W.S. File No. 70 of 13 Fasli (1947) &R. No. 1511 of 1357 Fasli (1948).

[61] *Taluqdars* and *tehsildars* worked at the sub-province levels. *Subedar* or commissioners were appointed for the entire province by the revenue department with the sanction of the Nizam to head a division. They handled all land matters, but were not involved with criminal matters or general supervision of the entire province. The *subedar's* subordinate was a *taluqdar*. Below him were first, second and third *taluqdars* and a *tahsildar* (Reddy, 1987: 55).

power to decide the case, based often on non-legal factors.[62] Eventually, with the weakening of the position of the Nizam in the late 1940s, people who held *patel* and *patwari* positions came to write off large chunks of lands in their names. However, not being customary landlords or having large amounts of capital at their disposal—such areas did not experience much agricultural growth or economic prosperity, even after the fall of the Nizam in 1948, and the regions integration with the rest of India. Such areas were spread all over the three provinces.

A second route to consolidating land was through the already existing system of hereditary landlordism. Hereditary landlords went by the title *deshmukhs*, *deshpandyas*, *sirdeshmukhs* or *sirdeshpandayas* and were families who over centuries of working with dominant rulers, had come to own land in return for their services to the rulers. They traditionally collected taxes for the state at the level of the province. Under king Salar Jung I, when direct tax collection by the state apparatus was introduced *deshmukhs* became restricted from collecting taxes, but were allowed to retain large lands that they had come to possess. They were also given an annual pension or *rusum-i-zamindari* (calculated as a certain percentage of revenue collections) as compensation for their loss of income from revenues.[63]

Deshmukhs came to be concentrated in the more fertile areas of south and central Khammam,[64] south-east Warangal and around Warangal town;[65] and in Adilabad province — around the town of Adilabad as well as north-east and south-east of the province.[66] Unlike *patels* and *patwaris*, holding key positions over generations had enabled wealth accumulation.

The only people who could move away from land were hence the landlord *deshmukhs*. They owned entire villages and lived off its rent—giving them sufficient flexibility to expand out of agriculture into running mills, money lending, and becoming contractors.[67] As a result, the highest number of rice mills not only in any Suba, but state,

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[62] W.S. File No. 79 of 1339 Fasli (1930) & R. No. 1263 of 1340 Fasli (1931).

*Mamul* or bribe common was common in the revenue, forest, police and customs departments. Bribes often resulted in physical beatings of really economically poor complainants (Golkonda Patrika, 3-9-1949).

[63] Pavier, B. 1974. "The Telangana Armed Struggle." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 9 (32/34), p.1413+1417-1420.

[64] Khammam, Madhira, Palvancha areas

[65] Mahboobabad and Warangal areas

[66] Adilabad, Sirpur, Rajura, Chennur and Luxetipet areas. Additionally, in Karimnagar, they were in Mahedeopur, Jagtiyal, Huzurabad and Sirsilla taluqs (Reddy 1987. op. cit, p. 98)

[67] Economic Investigations, Vol I. 1939-1940. p. 15.

were in Warangal (in this case, Warangal and Khammam provinces together, which formed Warangal suba).[68] To ensure profitability, the owners hired different machines seasonally to not only mill rice, but also different agricultural products depending on the season. Urban businessmen soon came to invest in them and made an additional profit by hoarding grains during the war shortage of the 1940s and selling it in the black market for a far higher price.[69] By 1941, in the Telangana area, there were about 500 factories employing close to 28,000 workers. Many of the big factories—notably textiles, mines, paper mills, chemical engineering plants—were heavily subsidized with loans granted from the Government.[70] Additionally, the *deshmukhs'* influence with high officials helped them win large contracts. Pingali Venkatrama Reddy, the Waddepalli *deshmukh* for instance, had managed to acquire excise contracts for the entire region of Telangana all for himself.[71]

The largest industries did not fit this pattern, and constituted a third method of wealth accumulation. The four largest industrial enterprises were government run: Singareni Collieries (coal mining) in Khammam and Adilabad, Azamjahi mills (textiles) in Warangal, Sirpur paper mills in Adilabad, and the carpet industry in Warangal.[72] These industrial districts hired labour indirectly through middle-men who were often also moneylenders with leverage over their debtors, and could collect large commissions—sometimes exceeding 50% of the wages paid— through supplying workers to government complexes.[73] Management preferred this system, since the debt relationship disciplined the workers to be quiescent and compliant.[74]

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[68] 1931 Census Report. Part I- Report, op. cit. p 154.

[69] The oil mills they started however didn't extract as much oil as they produced oil seeds due to the lack of good technology (Reddy 1987. op. cit, p. 502)

[70] Such as Salarjung, Babu Khan, Lahoti, Alauddin, Dorabjt, Chenoy, Tayabji, Laik Ali, Pannalal Pitti, etc.

(Sundaraya, P. 1972 *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons.* Calcultta: CPI (M), p. 12).

[71] In those days, excise (abkari) contract meant full control over the villages.

[72] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p 457

[73] In Azim Jahi Mills for instance, the managing agents' commission was 54.58% of the total wages of 4000 workers (Rs 13.43 lakh) in 1943. (P. Sundaraya.1972, op. cit. p 17).

[74] W.S. File No. 21 of 1352 Fasli (1943) & R. No. 5 of 1357 Fasli (1948); Memorandum of the Singareni Colleries Workers' Union, Kothagudem in A.I.S.P.C, File No. 68, Part 1. 1946-47.

Cultivating families who took to money lending formed the highest category within moneylenders. The fact that the biggest landlords also lent money created a very skewed dynamic, since they also rented out land and hired labour.[75] Money lending combined with trading became a mark of communities such as the *Komatis* and *Marwadis* who moved to Telangana towns.[76] Actual producers and village merchants formed only 1/3rd of the market in Warangal suba.

Acquiring *jagirs* became a channel through which large parcels of land came to be owned, setting in motion the fourth form of wealth accumulation. *Jagirs* were lands given by the Nizam to noblemen on whom he had come to depend for support—often ranging from one to several villages. These land grants were most prevalent in the Warangal suba—concentrated most particularly in south and central Khammam province, south-east Warangal and around Warangal town in the center.[77] The power of *jagirdars* varied. Apart from being allowed to collect revenue, their judicial and police powers differed. Nevertheless, they were notoriously exploitative: they consistently utilized forced free labour called *vetti*, and fully three quarters of the *jagir* villages had no schools.[78] *Jagirdars* utilized their plentiful revenues on conspicuous consumption, with many accumulating large debts.[79] None of the areas ruled by *jagirs* prospered economically. Many peasants were highly indebted, converting them into landless agricultural labour, often bonded to the *jagirdar* for generations. One of the demands of the early communist movement spearheading the Telangana armed struggle was the

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[75] Interests rates were 12%-18% cash and 25%-125% in kind (Reddy 1987: 228). Finally 55%-60% of families in Telangana villages were indebted (Dube, S.C.,1955. *The Indian Village*. London: Routledge, p 78). The transfers of land due to debt by 1949-50 were the highest in Adilabad, then Warangal, in the state.

[76] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p. 118.

They sold seeds and fertilizers to farmers, earning an interest, and got possession of the final product, which they in turn sold in the markets for high prices (Statistics about Trade Centers (Markets and Bazars) in Hyderabad State, 1948 (Hyderabad- Dn, 1950), p 9). Apart from *Komatis* who dominated trade from the village to state level, rich landlords also owned godowns, functioned as wholesale merchants and traders (A Note on Agricultural Marketing in Hyderabad State, op cit. p 6).

[77] Taluqs of Palvancha, Mahboobabad, Warangal, Karimnagar and Kinawat. The highest concentrations were State Manmanga Ramanajavaram, which had 22 villages and State Rajput 18 villages in Palvancha; Nawab Shaokat Jung Bahadur had 20 villages in Mahboobabad taluq; Raja Shivraj Dharmvanth Bahadur had 9 villages in Jagityal. In Adilabad, there were *inam* lands instead (discussed later).

[78] Golkonda Patrika (Bi-weekly) 29-6-1949.

[79] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p. 117.

abolition of the *jagirdari* system, which accounted for 30% of the lands in Hyderabad state.[80]

A final means of wealth accumulation involved the State renting uncultivated, barren, or abandoned lands to government officials. Since the most densely forested areas contained the highest percentage of such lands, Adilabad province was the locus of such development.[81] There were several versions of such concessions:

- *Maqtas* – lands given to a few on the basis of a very low fixed rent without liability to enhancement[82]
- *Kowldars* and *banjardars* – lands given on *kowl* or rent for 30 years to convert dry land to wet cultivable land (*kowldars*) or for 5-40 years to bring *banjar* waste land or land overgrown with trees to cultivable land (*banjardaars*)
- *Ijaras* – lands rented for bringing abandoned areas under cultivation with concessions extending to as many as 40 years[83]

High-ranking government officials earned these concessions, and almost all such lands became subject to absentee landlordism. This pattern of landholdings led to decreased agricultural productivity because *kowls* or tenants were too burdened by high rents to engage in experimenting for high production, and because such large landholdings became hard to manage efficiently.[84]

As a consequence of such lands being concentrated in Adilabad, it remained a province with low agricultural productivity.[85] The only large markets in Adilabad were situated in the north of the province, by the headquarters town of Adilabad and towards

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[80] Sundaraya 1972, op. cit. p. 10.

[81] Adilabad had 44% area under forest cover and a related low population density (W.S. File No. 36/86 of 1343 Fasli (1934) Record No. (n.g.).)

[82] But this became a way for some who had influence in the state to start transferring more and more *pattas* or land deeds to their names (W.S. File No. 10 of 1340 Fasli (1931) & R. No. 2982 of 13244 Fasli (1935). According to the Settlement Report of Warangal Taluqa for 1893, *maqta* lands increased by 406% (p 27). They also started to default on the rent, knowing that no one else in the area would come forward to purchase those lands because of arrears.

[83] They were made the *Pateli* (head) of the village if 40 or more houses had settled there and given other benefits (W.S. File No. 2 of 1354 Fasli (1945) & R. No. 2468 of 1357 Fasli (1948). This system was abolished in 1909 by which time no concessions were necessary, but had already led to wealth concentration by the time. *Ijardars* had managed to get lands, even encroached ones registered in their names (W.S. File No. 26 of 1348 Fasli (1939) & R. No. 847 of 1343 Fasli).

[84] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p. 167.

[85] Despite Adilabad having black soil which retains moisture and is even conducive for dry cultivation.

the south-west—which were areas sprinkled with *deshmuks*, but also ones that saw heavy investments from rich *marathwadas* (from the neighbouring state of Maharashtra).[86]

Hence, apart from the land concentration patterns within each of the provinces, the economic trends in neighbouring areas also had an impact. Rich landlords from Maharashtra crossed into Adilabad, Rajura and Sirpur in the north where they set up cotton pressing and ginning units. All the cotton produced was moved northward, back into their state of origin.[87] The two most irrigated areas in the south-west and south-east of Adilabad province (Nirmal and Chennur respectively) also saw the presence of small markets as a result of investment from outside.

For the rest, Adilabad province lacked *jagir* areas, and constituted the largest population of the *gond* tribe, in comparison to any other province in Hyderabad state; bringing into the dynamic the interaction of local groups with capitalists.[88] This prompted different conflict trajectories.

The *gonds* usually worked under *gond rajas* or kings under who they were not expected to own *pattas* or land deeds. Having a low population density, and several inaccessible areas from which the Nizam was unable to earn a revenue, the State encouraged the migration of outsiders into *gond* areas with the construction of roads. Laying of roads and railway lines bought populations from denser areas who not only started to cultivate in the *gond* areas, but unlike *gonds*, also managed to get lands written into their names.[89] As a result, the *gonds* moved to the more remote areas of Adilabad province. By 1943, most villages by urban centers and the road had become empty of *gond* families, with villages containing a 100% tribal population a generation earlier, containing only one *gond* family in the next.[90] As the *gonds* moved to more remote forests, the state declared those areas to be under the Reserved Forests limits, causing

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[86] These areas came under the Nizam's rule.

[87] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p. 20.

[88] The Suba of Warangal, in general, accounted for the highest percentage of *gonds* as well (43.02% as compared to 22.56% for the State). In fact 99.51% of the *gond* population resided in the Suba –Adilabad 50.60%; Warangal 47.33%; Karimnagar 1.57% (Census of India, Hyderabad State, 1941, Part II, pp 683-685). In Adilabad, it was mainly in the northern taluqs of Utnoor, Asifabad, Boath, Kinwat, Rajura and Adilabad. In Warangal, in Mulugu, Pakhal, Mehboobabad, and in Khamman in Palvancha and Yellendu (now also split into Gundala manadals).

[89] Records of Gond lands in Utnoor for example being transferred to outsiders is recorded in *Tehsil records* (Tahsil File of 1324 Fasli (1914-15), In Haimendorf, C. V. F, op. cit, 1948,p 65- 66)

[90] Example Renghanghat village in Asifabad, near the Asifabad- Utnoor Road. (Haimendorf 1948, op. cit, p 70)

clashes between the *gonds* and state, resulting in the death of several tribals or *adivasis*.[91] Further forest authorities informed *adivasis* that many lands they had cultivated earlier were also included in the reserve forest. No compensation was given and for a while the *adivasis* continued to pay revenues for land they were not even allowed to cultivate.[92]

However, the government, realizing the unrest brewing, decided to introduce some welfare measures for the *gonds* by instituting a Special Tribes Officer in 1943 whose job was to ensure the *gonds* didn't become further alienated from their lands (by other castes), and *patta* or land rights were given to them. As a result, by 1948, in Adilabad, 50% of the *gonds* had at least some *patta* under their name.[93] This move by the State was the direct consequence of a guerilla campaign that the *gonds* in Asifabad had staged earlier, in 1940, against the Nizam. Though crushed, and their respected leader Komaram Bheem killed, the government had started to take the *gonds* more seriously.[94]

This historical precedent had changed the political bargaining capacities of the *gonds* against the state in comparison to other tribal groups, or *dalits* with whom they shared a similar economic class but who were not granted such protections. This very allowance earned from the state, as I will show later, altered the course of political action of the *gonds* in Adilabad as compared to other similar tribal groups or *dalits*. By the late 1940s, thus, it had created class dissonance between the *gonds* and other tribals, and as well as between the tribals and lower caste *dalits*; at the time the Nizam's government started to face pressure to accent to the Indian state, in the form of the Telangana armed struggle.

### 2.1.2 The Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-1951)

We have, so far, mapped out the economic characteristics of the three provinces until the 1940s, just before the start of the Telangana armed struggle that was an antecedent to the Maoist movement. These economic patterns require reiteration since they had a large bearing on mobilization into the Telangana armed struggle. Regions with concentrations of *jagirdari* and *deshmukh* lands came to partake most in the Telangana rebellion.

Adilabad province had the smallest area of irrigated lands and least presence of

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[91] H.E.H, the Nizam's Government, Office of the Secretary to Government, Judicial, Police and General Departments, *Confidential File* No. 15/P.A/49, F. No.2.

[92] Haimendorf 1948 op. cit, p 92.

[93] Syed Khaja Abdul Gafoor, 1951. *Tribes and Tribal Welfare in Hyderabad*. Report for Hyderabad State. p 16. The Gond Education scheme was also started to promote *gond* language and train *gonds* as teachers and village officers. However at the same time, alcoholism among *gonds*, lack of proper or timely land surveys and arrangements for *phodi* (delimitation and demarcation of agricultural lands), still led to continued unrest among Gonds (Reddy 1987: 697).

[94] Reddy 1987, op. cit. p. 86.

either *jagirdars* or *deshmukhs.* It was only within a few *mandals* or sub-provinces (in its four corners: north-east and north-west; south-east and south-west) that had investments from rich *deshmukhs* or hereditary landlords, and neighbouring hereditary rich marathwadas. These were areas where roads had come to be developed, and displaced most of the populous *gond* tribe to the densely forested central part of the province. The *gonds* had managed to gain possession over some lands as a result of their armed rebellion in 1940. The areas where they previously resided had come to be occupied by outside labour that often worked as tenant farmers and, to a lesser extent, agricultural wage labour. Being a province with the largest amount of uncultivated, barren, or abandoned lands rented out by the State at heavy concessions, there was a high rate of absentee landlordism, but the most exploitative *jagirdari* system had hardly made its mark there.

Warangal province, on the other hand, had the largest number of rich landlords who became capitalists, transitioning out of agriculture into agro-based industries.[95] Hence Warangal had the most industrial labour (around the capital city Warangal), the highest concentrations of *kowldars* or tenant farmers (in the north and south tips), and—as a result of the *jagirdari* system and farmer indebtedness—the largest population of landless agricultural labour (in the south-east).[96]

Khammam (at the time a part of Warangal province) had a large number of *jagir* areas in the south conterminous with large holdings of rich landlords. It was a region that bordered the very wealthy provinces of Krishna and East Godavari, creating special economic conditions of a large proportion of rich and middle peasantry that had moved from the wealthy southern borders of Andhra Pradesh into Khammam.[97] The remainder of the province was occupied by various tribal groups, many of who had lost their lands with the introduction of outside cultivators, demarcation of their lands as reserve forests or in debt to *patels* and *patwaris*.[98]

The Telangana armed struggle, led by the Communist Party, thrived most in *jagir*

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[95] 80% of the industries in Warangal were agro-based (Reddy 1987: 783).

[96] During 1929-1930, in Warangal—apart from land owned by 19 big landlords (between 40 to 600 hectares)—as many as 75% of tenant farmers were living on land insufficient to sustain a comfortable living (Economic Investigations, Vol I. 1939-1940. p:15).

[97] Sundaraya 1972, op. cit. p. 89.

[98] The koya tribe, for instance (like the gonds in Adilabad) was highly impacted by outsiders and government policies, leading to widespread immerseration (Syed Khaja Abdul Gafoor 1951, p 38). With the new economy, the konda reddy tribe that lived in the central and eastern parts of Khammam province was also affected by the entry of traders from East Godavari who came to extract timber. Traders treated the tribe poorly, with the *patwaris* collecting the land revenue dues from tribals and passing it on to the timber merchants. This led to many of the tribals moving eastward, into British areas and becoming forest labourers instead since adjoining British areas didn't have such unjust and illegal extractions as Nizam's areas (Haimendorf 1948, op. cit, p 13).

areas, and in some cases, areas dominated by the *deshmukhs*. It demanded an end to the Nizam's rule, abolition of both the *jagirdari* and *deshmukhi* systems, increased wages for agricultural labour, and transfer of lands to the poor. It thus grew strongest in south Khammam and south Warangal, which had high percentages of agricultural and bonded labour (rather than tenant farmers). Mehboobabad, largely a *jagirdari* concentrated area with a few *deshmukhs*, in south-east of Warangal province, was a mainstay for the Andhra Mahasabha,[99] a part of which evolved into the communist movement in the region, joining communist cadre who made their entry through the province of Khammam, and supported the armed guerrilla squads.

The Communist Party (CP), which organized the struggle, had its origins in the Krishna district of Madras Presidency in 1934. It spread first across the border to the southern parts of Khammam province, where it maintained a continuous presence for the next 70 years. Telangana youth, many of who had become dissatisfied with what they perceived as the overly moderate Andhra Mahasabha, joined the CP and helped build its base in several areas in Khammam and Warangal province, spearheading the Telangana armed struggle.[100] Through deep reaching organizational capacities achieved with the help of local youth in specific areas, the CP was able to mobilize large numbers of peasants and, the Telangana armed struggle, able to achieve several reforms, which also became partly responsible for the decision to call off the struggle in 1951.

The communists, in a build up to the armed movement, made use of the Second World War period (1942-45) to free bonded labour. They also earned mass support by backing farmers against the forced purchase of war bonds during the same period (Sundaraiah 1972: 27). CP cadre entered Khammam province in 1948 through the resource rich southern areas of Khammam-Madhira-Palvancha, which had strong social and economic links to the well off *taluqs* of Krishna and Godavari of Madras Presidency where the CP had taken a foothold. These regions in Khammam, with a high percentage of bonded labour, thus saw the emergence of the Telangana armed struggle. In 1949-51, the struggle moved to the south-eastern and central parts of Warangal,[101] and adjacent Yellendu mandal in western Khammam through the organizational channel of radical

[99] As a result the first communist groups in the region settled in Mehboobabad and, as we will later see, became resistant to the entry of more radical communist parties.

[100] CP managed to very soon mobilize factory workers from the largest mills such as Azim Jahi paper mills in Warangal, the coal mines of Singareni (eastern Adilabad and parts of Khammam), municipal workers, hamals or porters, cartmen and many such workers. (Confidential Report of the First Taluqdar, Warangal to Subedar, Warangal, for the first fortnight of the month of Aban, 1934 Fasli (December 1944-45) contained in W.S. File No. 30 of 1354 Fasli and R. No. 6 of 1357 Fasli (1948)).

[101] Areas of Mulugu-forest parts of Mahboobabad and Warangal, and Parkal (with thick forests and big landlords).

Andhra Mahasabha youth.[102]

By 1947, the Disturbed Areas Act had been applied to the entire district of Warangal, and the Nizam's military or *razakar* camps had been set up in key towns in south Khammam province to resist the peasant guerrillas. Fights between the peasants and *razakars*, who were backed by the landed class led to a large number of peasant killings.[103] The guerrillas had to retreat to the forests. With continued repression (by the Indian state following the accession of the Nizam to India in 1948) and reforms, that had already been earned, the armed struggle was called off in 1951. At the time of communist guerrilla withdrawal, agricultural wages had increased and in many areas peasants had occupied large pieces of land. The Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act was also put in place in 1950 to protect tenants for the first time.[104] The Abolition of Jagirdari Act had been put in place in 1949, and with its integration into India, the *deshmukh* system was also done away with in the state of Hyderabad. The communist organization had achieved many of its goals.

However, soon after the calling off of the Telangana armed struggle, several landlords re-occupied their lands and in many cases managed to get lands in excess of the permitted ceilings transferred to their names, or found ways to retain the very best lands.

General trends in economic patterns *within* and *across* the three provinces, hence, once again continued, but with one major insight: organizational foundations for collective rebellion had been determinative in the spread and termination of the Telangana armed struggle. Existing Andhra Mahasabha organizations and CP networks, although generally greater in areas occupied by *jagirs* and *deshmukhs* had also affected the spread of the armed cadres; a fact that lent cadence to the importance of collective action organizations in determining the trajectory of further protest. This discovery finds reiteration throughout this chapter.

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[102] Mahadeopur, Sirsilla, Jagtiyal, Huzurabad and Sultanabad and Manthena in Karimnagar, and Chennur, Sirpur and Adiabad in Adilabad (all forest areas) saw activity later as the CP retreated to the forests after being defeated in the plains.

[103] *Razakar* or the Nizam's miliary camps were concentrated in Khammam, Madhira, Bonakalu, Nellakondapalli, Kallur and Wyra. But most killings, 96 of 147 took place in Warangal suba— 65.3% (The Deccan Chronicle 8-7-1949; The Golkonda Patrika 9-7-1949) and took place in Mahboobabad taluq, which had the highest concentration of land in diwani (state owned) or non-diwani areas (from 1948-49).

[104] Although there had always been provisions for tenant farmers to obtain ownership of land if they cultivated it for many years, this ascension almost never happened because landlords shifted tenants to avoid tenure. . This made them fetch a higher rent too since there was a large pool of landless peasants who were ready to take on the lease. Land leases were mostly oral and tenancy at will (terminated within a year) (Economic Investigations op.cit p 21).

### 2.2 Contemporary trends in economic conditions and Maoist recruitment

Despite the reforms that resulted from the Telangana armed struggle, the larger trend of economic hardships continued. Fifty years after the Communist insurgency, in 2012, landless agricultural workers constituted 50% of households in North Telangana (including our three provinces under investigation). Further, the land per household of large farmers remained as high as 71.55 times to that of agricultural workers.[105]

Owning land, or tenant farming did not exempt peasants from agricultural wage work. In Telangana 48.80% of tenant farmers income, and 40.99% of marginal farmers income came from agricultural wage labour. Even for small farmers, the share of income from wage work was 25.43%.

Table 5 and 6 below show the distribution of economic groups in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and landholdings in the year 2012. We will next analyze its impact on collective mobilization into the Maoist armed guerrilla movement.

Table 5 reflects the trend of majority of the economic group being constituted by agricultural wage labour, tenants and marginal farmers, who formed close to 60 per cent households.

**Table 5**: Economic groups in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (number and percentage of households), 2012.

| | **Economic Group** | **No. of Households** | **% of households in the respective group** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Agricultural Workers | 9228 | 42.61 |
| 2. | Tenants | 1065 | 4.92 |
| 3. | Marginal Farmers | 2584 | 11.93 |
| 4. | Small Farmers | 1241 | 5.73 |
| 5. | Middle Farmers | 493 | 2.28 |
| 6. | Rich Farmers | 166 | 0.77 |
| 7. | Big farmers | 54 | 0.25 |
| 8. | Traditional Occupations | 568 | 2.62 |
| 9. | Animal Rearing | 410 | 1.89 |
| 10. | Employees | 1332 | 6.15 |
| 11. | Self-Employed | 533 | 2.46 |
| 12. | Pensioners | 100 | 0.46 |
| 13. | Businessmen | 476 | 2.20 |
| 14. | Contractors | 28 | 0.13 |
| 15. | Commission Agents | 43 | 0.20 |
| 16. | Non-Ag. Workers | 2322 | 10.72 |
| 17. | Others | 1014 | 4.68 |
| | Total | **21, 657** | **100.00** |

Source: Reddy et al, 2012 (survey of 22 rural provinces), *The Marxist*

Within Telangana, the category of marginal farmers owned on an average about 0.45 hectare or 1.11 acres of land and constituted above 60% of the total landholdings in the region, as seen in Table 6.

[105] Reddy, S., Jojaian, N., Rao, V., Narasaiah, I. 2012. Land and Income Inequalities in Rural Andhra Pradesh. *The Marxist* 28: p. 50-74.

**Table 6**: Land Holdings and Area Operated (2010-11)

| | Category | Number of Holdings (Lakh Nos.) | Area Operated (Lakh Ha) | Number of Holdings (%) | Area Operated (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Marginal | 34.41 | 15.67 | 61.96 | 25.28 |
| 2. | Small | 13.27 | 18.69 | 23.90 | 30.17 |
| 3. | Semi-med | 6.03 | 15.85 | 10.86 | 25.58 |
| 4. | Medium | 1.67 | 9.27 | 3.00 | 14.96 |
| 5. | Large | 0.16 | 2.49 | 0.28 | 4.01 |
| | **Total** | **55.54** | **61.97** | **100.00** | **100.00** |

Source: Government of Telangana, Planning Department

In 1980, four decades after the beginning of the Telangana armed struggle, the Maoist armed movement, calling itself the People's War, began in Telangana state. As in the Telagana movement, the areas for the recruitment of the Maoists were determined by the differing economic dynamics *within* each of the provinces, modulated, by the organizational dynamics flowing from the history of social protest in the areas.

Caste correlations with class categories certainly existed. That is, the lowest caste of *dalits* and tribals or *adivasis* remained the most immiserated economic groups. They together, in fact, formed the largest group dependent on agricultural wages for an income, in Telangana. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana combined, 61% of the *dalits* income came from wages, and for *adivasis* it was 61.29%[106]— indicating their low economic positions, with most of their remaining income being supplemented from cultivating. Thus specific local groups remained more likely to join the Maoist rebellion. (See Appendix 4, for trends in population proportions of different classes in Telangana from 1983-2000.)

These economic disparities were, nonetheless, less apparent in some areas. As we noted in the previous section, for instance, south Khammam was wealthier as a result of investments from rich landlords from the bordering areas of Krishna and West Godavari. Warangal town, in the center, also had a concentration of capital investment in industries from hereditary landlords located close by; and the four geographical corners of Adilabad province had some investments from *deshmukhs* and the neighbouring marathwada landlords— creating a convergence of rice and cotton mills, and markets. In these areas mobilization into the Maoist movement became more challenging.

However where *police-patels* or *patwaris*, rather than hereditary landlords owned a large quantity of land, such as in north Warangal, and didn't necessarily come from communities that had remained dominant for generations unlike Rao's and Reddys (who were often *deshmukhs*), economic disparities were clearer and guerrilla mobilization

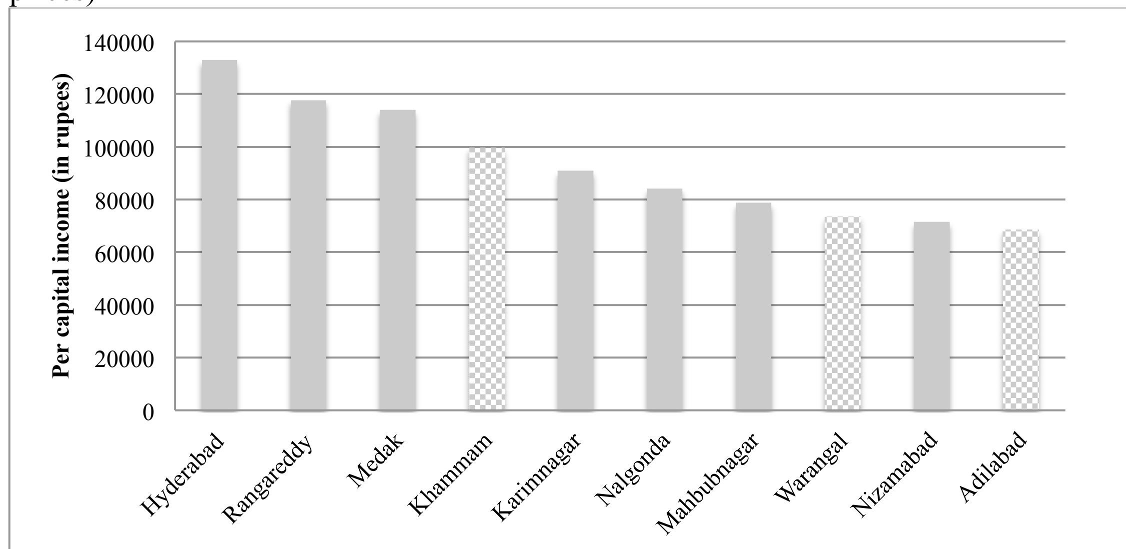
[106] Reddy, S et al., 2012.

relatively easier.[107] The south-east of Warangal, having the most exploited *jagirs*, was similarly, on an economic basis, more likely to result in greater armed mobilization.[108]

Adilabad, which had a dominance of *inam* or gifted lands and those rented at heavy subsidies to high officials, faced neither the relatively extreme prosperity of Khammam nor the levels of landlord exploitation of Warangal. Absentee landlords uninterested in increasing agricultural productivity had come to define the economic landscape of Adilabad, with exploitation instead coming directly from the state. Restrictions were placed on local populations access to forests, with Adilabad having the largest percentage of forest land (see, Appendix 5 for province wise forest area). This had resulted in the oppressed economic conditions of the local tribals, mostly *gonds* who inhabited the forest areas and organized a rebellion in the 1940s. The *adivasis* or tribals, in Adilabad, hence facing economic hardships were an equally likely group to be mobilized into the Maoist movement.

Figure 4 shows the 2013 variance in per capita income of the three provinces or districts in relation to other provinces in the state, demonstrating the disparities in economic conditions *between* the three provinces. Overall Adilabad had the lowest per capita income.

**Figure 4**: District-wise per capita income in Telangana , 2013-2014 (in rupees at current prices)




Source: Planning Department, Government of Telangana 2015

[107] The *patels* and *patewaris* instead were sometimes muslim traders or people, from what is designated as, *other backward castes*.

[108] South Warangal was also a region that had become very active in the Telangana armed struggle.

In the following section, I examine the ramifications of disparate economic conditions *within* and *between* the three provinces on mobilization into the Maoist movement.

### 2.2.1 Creating a class: organizational factors in marginal and landless peasant recruitment

When active Maoist recruitment began in the late 1980s, they were not most successful either in areas that had been strongholds of the Telangana armed struggle or those with a high concentration of *deshmukhs*, despite the large concentrations of landless *dalits* in these areas. This demonstrates neither caste nor economic conditions were fully determinative of insurgency.

Table 7 shows combinations of different class groups within each province, as well as slightly varying economic conditions and movement recruitment. Although the combination of marginal peasants (those with small landholdings who were still largely dependent on wages from agricultural labour) and capital-poor landlords, that is, landlords lacking enough capital to invest in increasing agricultural productivity and relying on extra-economic means to earn profits— created the most stable conditions for recruitment into the armed movement, it was by no means the decisive factor. As I discuss in greater detail later, the Maoist movement was able to recruit *adivasis* under far more varying economic conditions, which was a direct consequence of the more coherent class relations, that served to overcome the centripetal forces inherent in the political economy. This variance in recruitment between *adivasi* villages and others is evident from Table 7.

**Table 7**: Combinations of classes, economic structures and Maoist movement recruitment in the three Telangana Provinces

| Lower class composition* | Upper class (economic structure) | Region | Movement status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marginal peasants | Capital-poor landlords (sometimes diversified to money-lending) | North-east Adilabad; western tip of Khammam; central Khammam; south-east Khammam; north-east Warangal; north-west Warangal | Movement |
| | Capital-poor landlords. (Dis-invested from agriculture) | South-west Warangal | Mixed |
| | Mixed capital landlords | South-east Adilabad; | Mixed |
| | No upper classes. Money lenders from outside. | Central Adilabad; south-east central Adilabad; | Movement |
| | No upper class | West Khammam | Mixed |
| Marginal and landless peasants | Capital-poor landlords. Middle peasants diversified into money lending | Center-south Adilabad; East Warangal | Mixed |
| | Large capital-poor landlords. Diversified to money lending, working as contractors | Center-west Adilabad; south Warangal | Movement |
| | Capital rich landlords | South-west Adilabad | No movement |
| | Semi capital-rich landlords who rent their lands. Diversified to small mills, money lending | East Warangal | Mixed |
| | Middle peasants rent lands. Large traders invest | South Khammam | No movement |
| Majority landless | Mixed capital owning landlords | South-east Adilabad; central Warangal | Mixed |
| | Capital-poor landlords | South-west Khammam | Movement |
| | Investments from capital rich class | East Khammam | No movement |
| Marginal to small peasants* (mostly *adivasis*). | Large capital-poor landlords - diversified to money lending, working as contractors | North-west Adilabad | Movement |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Few capital-poor landlords who diversified into money lending | North-west Adilabad | Movement |
| | No upper classes. Money lenders from outside | North-east-center of Adilabad | Movement |
| Majority landless peasants, few marginal farmers | Capital-poor landlords, money lenders from outside | Central Adilabad | Mixed |
| Middle, marginal peasants, and landless peasants | Mixed capital landlords, Middle peasants diversified to money lending | North Warangal | Mixed |

* Marginal peasants= 1 acre or less; Small peasants= between 1-3 acres; Middle peasants= 3-5 acres. These vary slightly depending on availability of irrigation facilities.
Source: Fieldwork, 2013-14.

The data, in addition to showing a variance in the economic conditions for mobilization between majority *adivasi* regions and other areas, also shows that marginal farmers came together and joined armed struggles only in the presence of a very direct extra-economic relationship with the opposing class in their villages. The presence of upper classes in the form of capital poor landlords or moneylenders within the village, made class contradictions clearer, which the market where capital rich landlords operated, obfuscated.

Tejas mandal, located in the west Adilabad province, about two hours away from Nanded, Maharashtra from where it received heavy investments into its factories was one such *mandal* or sub-provincial area where class contradictions had been obscured. Mechanization in farming had taken place in the 1980s, and the region was home to 15 cotton ginning and packing factories owned by the traditionally dominant Rao's and Reddys, and the neighbouring Maratha Desai's. Even *adivasi* villages in the region (known for being under-developed) had wells for irrigation and used harvester machines for cutting grain. Because of their links with the landed factory owners, several households had family members that had migrated to other countries for labour (uncommon in the remaining province). These villages saw very little involvement in the Maoist movement, although most *dalits* were marginal farmers owning on an average 2-4 acres land, working as beedi workers (making local cigarettes with tendu leaves), and in season, being nominally paid factory workers. The *dalits* in the village had instead been recipients of land distributed by the government (with each family receiving an acre). The upper class landed peasants had invested in factories, also functioning as *soukars* who lent money, supplied seeds, fertilizers and machines to the peasants. The prevailing economic structure replaced interaction of upper class peasants within the limited village social structure with a more capital oriented one that was based on increasing agricultural productivity. This absence of upper classes in the village along with the presence of a majority of marginal farmers (*dalits* and other economically backward castes) meant that neither caste group joined the movement.

This absence of movement in villages lacking the opposing class was the case even in east Adilabad. In Sagar village, where the entire village was composed of people from the same class, few peasants were willing to join an armed struggle. The whole

village—all 400 households—were marginal farmers from other economically backward castes,[109] with an average land holding of two acres. Although they supported the movement with food, no one ever joined. A village resident told me, "we are not far from the town, so other people also come and rent our land from us. Some people make as much as rupees 10,000 per acre in rent for rice cultivable lands, and rupees 6,000 per acre for cotton. 60-70 acres are rented. And mostly now, people are using machines for tilling and harvesting. There are nine tractors used in the village."

Like Tejas mandal, forming and acting as a class was obscured in this context although all of the peasants were marginal farmers that still survived in economic adversity.

Villages with a majority of marginal farmers with highly visible landowners, on the other hand, were primary recruiting ground for the insurgents. They were most often outside *deshmukh* areas and unlike *deshmukhs*, who were hereditary landlords, had capital-poor landlords that had not been able to accumulate sufficient capital to diversify and relocate. In Venkat village in south Warangal province, both other economically backward castes and *dalits* joined the movement— being marginal farmers and having the presence of landed upper castes in their village. Reddys, the upper caste and class, still owned 180 acres land, which they treated as a real estate investment (rather than a productive resource).[110] The Reddys hadn't attempted to increase agricultural productivity; hence the economic condition of the village had not improved. Eight men and two women from the village had become underground cadre—all marginal farmers (six from the other economically backward caste and four *dalits*). In the neighbouring village of Venkat II however, the overwhelming number of upper class landed had dissuaded peasants from mobilizing into the movement, irrespective of caste or economic position. This was explained by the antipode of the same phenomenon: an overwhelming (rather than underwhelming) presence of the upper class in the village. Such degrees of dominance worked as a deterrent for peasants who relied completely on landlords for every aspect of their existence.

In villages like Pelli in east Warangal province, where there was a combination of marginal farmers and wage labourers, the marginal peasants joined the guerrillas, while wage labourers did not. The overwhelming majority of *dalit* wage labourers worked for the dominant landlord, a *police patel*, and were dependent on him both economically and politically—there were few institutional ties exterior to this relationship. Their landlord's alignment with the Congress party, which embedded them into active political relationships, made them even less accessible to the Maoist organizers. Marginal peasants in Pelli, unlike the *dailits*, had autonomous control over small pieces of land, giving them the independence that facilitated their availability to the insurgents.

Dependency relationships were thus important vectors in determining the availability of various groups to the Maoists. In most plain areas, where peasants (often *dalits*) depended on wages from landlords for a living, those who joined the insurgents

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[109] The Indian government recognizes several caste groups outside of the *dalits* to also be economically, although not as socially oppressed.

[110] They treated it as real estate because of its proximity to a town.

tended to have other sources of income, but even so chose to work only as part timers in the movement. Navin, the only *dalit* man from his village of Kesari in south Warangal province to join the movement full time, was an exception. He said, "most *dalits* only took part in short-term militancy. We were worried about feeding our family. So we only took part in land occupation, acting to punish someone etcetera. Nothing else."

He however decided to be the exception and join, "…because I attended some big leaders funerals followed by 15 days of political classes. I was very inspired. Then, I also had more land—3.5 acres each for my brother and me, but no one was willing to give us loans to cultivate our land. That's when I finally decided to join the movement."

Navin's economic standing was that of a marginal farmer: his family did not depend solely on labour to survive, making joining the guerrillas less risky.

The propensity of marginal farmers—rather than specific caste groups—to join the armed struggle is illustrated by the pattern in Manekallu village, where an equal number of *dalits* and backward castes joined the Maoists. Those drawn from both groups had in common their status as marginal farmers with at least some control of their own (inadequate) holdings. Although only ten people went underground, police cases were filed on close to 120 peasants for aiding insurgents. The majority of the land, over 500 acres, belonged to a Reddy landlord, but the strength of the movement led to its expropriation in 1988. In an expression of the degree to which organizational factors determine economic outcomes, the expropriation did not lead to division of the 500 acres into small holders. Instead the entire village collectively cultivated those fields twice a year.

So far, we have seen that marginal farmers with a degree of autonomy were the most likely economic group to join the armed struggle, irrespective of their caste, if the village also had a critical mass of visibly present upper class landed families who did not invest in increased agricultural productivity in the village. We now consider underlying dynamics of this relationship.

In the provinces we are scrutinizing, marginal farmers who depended on earnings from agricultural wage work, but they also had small landholdings to fall back on, were for the most part the main source of Maoist activists and the principle locus of support, regardless of caste affiliation. The landholding, though usually not accounting for more than 50% of their income, nevertheless provided them with a security that landless agricultural workers lacked. Peasants without this independent source of income hesitated to join armed struggles that pitched them directly against the very people that provided them with their primary source of income.

Table 7 demonstrates, however, that there is a significant exception to this pattern. Agricultural workers did join the Maoists in significant numbers when they constituted the overwhelming majority of the subaltern classes in the area. This is illustrated by the strong movements in several villages in western and north-east Adilabad; western and central Khammam; north and south Warangal. We see in this pattern another instance in which the political economic sources of rebellion are modulated by organizational considerations. In these predominant wage-labour settings, the agricultural workers achieved a kind of leverage that did not exist in mixed class settings: if organized they could apply the traditional pressure of striking, with the rich landowners having no alternative labour. It was in these peasantless settings that the Maoists successfully recruited landless workers, and organized successful campaigns to raise wages and

improve working conditions. In some circumstances, these successes led to demands for land distribution.

In Santpalya village, in north Waragal, where most land was owned by a *police patel*, 15 agricultural labourers became underground cadre, with scores of others lending overground support. Members of both castes, *dalit* and other economically backward caste groups, joined; and all were essentially landless.[111] The landlord class, which was dominated by *police patels* had a lot of the land, but never transferred the *pattas* or land deeds when they left, still owning majority of the land. They instead also became middlemen, selling fertilizers and seeds in the nearby towns. Neither invested in increasing the productivity of the lands they owned and creating a visible exploitative relationship with the peasants through their role as middlemen, led to most of the village, being landless wage workers, to join the Maoists in full force.[112]

Although this trend – of villages comprised of a strong majority landless agricultural wage labour— joining the armed revolution was observed in all provinces, eastern parts of Khammam province violated the rule. Though large numbers of landless peasants resided in these villages in the eastern Khammam, none became actively recruited into the Maoist movement.

Scrutinizing the history of the eastern parts of Khammam province reveals that the specific areas of absent mobilization were part of British administered India, and not subject to the aggressive exploitation of the Nizam regime we discussed above. With fewer illegal extractions[113] (compared to villages on the Nizam's side) because of British prosecution of super-exploitative merchants,[114] and regulating the self-aggrandizing behavior of forest officers,[115] the region (eastern Khammam) attracted a large supply of labour (from surrounding central Khammam) and investments from capitalists interested in financing agriculture. Wealthy *rajus* from the region of Vizag and *kammas* from Rajamundry invested in tobacco and chili cultivation, which soon started to be exported from the region.

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[111] Fully 70% of the cadre were landless. None of those with landholdings held more than one acre, so their land constituted an inconsequential proportion of their income, not enough to constitute protection from landlord reprisal.

[112] For the few that self-cultivated, none of the lands were in their names. Legally, they were all landless, but for a few peasants who had managed to bribe the administration and transfer land deeds to their names. Those newly landed farmers formed a minority in the village, and didn't join the movement.

[113] In the form of illegal or excessive taxes from peasants.

[114] A reason why many of the merchants left their areas in East Godavari and started doing business in Palvancha (Haimendorf 1948, op. cit, p19).

[115] Haimendorf 1948, op, cit. p 13.

As a result, although landless peasants formed almost one hundred percent of Bellam village,[116] none of them joined the Maoist movement. This reflected their upward economic trajectory. Beginning in the 1970s, the upper class *kammas* began loaning landless workers to invest in rented lands, at the low interest of three per cent for the cultivation of tobacco. These peasants had a guaranteed market among the *kammas*, thus providing an outlet for entrepreneurial energy and the promise of economic improvement. The key consequence of this and other forms of landlord investment was the relatively higher and rising incomes in these areas of eastern Khammam, or even in comparison to less immiserated Warangal or Adilabad. However, unlike areas where landless peasants gained high wages as a result of collective action, then, went further to demand land rights, (such as Santpalya village north Warangal), in capital flushed areas, the capitalists themselves increased wages and stopped at that.

In Wazi village, located in the same area, a landless *dalit* man explained:

> *Rajus* worked directly with the British. In nearby villages too, very few *dalits* have any land. *Rajus* here were never very exploitative. They never had any administrative powers, so I think they remained less coercive. Even now, 100 – 150 labour come from Chattisgarh as well. They are *gonds* and non-tribal people. They come here though they have 20 acres of their own land there, because they have no water to cultivate their fields. They get Rs.150 *coolie* or wage per day, plus chicken or fish on Sundays. Normally labour in other areas get paid rupees 130. Since these areas are famous for *mirchi* (chili) cultivation and it is very profitable, the *rajus* don't fuss too much. They generally mind their own business and even before any one has a chance to demand higher pay, they increase wages.

Thus an improvement in wages by the capitalists pre-empted a workers movement and instead of resulting in greater demands, which occurred in villages with a strong organization, resulted in quiescence.

This variance in mobilization between landless *dalits* from *police patel* villages in north Warangal versus *landless dalits* in the more commercial agriculture areas of east Khammam hence once again provides evidence against a caste analysis in favor of a class-based one, based on the specific economic structures in which the subaltern groups are embedded.

In villages like Bellam, just discussed, where a majority of peasants were landless agricultural workers, an economic system similar to parts of west Adilabad: where labour were recipients of loans at fairly low interest rates and transformed into tenants, with capitalists providing fertilizers and seeds (on loan), a *class* of peasant workers did not arise. Landless peasants only intermittently took on agricultural wage labour, remaining otherwise engaged in acquiring loans from the upper class, becoming tenants— diluting any efforts at creating a movement among the *dalits* or khoya *adivasis* against the

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[116] *Dalits*: Mala community had 100 households of which only 3 had land; few from the Madiga community, also landless. *Adivasis*: 250 households of Khoyas, also landless.

capitalists in Khammam. Instead, what prevailed were the economic conditions that disabled the making of a class within a village. This elaborate economic system enjoined by outside large capitalists, investing in lands and through it, keenly managing labour and production, kept the landless, irrespective of caste, from joining the Maoist movement. That is, the large *kamma* investors, who dominated over capital in the region, even managed to dictate what marginal farmers (those with 1-3 acres land) outside of their economic relationship with the *kammas* came to cultivate. Marginal farmers who chose to plant crops other than tobacco, such as maize, had to take up the challenge of finding loans from sources outside of their villages. The *kammas* from Rajamundry, who controlled the market, only provided loans for tobacco cultivation.

The other organizational element conditioning Maoist recruitment in Khammam province were Christian churches, which operated as heavily networked institutions with access to investment capital. These operated in much the same way as British colonial institutions, creating productivity expansion, which vitiated the economic prerequisites for movement building. An example is Tane village in south Khammam, 6 kms away from the bordering wealthy province of Krishna. The village was constituted by marginal peasants from various caste and *adivasi* groups—all landless or with extremely small landholdings, and thus a strong candidate for Maoist recruitment. But in this area, the majority of the population had been converted to Christianity. The church had utilized its institutional connections to attract infrastructural investments in the form of canals, which aided irrigation and led to a system for landless and marginal peasants to take lands on rent from the larger landlords. This increased productivity in the rice paddies and cotton growing areas, and investment in mango plantations. Big traders became a fixture in the area, purchasing these and the lesser crops. Of the 500 households, only 50 were settlers from neighbouring Krishna, and small peasants themselves. Here, again, the logic of improvement resulting from the infusion of investment capital muted the appeal of the armed rebellion.

Thus larger capital investments in Khammam province, as opposed to the other two districts which came through various channels: British administration, church connections, bordering wealthy provinces, and even the Telangana armed movement itself led to a smaller presence of the Maoist movement in the province.

I have, so far, shown the predominance of a class analysis in explaining why people from the same caste groups were differentially recruited into the Maoist movement in India. Their class formulations varied, determined in turn by the village economic configurations, which impacted their organizational potential as a class. Next, I address the puzzle of why the other immiserated group: *adivasis*, who presumably belonged to the same class, acted in contrasting ways to the *dalits*, even when subject to similar economic conditions within a province.

### 2.2.2 *Adivasis* as a class

Historically, *adivasis* were the sole inhabitants of many villages that later came to be occupied by numerous other groups. The infusion of their villages with other groups was encouraged by the state, since *adivasis* did not pay revenues to the state, lacking

even in a system of registration of land for land deeds.[117] With newer populations beginning to cultivate those lands, and managing—with the assistance of the state—to obtain official deeds, the adivasis were displaced to more remote areas (See Appendix 6 for sub-province-wide distribution of adivasis in 1931). This process left behind mixed villages that also came to be occupied by landless *dalit* groups. No exclusively *dalit* villages existed, since *dalits* were a class created in contradistinction to the landed groups in these villages, for whom they worked.

Notwithstanding this process of diversification, some villages remained exclusively *adivasi*. This structural divergence became the foundation for *adivasis* eventually developing into a more coherent class than the *dalits*, even when the two groups were confronted with similar class fracturing economic conditions.

For decades, *adivasis* in Hyderabad state and surrounding areas had fought against state policies that awarded land to other groups, often with long-term effectiveness. The 1940 *gond* rebellion in Adilabad province, for example, resulted in the creation of a Special Tribes Officer whose agency, in 1943, began distributing land titles to the *adivasis*. Similarly, the *koyas*—the second most populous *adivasi* group in the Hyderabad state, who had become tenants or wage labourers even before the Land Alienation Act of 1939-40 came about, were given scrupulous attention by the state.[118] After several years of protest centered in Khamman province—where the *koyas* were most numerous—the government appointed special officers in 1947 to administer the Godavari Valley River welfare scheme, which not only allotted *patta* or land deeds , but also initiated services relating to education, health and cooperative foresting. Though land was successfully transferred to a substantial proportion percentage of *koya* families (mainly in Yellendu and Mulugu mandals in west Khammam and northern Warangal), political trouble in 1948-49 in the region stalled the work.[119] This reduced the organizational potency of the *koyas* in comparison to the *gonds*, who had won a victory.

These successful campaigns laid the organizational foundation for later *adivasis* struggles around their claims to forest-land. Ultimately, these efforts resulted in their rights being encoded in the Forest Rights Act of 2006, the culmination of decades of piecemeal legislation at the provincial and national level, animated by the struggles that had begun in 1940. This process achieved its first victory in 1959, when the state of Andhra Pradesh passed the Scheduled Area Land Transfer Regulation Act, which voided the earlier transfers of *adivasi* holdings to non-tribals, though enforcement of this Act in

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[117] There are records however that, in fact, hint at the economic prosperity of the Gonds during those times, with some families owning as many as 1000 cattle (Haimendorf 1948 op. cit, p 66).

[118] Since many of their lands had been illegally appropriated (Ranga, N.G. 1929. *The Economic Organization of Indian Villages*. 1 & 2. p28).

[119] The region was slowly moving out of the Nizam's administration in to Indian rule (Report Submitted by the Dept. of Aboriginals and Backward Classes to the Secretary, Rural Reconstruction Dept. H.E.H the Nizam's Government, in Agriculture Dept, S. no 81 and *File* no.148/1358 Fasli (1949) of 1358 Fasli, p 19).

Telangana, where *adivasi* forest land was concentrated, was spotty at best. Additional regulations passed (such as the 1/70 Act in Andhra Pradesh), delineated *agency areas* in which *non-adivasis* could not buy land. This resulted in the official authorization of land deeds in forest areas for many *adivasis*. However living essentially in forests and practicing shifting cultivation— cutting down forests to cultivate crops, known as *podu*—resulted in a continued struggle by the *adivasis* against the state—for rights over the newly cut and cultivated lands as well.

Rebelling and succeeding in the right to own land in certain areas, I argue, played a crucial role in building a greater class consciousness and a functional class organization among the *adivasis*, which caste groups in India, such as the *dalits* or other economically backward castes, lacked. The *adivasis* rarely struggled against landlords (who were rarely a developed class in the regions where *adivasis* were concentrated). They instead organized against the government itself, which was distributing their land to *non-adivasi* castes, or against the forest department, which sought to deprive them of access to forest land. The *adivasis*, therefore, had a long history of struggle against the state. The *adivasis*, whether they lived in homogeneous *adivasi* villages focused on forest work or among mixed caste groups working as agricultural labour, were most resonant with the Maoist appeal, which focused on challenging the state, utilized collective protest that they had successfully applied in the past, and relied on the same organizational elements that still operated within the *adivasi* community.

Maoist organizing in the Jayanagar area of west-Adilabad, just above Tejas mandal, illustrates the impact of class formation among adivasis on recruitment to the guerrilla movement. Jayanagar, was an area occupied by landlords who had little capital at their disposal. In Alli village for instance, the Reddy's—who constituted the majority of the landlords in the village—did not leave the village, but rather used their meager capital reserves to diversify into money lending. Without the investment capital needed for increased agricultural productivity, economic success relied on cheaply sourced (and at least sometimes increasingly immiserated) agricultural labour from the village, with further exploitation deriving from money-lending. In Jayanagar, the labour came in equal measure from *adivasis*, with their historical roots in the area, and *dalits¸* who had arrived expecting to gain land ownership during the diversification process motivated by the national government.

On the one hand, the presence of well-informed resident landlords on whom they depended for virtually all aspects of their lives (most notably jobs and credit) deterred *dalits* from joining the insurgent movement. We reviewed above the quiescence that derived from this sort of arrangement, including the absence of *dalit* recruits in Jayanagar. Adivasis, on the other hand, worked for the landlords as well and had little other source of income. But they had retained their historic living arrangements in townships outside the village, away from both the resident landlords and their landless *dalit* co-workers. In addition to their structural protection from landlord surveillance, they were already more unified as a group because of their past struggles that had produced significant concessions as well as ongoing collective organization. Even among those whose current circumstances did not reflect these previous gains, they nevertheless understood the promise of collective action, and retained the within-community elements for organizing protest. In Jayanagar, therefore, we note that five *adivasis* became armed cadre and the *adivasi* community joined in numerous campaigns for better wages and

land acquisition, while the *dalits*—despite equally immiserated and relatively deprived conditions—did not join the movement.

This pattern of differential *adivasi* mobilization, with local variations, occurred in many other areas in the regions of this study. In parts of northeast Warangal, for example, the local areas tended to be dominated by a single resident Reddy landlord, with mixed caste groups working as agricultural labour on his land. The landless caste groups, constrained by economic dependence on, and structural ties to, the landlord did not join the movement; while *adivasis*, who were equally dependent on the landlord economically, sent two activists into the guerrillas and organized as a community around wages and land.

These northeast Warangal communities' also contained economically backward castes, the only other sizable group in these landlord-dominated villages. Unlike economically backward caste members in other regions, they did not mobilize. This reflected their economic circumstance, since they had been the chief beneficiaries of the government's earlier diversification projects that had eliminated the *adivasi* homogeneity, gaining access to landholdings of 10-15 acres that made them viable small, or even medium, farmers. Their failure to mobilize thus reflects the dominance of class over caste, since their land-poor caste-mates in other areas were willing participants in the Maoist movement.

Several areas in central Adilabad also contained non-marginal communities of the traditionally economically backward castes, with the same inert outcome, though through a very different process. These areas, unlike those in Warangal, were not dominated by large resource rich landlords, because they were heavily forested and hard to access, and thus uncongenial to landlord domination. This absence allowed for some backward caste members who entered the areas during the government diversification campaign to gain upward class mobility by becoming contractors or money lenders, using smaller funds of investment capital than would be required in the more open competitive regions of Adilabad. At the same time, the absence of landlords, combined with a history of collective action demanding land rights, had produced small but significant four to five acre landholdings among the *adivasis*.

This dynamic led to another permutation of the class formation process among the *adivasis*, and another illustration of the ways in which organizational/structural conditions bend the economic determinants of collective violence. On one side, this setting meant that the backward class—a prime organizing focus in other areas—was uninteresting to, and uninterested in, the Maoists. On the other hand, the *adivasis* in Adilabad were relatively prosperous compared to comparable communities elsewhere and therefore candidates for lack of interest in Maoist organizing. The class formation process of the *adivasis* and the growing contradiction with traditionally economically backward caste entrepreneurs rendered this structural logic inoperative.

During the earlier period, when the *adivasis* were primarily concerned with obtaining land rights, their focus had been on the government. But as they became landholding farmers, a secondary struggle became increasing salient, since the moneylenders (and contract labour providers) became an increasingly important part of the economic conditions they sought to master. Equipped with their already developed organizational infrastructure and their consolidated belief in collected action, the relatively prosperous *adivasis* in Adilabad joined the Maoist movement in large numbers,

not only to continue the fight for more concessions from the state, but now also to challenge the exploitation of the backward caste money lenders and middle men. This pattern illustrates the pattern we noted earlier, that the demands of the Maoists—and their success in organizing—must necessarily be sensitive to differences in class/caste structure at the level as low as individual villages.

*Adivasi* class unity was not immune to all economic formulations, particularly when the internal structure of the *adivasi* community eroded the development or sustenance of class organization. Consider, for example, Tejas mandal in southwest Adilabad province. This region attracted substantial investment capital from neighbouring *marathwada* capitalists, as well as the *deshmukhs* who had replaced extra-economic relationships with economic ones, creating competing interests among the peasants and resulting in a lack of support for an armed movement among *dalits* and other economically backward castes. This process had the same effect on the *adivasis*, despite their immunity to other configurations that demobilized landless castes. The lack of immunity in these settings can be attributed to the impact of this investment capital on the *adivasi* community. In Sana tanda (hamlet) for example, of the 34 *adivasi* households in the village, two brothers owned over 25 acres, six families owned plots too small to support their families, and the remaining *adivasis* were agricultural wage labourers. Under most circumstances, the landless *adivasis* would provide a strong basis for organization over the decades which would form a foundation for recruitment to the Maoists, but the presence of a steep class structure within the *adivasis* that made the two brothers the bridge to ample investment capital meant that families could plausibly hope to prosper individually as renters with ample new equipment and modern methods. This pattern removed both the structural independence and the protection from reprisal of most *adivasi* communities, dampening the ability of even the most immiserated families from organizing to obtain land in earlier years, and then depriving them of the organizational structure and collective orientation that led them to the Maoist movement in later years.

This pattern of internal access to investment capital, and the consequent undermining of the organizational conditions for *adivasis* community organizing can also be discerned in both south and east Khammam, where agricultural workers received investments for renting land and cultivating export oriented crops. In many of these villages landless *adivasis*, similar to landless *dalits*, found it difficult to organize around their class positions because of the availability of individual entrepreneurial options and presence of control mechanisms within the community that made collective organization difficult to consolidate.

We have noted above that the earlier movements within and between *adivasi* communities yielded many concessions from local, regional, and national governments, mostly without dampening the class formation process; even—and particularly—the most successful struggles appear to have laid a foundation for Maoist recruitment, even when the *adivasis* in these communities had obtained a degree of economic security (usually in the form of substantial landholdings). Looked at from the point of view of government officials, concessions granted to *adivasi* movements usually helped to consolidate *adivasis* as a class, perpetuate the movement, and lead to further demands. The exception to this pattern occurred when the state established administrative positions within the *adivasi* communities. Waka mandal in north Adilabad province was one such case. Although dotted with hundreds of *adivasi* villages, mostly populated with *gonds* (who in

other areas became the backbone of guerrilla organizing) the Maoist movement remained curiously absent from these areas. A villager I talked to explained this commonly noted anomaly:

> Gonds in this area were very educated. Bhim Rao was the 1st Gond MLA in 1972. His younger brother also won a local sarpanch election. Gonds in this area were very forward because they were all given *police patel* or *pattedar* positions, which required them to collect revenues from peasants and maintain land records. My father was a *police patel* and had close to 300 acres of land. The government seized 150 acres and he kept a 100 acres, which was divided in the family. The rest (50 acres) was given to the villagers.
>
> *Police patels* were very powerful. They would sit on a chair and tell a person who might have just cleared land to cultivate on it—to leave it—because the *police patel* had just become interested in cultivating it. The *police patel* could tell him to go cultivate elsewhere, simply saying, 'I want this land.' That was their extent of power. Many ex *police patels* were later given village revenue administration (VRA) work under the revenue office. Many *gonds* here were also *pattedars*. Sama Ganju was one. He did *podu* [clearing forests to cultivate] in many villages and managed to get the land written in his name. Bhaisa Patel was another *police patel*. The state and *gonds* have always worked together here. In 2006 the Girijan Battalion was also set up. It was the 14th battalion of the Indian army and many *gonds* tried out for it to claim a position.

The fact that *gonds* in these areas, unlike any other, had been given administrative powers by the Nizam's state, historical records suggest, as a result of a state relocation. In 1914, the Nizam's government had changed the province headquarter from Adilabad town (west) to Asifabad (center, located in proximity to Waka) since they expected a railway line to pass through the area. Lacking in other groups that could administer in such remotes areas, several *gonds* received administrative positions. However the railway track failed to pass through and the administration was struck by a rampant malaria problem, prompting them to move their headquarters back to Adilabad town in 1940.[120]

This fundamental difference, of being given administrative positions and land had resulted in a situation where strong internal power-holders (exploiters) arose within the community that prevented an *adivasi* organization from either developing, or forcing it to dismantle. These *gonds* acted much like the *kammas* in Khammam, exercising social control and destroying collective organizing possibilities.

Somewhat similarly, *adivasi* hamlets, in south Warangal province had also remained inactive in the Maoist movement. In Venkat, mentioned earlier as a village from where both economically backward castes and *dalits* had joined the insurgency—

[120] Boath and Utnoor taluqs were also created (Census of India, 1931, Hyderabad State, p 1).

being marginal farmers and having the presence of a landed upper class in their village that treated the land as a real estate investment, the *adivasis* remained absent from the movement. This, like the previous case, was because their economic positions had already been negotiated and won as a result of their close ties to officials in the past. A *gond* man said, by 1980, when the guerrillas entered the village,

> We had fought against landlords, and everyone in the *tanda* (hamlet) had land. We had paid the *deshmukh* a small amount and got their lands too since they would hire *adivasis* to work for them. I worked for the *deshmukh* too, so I helped negotiate between him and the people. The *deshmukhs* later distributed approximately 35 acres land free to people who worked for them—to us. That is why I didn't join the movement. Once the Maoists came here and asked if there was anyone who didn't have land. Two people said they didn't. In our own language I told them we would settle this among ourselves— that I could give them land. I told the party everyone was okay.

Involving the *adivasis*, a potentially revolutionary force, as employees had been an effective strategy used somewhat incidentally by the state and more deliberately by *deshmukhs* to break their class alliance with the *dalits*. These few adivasis worked to control the organizing potential of the remaining community, like the *adivasi police patels* in Waka mandal in Adilabad. Hence, in *adivasi* hamlets in plain areas of south Warangal, there was seldom any full time movement mobilization into the armed movement.

Lastly, several *koya* tribals, who resided in Khammam, like the *gonds*, also supported the radical communist groups present in the province— a Marxist-Leninist political party (that had both an armed and over ground wing)— irrespective of the economic conditions. They too had organizational foundations of protest which had been established through their previous struggles.

In south Khammam, an area in proximity to the wealthy Andhra provinces, thus *koyas* became members of the Marxist-Leninist party that was demanding rights over land.[121] Although both *dalits* and *adivasis* worked as agricultural labour for the landlords, no *dalits* joined the radical Marxist-Leninist party, while *adivasis* did, prompted by their condition as mostly wage labour, as well as their class-consciousness, developed in

[121] Though the area was a SC constituency where political seats were reserved for *dalit* candidates who formed 50% of the area (20,000 out of the population of 40,000), one panchayat or cluster of villages was reserved for *adivasi* political candidates since 5 of the 7 villages in it had a 100% *adivasi* population. Upper classes, also upper castes— *kammas*, *reddys* and in some villages *vellamas* had large land holdings of 40-50 acres. *Dalits* owned an average of one to two acres with 90% owning below ten acres. In the adivasi villages, several had land, however lacked official papers or irrigation facilities. Three large landlords held land in the neighbouring villages, and being brothers the consolidated land holding was close to 1000 acres

opposition to the state, much like the *gonds.* Their organizational foundations led them to even making demands over rights to land they had been cultivating over years.

In this section, I have shown how *adivasis*, despite being in similar economic conditions as the *dalits*, as a consequence of previous struggles had organizational foundations that helped them develop into a class. This separated their actions from the *dalits*; they joined radical armed struggles in larger numbers.

**2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated, through a careful comparison *within* and *across* provinces, the limited, although powerful explanatory potential of economic conditions in armed organizing. I argue for the superiority of a class analysis, rather than a local caste or development based one, in explaining who came to be recruited in the Maoist movement in Telangana. It was a combination of economic substructures with organizational/social superstructures that determined who and how groups joined armed struggles.

Through an analysis of economic systems and tracing its historical roots, I was able to determine, to an extent, why some villages came to be actively involved in the Maoist movement, while others remained absent. It was not caste, I found, but the common factor of being a marginal farmer that explained peoples' entry into the armed movement. Additionally, the presence of the upper class within the village that retained extra economic means to extract labour (lacking sufficient capital to make profits otherwise), worked to create a condition of peasant mobilization. Agricultural wage labour were less likely to join because of their excessive economic dependence on the upper classes with who they had extensive links, for every aspect of their lives. Such classes (irrespective of caste) - of agricultural labour joined armed movements only when their numbers reached thresholds that were large enough to form a majority in the village and tip the bargaining in their favour. In such cases, I suggest, the agricultural workers achieved a kind of leverage that did not exist in mixed class settings, where, if organized, they could apply the traditional pressure of striking, with the rich landowners having no alternative labour.

The condition of having large capitalists invest in the process of production to crop commercial crops, or provide loans and machines to land owning marginal farmers proved to be an important deterrent of collective action. It in fact quelled the organizational foundation and creation of a class, we found so crucial in determining the eventual trajectory of armed recruitment. Peasants started to compete for resources, causing divisions, always hopeful of becoming the next beneficiary of investment. Although workers in such situations were by no means in better economic conditions than their counterparts under other economic conditions,[122] armed mobilization was low, as provided by evidence from eastern parts of Khammam and south-western areas in Adilabad. Here a regular influx of capital from outside kept the peasants from

[122] In fact, as the case of Khammam province proved, despite having the highest agricultural productivity of the three provinces, Khammam also had the percentage of rural poor.

collectively organizing. It was the class fracturing tied to such economic conditions that resulted in the lack of participation in peasant movements.

What superseded economic logic, however, was the role of organizational factors. Rather than economic conditions alone, organizational foundations of a *class* finally determined recruitment into the Maoist movement. This was demonstrated by greater numbers of *adivasi* mobilization, even under the differing economic conditions. *Adivasis* demonstrated a greater class consonance, resulting from their strong organizational collective action foundations based on successful land struggles. This presence of protest organizations among *adivasis* led them, sometimes violating the economic logic, to join the Maoist movement in large numbers.

# Chapter 2
# Organizational structures for class-making in insurgent movements

In this chapter I examine the organizational structures that become crucial in sustaining peasant insurgencies and which facilitated the formation of a class.

A growing body of research has discussed ways in which insurgent movements are organized—examining their networks and state-like governance structures.[123] Scholars have also analyzed rituals and symbolic conventions that come to be associated with such organizational forms. Whitehouse and McQuinn (2012)[124] show, using evidence from armed groups in Libya, how insurgents' organizational practices were tied to the type of resources available to them. They found, for example, that when armed actors operated around mining economies that were more or less stable and resource plenty, they partook in less elaborate rituals for incoming recruits. They analyzed this to be the consequence of the movements' independence, in its ability to govern and survive, from participants' entry and exit.

Such works view organizational structures as a tool to address the question that has also become of foremost importance to counter-terrorism studies: how armed insurgents control and expand territory (and counter-terrorism tactics that can directly counter them).

On the other hand, scholars of corporations have used their analysis of organizations to build, among other things, a more dynamic understanding of what these organizational networks and forms, or structures, do for the creation and distribution of power among various contending groups *within* it. Their analysis, no doubt, has also gone much further, even examining monopolization by few institutions.[125] However, for our purpose, we focus on how certain organizational forms came to confer power upon some individuals and its larger consequences, for class formation within a community, and for sustaining certain institutions and actors.

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[123] Faria, J.R. and Arce, D.G. 2005 "Terror support and recruitment." *Defense and Peace Economics* 16(4): 263-73; Feinstein, J.S. and Kaplan, E.H. 2010. "Analysis of a Strategic Terror Organization." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(2): 281-302. Mampilly, Z.C. 2007. Stationary Bandits: Understanding rebel governance. LA: University of California, Los Angeles; Sundar, N., 2014. "Mimetic sovereignties, precarious citizenship: state effects in a looking-glass world," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41 (4):p 469-490.

[124] Whitehouse, H. and Mc Quinn, B., 2012. "Ritual and Violence: Divergent modes of religiosity and armed struggle." *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*: 597-619.

[125] Mintz B., and Schwartz M., 1987. *The Power Structure of American Business*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

CEOs of firms come to position themselves in a place of indelible power even when what appear to be accountability seeking organizational structures such as having plentiful shareholders, or deploying external board members are set in place.[126] They achieve this by playing a significant role in picking board members and thus protect their own interests and power. Next, majority of the shares too come to be held by the same institutions from which board members emerge. Eventually, this organizational structure, of board of directors and CEOs succeeds in the preservation of power and bringing together of individuals, with the same wealth accumulation interests. It creates what is an *elite class* working to uphold its own welfare.[127] Where scholars on corporations stop, however, is in explaining how such organizational structures affect the making of the working-class.

One would imagine that, at least, be the focus of movement scholars, considering the extant class dimension in most collective action.[128] In fact, the formation of class should also be of interest to scholars studying insurgent movements, since revolutionary struggles are driven by the political goal of creating revolutionary classes, as a means to social change.[129] The success of this goal, of creating class-consciousness, is, however, by no means guaranteed. It is, if achieved, done over time and through a combination of experiences.[130] It is nevertheless, I find, crucial in explaining insurgent movement sustenance, and something that social movement scholars have missed.

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Domhoff, G. W., 2005. *Who Rules America?* New York: McGraw-Hill.; Mizruchi, M. S., 1996. "What do Interlocaks do? An Analysis, Critique, and Assessment of Research on Interlocking Directorates," *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: p 271-98.

[128] Leondar-Wright, B. 2014. *Missing Class: Strengthening Social Movement Groups by Seeing Class Cultures*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Maheu, L. (Ed.), 1995. *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action.* Sage Publications.

[129] Mao Tse-tung. 1965 (1937). *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume 1*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press.

Snow (1944) demonstrated the lengths to which Chinese communists went to grow and maintain their support and build unity among peasants in villages— experimenting with varied organizational forms and rules to achieve it. As a result, they devised a method of 'conducting gates' in party villages, in order to bring in peasant opinions in the choice and promotion of movement cadre. The Chinese Communist party began to hold village meetings where each individual peasant's vote counted in the decision to permit cadre to *cross a gate*, marking the deepening of party members' positions in the movement and, simultaneously, non-member peasants' relationship with the party and one another.

[130] Fantasia, R., 1989. *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness and Action and Contemporary American workers*. Berkley: University of California Press; Thompson, E. P., 1980 (1963), *The Making of the English Working Class.* New York: Vintage Books.

In this chapter I show the criticality of class making to the resilience of armed peasant insurgencies. I find it to be the most important variable in determining Maoist resilience, with the movement sustaining itself in villages where it was achieved, and experiencing an episodic presence where class formation was imperfect.

I do this by analyzing organizational structures of the Maoist movement. Since class making is achieved through particular organizational structures, specific organizational forms are necessary for the creation of class-consciousness in villages. Organizational structures, which facilitated the development of class unity, were found to be most critical in withstanding repression, and in explaining areas where armed movement resilience occurred.

In the following sections I go through in detail, the numerous organizational (and strategic) forms adopted by the Maoist movement in the three Telangana provinces, in relation to varying economic, geographical, and local configurations of class and caste, from its inception. Although environmental factors such as geography and economic compositions allowed for certain organizational structures to be built with greater ease than others, I also show how the Maoists were able to overcome those challenges to organizational survival, through innovative strategizing. Moreover, I discuss the role which village-level class unity played to further insulate the guerrillas from threat. Villages with more cohesive classes and class-consciousness offered a less encumbered organizational environment, and even further organizational possibilities for armed insurgencies, creating an upward spiral of insurgent- village relationships.

### 3.1 Economic Conditions and Movement Organizing

Economic conditions impacted rebel movement organizing by affecting two aspects: the amount of resistance faced (from landlords and the state), and ease with which peasants could be mobilized. The Maoists initially organized in areas dominated by capital-poor landlords where extra-economic relationships had led to greatest exploitation and created the most mobilization possibilities. These challenging environmental factors had resulted, initially, in lean organizational forms being set up at the village level, which did not prove effective at class creation.

In the early 1980s, the movement, being in its formative stages and having to deal with the antagonism of landlords, initially established rather sparse party structures at the village and *mandal* (sub-district) levels in the villages where it mobilized. One full time underground movement organizer was assigned to each sub-district, supported by a number of youth located in the villages that provided information and undertook program implementation. Youth were selected with the help of members of the Radical Student Union (RSU) that had made initial visits to the villages, from towns and cities and in their surveys on village conditions, also noted names of active village youth. The movement organizer, equipped with this information upon his entry into the villages, made contact with youth, using them to help establish and expand the movement. As the Maoists started to organize programs, the number of interested youth grew, increasing the size of the youth groups that engaged in party work in the focal community and neighbouring, villages.

The lone party organizer – the Central Organizer or CO - came to rely heavily on these village level mobile youth groups to provide village information and implement party programs. This organizational structure, however, ended up impacting the longevity

of the movement— cutting short movement presence in the villages where it was practiced. I discuss this in the first section of the chapter and find that was because such an organizational structure failed at creating and sustaining class-consciousness, and building local groups that could develop into solid collective action foundations. The village youth, given arms, but only brief political training, had superseded existing village structures, making it difficult for the lone organizer to fully control them or create class unity.

The youth groups that became integral to the movements' interaction with the village, particularly in densely landlord occupied areas,[131] led to compromise on class building, foregoing the setting up of multiple village and sub- provincial or district level organizations, which could regularly interact and function together, and generate a class-consciousness. Such organizationally shallow structures, of a single organizer and few village youth, in the long run, were unsustainable against upper classes and the state, and in building class based repression-immune village structures, which ultimately became determinative of movement sustenance.[132]

### 3.1.1 Mobile Youth Groups — The Beginning

The beginning of the Maoists presence in the several villages was through the youth organizations that ultimately met with their demise during repression. I trace when and where this organizational form arose, its working, rise to power and reasons for negatively affecting movement sustenance; which points directly at the criticality of a class-building organizational form to insurgent movements. Only in areas where this shallow organizational structure evolved into multi-level village organizations that created class unity among peasants did resilience appear.

In the early 1980s, the Maoists began mobilizing in capital-poor landlord villages in Telangana. The CO or Central Organizer, from the movement began to visit villages, such as those in south Warangal, as a lone, armed, mobile party member. Prior to the CO's visit, members of the Radical Students Union (RSU) had conducted the necessary groundwork. Radical students were sent to villages in groups of five to eight to conduct village surveys, in what the party named, *go-to-village campaign*. Politically trained students entered villages through relatives and friends, staying with poor *dalit* peasants, conducting village surveys, assessing peasant demands, and collecting names of active

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[131] The lack of conducive environmental pre-conditions forced the movement to choose a sparse organizational structure at the lower levels in villages that were occupied by capital-poor, as well as capital-rich landlords, where the movement also attempted to organize. Landlords, generally settled in villages where access to land was easier, usually located in non-forested plain territories. However, these areas were close to urban centers. They lacked forests or hills for cover and were predominantly mixed caste class-discordant areas. They were also areas where the Maoists could mobilize peasants most, since exploitation was high.

[132] In the short-tern however, they had the advantage of generating immediate action, even militant action, and therefore had an enticing aspect that may have encouraged its application.

village youth that later came to form the Revolutionary Youth League (RYL)— one of the most crucial organizational structures in plain areas marked by the presence of capital-poor landlords.

By the time the CO entered villages,[133] armed with information and networks established by the radical students,[134] he knew to prioritize giving a concrete form to youth and militant groups that could protect peasants, relay information, and feed into what some villages referred to as action committees, or in central Warangal referred to as *area revolutionary youth leagues*—Area RYL.[135] The party became increasingly dependent on the revolutionary youth league—RYL—with its members sometimes morphing into area committees, action committees, or local militants.

Sana, 41 years of age, and a landless toddy tapper from Kata described the movement's organizational set up in his village, which centered on youth who attained brief political training. As a youth, Sana became a member of the action committee, like many young men in his village, slowly moving up the ranks to a decision making level, but achieving little in terms of generating a class-consciousness.

Although Kata village didn't have a large landlord, it contained marginal farmers of mixed caste groups that worked as agricultural labour, with the exception of two brothers, who owned relatively larger pieces of land—economically and socially dominating the village. Sana described the organizational structure of the movement in his village:

> When the party first came here with RSU students from town, they spoke against the two brothers and intervened in the decision making of the village. The two brothers informed the police and threatened the students. So the party killed the two brothers, which led many in the village to join the movement. That was in the early 1980s.
>
> Party recruitment was fast. They went door to door and got people to join. More than twenty people joined, and this scared the police. I immediately started working for the party and became a courier—a link between the party central organizer, CO and other organizations like the town committee and sub-district or mandal committee. Each large mandal had one CO.
>
> After killing the two brothers, the CO shifted focus to the nearby town—targeting truck owners, Reddy landlords, and contractors. I became part of the action committee at the village level, which was

[133] Due to the high risks involved, all the COs recruited were men.

[134] Radical students by then had often moved on to full time underground work in various leadership capacities.

[135] The action committee consisted of revolutionary youth league members who lived in the villages, but had the mobility to travel to villages outside of theirs to gather information, as well as participate in larger armed action, when necessary.

> assisting in such work. We would give warnings, like ask people to shut down liquor depots. If they didn't comply, the mandal or sub-province committee would handle the issue, or sometimes even the district (province) committee would take a decision and send an area squad for warning with guns, or the area squad would blow up the depot.
>
> There was only one area squad for four or five mandals (sub-provinces), which consisted of nine to twelve full time armed cadre. I had secretly become a part of the action committee that was involved in working with the squads. People in my village didn't know. I would not give any warnings in my own village for fear of being exposed. But some people from other villages started to recognize me, which led to a police case being filed against me.
>
> The action committee in our villages didn't get much political training, maybe one or two hours. The CO who was underground would give trainings when he had time. Only one person in the village action committee was given guns, and they had to be prepared to go underground any time. Grenades were given if necessary. The party secretly inquired about people before putting them in the action committee. There were almost no women that were a part of it and the average age was 23-24 years. Out of 50 who wanted to join the party, only 20 were found good, of which six became village militants, who were the reserve force that had to always be willing to join the action committee.

In Kata and neighbouring villages, youth league members and action committees came to become increasingly critical to the ongoing functioning of the party. Since the CO position was allocated to one individual, but carried the responsibility of handling a large number of villages, the local revolutionary youth league (RYL) started to take over a lot of the movement tasks. For instance, a former Revolutionary Youth League (RYL) member from the not-too-distant Kesari village said,

> As an RYL member I was a part of militant activities with some action committees. When the party was still legal [till 1985], RYL would solve many problems. Otherwise I was also sent by the party to villages to meet their people (few in each village) to inquire about village problems. If there was no party person in a village, four or five cadre would go together; one would act as a sentry. The CO would then be informed of everything and would settle issues in a village, but the RYL would be sent for the last round of talks to see that things had gone according to plan. RYL also worked in the fields as labour to raise party funds, and supply food to the party. We would also support farmers, by doing labour with them.

The revolutionary youth, simply put, were young village men, with some mobility, across villages, who could assist the CO in the working of the party. Although their beginnings were in the capacity of functioning as information providers, their roles

slowly grew, since the CO, by himself, was limited in the number of villages he could attend to fully—raising a class-consciousness, forcing him to focus on a few, especially since also dealing with state forces. A former CO of the area for the years 1983-86 explained,

> I had 65 villages under me to manage but didn't have the same relationship with all villages. Out of the 65, 15 villages were most important, where I could stay for two to three days, and most in the village were movement sympathizers. I would travel to stronghold villages once in 15-20 days and ask, say two or three main people about what problems the party should take up, and have an in depth conversation about which problems were genuine to gather greater support.

COs, though, were often involved in programs that worked to bring the marginal and landless peasants together, such as land occupation struggles, in several villages that went beyond the limited core ones.

> 'This was a process that lasted months….and it was months of violence. Land occupation and distribution didn't finish in a day. In Jagapalli, the CO was Maviah Seriah who, with the people, occupied land. Then the landlord's gundas (goons) attacked him. All the village people got scared and ran. The gundas thought the CO was dead, but he was alive, despite heavy injury. The militants in the village took the CO in. That way, for months, there was a dispute. The landlords would also come back and file cases on people. So it was the party's responsibility to keep following a village case. The Party would also need to give legal fees for people on who police cases were filed,' said Ashok, a former CO subordinate[136] that would visit villages and meet party militants with the CO.

Apart from the heavy responsibilities, which came with being an organizer, he went on to explain the challenging working conditions,

> We would work from night till 4am—then go back to our dens and not roam during daylight hours. We would also not visit villages in a serial order for fear of an attack. Depending on the police, we would keep

[136] Initially, the CO worked individually. However with incasing opposition they began to travel with two more party members, resulting in what was known as the 1+2 formation. A peasant from central Warangal, and part time party worker explained, "In south Warangal, Ramu, a CO was killed by ex-militants. Later a family member of Ramaus' in the police department inquired and found out that a landlord had arranged for the ex-militants to kill him. It was after that that the 1+2 system was started, after 1982."

> changing our schedule. We would go to a new village through an introduction by one village person to another village person, not the party, to keep our party networks intact, hence always requiring a large number of mobile people.

The CO hence came to depend on the more mobile youth groups for information, communication and even implementation, as did the armed squads working in the area at the time. Although other village level committees such as the peasant committee (called *ryutu coolie sangam* (RCS)) and the women's committee (or *mahila sangam)* were established by the party in some villages, to demand higher wages, and better working conditions for *palerus* (bonded labour), the youth league members remained most closely associated and favoured by the party (CO or armed squads). This was in no small measure, also because they could graduate into becoming full time underground party cadre— something always in short supply, but high in demand by the movement.

Prasad, from Venkat I village in South Warangal, a marginal *dalit* peasant who started working for the movement as a 15 year old, became an RYL member through his brother-in-law who had joined the movement directly from the town hostel as a radical student (and later rose to the rank of a district commander). An armed squad – rather than a CO – frequented his village, but needing to work within existing organizational structures led to even the more largely manned armed squads in the area to rely on the RYL. Further, although Prasad was recruited into the RYL as a village member, he eventually became a full time underground squad commander, like many others in the same position. He outlined the working of the RYL and the common trajectory of RYL members, using his own example, which again had little to do with raising the class-consciousness of the village.

> Once late at night someone from the village knocked on my door and said the party is calling me. I wanted them to come here. But when I went I saw 15 cadres with arms, singing, talking… They persuaded me to join the movement since I wasn't studying anyway; I used to roam a lot. They requested I come whenever they called, and help by supplying them with food, and get clothes stitched for them (for which they would always give a little money). My brother-in-law would guide me, saying 'Sala [brother-in law], behave like this, work in the sangam [committee], put a flag on that man's land…he has too much. If the police come, inform us.'
>
> The area committee would come visit regularly. Higher leaders, like the CO would come only once a year sometimes. My friend Hemu and I would meet the squad two to three times a month. Slowly I started to take more boys to meet the party. Once I took 15, and the party gave us all a political class. Hemu was the RYL village secretary, and I was a member. I was given the membership after one to two years of observation, in 1994. Another youth was also given membership but he was ineffective as an RYL member because he didn't want to travel to other villages. He would send other people instead. So he ended up doing

> only some basic courier work as a part-time militant and was pressurized to leave by us [his colleagues].
>
> The RYL conducted land programs, hit people who continued to sell alcohol, and distributed an acre land to each poor family by putting flags on large landholdings. I attended a total of four or five political classes with four boys. We were secret background organizers. We didn't want people to know we were working with the party. The new COs would know us and go to new villages only after one of us had done groundwork. I then became a squad commander for the area. I was a one-man squad show here. I was in charge of a *mandal* or sub-province. The bigger squad was in charge of five *mandals*.

RYL, as a flexible organization, allowed members to keep in touch with the changing party organizations working in the area. They worked with the CO, area committees, and later even the armed squads. As repression increased, however, with the first such cycle starting in 1985 and lasting until 1990, as many as 30 COs from the area were killed, along with several RYL members.

A former squad sub-commander for central and south Warangal, Rani explained how the RYL grew and finally collapsed during the first concerted state repression, unable to withstand oppositional force. "RYL came to be viewed by the peasants as a sub-squad, although that is not what it was intentioned to be," she said.

> Initially there was one RYL person per village who roamed with a tapancha (country made gun). However with an increase in the popularity of the movement, recruitment increased and four-five other boys joined and began to roam together. There was no commander who was in charge of them. So they made many quick decisions, and eventually several died in police encounters.

A peasant from central Warangal concurred. RYL members roamed the villages, with weapons, but without guidance and without stabilizing village organizations. This unrootedness led to their demise. He said, "RYLs were like sub-dalams or squads—left to sort local issues in four to five villages. They were men in civilian cloths from nearby villages. Because recruitment was so high in the early 1980s, the party gave them this job and said they would observe them. But it became difficult to control them."

A former sympathizer from Relu, a village composed mostly of landless peasants, surrounded by stone quarries, spoke about the ascent in the power of the mobile youth group, pointing particularly to the price paid when they failed to develop other village organizations (and consequently class-consciousness):

> Because of increased police repression RYL became even stronger here. It grew into a ten-member team. Until before that the CO would come often. RYL soon started to initiate many programs in different parts of the village…

‘But these boys,’ another ex-dalam (squad) sub-commander added, ‘started to dominate in the village and didn’t let sangams or village committees come up.’

‘So when I was in the squad and would meet RYL members,’ a full time under ground member from another mining village in central Warangal, Benga, said, ‘I would teach them how to be safe and careful, and work with the people. If they tried to take short cuts, they got killed. In our village RYL started its own programs and didn’t listen to us. So eventually they had to be sidelined by the party. They were affecting our support base with their style of functioning. For example, once they didn’t follow the full precaution of emptying neighbours houses before blasting the ministers (MLA’s) house. Fortunately the neighbours didn’t get injured, but we had to give compensation to families whose houses were cracked or affected as a result of our actions. We have to protect civilians at all times which is why we were required to put posters telling taxi drivers not to give rides to the police and warn them ahead of time that if they did, they could die in a Maoist attack on the police. Not being able to ensure RYL followed such procedures, we started a similar mobile group, but this time, comprising squad members instead, called LGS or Local Guerrilla Squad so that it could be more disciplined and work better with the people. The RYL didn’t function much after the LGS.’

By 1991, the party had realized it needed to modify its organizational structure in order to survive in the villages.[137] Although the mobility of RYL was highly valuable to the CO in increasing the reach of the party and gaining information, having a mobile force with little political education, that was neither embedded fully in the party nor the villages where it operated, led to a decline of the movement in villages that came to be dominated by the youth league.

In most villages, the occasional visits by youth cadres proved to be ineffective in raising or sustaining class-consciousness among peasants. Moreover, RYLs decisions were often informed by the youths’ weak structural position in terms of experiences with village and external structures. Of the many problems of the Revolutionary Youth League, however, such as inadequate political training from the CO, and having to work independently on several occasions—the most far-reaching negative consequence, the residual structural product of their organizational form—was the near absence of strong democratic village committees in RYL operated areas. This, by far, most adversely affected the organizational opportunities for class formation, which, as I discuss in the next section, village committees were found to be most effective at achieving. In contrast, villages that had at least one or two village committees or party sub-organizations like the peasant committees and women’s committees (*mahila sangam)* as a consequence of more

[137] A 1997 party circular released by the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, titled “Some problems in fulfilling the organizational tasks— our understanding” discusses the criticality of starting and maintaining autonomous village committees and holding regular general body meetings (People’s War, July 1997-June 1997: p 41-54).

frequent CO visits, were able to build greater class-consciousness, and thus endure periods of heavy repression, in addition to containing the excesses if RYL members.

Kesari village, in the plains, occupied by capital-poor landlords, is a great example of just that dynamic. In Kesari, the CO and party had fenced nine acres of a landlords land, and helped 150 peasants occupy it and build homes. However, the movement had also concentrated on organizing women, since most agricultural workers were women , resulting in the *mahila sangam* (or women's committee) gaining prominence in the village. *The mahila sangam* became involved in all movement decisions, even facilitating solutions in local marital disputes. A marginal backward caste RYL member from the village discussed the difference between the party's working in Kesari (compared to those that lacked village level committees), which he believed led to the sustenance of the movement in his village, even during repression.

> In our village, the CO would give instructions to the village committee. He would also conduct surveys with the committees on peoples' problems and solve them. Select village committee members would become a part of the area committee too. The party had instructed COs to contact two to three different people from village committees for information. If contact could not be established with those people, the CO would have to sleep in the fields and wait until he actually got in touch.
>
> The CO had a great relationship with us. Once a CO walked from our village to the town with village people. Village couriers also took the CO from one village to the other so that the CO could know of everything happening in the area. The village committee took decisions of what needed to be done in the village first, after village discussions. Then they sent a message to the CO, who would contact the district committee, who would in turn inform a higher committee. A program would only then be conducted.
>
> There were various committees in the village— mahila or women's committee, peasants committee (RCS or ryutu coolie sangam), cultural groups, and RYL, which was only another among these. From the committees, a few selected people became a part of the larger village committee. Even during repression (1985-1990) and after, the CO continued to visit our village since he had built a rapport here and protection for himself, despite the presence of many large landlords, through the effective working of village committees.

The case of Kesari village, however, leaves open the possibility of creating a sustained movement through better movement discipline; something the formation of the local guerrilla squad (LGS) under the direct guidance of the party could solve. Could the LGS create movement resilience irrespective of the presence of village committees, which created class-consciousness?

In the next section I show how villages with the organizational structure of local guerrilla squads had an episodic movement presence, while the village committees sustained movement presence and became exemplars of repression-immune structures.

### 3.2 Village committees: creating class consciousness for movement resilience

In the early 90s, the movement had shifted from the mobile youth groups to the equally mobile organizational form of Local Guerrilla Squads (LGS). LGS's functioned in several plains areas in Warangal, as well as areas where the party had been unable to build a base—notably those marked by the presence of capital-rich landlords. North Warangal, a forested region but with mixed capital landlords, and south-west Adilabad, with few hills but the marked presence of capital-rich landlords, both experienced high local guerrilla squad or LGS activity. The LGS also replaced the RYL in several capital-poor landlord areas in the plains. As a lean, more skilled and disciplined organization than RYL, the LGS was considered more adept at overcoming organizing difficulties encountered in partite villages with large oppositional classes and state forces, and plain geographical terrains, all of which required greater armed and political dexterity.

Rani, the sub-dalam commander explained how LGS squads functioned:

> There were two LGS set up per area in Warangal province in the 1990s. The best military men were chosen to be a part of this five-member team. They were sometimes picked from among village PRs or provisional revolutionaries, who were a rank above party members in the villages. Provisional revolutionaries were recruited around the late 1980s and were always clandestine, living in their local areas, but working as full timers. Good RYL members were sometimes made into provisional revolutionaries and would secretly hand down programs to party members to implement.
>
> Anyhow, the best provisional revolutionaries and squad members came to form the LGS. They received political and military training. In fact, they had to be as skilled and knowledgeable as the dalam or squad to survive. They wore uniforms unlike the earlier RYL members and would meet the squad once in 15 days to report on their activities. They became very important to continued party functioning during times of repression.

Surendra, a marginal peasant from the large semi-forested, 800 household Passar village in east-Warangal, which contained semi-capital rich landlords and middle peasants who had diversified to small rice mills and money lending, worked as a legal person and sympathizer in his village. His dealings with the LGS were frequent since the movement and larger squad could not fully establish itself in his area. In fact, as he explained, the LGS became vital to the party.

> There were four to five LGS cadre here in uniform. This LGS team worked in two mandals or sub-provinces. LGS formed the uppa dalal or the area committee here and only the secretary was exposed. They had short weapons and grenades. They would distribute grains, implement programs and speak to people in cover organizations that had been set up by the movement during times of low repression.

The area committee would also organize military training thrice a year for locals. Before LGS came here in 1995-96, RYL would coordinate between the party and people. The LGS as an organization worked in a small radius. The party usually shifted local people out of LGS, but sometimes kept one person if people really liked her/him. The party used the LGSs understanding of the area to plan strategies here—who could be possible enemies, friends etctera. During repression LGS would become extra active. They began to attend village meetings in plain cloths, and take care of village issues. When there was no repression, they would visit each village twice a month. The party would directly introduce new LGS to village sympathizers.

Similarly, in south-west Adilabad, the area bordering neighbouring Maharashtra State and receiving large capital investments, in villages that were contiguous to forests but not located in forests, the LGS model came to be applied to extend the movement's reach. A former district committee member of Adilabad province described the close relationship the LGS maintained with the squad and highly skilled background of the cadre,

> People who were active in *dalams* or squads and had the ability to make quick, and good decisions on the ground were made into LGS. Areas where we had relatives and friends were the ones chosen for LGS functioning so that they could gain an entry into the area. The LGS commander was a shack member of the dalam or squad,138 so very much a squad member too. The LGS (twelve members totally) would split and come together once a month to have a meeting. Their job was the same as the *dalam* (squad). The LGS cell was composed of the LGS commander, LGS deputy commander, and a party member. In Adilabad, LGS was sent to non-adivasi areas to take initiatives among the public, mingle…form associations in plain areas.

However the LGS – or it's town equivalent, the Mini-Guerrilla Squad – two of which had been formed close to Warangal town to oversee villages surrounding towns and functioned under the town committee and district committee member, created at best an episodic movement presence, and at worst no movement. The small mobile groups were effective *only* when combined with extant local village committees composed of party members and sympathizers. To be sure, the presence of guerrilla squads in the absence of village organizations often resulted in party programs that did not culminate in a complete buy-in from the peasants. The primary reason for this was inadequate information gathering capacities of the squads from existing village structures, such as different caste groups. This information was necessary for planning movement action that

[138] A shack consisted of the squad commander, deputy commander and three party members.

resonated with the peasant support base, and built class-consciousness. Additionally, squads also had poor information disbursal capacities. Information disbursal was crucial to provide peasants with an adequate understanding of the reasoning behind movement activities. This was important for building class-consciousness, unity and sustained movement support in a village. Hence the LGS, as an organizational form, was ineffective in class making, hence in also sustaining the movement.

Village committees became the only organizational structure then, which provided multiple channels of communication *from*, and *to* the village, which was quintessential, in combination with armed action, for creating a strong, armed peasant movement.

This causal connection is most visible in cases where inadequate information exchange between the village and movement resulted in a loss of peasant support. In the forest village of Talli in north Warangal, majority of villagers were marginal farmers who had leased their inadequate lands from upper class landlords. The landlords had rented lands at low prices, but diversified into money lending. This resulted in the lack of growth of employment opportunities in the village and led to the impoverishment of marginal farmers, who were forced to borrow sums of 10,000 to 20,000 rupees. These farmers forced to work an entire year at low wages to pay off these debts.[139] The LGS-local guerrilla squad was in charge of five *mandals* or sub-districts, also implementing party programs in Talli.

Peasants from Talli village shared their dissatisfaction with the district committee of the Maoist party. The committee decided, without consulting with the village, to kill a man named Narasimiah, who they believed was a police informer.[140] A few months earlier, the party had got involved in a dispute in the same village between a man from the dominant *peraka* caste who had threatened another village man for bringing the party into the village. The party had decided to punish the *peraka* man. However, they mistakenly shot the elder brother's child who was pleading to the party to spare his uncle, and wounded the man's daughter. This was foreshadowed by yet another incident that had taken place in the same village a few years earlier. In 1987 a *karu dari* or food raid had been organized by the party and resulted in 200 police cases on the villagers, to be cleared only in 2002. This especially angered *dalits* in the village because the party had broken open the ration shop on a *peraka*[141] street and distributed food— most of which had gone to the *perakas* itself, who were already economically better off than the rest. The *dalits* were arrested instead.

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[139] By peasants' calculations, it took 200 days of labour to repay the amount, but money lenders extracted an entire years work.

[140] This movement action was probably brought on by the insecurities spurred by an incident in the neighbouring village of Channagudem the previous year, in 2001. The movement had begun to trust a village man who to their surprise ended up being a police informer who even had a police phone line installed in his home. The party had held a people's court to try this trusted party sympathizer who turned out to be a police informer, and decided to kill him.

[141] *Perakas* are not considered a marginal caste.

> Some *perakas* went to the river, dug the sand and stored the sugar they had got in the movement raid. Most of those involved ran away, expecting the police to come. In our *dalit* colony we didn't even know of it, but we got arrested for it. 'The party apologized to us, but could never reorganize,' said a *dalit* man who believed the party had wasted its potential to mobilize the *dalits* from his village, several of whom were wiling to join.

Though the village of Talli was an opportune recruiting ground, a lack of attention to local level divisions such as caste dynamics of the village, and opinions of people—created by the absence of setting up democratic village groups, spawned challenges for the movement to establish itself despite several efforts. By 2002, when the party distributed land of a *vellama* (upper caste) man to eight *adivasis* and seven *dalits*, the peasants did not dare to cultivate it because, by then, the landlords had filed police cases from the capital city, Hyderabad. However in 2007-08, when another landlord Rama Rao battled the court to get his land back—the party killed him. Some villagers said this made them happy, however, the party would need to find a way to remain aligned to the village dynamic, generating a strong revolutionary class, if they wanted to create sustained support.

Actions such as food raids, annihilations of landlords or informers in the absence of village committees, or while ignoring their opinions, even in structurally conducive movement villages such as Mysure in south Adilabad which had majority landless peasants who had experienced extreme forms of exploitation from the capital-poor landlords, or the all *gond* village of Cheli in central Adilabad, led to an episodic, and sometimes aborted, movement effort.[142] In Cheli, where there was no mechanization of agriculture, and exploitative moneylenders who had to be sold the entire cotton produce on their terms, resulting at the end of the year in only enough money for peasants to repay loans— experienced an episodic movement.

The Maoists had helped peasants in Cheli cut forests to make cultivable land as far back as the early 1980s, but didn't undertake any other activity again, until the 90s. In 1990-91, the movement organized *karu dari* (food raids) because of which over a 100 people from Cheli and surrounding villages were arrested. The peasants complained that the movement had not clarified the action plan to the villagers who had gone along, trusting the cadre. The incident had culminated in several unexpected police cases (which only concluded in 2009). "We trusted the movement, but later, because of the movement, had to endure police harassment," some peasants said.

Although Cheli had village committees, the party had fallen behind at consulting them, for the most part only visiting the village on occasion and holding medical camps. The village committee members had become demotivated as a result and this affected

[142] In Mysure, one of the first movement annihilations had taken place, even before the peasants had been properly organized or village level committees set up. As a result of the backlash, no committees were set up, bringing movement organizing to a halt in the village.

class-consciousness and unity in the village. They didn't relay much information to the movement, because of which in 1994 the party killed Rao I, and in 1997 Rao II, for being informers. They also killed Illi Shom from the neighbouring area in 1997. The peasants were displeased at not having been consulted, and disapproving the killings finally disengaged with the movement. A peasant from the village exclaimed about the killings,

> But these people were nice to the villagers. Rao I worked with the government-run Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) and had brought some development to the villages, although he didn't listen to the party. He even got electricity to our village, one well, and pump sets. The party, in the name of being informers, also beat many people in our village. Then police repression came too. So the entire village came together once and told the movement not to visit anymore… because they were killing our own people. The movement then stopped coming.

The only way the movement was able to re-establish its presence in such villages was through rebuilding a relationship, often through a party member who was familiar to the peasants; which it did in Cheli, after a four year hiatus. In Cheli, the party re-established contact in the year 2000 through Sangeet, a young man from a neighbouring village, who had joined the movement from his school hostel and gone underground several years earlier. In 2000 he had remerged as a leader in the province, re-establishing contact with the villages and implementing actions. The peasants said "people protected Sangeet from the police because he was local. But at the same time, people were still leary of the movement, and didn't get much opportunity to even talk to Sangeet." Hence with Sangeet's surrender from the movement in 2004, once again, movement presence in the area was interrupted.

Contact with peasant committees and villagers opinions when implementing party programs was so determinative of the movement's continuity, through fending off downward class cycles, that even in villages where a loss of contact occurred in short stints, it led to a termination of the movement.

Consider, for example, the case of Indira village, in Adilabad province. While in the early years of mobilization, the party had worked closely with the peasants, with all killings and food raids being initiated by the village committees. When police repression started, the movement moved away from working with the peasants and the Maoist presence began declining.

Indira village was located in north-west Adilabad and occupied by *adivasis* who had an average land holding of five acres. The village was absent of landlords, and the presence of outside moneylenders had filled the economic vacuum in the area. Indira had an active *ryutu coolie sangam,* or peasant committee. Peasants would themselves take decisions in the village, and only in situation where they were not adhered to, would inform party cadre, who would then put pressure on the person to follow through with the peasants' decisions. If the person concerned resisted, the cadre would punish them. For example, a village resident approvingly reported such an incident: "In Vala, there was a powerful contractor Ali who the peasants demanded leave the village because he had

started to dominate in the area. When he refused to leave, we told the annas (party men). He didn't even listen to the *annas*, so they killed him in 1994."

In neighbouring villages too, the party initially worked with the wishes of people. When peasants informed the party they had no food, the party suggested that everyone get something from the *haves*. It is after the peasants agreed to collectively take part in the food riots that the program was implemented, and as a result, unlike Cheli village, peasants accepted the police cases that soon followed.

However with increasing police presence, there was a transformation in movement decision-making in the area. Cadre began to act independently and became non-consultative, leading to their distancing from even organizationally united villages like Indira, and the eventual decline of a revolutionary class. A movement sympathizer from Indira told me:

> From 1992, the police had started frequenting the village. They even put posters saying if anyone from the village goes to the movement, they will be shot. Manik was shot in 1993 for giving information to the movement. The police even shot Hari in 1995. The party, becoming weary of police presence, as a reaction, started to call only a few people for information and, slowly, even dominating in the village. In 1996, they threatened a dealer of a food supply shop who was 80 years old because when the squad called to him, he responded with an agitated, 'who is it?' Annas (party people) scolded him and said 'how dare you speak to us like that?' He told them they were doing wrong by talking badly to him. The squad even raised their hands to hit the man, but people from the village saved him, saying 'He is old." No one supported the party fully after that. Pressure from the police combined with dominance of the movement cadre made us withdraw support for the movement, and slowly go back to our individual lives.

In contrast, villages that had established working committees, which continued to function relatively autonomously (with guidance from the party), even during repression— retained a sustained movement presence. Such villages persisted in interpreting movement politics through the village groups, even in the absence of direct contact with the party during long periods of heavy repression. Through this, they had kept up the task of building and strengthening the revolutionary class base of the village.

The strongest evidence for the effectiveness of village committees comes from villages where even when the local guerrilla squads or LGS functioned, which usually always resulted in an episodic presence—in the presence of operational village committees, sustained peasant support. Below, I present instances of this success.

In Passar village in east-Warangal, discussed earlier as where the LGS functioned, the movement came to have a sustained presence through the local mining committee they had set up in the village, which extracted money from nearby mines to develop villages according to changing needs of the peasants.

In Benga, also a mining village in central Warangal, previously mentioned as where the LGS had started to function after the demise of the RYL, the party retained a

sustained presence as well, through the stone workers union they started in the village (called *Shrama Shakti Sangam)*. The union members, all of whom were local quarry workers (made of mixed caste groups), learned negotiation tactics. The workers, with the party, had become owners of a part of the quarry, which they collectively leased out for a monthly rent of over one lakh rupees.[143] The movement had also created three cells per village, combining members from different *sangams* or village committees. Each cell consisted of three people who interacted with a shack in the squad (commander, deputy commander, and three party members) that knew all the cell members, constantly exchanging information and views and creating a strong class foundation in the village.[144]

Surprisingly, in adjacent hilly north-west Warangal too, which were dotted with capital-poor landlords' villages, and where the RYL had initially dominated depleting the area in village committees, the movement managed to sustain its presence despite government repression.

This was achieved by taking up the task of setting up village committees after the hiatus caused by the collapse of the RYL presence. In 1994, PK, a *dalam* (squad) commander for Warangal province started setting up new village committees in north and south Warangal, years after the movement had been functioning, elongating the movement's presence in such villages. A marginal peasant from Halli village, which consisted of the structurally conducive—one large capital-poor landlord and a majority mixed caste marginal peasants in the plain areas of north-west Warangal, said,

> In 1994, PK revived the movement with village cover organizations. To survive, the cover organizations kept changing. In each village hundreds of people became involved with the Saharakara Sangam Cooperative Society for seed distribution, the Nyaya or justice committee, the GRC or Grama Rajya Committee [formed with members of different committees to lead village development]; Jala Sadhana Samiti for irrigation, Jana Sabha or people's assembly, and Ryutu Seva Samiti (co-operative for seeds and fertilizers). These committees became integral to the village. PK also started cells with members of different sangams or village committees. The squads started as many departments in the villages as the government. Even people who didn't participate in any program of the party would be set aside to give information. LGS, which came after RYL, only helped implement programs, not plan. There was also a central squad that would conduct programs.

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[143] Workers said 169 of the 269 workers still sided with the Maoists, continuing to implement their policies in the quarry. The other owners of the mine were apparently 2 families from Tail Nadu who owned 103 quarries in Andhra Pradesh.

[144] To protect party members, cell secretaries knew each other, but not cell members. The shack secretary would sometimes even meet the cell secretary independently, but only the DCM or district committee knew all cell secretaries.

In Manekallu village in south Warangal, configured like Halli, local committees, started at a later date, brought the peasants together into organizations that enacted their class interest. The committees built three *anganwadis* (play schools) and a water tank, in 1994. They also worked to get land sanctioned for a bus stand (until which, no buses came to the village). Full time party cadre, aided by local youth, repaired the road, and even organized people from other communities to demand the reinstatement of a physical education teacher from the village. The party worked from the background, sometimes even pushing local legislators (MLAs) to work in their committees. Over a hundred people from the village had been accused of being Maoists, still requiring to report to the police during political elections, with 15 of them having to mark their presence at the police station every month. Nevertheless, all the villagers I talked to asserted their loyalty to the movement, saying, "this place is a mother's lap for the party—they will always find protection here."

These cases demonstrate that villages where movement-established village organizations existed (and could even be set up after years of presence of the movement by activating party networks in unique ways),[145] the revolutionary peasant struggle persisted, with large numbers of local residents willing to act collectively to initiate new policies and to endure police repression which, when the Maoists acted on their own initative, would make the movement unwelcome. These committees thus communicated political ideologies to the peasants, built class-consciousness and assured that the party would be an instrument of local intentions.

Several factors account for the organizational effectiveness of village committees in building a class, becoming integral to the functioning of clandestine armed groups such as the Maoist movement, and – most relevant to our concerns – contributing to their resilience.

One of the problems with the revolutionary youth leagues (RYL) was their propensity to act on their own judgment and initiative. Although their mobility was advantageous for the task of information gathering, being the only cadre in touch with the Maoists for the combined role of giving information, together with implementation of programs led to dominance and, was detrimental to sustaining armed movement support in the villages.

Stated differently, the RYL structure had no inbuilt organizational redundancies and hence led to divisions within the village. That is, since the same set of individuals gave information, enacted programs, as well as engaged in disciplining, with the movement lacking in other sources for testing the validity of either information, or implementation, there were many contested decisions. In somewhat the same position as

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[145] For example, PK utilized his university networks, many of whom also came from privileged backgrounds, with some making it to high positions in large political parties (through family and caste networks). PK ensured an electoral win for friend's political parties with the tradeoff being free movement for party cadre. PK used the mobility granted to the party to interact with several sections in the villages and gather multiple sources of information. He also used this opportunity to increase communication, inform villagers of new party member's visits (reducing challenges that came with information gaps), gain new recruits, and start large numbers of village committees.

managers in firms, RYL could control much of the organizational narrative[146] and came to exert absolute power in the villages. Additionally, the RYL did little to further the movement's ideology, since members lacked political training and were ineffective, as a non-peasant mobile group, in raising class-consciousness. For the movement however, class-consciousness, and further class unity, was not a given in most villages, and organizational foundations for it had to be laid and worked at actively to build a strong movement. Mobile youth groups, being neither embedded in the party nor peasant structures, lacked the schema to make class appropriate decisions that fully exemplified movement ideology or pushed forward class-consciousness.

Village organizations, in contrast, proved much more effective at achieving this, mainly because of the many informal channels of communication they maintained within a village. Since most political conversations and movement planning took place informally in the villages, the village committees, whose members were a part of it, were able to constantly add to the conversations.

The reliance on small mobile youth groups, however, had emerged as a result of the limitations of the party's larger organizational structure. The one-person CO, or central organizer structure, which was initially deployed by the movement,[147] especially in the plain areas of Warangal (and to a lesser degree in the forests of Adilabad where for the most part an entire armed squad worked), was partly responsible. This system had resulted in relying on a few youth league members and village couriers, since a lone organizer did not possess capabilities to interact with more numerous organizations. This created a dependence on few cadres for information, as well as in bounded strategies for the movement, which came from limited member interaction.

This model of sparse movement membership at the bottom levels of the hierarchy was also a problem that affected the alternative organization, the local guerilla squads. Although more disciplined, and working directly under a large squad, they too were weak in transmitting movement or class ideologies, in the absence of more resident village committees. This problem even escalated to affect the squad, if the squad didn't prioritize strategies of setting up village level organizations outside of the formal membership structure of the movement. In fact, with the beginning of the third (1999) cycle of state repression, *dalams* or the larger squads had split; with two LGS coming together to form a *dalam* when needed. This facilitated the diffusion of LGS's lean membership strategies to the squads in Warangal as well. Hence, even when conditions allowed for more dense and situated networks, the movement sometimes became bound by its previous organizational choices, requiring a deliberate, more concerted attempt at changing organizational strategies.

Village organizations were located outside the formal party structure, with a more open organizational logic allowing them to function in sync with local level fluctuations. That is, changing form and function according to local needs. Village organizations hence possessed the advantage of not becoming locked in to party organizational structures, and

[146] Greve, H. R. and Mitsuhashi. H. 2007. "Power and glory: Concentrated power in top management teams." *Organization Studies*, 28(8): 1197-1221.

[147] Later moving on to eight to twelve member armed squads.

remained free to transmit information that didn't occur within the formal channels of the movement either because of a lack of time, or distance of formal armed cadre from the villages. As a result, they also more effectively built a village revolutionary class.

Over the years, the invaluable role of informal networks and communication in the functioning of organizations has gathered large amounts of evidence, especially in the context of corporation.[148] These informal networks close gaps in information that formal management and communication channels are unable to. Further, they serve to align organizational purpose with individual motivation, even creating greater organizational discipline. Translated to movements, the same nexus of informal networks facilitates a surer transfer of political ideology and movement goals to the level of individual peasants in the villages—thus creating an organizational alignment at all levels towards building a structurally strong resistance movement. Hence formal armed movement channels which are replete with structural holes—where members network ties are unconnected or undisclosed in order to maintain secrecy and survival (especially in repressive situations)— while useful for communicating information, do poorly at communicating group identities and expectations.[149]

Put differently, formal armed movement cadres, without the creation of an additional organizational layer within the villages, risked not being able to raise class-consciousness and unity, which was essential in constructing repression-immune organizational structures. Resident, networked village organizations that operated with their own local logic, thus became necessary at maintaining, even during repression, and perhaps *especially* during repression, class rumblings.

This combination of more formal movement organizations with relatively autonomous local sub-organizations also had another advantage: it allowed for greater innovation in movement agendas and strategies. Through providing insulation for the movement, even during repression, the armed squad was able to move in groups of three or fewer to such villages, to keep up with local situations, coming up with relevant programs as a consequence.

Jyoti, who worked with PK's squad in the north-east Warangal villages, shared one such instance.

> Though we were losing the ability to organize large meetings, we managed to remain innovative in some villages. When farmer suicides started to take place, we gave money to some families who had lost a family member. We also started to trace vulnerable farmers, and speak to them to avoid further suicides. We simultaneously put pressure on the local moneylenders in those villages to stop harassing families for debts.

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[148] See, Blau, P. 2001. *Dynamics of Bureaucracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Burawoy, M. 1979. *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

[149] See, Podolny, J., and Baron, J. 1997, "Resources and relationships: social networks and mobility in the workplace," *American Sociological Review* 62:673-693.

At the same time as the party started to rely on village groups, it also started to emphasize deference to peasants, in its training of cadre, "because the opposite—trying to dominate village committees and people would create enemies in villages and, our eventual death. So sometimes even when we knew the person was wrong, like beating his wife, we had to calmly explain to him why he was wrong rather than beat him up, because he could become an enemy," Jyoti said.

Keeping this in mind, there were several villages in which the village committees and party worked closely to plan and creatively implement programs. In Jagga, an all *gond* village with an average landholding of five acres in north-west Adilabad province, armed squads had met some of the village leaders in 1979 and assisted the village in clearing land for cultivation. With the village committee functioning continuously from then on, the cooperation eventually matured into one of the largest projects the movement undertook in the province, building a lake for irrigation. One of the participants in the project described the process:

> In the 1990s, we together constructed a lake, which took two years to complete. People from 45 villages participated in it. However a committee from our village coordinated the project with guidance from the party. Each day one person from each of the households had to volunteer a day's labour. People from Jagga would cook and serve food to the labour. Every day, people from three villages took turns to work at the site. The lake had two canals, which connected to people's fields. Of the total 317 hectares of land in the village, water was directed to 70 acres, and shared with the neighbouring villages. We all learnt to work together.

The village committee in Jagga remained active supporters of the Maoists. Once resident described the community's relationship with the Maoists in 2015:

> Even if we wouldn't meet the dalam for a long time, we would still run the committee. We were taught to organize and fight, so recently we have taken up a fight against the local government officials over some paper work. Now there are two Maoist dalams [squads] currently running here. They come once a year during the rains, call us and discuss what is happening.
>
> There are two committees running in our area. The party suggests things we can do, and we share that with the village. They always reiterate that we must make sure to keep the village unified, and not let people feel left out of the committee ... involve everyone. When the party comes here, they flash a light. We see that light and know it's them and go.

The police had harassed peasants on multiple occasions, but the difference as compared to committee-absent villages, was that the movement had continued to work with local committees creating a strong resistance base, making police pressure a tolerable sacrifice, in exchange for the benefits derived by the collective enterprises facilitated and protected by the Maoists.[150]

So far we have compared villages with sustained movement support with ones that experienced an episodic or short-lived armed movement presence. Of the several organizational forms, autonomous village level committees were the most durable structures for sustaining armed struggle and enduring repression. Since repression is arguably an inevitable element of armed movements— building structures to override them is then key for organizational survival.

Village-level organizations came to be the most effective repression-immune structures because they were able to raise and maintain class-consciousness, translate movement ideology and actions to the peasants, and thus create further space for innovative movement agendas and strategies, even through repression.

What strategies did the Maoists use to ensure the resilience of village organizational structures? The next section addresses organizational survival strategies of Maoist village organizations, and hence class building for a resilient movement.

### 3.3 Strategies for organizational survival

The movement could create strong class organizational foundations through village committees, but they could also go a step further to ensure the robustness of these organizations. This section discusses some of the organizational survival strategies of the Maoists for the village committees, and hence themselves.

As the movement evolved, every village committee came to contain, at its full potential, exposed members, secret members, non-member village sympathizers, and cell members. Each layer maintained a different distance and level of communication with the party. This multi-level membership model came to be the movement's best strategy at creating organizational robustness of the village committees.

In a sense, every membership level in the village committee was set up to withstand different intensities of repression, which was necessary in keeping the movement afloat at all times. At the same time, the multiple-levels also helped self-regulate the behavior of cadres, who were never fully certain of all other sources of party information. An additional mechanism for achieving organizational robustness was work within existing organizational structures in the villages, creating least friction between the movement and village, and hence retaining class-building activity.

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[150] Five people from the villages had even been taken to prison and kept separately to avoid them corroborating in front of the police. The police would even show up at the village and torture people, randomly beating. The villagers would inform the *naxals*, who when they could, would send lawyers to free the villagers.

The Maoists also worked hard to widen the pool of sympathizers in the village, as distinguished from focusing their effort on recruiting full time party members. Sympathizers provided not only more sources of information for the movement, but also better protection for the movement against repression, through larger numbers. Lastly, as was necessary with any organizational form associated with an armed movement, a group of village cadre with military training, who could protect the peasants and party cadres, was built into the village organizations, contributing to organizational survival. I discuss each of these factors in detail below.

**i) Multiple levels of membership**

Membership in village organizations was not limited in size, but not all members' relationships with the party were set up to be the same. The Maoists secretly arranged to meet some committee members— those that were party members— outside of the larger group. These party members functioned to keep the organizations together and motivated, also providing direction. Their ability to direct organizations came from having received more regular political training, and maintaining regular contact with the party. These secret or unexposed party members also served an additional function— of acting as one more source of information for the movement.

The party maintained its sources of information at varying distances, from as general (and distant) as the village groups, to as narrow (and close) as a cell secretary. That is, crosscutting various village organizations were cell structures. Cells, constituted by three members, sometimes combined party members from three different village committees. There were several cells in a village whose members were not even known to one another. Only the Squad Commander was privy to such knowledge. This strategy of covertly interlinking organizations at the most core level, yet allowing for the autonomous functioning of the committees, achieved the same organizational advantages that balancing armed squads and village committees did. Cell members, being disconnected from one another, could not independently transmit movement ideologies and raise class-consciousness without the functioning of the parallel organizational structure of the larger, more cohesive village committees, which as previously discussed, could. Nonetheless, cell members functioned as good sources for information, and helped tie together activities of numerous committees. They, in a sense, worked like interlocked board members in firms, bridging the strategies of disparate, yet similar firms, making them more identic.[151]

A final organizational layer in the village committees was added, in the form of exposed party members. They were cadre who would openly advocate for the party, and carry out party work outside the village, such as, collect money from contractors, attend cross village committee meetings, and arrange for food and shelter for the armed squads. The first people to go underground during repression were the exposed members, who during low-repression periods were necessary, since the movement required people who could move freely for tasks like fund collection, but during high repression were easily identifiable.

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[151] Domhoff, G. W., 2005, *op, cit.*; Mizruchi, M. S., 1996, *op. cit.*

In Jagga, the village where the large lake was constructed, only five of the committee members were exposed members known to all, and others (number unknown) were clandestine. One of the exposed party members revealed their role:

> No one knew who was in the village committee initially. Only four to five people would be exposed. They were people who were great workers and worked with the party as well as the village. But they couldn't dominate because they were not allowed to do anything without also consulting the secret members (they knew), and the party. Exposed people would collect money from the contractors and be the face of the party to the village—that's all

Multiple level memberships hence served three goals— it provided the movement with various degrees of information, coordinated between village different committees, and during repression, protected the committees and movement from completely dissolving relationships, by keeping some members protected at all times.

**ii) Village militants and prior organizational structures**

Next, of the varying number of committees that could be set up in each village, one that was prioritized by the party was the secretly chosen *grama raksha committee* for village defense. This committee achieved a number of things for the movement. It provided the peasants with protection that was necessary to conduct meetings and implement programs. However, equally critically, it provided protection to the movement, for the armed squads and Maoist commanders to also directly demonstrate their ideas and commitment to the peasants.

Direct relationships between the party and village were also valuable since they created direct sympathy of the peasants towards the movement. This was especially useful for when the either party faltered or lost contact with the villages. Either of these situations without some trust in the party could result in dwindling movement support from peasants. Local village defense forces, being best equipped to handle security at the village level, proved themselves most useful in maintain such trust.[152]

Militarily trained, *grama raksha committee* cadres worked in the village, unarmed or in case of highly antagonistic villages, with one country made weapon. The size of the village defense committee varied in accordance with the party's assessment of the conditions in the village and surrounding areas, and thereupon, also the type of presence the party wished to establish in that particular village.

The movement didn't try to build classes and create a support foundation, despite conducive structural conditions, in villages that were located by main roads or police

[152] Militants became very important to the logic of sustenance since they came to occupy the position of reestablishing the movement- village contact that was often interrupted during repression. Also being members who met the *dalam* frequently, they felt they worked for the party at all times.

stations. One instance is Samaya village (in central Adilabad), which was located by a main road. Although it contained majority *dalit* marginal farmers and a few upper class Reddy families who had moved to the village in the 1960s from Karimnagar district, buying up a lot of the land, the movement remained clear of organizing. The extent of Maoists presence in such villages was the occasional killing of a landlord, or on finding an opportune moment, having a conversation with active village youth to get a sense of the village dynamics.[153]

The Maoists similarly chose some remote villages to be exclusively used for shelter, keeping their party organizations and activity to a minimum to ward off attention. In villages like these, which were viewed as movement shelter zones, establishing a direct connection with the peasants was even more crucial for survival. Kumaram was one such village where only two committees functioned, the *ryutu coolie sangam*—peasant committee, and the *grama raksha committee* or village defense force. It was an all *gond adivasi* forested village in central Adilabad, where every family possessed an average of 25 acres land. The peasant committee was set up with three open members, and the village defense committee with two members, who arranged village meetings and visited other villages pasting posters. The squad directly addressed the village several times, and held two people's courts to solve local problems, with the assistance of the defense committee members, to maintain village support, create a solid class base, and retain its movement enclave status. A peasant described movement committees and the activities in the village that eventually made it a secure area for the movement.

> Only good people joined the party from my village. The party facilitated this.
>
> The party came to our village and held meetings with men and women. They then asked the villagers to choose some people from their heart to work for the party. They explained that the chosen people would become the link between the village and party. They would become the people the villagers' would give information to—and they in turn would pass it on to the party. If those villagers didn't work properly, people could directly talk to the party too. Otherwise, the party would generally speak with the village representatives for information, and visit the village as and when they had time. That way the party had committees in each village.

[153] A few months after the 1989 incident in Samay, where *dalit* boys had gone to the nearby food joint and smashed all the utensils because of the practice of keeping separate glasses for the *dalits*, an unknown *dalam* person in civilian cloths visited the village and asked the *dalit* leader to come to the forest. "There I met Prakash *anna* who asked me about the hotel incident. They then told me to go. Because I was active, they called me out and talked to me. I never saw them again," said the *dalit* youth leader.

In our village three people were a part of the committee, all men. The committee was called ryutu coolie sangam (RCS), for peasants. There was also a grama rakshak committee for village defense with two people from our village being a part of it. It was secret and chosen by the party. They were given military, rather than political training. This was ten-fifteen years back, so there was no particular political training. The party would come, call them, and have meetings with them, sometimes—exclusively with them— about how to talk, what to do, the consequences of each action they could choose etcetera.

The peasant committee also got such training: 'we should fight the government like this… if we fight like this, that will happen,' etctera. The three RCS people never tried to dominate over the villagers. The party would also come two to three times a month since at the time this was a thick forest. So the party would come here at night, and when they got a chance, settle outside the village, keep a sentry and hold a meeting. The party also directly held two praja (people's) courts here.

Another peasant continued to describe party meetings and direct work in the village, which created not only class-consciousness, but also a direct relationship of the peasants with the party.

One large meeting was arranged to discuss the distribution of a large piece of land, and the second was for handling the drought. There had been a poor harvest in the mid 80s, and people were suffering from hunger. If we decided to steal for survival, the police would arrest us, and if we decided to ask for alms—there was no one who could provide it. So the party held a village meeting. The party also called seths [traders] from nearby towns. They told the seths to give people some grains or what ever they had in their gowdowns. The party told them, 'these people are dying, and you need to help. We are not calling you to hit you or shoot you or for your money…. just give something to the people. We will survive by asking them to share some with us.'

So each household got one quintal of jowhar grain and a few other small supplies they needed. Each village had to go to a small-predetermined village, taking turns at night, to receive their share and carry it back to the village. This transfer of grains could not take place in town because it would have come under the radar of the police. So both, the seths and the villagers, had to be very secretive about it. Different villages had to also wait their turns, for the same reason. The seths would carry the materials in bullock carts and dump them in a nearby village, and the villagers would go pick them up. That's how all our areas were supplied, and everyone had food. That's also why the movement was so adored.

Another strategy which became imperative for organizational survival was working with organizational foundations that had been already established in the village. Where the movement showed such flexibility, of working with local organizational forms, instead of displaying bureaucracy and rigidness, it created a resilient base of village organizations. This basically implied leveraging off already existing class-building organizations, rather than going against them and forming yet others.

For instance, in Jagga, the lake village, where elders were respected and had traditionally held the position of decision makers, the secret village defense committee members – the *grama rakshakas* – were relegated to the background. All the village elders were instead put into a single committee, which oversaw most of the militants' work— of providing information and training; militants being used only occasionally. The powerful village elders committee later came to be referred to as the *gram rajya* committee, which by 1997 had been started in many villages to co-ordinate village welfare programs. In Jagga and the neighboring *adivasi* villages, which had a similar tradition of relying on elders, this committee became primary to the movement. A village elder elaborated on the organizational set up within his and similar villages:

> As gram rajya committee members, we would give information about people coming and going from our village, and any incident that took place in the village. We would try and solve problems within the village committee. It's if we couldn't solve a problem or the person wasn't listening to us that we would call the committee above us (which was still at the village level) made up of one or two people from each of the gram rajya commmittee from ten villages—all like ours.
>
> Each grama rajya committee had five people, but from them, a few were picked to be a part of this higher committee that would be called if the committee from the village couldn't solve a problem. The party was called only if we failed even at this level.
>
> We did call the party sometimes, when the government official wasn't listening to us. This committee received military and political training for eight days a year. We would have to go to the forest to receive this training, and the party would even teach during the rains. They taught us how to use our own weapons, hold the stick like a gun, and charge at the enemy.
>
> The grama rajya committee needed to, and did grow, as the movement became more popular. As committee members our job was of expanding this committee, and taking in new people. We would train young people in our village and send them to the dalam, if they were willing to go; like that five or six people from our village went. Two were women. Our job as people in the grama rajya committee was also to receive training from the party, then teach it to the village. We would even train kids in the bala or children's committee about what to do if the police came, how to snatch their weapon and run— since kids were not as easily suspected. Also, if we were being attacked, the children were taught to intervene.

As a result of the different village organizational structures that the Maoists began to coordinate with, they started to use the militants as a flexible force which could neatly be fit into any organizational configuration that required an armed backing (instead of being utilized in the standard form of a stand-alone force).

In some cases, all militants were placed in the peasant committee: in villages where peasants were the most active committee, facing greatest opposition. In other cases, they were fit into positions that lay vacant, like becoming village teachers. In north-Adilabad, in the *gond* village of Badhra, which had two committees—the village development committee and a peasant committee, most militants joined the peasant committee; two became teachers. The militants started to be used as catalysts in the class building process.

The district president of the peasant committee, also a squad commander for the area, and action committee in-charge, Siddharth who was inundated with the job of managing three organizations, was the one who had asked the Badhra village militants to join the peasant committee. At the same time as backing other village organizations, the militants continued to assist the party cadre in interacting directly with the villages, as well. Siddharth explained,

> There were nine militants in Badhra village. Almost all were in the RCS—the peasant committee. The party also placed some teachers here. Eshwar was one of them. He was a party militant. Elders were placed in the village development committee. Because all RCS people were known and exposed, seven of the nine militants got arrested in 1989. The other two who were not exposed remained undetected. In fact the teacher was one of them. The police came to know of the seven RCS militants because they would go to other villages to paste posters, and get information for us. We would tell them to do that.
>
> As the RCS president, I would come here once in two or three months. I would call the RCS committee outside the village and ask them what they did. We suggested the tank project, and the local RCS thought it was a great idea. The villagers provided for one meal for the labour, for volunteering their time. All villagers contributed labour for it, and it took four months to complete. People from the village would give suggestions too; they asked for a well. We also dug a bore well. Although the village is remote and hilly, we still made a contractor come and dig it! Small meetings often took place in the village, but only the dalam (squad) would hold the large meetings and the village militants would protect us. They would hide us and even lie to the police. They were more than adequate for chasing the police out.

Village militants came to be important in protecting the village committees, as well establishing direct party-village relationships. As essential as they became, as synergists, to the peasant-armed struggle, they also contributed most to the class

foundation process by working within pre-existing organizational structures to achieve the best results.

**iii) Diverse organizational channels and sympathizers**

Multiple and diverse organizational channels were extremely effective at quickly establishing whom to trust and not within the village. Unarmed exposed members along with clandestine members, in combination with village sympathizers, thus contributed to organizational survival in another crucial way. Not only did they assist in implementing formal party programs of land distribution (agricultural committee), administer justice and village development activity (*gram rajya committee*) and increase wages (women's committee), but also informally communicated individual peasant and police information.

That is, they kept an eye on people suspected to be police informers, communicating to the party when someone really became a threat to the movement, thus limiting movement violence to the most defensible moments and thereby preserving support in the community.

For this task of identifying police informers, the party also roped in individual sympathizers, or even people written off by the village, such as those considered mentally unstable[154] because it made information from the villages more reliable. The scope for miscommunication and incorrect information declined significantly with every additional formal and informal source of information that overlapped, achievable through both party members and individual sympathizers.

Digging organizationally deep to correctly identify police informers, giving them warnings, and attacking them only after first communicating with the peasants, was paramount for the movement to maintain sustained village support, increase its base of supporters, and ward off (further) repression.

However, the number of movement sympathizers (not members) per village was dependent upon the movement's formal and informal communication channels flowing well, committees functioning to potential, and false information or actions being rare. These conditions created trust between the peasants and village, built class-consciousness and attracted a greater number of sympathizers, which in turn led to yet greater levels of trust and a more sustained movement presence.

Village sympathizers affected movement sustenance through a number of mechanisms.

One, when diverse and open channels of communication were established between the party and peasants, it led to honest party-village discussions before village members could be accepted as full time underground cadre. Recruits from villages with a high number of sympathizers protected the movement against indiscriminately absorbing all cadres that exhibited an interest— with the movement recruiting only the most committed, those that had the smallest chances of turning against the movement.

Mimadi (2013) discusses the challenge of armed group recruitment in an institutional vacuum, with Maoists having to rely on ex-post measures of assessing members when they fail or leave. He mentions two strategies used by the movement to

[154] A strategy which was effectively executed in central Warangal.

overcome this. First, the expectation that potential recruits display hard to mimic behavior as a sign of true commitment, and second, recruiting people that had burnt their bridges and had few outside options for survival. These methods, however, were less reliable than recruiting cadre from a village where the movement had autonomous sub-organizations, hence communication, and sympathizers who could guide the party.

Another mechanism which insulated the village from extensive state repression was having a large ratio of sympathizers to full time members. In villages where the movement planned and executed activities on its own (without setting up diverse village organizations), and further recruited large numbers under those circumstances as underground cadre— irrespective of the structural conditions in the area – resulted in two eventualities: short-term movement support, and heavy state repression. These were villages were the exercise of class building hadn't taken place. An example is executing unconsented raids on landlord's granaries, which had led to many local arrests, and the entry of uncommitted people into the party.[155] This strategy had resulted in short spurts of high recruitment into the movement, of people who often surrendered within a few years, and during peak periods of police repression became informers.

This problem was particularly pronounced in villages in south Warangal, producing a vicious cycle between police repression, movement recruitment and further police repression. The movement's indulgence in quick recruiting due to a sudden loss of cadre, such as in 1987 after a short period of police repression, resulted in much higher losses for the movement in subsequent years. The earlier recruits who had joined for heroism, or personal gain surrendered in a short period, and became integral to intensifying police repression against the movement. Hence, villages that showed sustained support and recruitment had a significantly large ratio of sympathizers to full time members, as a result of several programs which built class-consciousness and played a pivotal role in movement survival. This organizational structure of local autonomous organizing, which created a large base of village sympathizers, and armed backing, visibly became an advantage during the periods of high police repression: 1985-87, 1991-2002, and after 2004 (even presently).[156]

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[155] The quick recruitment tactic failed to result in sustained support for the movement even in areas displaying strong structurally conducive factors such as remote forests with large tribal populations.

[156] The fluctuations in police repression came from state regime changes or peace talks between the party and government. An example of a village which a large number of sympathizers is Santpalya, in north Warangal, where thirty-four village sympathizers even actively assisted the movement and party committees. The sympathizers were the result of the functioning of several local committees that made most decisions, then consulted higher party cadre, before implementing. The village had a functional women's group, children's group, students committee and a peasant committee. There was also a local organizational squad, which actively took party policies to the public, a grama rajya committee for village development, and finally a village defense committee. During repression, the party remained in touch with select cadre, allowing the committees to continue functioning.

So far, we have established that although recruiting militarily adept mobile forces, which could function across a few villages, was integral to armed movements, they were effective only when combined with more autonomous local village level committees, which in some instances were built into prior organizational structures of the village, and contained people with various levels of membership and communication abilities. This ensured the robustness of class-building organizations.

The necessity for armed cadre or militants however, was so constant that every iteration of the movement organization resulted in some version of it. The last discussed was village militants. The challenge of controlling their domination however returned with every new organizational form, threatening to wipe out movement support.

### 3.3.1 Organizational survival: controlling armed recruits

With each new organizational mode, the movement hence faced a similar challenge: of not falling into an over-reliance on mobile military structures. When it did, the consequences brought on were the same as those of over-reliance on the previous mobile forces, of losing movement support due to mobile cadre dominance, and inability to create or maintain class unity.

A dalam commander in Adilabad commented on this problem:

> The dalam sometimes believed the militants and didn't cross check before making a decision. That hurt the movement a lot. Twenty to thirty per cent of the time that over-reliance was the reason for our decline in an area. Sometimes militants started dominating in the village and speaking against people who opposed them. For that reason also, many serious people left the movement.

One of the organizational choices that worked as a safeguard against over-reliance on a few village cadres was maintaining a *non-transitioning local leader*. Military logic would suggest the distancing of cadre and leadership from their home territory to prevent existing local biases from affecting armed movement decisions. However, new commanders in clandestine armed movements were then left to rely on information handed down from the higher district committee member and village militants, who were most frequently in touch with armed squads. Although members at the district level maintained their own sources of information in the villages, separate from the *dalam*, their higher position in the movement restricted their understanding of the complex village micro-dynamics that impacted movement survival. Areas of resilient movement activity therefore tended to have long-term locally recruited military commanders, rather than quick shifting leaders. This arrangement, when it occurred, enabled embedded relationships between the squad commander and villages — where personal relationships

and communication were used to produce trust, and produced the usual dynamic of a larger number of sympathizers, and better informed organizational decisions.[157]

To control for domination however, a majority of the lower cadre were posted away from their villages. This combination of a local commander who had the trust of villagers and knowledge of the past and present; and regularly rotating outside lower cadre who brought new experiences, ideas and networks — together led to better organizational learning, where the chances of repeating mistakes was significantly reduced (such as killing or punishing innocent civilians on account of being informers or anti-poor—as stated, a common cause for the loss of movement support, especially if repeated frequently). Newer cadre further enabled experiments with new actions and strategies, since it allowed for people with varied experiences and networks to come together and interact with different village configurations.

In the next section, I take on the task of understanding the role of environmental conditions in enabling different movement organizational forms and strategies discussed so far.

### 3.4 Role of environmental conditions: organizational form and movement success

The efficacy of certain organizational forms over others to achieve movement support and sustenance might explain why the many important insights into armed movement structures derive from studies on the organization and working of corporations, which are equally organizational structure driven.

One of the most significant contributions of organizational theory, however, has been the finding that firms shape their environment, while also organizing themselves in response to external conditions. One key mechanism for shaping corporate environment involves utilizing existing networks and capital to push other companies into adopting similar practices and organizational forms,[158] and therefore shaping the competitive and resource environment in which the firm operates. [159]

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[157] On the leaders exit however the organization did suffer on issues of trust, information communication and problem solving, as shown by Uzzi in the context of firms (Uzzi, B.1997. "Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42: 35-67).

[158] Powell, W. and DiMaggio, P. 1991 *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Meyer, J. W. and Rowan, B. , 1977, "Institutional organizations: Structure as myth and ceremony, *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 340-63.

[159] The  conspicuous example is the huge corporations that now dominate the modern economy. Perrow demonstrates that, despite lack of evidence of the efficiency of large firms (small networked firms were as efficient), this organizational form prevailed by shaping external conditions, and pushing costs onto, in the case of the United States, poor Irish immigrant workers who did not have the bargaining abilities to exit the labour market. It is what came to be called *the efficiency myth* (Perrow, C., 2002, *Organizing America.*  Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Staying within this analytical thread: armed movements, in contrast, possess fewer abilities to shape their environment (in the short frame), restraining their choices in organization as well as in strategies. This is for two reasons. One, unlike influential firms who have the option of shaping external conditions by pushing externalities and costs on to people, for armed movements, this is an untenable choice. This is because the associated costs — arrests and deaths — would work inversely, reducing the very base of the movement on which it depends for survival. Further, since peasant struggles lack in heavily influential networks that are crucial in manipulating policies and turning environments in one's favour, their choice of organizational structures is pressed into becoming more aligned with the local environment.

In the previous sections, I outlined organizational structures that sustained movement support through raising class-consciousness and maintaining the robustness of those organizations. These were: having autonomous village organizations, multiple exposed and clandestine level party members, large number of sympathizers, and skilled village and area level armed cadre. The movement should ideally have organized itself to achieve these organizational components in the villages it seeks to organize.

However, the Maoists were left to do this while simultaneously fulfilling the organizational prerequisites of addressing variance in environmental conditions of: i) repression from the state ii) differing geography iii) the existence of local political groups, and iv) upper class resistance.

The party found itself pivoting on differing geographical factors, those being the most apparent conditions for the movement to tackle.

To begin with, the three provinces of Warangal, Adilabad and Khammam did not initially fall under the same higher committees. While the flatland areas in Warangal were a part of the North Telangana Committee, which specialized in organizing guerrilla movements in geographically plain areas; while north Warangal, Adilabad and Khammam were managed by the forest committee,[160] which focused on organizing in forests and hills.

The challenge, however, was that other important determinants of movement success— beyond geography—existed on the ground: between economically prosperous and capital-poor villages; class unified and divided ones; majority peasant, and ones with workers; those with other existing communist party organizations, and those without. Each condition created its own organizational challenges.

In terms of geography, Maoists operating in the forests didn't need to experiment for long with the leaner organizational structures that were used in the plain areas, such as deploying a central organizer. In most cases, they could directly transition to the eight - to- twelve members armed squad, since the forests and hills provided a cover for the movement of large groups. Further the lack of universities and schools in forest areas, prevented the formation of radical students or youth groups, such as the RSU (radical students union) or RYL (revolutionary youth league). That form of organizing, of using smaller mobile youth groups came to be more prevalent in plain areas, where mobility of large groups of armed cadre was restricted.

[160] Source: Ex-district committee member, Adilabad.

However, as we have already emphasized, movement-organizing potential was higher in certain economic and demographic domains,[161] which were spread across geographical divisions of plain and forest areas, giving rise to their own organizational requirements.

Further, although repression from the opposing classes varied,[162] state repression eventually became more or less constant, across varied village and geographical structures. This inevitability of repression explains our earlier observation that a mobile military committee was a consistent feature of Maoist organizing, since the constant threat of repression requiured the creation and perpetuation of a flexible and mobile group of armed cadres that could survive, retaliate with precision, and uphold party actions such as land grabs, demonstrating success, even under highest use of force by the state. Moreoever, the varying nature of the local struggle also called for variation in the utilization of force—and therefore the organization of the armed struggle.

The capital-poor landlord areas, such as central and south Warangal, and east and west Adilabad, were conducive for more extensive movement organizing, including programs involving land redistribution. These efforts inevitably generated both state repression and upper class resistance. When these economic conditions co-occurred with the absence of forests, such as in Warangal province (as compared to Adilabad or Khammam which were forested), the party struggled to retain the lands it had occupied, and needed specific kinds of defensive organizations. In many cases landlords were able outwait land reform by temporarily withdrawing to cities or towns for short periods, and returning when the state coud mass its forces to overwhelm the local guerrillas and repossess the land.

Because of this strategy, only some of the early land redistributions survived this counterattack because the armed force that had protected the land takeovers dissipated over time, and thus left the local villagers vulnerable to state-landlord counterattack. But those communities with functioning village organizations that continued collective action and therefore sustained and protected the armed cadre were organizationally prepared when these counterattacks occured.

Kesari village in south-west Warangal, mentioned previously as a village the CO (central organizer) visited even during repression, was one such example. After the movement grabbed and retained fourteen acres of land in the early 1980s, where marginal farmers had built houses, the landlords sold their own homes and outbuildings in a distress sale. Several peasants moved into those houses. Sights such as a 74 year-old teacher living in what was previously a cattle shed of one of the landlords, large enough for an entire home to be constructed, was a common site in Kesari. In the main house of the landlord, ten peasants lived.

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[161] That is, capital-poor areas where landlords still engaged in extra-economic relationships with the peasants, and areas predominantly occupied by *adivasis*, where organizational structures of collective resistance had been previously established.

[162] It being highest in capital-poor landlord areas.

In contrast to Kesari – especially in plain areas with lean movement organizations at the village and sub-provincial level – party programs, particularly land occupations, could not be sustained.

In Adilabad province, being able to take advantage of the forest cover, the large armed squads, assisted by village committees, managed to retain lands they had grabbed, forcing landlords to legally hand them over to the peasants. Further, supported by several village organizations, the movement was able to quickly diversify programs; such as demand better prices for beetle nut leaves and higher wages for labour. In villages in plain areas like central-west Warangal as well, the movement changed its organizational strategy from one person COs to eight to twelve member *dalams* or armed squads in the 1990s. This correlated with the start of several village cover organizations, which became the responsibility of different squad members. Here, the movement succeeded in retaining the lands it captured, but also started other struggles.

The multi-issue approach, became a movement strategy to combat environmental challenges, and worked to sustain movement presence for two reasons. Firstly, the chances of success of at least one of the several movement programs undertaken was higher, since each program utilized the leverage of different peasant groups, which taken collectively, mounted pressure on a larger set of state and economic actors. Secondly, the multi-issue agenda, which required working with multiple local level village committees, helped escalate class-consciousness, bring greater unity to the village and insulated the village from repression, to a degree.

Although plain areas typically suffered a geographical disadvantage, the movement sought and found organizational strategies that adapted to the restricted mobility of the armed cadres. These strategies involved situationally specific methods of concealing their presence. A *dalam* member who organized in these areas disclosed in central Warangal by the late 90s described their particular adaptation. "We found places to hide according to the season. In some seasons, peasants grew tall crops that were useful covers. So we would work through the nights and not let anyone suspect us. During the day, sometimes, we would have to stay crouched in the middle of the fields for hours, so that even the farmer didn't see us."

Hence, in central Warangal, as the village organizations started to function, after the formation of the *dalam*, the movement took up new issues, such as that of the landless peasants.

Although landless farmers were the least likely group to join the movement as full time cadre, they were a potentially strong force of over ground village sympathizers. In Ghala village, the *Jeetalu sangam* or committee for landless farmers was started. Landless peasants were largely over-worked and severely underpaid. Those given the task of cultivating land for large peasants, earned 40 kilos of maize a month for their labour. Workers given smaller tasks, such as collecting fodder for the cows or milking them, earned 20 kilos of grain a month. The movement, with the landless, demanded a flashlight for the workers (as a precaution against snake bites at night), tobacco, footwear, woolen blankets, and 80 kilos of grain (for working on the fields). They even demanded compensation for one of the workers who had died by falling into a well while on duty in the fields. The movement also demanded the transfer of large government lands to the landless, and fought against manipulations in measurement by the traders; all in addition to occupying landlords' fields.

The Maoists showed their ability to adapt, overcoming geographical challenges to quite a degree and organizing village committees and diverse programs. However, due to the hardships involved, the party made a decision to withdraw from plain area organizing in Warangal in the year 2000; moving the cadre to semi-forest and forest areas. The armed cadre returned two years later, ready to re-start their interaction with the villages, after a much-needed break. In plain areas hence, although varied organizational forms were attainable, they were typically spasmodic.

The next related challenge (after geographical considerations) that faced the movement was repression, which spread across the territory.

Although village level organizations, which could function independently, were reasonably repression immune, the Maoists had to devise their own strategies as well, for protecting cadre and civilian lives, which also retained peasant support. The movement addressed repression by creating an additional level of organization. This organization was separate from the village structures, and was equipped to deal independently with state repressive structures (in an offensive and defensive capacity). The Central Guerrilla Squad was formed (in plain areas), whose only job was to deal with the state forces.

A district committee member from Adilabad spoke about such a, "military *dalam* that was started in 1993, and a protection dalam which was also started at the same time, with one in each district, containing nine members each, with a goal to protect party members at political meetings, and to conduct recces." This allowed village organizations to remain focused on their tasks, leaving the job of protection to full time underground-armed cadre. This was also the surest way to secure village populations from state repression, equally necessary to their village organizational functioning.

Until 1995, Adilabad was under the umbrella of the forest committee, and distanced from the narrower organizational structure at the village levels, often seen in plain areas, instead using larger squads and forming numerous village committees.[163] Being able to produce the necessary organizations to counter local conditions certainly proved easiest in Adilabad province because of the protective cover provided by forests and neighbouring provinces, and previous village organizational structures.

However, as we have seen, this didn't guarantee the sustenance of the movement, with the Maoists still having to deal with the organizational challenge of dominance of village cadres, finding ways to retain multiple sources of information, and keeping party members in the villages motivated.

Environmental factors only created a pre-condition, which could be overcome by innovative strategizing by the movement, or squandered through a series of poor organizational decisions.

[163] Northern Warangal, also forested, used the dalam or squad structure for the most part, relying on smaller LGS or local guerrilla squads for villages that had capital rich landlords who leased land to grow exportable products like cotton and chilli; the movement never really establishing a base in those villages.

### 3.5 Generalizing to other armed movements: a note on Khammam

So far, we have only discussed Maoist organizing strategies in the two provinces of Warangal and Adilabad. Khammam has remained absent from this account for one major reason— it had already become an center for other radical armed peasant movements by the time the Maoists tried to organize there. As a result, however, Khammam provides a perfect test case, to check the generalizability of our findings on successful armed organizational structures, with a different armed movement in the same region.

Khammam was one of the most active provinces in the Telangana armed struggle of the 1940s, and following it, several communist political parties established their organizational base in the province. Of them, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) New Democracy, or ND, was the most radical. ND came from a long tradition of splits within the Indian Communist party. In the 1970s, its ancestor – the Chandra Pula Reddy group, often referred to as the CP group — merged with the Marxist-Leninist, ML party. Although the party continued to advocate guerrilla warfare alongside participation in state elections, minor political differences kept a number of operating ML groups from unifying.

Being the first radical organizers in Khammam province gave the ML groups a head start, narrowing space for the entry of other revolutionary groups. What is most crucial for our analysis, is the similarity in the organizational structure of New Democracy to the Maoists, and, the consequent similarity in movement sustenance outcomes of the different organizational forms and strategies I found in Maoist villages. The case of Khammam, and ND, hence leads us to draw the same conclusions as we did for the Maoist organizational structure— suggesting, in fact, the generalizability of our findings to other armed movements. It is worth noting however, the vast differences in exposure to repression by the two groups. The Maoists were exposed to far greater levels of repression than ND, which created a more challenging organizational environment for them to operate within.

Like the Maoists, ND succeeded in gaining support in villages with a large number of organized *koya adivasis*, and capital-poor landlords. NDs organizational structure in the villages approximated that of the Maoists. ND had formed multiple village level groups with youth, women, peasants, and coal workers, working on raising class-consciousness among potential members.[164] There was one significant variation though — ND had an additional over ground arm of cadres that contested local and state elections, absent in the Maoist movement. However, this difference does not affect our analysis. Even within ND, a division took place rather quickly between villages that were dominated by over-ground legal cadre, and those that came to be handled primarily by the armed squads (*dalams*). In the discussion here, I focus on villages that came to be

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[164] A New Democracy party worker elaborated on the village level committees: PYL= Pratisheela Yuvajana Sangam (youth); PDSU, the students union; POW= Pragatisheela Mahila Sangam (for women), IFTU= Bharata Karmika Sanga Samakhya (workers union); AIKMS= Akhila Bharata RCS (for peasants); GLB= Godavari Loya Bhogagani Sanghalu (for coal workers).

managed by the armed ND squads, and the organizational structures dictating their sustenance. One of the peasants in a *dalam* run ND village, in fact, spoke about the indispensability of the armed squad to creating a sustained resistance base in the villages. "Dalams are essential. We need them because if you don't have them, forest guards and others attack. They even talk to forest officials and warn them not to harass us, or to come to this area. If there are cases against people in this village, they help with a lawyer. In our villages, dalams are irreplaceable."

Although over-ground ND candidates won elections in several constituencies over the past forty years,[165] some villages remained locations for the armed squads, retaining movement supporters for over three decades, and continuing to contribute cadre to the underground squad.

One such village was Gundala, located in west-Khammam. An earlier version of ND had entered the village in 1969, inquiring about village problems and organizing on that basis. They settled village issues through the government, and with the locally elected *sarpanch*, asked for funds and engaged in development work. The armed *dalams* operated since the beginning of ND's presence in the village. Initially, inhabited by only the *adivasis*, the *dalams* helped with *podu,* or clearing forests for cultivation. They also protected the *koya* peasants from forest officers sought to impose taxes on sheep and forest produce. Forest officers stopped collecting a tax after the *dalams* marked their presence in the area.

A group of peasants from the village described the pivotal role of the village organizations in the survival of the party, and its relationship with the *dalams*. The narrative below indicates the criticality of the village groups in constructing class unity as well as in relaying information to the armed groups, feeding into deeper movement-village ties. The *dalam* came to rely on village organizations for accepting cadre into the party, as well as planning party programs. A peasant from Gundala described the role of the village committees in party functioning:

> Twenty people from the village went under-ground, some surrendering over the years. A few new cadre joined as recently as two years ago. But the party doesn't just take anybody. They examine the reason for people wanting to join. They don't take people who have done wrong, and are joining the movement as an escape. The party enquires about these things from the *grama* or village committee, which has eighteen members, three of whom are women. The president and vice president of the *grama* committee are responsible for assigning work to different cadres. That way almost the whole village is involved. The most active people from *praja sangas* or people's committees, those without any bad habits, were picked to be a part of the village or *grama* committee.

Each committee had a role set out for it, with the armed squads interacting with each of them at a different level. However every program was organized as a joint

[165] Yellendu, Bayaram, Gundala mandals.

decision between the committees and the squad, deepening the construction of the revolutionary class, something that proved equally effective in also sustaining Maoist villages. One of the village peasants continued,

> The praja sangas (people's committees) take up the issue of wage rates. The grama committee finds solutions to larger problems and settles village disputes. They also decide how to use grama panchayat (local government) funds. The dalam can call praja sanga members anytime and ask them what issues they are taking up in the village, and discuss potential village programs. Dalams even ask praja sangas for their opinion at the time of setting tendu leaf prices. Dalams can also ask the committee members to assist in protests. On any issue, first the dalam and praja sangas talk. They make sure that the party line is being followed before moving ahead with any action or program. The dalam visits the village once a week or every ten days, or sometimes once a month. Although they meet some members more frequently than others, nobody close to the dalam dominates because the entire village has committed people in these groups. The dalam calls the praja sanga leaders first, and then decides whether to talk to the village or some specific people. It depends on the amount of time they have. Sometimes they only have time to collect food from various houses, eat and go.

As a result of such a close interaction between the squads with the villages, and multiple membership levels, which generated multiple communication channels, the scope for misunderstandings and poor decisions was significantly reduced, preserving movement support. A group of peasants continued talking about program decisions, saying it often resulted from village committee initiatives, rather than being unilateral decisions from the armed squads. "There have not been any mistaken decisions by the dalam. They mostly take decisions based on people's interests, giving quite a lot of autonomy to the committees. Women in the sangas were keen on taking up the issue of alcoholism. They did that by breaking daru (liquor) pots. Mahila sangams also took up issues of wife beating on their own."

Through working with local committees, making peasants opinions matter, and handling deviations from the party line with sensitivity, ND too created movement resilience in several villages, not dissimilar to the Maoists. Not only were the peasants brought together, politicized to fight, but also, over time learn to place their collective trust on the party. The peasants explained these factors,

> Self- criticism happens often, but no one from the party has been suspended. The grama committee and other village sangas have meetings where we also discuss actions of full time cadre. Good cadres in the dalams were sent to other areas to build the organization, but the organization has remained somewhat consistent. We have known the same cadre for many years now. Sometimes other radical groups like PPG,

> Janshakti and Maoists tried to organize here, but no one supported them because of a loyal ND base, which is unshakable. That's because ND treated us well. If we made a mistake, they gave us guidance. There was never any beating involved. There are also no police informers here. There was police repression here earlier and even some police presence now. Since we have mobile phones, we inform the dalams of police activity constantly. During earlier times of repression we used to write letters to the dalam and send it through a courier. No one has ever opposed the party because it worked by taking everyone's wishes into consideration.

Areas in Khammam where the Maoists were able to displace ND, were ones where ND had failed to set up the essential organizational structures. One of the Maoist supporters in north Khammam told me:

> ND didn't manage to form a connection with the villagers here. That's why Ajay anna (Maoist commander) managed to walk through so many of these villages during the 2004 Maoist-state talks, mobilizing people. The Maoists also worked under the cover of many mainstream political parties here, taking up macro issues affecting a large number of villagers, such as the displacement caused by over ground mines, the construction of dams etctera.

However, the Maoists, in Khammam too, sometimes fell into the familiar misstep of over-relying on few village cadres, losing their opportunity to establish a presence, even in some of the structurally conducive areas. A Maoist sympathizer in Khammam talked about this.

> The Maoists have made a few mistakes, which cost them their presence here. For example the incident that took place in 1996 in south-west Khammam, in an over-ground cadre dominated ND village. Some peasants had started opposing ND since the over-ground cadre were growing increasingly corrupt, with one person in particular from the village leading the protest. When Maoists decided to enter the area using this opportunity, they began to put all their trust in that one man. But by using the Maoist party name, that man started collecting money and threatening people. ND then released a pamphlet against him. The Maoists only then realized their fault and killed the man. That was the villages' only interaction with the Maoist party, which led most peasants to immediately distance themselves from it.

An ND squad commander shared similar reasons for a loss of support for ND in some of the villages, in addition, and somewhat related to not setting up the right organizational village structures:

> We have to be very careful when taking decisions in a village. We have to assess what people feel too. In an adivasi village dispute once, we backed one group and attacked the other. As a consequence, that village stopped giving us food. We could not enter that village for fifteen years because of that small mistake. We have recovered that village now, but it took that long. When an issue happens in a village, we get angry and think it's a big problem, but the village might not think it's a major problem and vice versa. We have to be very careful with our actions in the villages and not over rely on one person.

Khammam province, predominantly, remained a shelter zone for the Maoists, due to the presence of ND, and its strategic location of connecting East Godavari to Dandakaranya, two strongholds of the movement. "The Asha squad was here. Its thirty members usually stayed together and only split rarely," a Maoist cadre in north Khammam informed us. He continued, "The squad stayed next to each identified village for at least a month. Those were villages we identified as militant due to the economic conditions, and other demographic and geographical configurations, where an even deeper movement could be built."[166]

Even as the Maoists have continued to seek, and find, villages to enter Khammam province, the presence of New Democracy has lingered, and demonstrates the same organizational patterns for achieving movement resilience as the Maoists elsewhere.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the eminence of villages or territories where armed movements operate in dictating insurgent resilience. The armed revolutions could not be sustained at the cost of, or outside of, the villages' structures around which they functioned. Forming village level organizations was essential for building the class-consciousness that anchored the mutual trust required for movement resilience. This triangular mutual dependency insulated both the armed squads and community collective action from threats of retaliation and repression.

As the Maoist movement evolved over thirty years, so did the organizational forms taken by the movement in the Telangana region. Starting with mobile youth groups, the movement, in some villages, eventually built an elaborate network of village organizations that contained a range of members, from sympathizers to cell members, undertaking diverse programs. This was dependent on the party being able to contain its own tendencies to undertake campaigns without reference to the will and support of the local community.

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[166] There were several villages in Khammam, which appeared conducive for radical organizing and ND had had an episodic presence, leaving room for other radical groups to enter. However, this sometimes led to a situation where peasants came to withdraw their support from all radical groups as a result of often landing up in the middle of clashes between the radical groups.

The Maoist organization was most resilient in the villages where they focused on building these village level relatively autonomous organizational structures that effectively built class-consciousness enacted through collective action, with guidance and training from the party. This dual structure was particularly effective in enduring the recurrent periods of repression.

Although environmental factors created pre-conditions, which determined the ease with which such organizational structures could be built, in many circumstances the movement overcame organizing challenges in unpropitious circumstances by finding organizational models that could produce this symbiotic duality, and failed in very promising locales when tendencies toward party dominance eroded village autonomy. The Maoists set up hundreds of village committees, even in very difficult plain areas dominated by capital-poor highly resistant landlords by finding organizational answers to the circumstances; and squandered away their environmental advantage in many remote forest villages, usually through indiscriminate violence that opened the floodgates to heavy police repression.

The importance of this structural logic to enduring armed struggle is validated by the parallel efforts of the CPI(ML) New Democracy in Khammam, where the same organizational factors, of organizational depth through village committees, accompanied with strategies designed to suit each local situation, to build a strong class base, facilitateed the resilience of armed movements. At the end, achieving regular communication between the movement and peasants, establishing multiple sources of information, and allowing for some organizations to work outside of the formal movement structure were most effective at at class formation. This case of independent evolution points to the importance of the dynamics described here in determining the fate of armed struggles.

# Chapter 3
# Analyzing the Organizational Field: Workers and Women

In the previous chapters, I argued that, for the Maoist movement, resilience relied on creating political consciousness, organizational foundations and unity outside of the armed structures. In other words – class creation was essential for survival.

In this chapter, I discuss the need to look for such evidence outside of the peasant village structures discussed so far.

Through an analysis of the Maoists organizational interaction with workers and women, two groups that occupy a crucial structural position in constituting a class, I examine the veracity of the class building agenda of the insurgents. I find that building and sustaining a class, was, indeed, a central organizing principle of the insurgents.

I outline my investigation and argument below.

Resilient insurgent movements create organizational structures that not only catered for the production and control of violence,[167] but also strived to create a unified class willing and able to act collectively. This intent, irrespective of its full realization, createed a conceptual separation between revolutionary projects from other forms of armed organizing. Several armed groups exist whose organizational structures do not seem to demonstrate a commitment to creating either a class wide consciousness, or allowing for independent political decision-making by the members of the class, outside of the armed structures that are governed by cadres.[168] These two factors, of raising political consciousness and giving autonomy to local groups, as discussed earlier— were most conducive to the creation of *class*. Put differently, violent movements that engage in class creation at local levels will outlast those that don't.

Since my argument for distinguishing among armed groups and predicting their resilience hinges so heavily on creating political consciousness outside of the armed structures, I look for evidence of this through an examination of Maoists' organizational interactions with other groups occupying the insurgents organizational field.[169]

An organizational field where organizational interactions are regulated, was originally defined by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as being made up of "those organizations which, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resources and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other

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[167] Kalyvas, S. N. 2006. The Logic of Violence in civil war. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[168] Such as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Jemaah Islamiyah (Vinci, A. 2009. Armed Groups and the Balance of Power: The international relations of terrorists, warlords and insurgents. New York: Routledge.)

[169] By investigating the relationship *between* different organizations, Mintz and Schwartz (1983) had found financial institutions or banking organizations control over corporations (mentioned in the previous chapter).

organizations that produce similar services or products."[170] The purpose of defining an organizational field was to investigate the role of organizational interactions in directing the trajectory of a field as a whole and the constituent organizations within it. That is, a field is constitutive of a community of organizations that interact more closely with one another (than actors outside of it) and come to open space for certain types of action, delimiting the space for others and eventually creating a degree of institutional isomorphism.[171] This is a fairly accepted aspect of an organizational field.

The more debated aspect has been the identification of all the organizations and actors that actually come to constitute the field and influence one another. Organizational scholars have developed several methods to identify constitutive actors, such as being involved in producing the same function[172] or being able to contribute to the same debates.[173] Since the question under investigation, for peasant insurgents, is whether class played a central role in its organizations, I focus on two organizations on the basis of their critical structural positions in class making.[174]

I examine the organizational structures set up by the Maoist movement in Telangana with workers and women. Two aspects are crucial: organization within these groups themselves and, their impact on the larger insurgent class struggle. Thus, I

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[170]Dimaggio, P. J., and Powell, W. W. 1983. "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields." *American Sociological Review*, 48(2): 147-60; p.148.

[171] Dimaggio, P. J., and Powell, W. W. 1991. Introduction. In W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis.* London: University of Chicago. p1-38; Scott, W. R. 1994. "Conceptualizing organizational fields: Linking organizations and societal systems." In H. Derlien, U. Gerhardt, and F. Scharpf (Eds.). *Systems rationality and parcial interests.* Baden: Nomos. p 203-221.

This had been useful to study how all organizations within an industry came to develop and choose particular organizational structures for instance (See, Mazza and Pederson 2004, for the development of the press; Scott, Mendell and Pollack (2000) for the medical care industry)

[172] Scott, W. R. 1991. "Unpacking institutional arguments." In W. W. Powell and P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis.* London: University of Chicago Press. p. 164-182.

[173] Hoffman, A. J. 1999. "Institutional evolution and change: Environmentalism and the U.S. chemical industry." *Academy of Management Review*, 42(4): 351-371.

[174] Structural position plays an important, though not sufficient role in the creation of a class. The apparance of exploitation and class antagonisms in particular combinations of working, living and social conditions are hence more disposed to the creation of class consciousness. (Foster, J.1974. *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns.* New York: St. Martins Press.)

examine the class-consciousness building agenda of these organizations and their contribution to the larger class formation agenda of the armed struggle.

I find the organizational structures of the workers movement to reflect the same essential organizational priorities as the general village organizations discussed earlier: to set up multiple levels of groups with political training that could operate non-violently, with autonomy, along guidelines set by the party. The women's village groups were similarly built in villages with the aim of strengthening the political consciousness and unity of the village groups. Much like the peasant organizations, these groups sustained the class building and unifying purpose, which took place alongside armed activity, demonstrating the centrality of the class unifying agenda of the insurgents.

I begin by first looking at the workers.

### 4.1 SIKASA: Militant Coal Workers Federation

In this section I focus on how and why the Maoists in Telangana – armed insurgents that worked predominantly with peasants and roamed the forests – took on the task of organizing coal workers. Further, I discuss their organizational structures and their interaction with the numerically larger peasant guerrillas. I find that when the Maoists were successful in activating miners and sustaining their collective struggle, the, workers' organizations strengthened class unity by supporting – and receiving support from – peasant organizations. I conclude that this pattern of contingent success is evidence for the centrality of class producing organizational structures in sustaining the insurgent movement in Telangana.

*Singareni Karmika Samakhya* (SIKASA), or Singareni workers federation, was officially started by the Telangana Maoists in 1981 as a separate organization to work exclusively with coal workers. However, unofficially, their workers organizations had started several years earlier, before the call of state emergency in 1975.[175]

Coal mine workers, along with workers in other large industries in the state had, from very early on, been subjected to exploitation from the growing class of money lenders we discussed in chapter 2. With encouragement from the management in industries, money lenders who had already successfully tied in workers through heavy debts, directed them to towns to become industrial workers. This earned them substantial commissions and at the same time guaranteed worker quiescence and compliance for the management, as a result of their debt relationship with the moneylender.[176]

As a byproduct, however, one of the first trade unions started in the state was in the Singareni coal mines, in 1921,[177] which formed the organizational base for workers

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[175] The then prime minister, Indira Gandhi called for a state of emergency which led to the suspension of elections and curbing of civil rights for 21 months, from 1975-1977.

[176] W.S. File No. 21 of 1352 Fasli (1943) & R. No. 5 of 1357 Fasli (1948); Memorandum of the Singareni Colleries Workers' Union, Kothagudem in A.I.S.P.C, File No. 68, Part 1. 1946-47.

[177] Comrade S.A. Dange, All India Trade Union Congress Papers, NMML, Delhi.

collective action.[178] This set the stage for the formation of numerous trade unions that successfully organized workers in other industries, such as the Azim Jahi textile mills in Warangal.[179] The number of trade unions in the state at the time of Indian independence, in fact, grew at a phenomenal rate, from seven at the end of 1948 to 123 by September 1950.[180] The communist led All Hyderabad Trade Union Congress that was formed in 1946-47. eventually became the most popular.[181]

By the 1970s, when the Maoist insurgency began organizing in the villages, the communist led trade unions in the towns had started to come under flak for corruption.[182] Hence the coal mines offered two opportunities for the Maoists.

One, the opportunity to integrate the industrial workers into their political fold. Coal workers, accustomed to and aware of the power of organizing, but dissatisfied with the unions that represented them, were readily accessible because they possessed the key collective orientation that lay at the foundation of Maoist organizing. Further, since workers came from different caste groups, the coal mines created conditions such that workers could be unified— finding a route around one of the movements largest challenges on the ground, of unifying across caste groups and along class lines. Thus, if the goal of the insurgents was to build a strong class based movement, the coal workers appeared to best fit the bill.

Second, the mines offered high potential for success because of the vital economic position they occupied – the coal industry accounted for the chief source of energy for most other large industries in the country.[183] Coal workers, through their

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[178] The workers had organized a militant strike in November 1922 for better wages under the guidance of a sympathetic labour contractor (Reddy Interview 21-12-1984 in Reddy, R. R. 1990. Industrial Relations in India. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, p. 130)

[179] Despite failing to win any large victories due to suppression by a strong management and the police (Reddy R.V. 1987. Economic History of Hyderabad State (Warangal Suba): 1911-1950. New Delhi: Gian Publishing House: p 535). The Singareni workers had for instance, gone on strikes for a 12.5 per cent increase in pay, or payment of a bonus, night allowance, declaration of public holidays etcetera (Ibid.)

[180] Hyderabad Government Bulletin on Economic Affairs, Vol III, No. 9, September 1950, p 805.

[181] Reddy, R. R. 1990. Industrial Relations in India. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, p 108.

[182] Ibid.

[183] In the year 1982-83, the highest consumer of Singareni coal was the power sector at 52.28% (Annual Report and Accounts, the Singareni Collieries. Co. Ltd. 1982-83). Although the state government owned 50.79% of the undertaking by 1982-43, and the central government the rest, coal mining was initially undertaken by the Hyderabad (Deccan) Company Ltd., which was incorporated with the British starting in 1889. The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. was further incorporated into this company in 1921.

disproportional impact on the political economy of the region, thus, possessed far more leverage than other categories of workers. Through being able to utilize the workers positional power, organizing coal workers first was a more guaranteed route to winning demands. This success could then, more easily, be translated to other worker groups by linking different workers' organizations, as well as having a ready model available.[184]

The power of the coal miners as a result of their economic leverage over the state, as well as their unrest is reflected in the frequent number of strikes they organized all over India, during the years of the formation of SIKASA. For example, while strikes in the public sector in India accounted for 45.5 per cent of total loss of man days in 1980-81, the coal industry accounted for 29 per cent total loss of man days in those years.[185] Further, among the public industries, those in the state of Andhra Pradesh (Telangana) accounted for the highest industrial disputes – 40 per cent in 1980 and 37 percent in 1981.[186] Of this, the Singareni Colleries, that extracted coal, accounted for 24.6 per cent, 47.3 per cent and 70.4 per cent of lost man days from strikes and lockouts in 1971, 1976 and 1981 respectively.[187] It is also worth noting that Singareni Collieries employed as large as 81,000 workers in Karimnagar, Khammam and Adilabad (the last two provinces being those under investigation in our study). Table 8 shows the strikes and man days lost per worker in the Singareni Collieries in the years 1969 to 1984.

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Since the production of coal was meager, the Nizam's government took responsibility to develop coal mining in the state and acquired 88 per cent of company shares on 14 November 1944 (*H.E.H The Nizam's Government: statistical year handbook*, 1941-42 to 1944-45, p 1125.) It was in 1956, after the integration of Hyderabad state into India that the Government of Andhra Pradesh took over the controlling interests.

[184] The Maoists created many other workers unions later, such as with daily wage labourers, bus drivers etcetera.

[185] Reddy 1990, op. cit. p. 8-9. Statistics of strikes and lockouts in India for the years 1977-2008 by economic activity reflect the consistency of the highest number of strikes in the manufacturing and mining and quarry sectors (ILO http://laborsta.ilo.org/. Accessed March 2016)

[186] Reddy 1990, op. cit. p. 9.

[187] Ibid.

**Table 8**: Number of strikes, cumulative percentage change and man days lost per worker in Singareni Collieries (1969-1984)

| Sl. No. | Years | No. of Strikes | Cumulative Change (%) | No. of man-days lost per worker |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1969-70 | 36 | - | 2.2 |
| 2. | 1070-71 | 64 | 43.75 | 2.8 |
| 3. | 1971-72 | 60 | -6.67 | 4.7 |
| 4. | 1972-73 | 93 | 35.48 | 4.1 |
| 5. | 1973-74 | 120 | 22.50 | 3.8 |
| 6. | 1974-75 | 87 | -37.93 | 2.5 |
| 7. | 1975-76 | 19 | -357.89 | 0.4 |
| 8. | 1976-77 | 12 | -58.33 | 0.7 |
| 9. | 1977-78 | 73 | 83.56 | 2.9 |
| 10. | **1978-79** | 185 | 60.54 | 13.5 |
| 11. | **1979-80** | 376 | 50.80 | 9.9 |
| 12. | **1980-81** | 360 | -4.44 | 9.0 |
| 13. | **1981-82** | 212 | -69.81 | 9.3 |
| 14. | **1982-83** | 448 | 52.68 | 10.0 |
| 15. | **1983-84** | 460 | 2.61 | 16.6 |

Source The Personnel Department, the Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. in Reddy R.R 1990, p188.

The above evidence suggests the criticality of the coal sector to the local economy and its immense potential for strengthening the Maoist insurgent movement among the working class, in addition to strengthening the peasant struggle.

Since many coal workers maintained strong village linkages, travelling back during harvest season to work as labour, there was an opportunity for infusing villages with class driven unity created in the mines. Further, it contributed to the goal of creating networks between peasant and industrial workers, which were also facilitated by the location of some mines in rural areas. A worker organizer with SIKASA, thus claimed continuity in Maoist strategy even across the urban-rural divide: “50 per cent of the mines fell under plain –peasant mixed caste areas, and 50 per cent in tribal areas. That created a lot of potential for the workers movement to link widely.”

The mines also fell inside what the organizer called the Guerrilla Zone of the party. This further facilitated strengthening peasant-worker linkages.

Below, I elaborate the organizational structure of SIKASA to examine its actual purposefulness at creating a class of workers and, at the same time, contributing to peasant class building.

### 4.1.1 Class building and resilience: SIKASA’s organizational structure

Singareni coal mines were state owned and spread across three districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, and Khammam provinces. Started in 1921, the coal mines had led to townships, bringing mixed economic and caste groups together as workers.

Recognizing that mobilizing around towns, especially with workers, required a unique organizational form, the Maoist party created a separate wing for the task, which belonged to neither the forest nor plains division. The organizing division came to be called the Singareni Belt Committee (SBC) received intensive guidance directly from the

Maoist State Committee, and was required to coordinate with the district level committees in each of the districts or provinces.

SIKASA utilized several of the organizational components used by peasant organizations; demonstrating the efficacy of the insurgents at being mindful of local issues and developing organizational capacities for building class unity, and ultimately, sustenance.

Further, what proved to be an inadequate organizational form for sustained support in the plain areas of Warangal, the one-person central organizer (CO) system with lean organizational base structures, proved to be perfectly suited to the contained mine conditions.

Despite minor differences in organizational form, the types of organizations that emerged among workers, and the workers' actions, provided evidence of the centrality of class building considerations in the working of the militant workers movement. That is, the Maoists could have chosen several pathways to mobilize workers, especially in the context of an already potent, violent peasant struggle in the villages. In both the mines and villages, the same path – of building local organizations – that led to class building and resilience, was chosen.

Of the many possible routes to organizing, the armed insurgency seemed to pursue one of working with multiple categories of workers and their families, and empowering them to drive much of the organization. SIKASA, in a piecemeal fashion, brought in all the organizational layers that made for effective and class unifying armed organizing, with workers leading many of the decisions, as I demonstrate below.[188]

To begin with, unifying workers against the management was a challenging task. One of the earliest organizers shared the highly divisive circumstances around which the movement started mobilizing, with the goal of narrowing those cleavages.[189]

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[188] Evidence of this is visible from the first overt mobilizations, in 1980-81, where the insurgents took on an officer's issue (extending their mobilization efforts), who was in dispute with the management over pay. The insurgents significantly added to the relay hunger strike by the officers, which led the management to in turn suspend the officer. The workers, who had been organizing with the insurgents for a few years by then, went on a strike to have the officer reinstated, and won (Interview with radical student organizer (January 2014).

[189] Workers were divided in three categories: time-rate, piece-rate and monthly rated. The time-rate workers were further divided into nine categories, differentiated by skill levels. A Coal Wage Board was appointed by the Government of India in 1962 to look into wages and working conditions, where these divisions remained an accepted nomenclature. As workers agitations continued, the Joint Bi-partite Wage Negotiating Committee for the Coal Industry was formed in in the 70s and arrived at the National Coal Wage Agreement in 1975 (NCWA I). They compressed the nine categories of works men into six (Reddy 1990, op. cit. p. 86).

> There was no unity among workers. There was a rift between piece rate workers who were either temporary, and those that had a permit. There were also divisions between job rate workers, which were also broken into several worker categories and divisions, such as first category workers, second category workers and so on, all of which commanded different pays. The first category workers would not help second category workers, who would not help the third category workers, and so on. There were also divisions between piece rate and job rate workers. The management would also hire temporary workers, in case the permanent ones went on a strike. This too created a rift.
>
> A further challenge was created by the fact that workers possessed a half peasant- half worker mentality, since all Singareni workers came from the villages where many still had one or two acres land, and relationships with people. While that was an advantage in many respects, since peasants could help support workers when they were striking or facing repression through providing food and shelter, the problem was that when a strike was called, almost all workers would go home to their villages and wait it out, taking care of agriculture in the meanwhile. This weakened the impact of strikes. So our goal was to unite the workers as a class, without actually distancing them from the peasants. They had to take turns to stay on in the towns, and struggle for the strike to succeed. We needed to change their mentality.

SIKASA began to organize the workers by first becoming active in towns and villages—among coal workers' families. Unconvinced of the ability of armed insurgents to organize workers, the Maoist district committee had, until then, brushed aside the idea of forming a separate workers union, fearing that it would lead to further divisions among the workers.[190]

The connect with coal workers came when Central Organizers (CO) in towns, in addition to organizing villages near towns, began to organize students into study groups (which eventually turned into the Radical Students Union). Through the students, the CO entered into a dialogue with the coal workers, often students' own family members, who lived in coal townships. Issues regarding mining trade unions working in cahoots with the management and the deplorable living conditions of workers, not addressed by existing unions, came up (See Appendix 7 for causes of strikes between 1983-84, with living conditions constituting the third highest reason). There were two big issues that faced the townships: harassment of women by local thugs, and the lack of clean water and sanitation. The CO or city organizer entered the *bastis.* or townships, with discussions on these issues.

The Maoists ability to identify local issues, just as they did in the villages, thus led to their first instrumental contact with workers as well. In successful locales, the armed CO's built the organization gradually. Smaller meetings were followed by larger

[190] Interview with a former SIKASA CO (January 2014).

organized protests in the townships addressing *basti* issues. This generated substantial local support. A worker described the process in one town:

> There was a protest against the manager's son for raping a woman household worker from the basti. All the women the party organized came forward during this time. The police fired at the protesters, and a person even died in the firing. But the workers stayed strong. Our processions were 4,000-5,000 people large. Two thugs were also later killed by the party. That's how everyone started supporting the party.

*Basti* committees were then formed in the townships with coal workers and their families.[191]

The earliest organization among the workers were these organically emergent *basti,* or township, committees, with other organizations forming only later, with the expanding demands that workers articulated as the viability of protest (and armed struggle) became visible. This showed the malleability of the insurgents and set the foundations for a resilient presence. Resilient foundations, which in turn created a sustainable movement, were created as a result of activating local organizations that, due to their relevance, in turn, activated continuous local energy and debates. This same strategy was seen, not just among coal workers, but also among the railway workers unions or stone workers unions..

With the formation of the *basti* committees, a radical student youth was usually sent to give political classes in townships every fifteen days, to keep people energized and motivated. A party member spoke about the effectiveness of using students and youth as mobile groups for dispersing information, as a start to creating a class-conscious structure. Their role, unlike in villages that experienced an episodic presence, remained, importantly, that of relaying information and bolstering support, rather than directing organizations.

> The party recognized the need to build a strong organization with students, youth, peasants and workers—all together. Often a father was a worker/peasant, and son a student or just youth—the entire family was always affected. So it was necessary to bring everyone together. Hence RYL- the youth league, – and RCS- the radical students unions – were also created…..
>
> Youth and students were important to the worker and peasant struggle by adding to workers processions and relaying information. They would sing, give speeches, and walk with the workers. Until 1980-1981 the workers-youth-students units were mixed, but as the number of sympathizers grew, separate cells were created for workers,

[191] A previous organizer in Adilabad claimed 75 per cent of the mine workers at the time didn't have living quarters, drinking water, electricity or sanitation.

> youth, and students. This was because the party realized that students and youth worked differently from the workers. They were ready to go to jail anytime, and were more fearless about becoming exposed. But workers who were in cells and units had children and families. They too were ready to risk their lives, but tried to continue working in the mine, along with being a party worker. Mixing youth, student and worker units would have led to the problem of exposure thorough linkage, for workers. So the students and youth were used accordingly.

The insurgents had to build structures within the *bastis* to mitigate the risk of losing links with workers. This problem had affected armed organizers in the villages, and could, to a lesser degree, because of the constrained geography of townships, affect the armed coal worker organizers. Developing local organizations and sympathizers was therefore conducive both to building class-consciousness through local level discussions and resilience through repression-immune organizations.

As in peasant organizing, workers actions led to some exposed members going underground; but the party tried to increase the term of the non-exposed over ground members since the political training they received and direction that they gave to the local committees was not easily replaceable. Additionally, *worker-members* generated a vibrant political environment, which could, in turn, generate a large number of part-time party members and sympathizers, also invaluable to the party.

Part time member workers were highly valuable in sustaining the struggle through sustaining political discussions and demands – working at creating a class, similar to the village peasant committees – even during repression.

Full time Maoist members grounded themselves in political training, focusing on letting more sympathizers emerge. As in villages with a resilient movement presence, a *base of sympathizers* was important to movement survival, since they formed a large mass of the class that could be relatively repression free.

The guerillas, however, as in the villages, also spent effort at working with clandestine trained workers that could direct the people's organizations.

Hence, small, permanent groups of ten to twelve selected *militant workers* were recruited and trained by the party. Such workers took the lead, even in the underground mines. The CO met with them two to four times a month to have political discussions, where the workers shared information with the insurgents. Such information sharing was crucial to the workers and insurgents being in sync with one another and determinative of movement resilience, like in the villages.

A SIKASA Belt Committee (SBC) member, who coordinated COs activities across the three districts, emphasized the decision of the party to remain a primarily political consciousness raising body.

> The workers were the main force. The job of the party organizers or CO was only to act like a political committee. Our primary job was political: to raise consciousness, form cells, give training, educate, and bring

> unity.[192] Each organizer would move individually with a gun doing this. Every single day many different issues would come up in mines, as would strikes start and fail. That was common. We couldn't take that seriously. The local non-party workers handled 98 per cent of those issues. It was if strikes were elongated, that the SBC would become part of the decision-making. The organization would not work if the SBC had to take a call on every decision!

The Maoists, set out to create a deep organizational structure, and waited for the right time before they actually brought such struggles forth. That right time came with the declaration of Emergency in India. According to CO Ramakant, the Emergency allowed management to exploit workers further – even cutting pay. The party took advantage of these conditions to rally workers together and thus to strengthen their presence.[193]

What followed were activities that lent to the creation of a class. The CO and committees were essential to the consciousness-raising project, which took months, since the workers found their conditions as industrial workers much less exploitative than as peasants in the villages. The struggles until then, had been limited single issues, rather

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[192] SIKASA even had pamphlets on workers of the world, Kashmir in the 1990s, on the Bhopal gas tragedy. During the Iraq war, they formed an anti-war committee in the area. When the well-respected trade unionist Niyogi was killed in Maharashtra, they organized a big rally.

[193] Before SIKASA was officially formed in 1981, they led their first strike with the militant workers that had been politicized over the years. The strike lasted 56 days, with workers demanding that withheld wages be returned, and against the management's decision to cut eight musters for each day a worker was on strike. This was the result of radical workers going on strike a short while earlier against the manipulation of health certificates by the company hospital, on behest of the management. Workers who had on-the-job accidents were sent to the company recommended hospital for treatment. According to the law, if the workers accident kept her/him away from work beyond nineteen days, the accident was considered major, and liable to compensation from the management. Often the management was accused of not writing accident reports as a result of this, or ensuring the worker was discharged from the hospital before the 19th day, with a fitness certificate. One such incident in 1981 led to a workers protest, with the injured worker, along with a few other being arrested. The next shift went on strike to show their solidarity; so the arrested workers were let off. Workers thought their strike had been a success, but when they returned to work the next day, the management had put out a notice accusing 500 workers from two shifts going on an illegal strike, and, as a consequence, having to face a cut of eight musters each. This pushed the workers to strike again on April 18, 1981. The April 18th strike spread to other mines, with higher management relenting, and going to talks with the unions. Not being an official union, SIKASA, whose workers were primarily responsible for the strike, could not be represented at the table. SIKASA decided to go official and register as a union within the year itself.

than class building. Shyam, a CO from the time, articulated the movement's goal of raising workers consciousness and creating a class.

> Although the conditions were terrible, the workers who had, until then, been peasants, thought their relative condition was better in the mines than in the villages, where they worked for 24 hours and got only ten kilos of rice. In the mines they worked for eight hours and got 100 rupees, and sometimes a sick leave, as well as compensation for death. So they thought, why ask for more? In the village they didn't even get that.
>
> But the underground mines had a lot of accidents. Workers would attribute accidents to ill fortune. They would say, 'it's because I didn't have a bath…. because my fate is bad… because I didn't pray": absolving the management of all blame. So the CO started to work inside the mines too, as a worker, with committees to create awareness among workers, to explain why problems were arising, and find solutions. We needed to create workers consciousness and unity of struggle along with a 'struggle mentality.

Towards a gradual building of organizational depth, *shift committees* were started inside mines. They served the role of political workers groups, capable of taking decisions, *within* each shift, inside each mine. Every mine had their workers divided into three shifts. The *shift committees* were given political training and made responsible for politicizing workers during their respective shifts. They worked, like the village committees, in raising workers consciousness, unifying them and directing the struggle.

Although the workers became politicized through the committees, their unity could be strengthened only through coordinated action. To this end, different shift and mine committees were linked, to coordinate with one another. In case of a strike, this gave labour the power to shut down all mines. Such coordination and its related potential to build worker unity slowly took the workers organization towards becoming self-reliant

The previous CO, Ramakant elaborated on this strategy,

> We organized the workers such that until the shift that called for the strike, declared it over, no other shift workers would report to work. We made workers work in unity, and realize that the management also created the rift between temporary and permanent workers. They saw that with their own eyes. The management would pit the two categories of workers against one another.
>
> We also told workers that after a strike was called, all workers—even those in second and third shifts had to come to the work-site immediately, to show their unity and strength, and carry out processions together. If the management didn't concede to the workers demands in a day or two, despite all shifts going on strike, we asked for the strike to be spread to other mines. That was the only way to deal with the managements' mentality; they weren't willing to concede to even a ten

> paisa (cents) increase in pay to the workers. There could be crores of rupees worth of loss of production because of the strike, but the management would still say, 'let's not concede.' So spreading the strike was the only way to unify workers, increase workers leverage, and make them confident of their strength.[194]

As the movement started working with a growing number of workers' committees after 1981, new issues emerged, as with the village committees in peasant areas, all of which the Maoist party decided to support as a way for workers to become political, unified and confident. A CO at the time told me,

> New issues emerged, such as the struggle for permanent workers. For instance, if workers had been at the mine for one year, the fight was to make them permanent. Underground workers who had worked 190 days, and surface workers who had worked 240 days were entitled. That meant, in one year everyone could be made permanent. However managers would never let workers complete 190 musters.195 We had to unify workers, and as issues kept emerging, took them up one by one, with workers, and weaved a strong struggle.

The Maoists endorsed and supported spontaneous strikes, deferring to local leadership, as they did in villages where they were successful.

The mines were not conducive to a long decision making chain and, in towns where they were successful in building an enduring movement, the insurgents made significant organizational arrangements to cater to this specific detail. This again demonstrated the ability of the Maoists to tweak structures to fit local conditions.

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[194] The CO said the management was particularly inflexible because they feared any concessions would further strengthen the already strong leverage the coal workers possessed. Singareni, as previously mentioned, was a key industry and had given rise to many other tertiary industries, which were dependent on it. For instance, NTPC, the National Thermal Power Corporation.

[195] They would suspend workers just before the 190 days were complete, to withhold benefits. That kept workers temporary for six or seven years, receiving neither increments nor benefits. Temporary workers were employed to work on a piece- rate basis. Their job was to be coal fillers. But the management would use them to first do one or two hours of the work of job rate workers; then switch over to piece rate work of coal filling. Thus the management was extracting two hours of free work from the piece rate temporary workers, apart from diminishing the strength of permanent workers (Coal mine worker, Interview December 2013, Adilabad).

In mines, sometimes, problems such as lack of ventilation suddenly emerged and needed immediate attention, requiring quick decisions from the workers themselves.[196] This furthered the power to the workers themselves, and created greater chances of success.[197] Therefore, the clandestine cell members, cell units and cells in-charge only provided a general direction to the underground committees.[198]

The challenge for Maoist organizers came in extending the single organizer structure into the rural mines— which had workers, but were situated in villages, where peasants lived as well. Until then, the peasants and workers helped one another by providing shelter and information during repression, apart from partaking in political discussions. But when it came to organizing workers in the villages, the Singareni Board Committee, instead of remaining focused on SIKASA alone, expanded its organization to also start a peasant committee.

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[196] A worked explained, "If there was no water or ventilation one day, or an accident report, or lack of safety precautions – we needed to act right away. We could not wait. Immediate solutions were necessary. If there was a shortage of even tubs (to carry coal), then managers or owners mentality was to get workers to still keep producing as much by rotating the tubs. They always wanted to provide less (to the workers) and get more. Their mentality was to exploit the fact that coal fillers were piece rate workers; believing they would somehow find a way to fill coal, to make their money. So we would say we will not work till we get water, till we get more tubs, till we get shoes. That way the workers also started to gain more confidence in collectively negotiating their rights." (Interview, December 2013, Adilabad coal mines)

[197] There were however checks and balances in place. The workers were trained to follow certain procedures, such as complain to the management first, before taking any steps. The CO Ramakant said, "processes were usually followed, if workers decided to strike on their own, the party decision was to back the workers nonetheless, making way for workers decisions in the organization. The CO would however follow this up with an evaluation session, and use the action as a teaching experience. The Singareni Board Committee (SBC) never had a disagreement with the workers about a strike either, because as soon as the workers declared a strike, they would come in contact with an SBC organizer within one or two days, since the organizer lived in the same community. There they would discuss if the strike should be supported, extended or not, and if the demands were critical."

[198] The cell members, workers themselves, helped direct the bargaining and were the base of the party structure in the mines. Cells had units, which contained three to five members who the party district committee member chose after general observation, as well as workers observations, and impressions of one other. Cell units were given different tasks and small party jobs such as providing shelter, food and receiving the party. The cell-in-charge received political training from the district committee member or CO, and then passed it on to other unit cell members. All cell members received political training. A cell in-charge said, however that during repression, the frequency of classes reduced from once a month to once every six months.

The commitment to a class unifying organizational structure compelled the decision, which if absent could well have shown a workers-only militant organization in mining villages—enough for the movement to map a presence, and survive in the village. This organizational choice, to also bring the peasants in, pushed SIKASA into an organizational modality that required it to expand from the single organizer system, requiring greater armed protection.

This entry of SIKASA into militant peasant organizing in villages led to a much more direct connection between the urban-rural/ peasant-worker movements, such that events in one started to directly impact the other. Hence at the height of police repression in the villages in 1985, SIKASA faced a loss of many organizers. The effects were felt in the mines, where the party stopped being able to provide political training to workers, and began relying on secret cell members alone.

Such a situation would have resulted in terminating insurgent presence in the absence of shift committees in the mines and *basti* committees in the townships, but the local committees maintained a political presence, aiding resilience. However repression did have its impact. It decreased the ability of the guerrillas to impart direct political training to newer workers and the thinned down informational sources created the potential for mis-communication and dominance of armed cadre: the inherent risk that remained in every iteration of the guerrilla organization.

Indiscriminate violence or dominance by a few organizers, or cell members in workers committees, occurred, decreasing the support of a section of workers, as witnessed in villages with episodic movement presence. However, the relatively dense concentration of workers, as compared to the villages, did not result in consequences as dramatic.

A SIKASA shelter house resident narrated an experience of such an episode and its consequences on movement support,

> A CO at the time killed two people without party permission—out of a personal vendetta. All the workers came to know of this and it led to a split in support for SIKASA. People who gave shelter also started to dominate since they had access to the CO, so they got away with giving him the information they wanted during repression. These types of occurrences certainly divided support for the movement, although it didn't dissipate it.[199]

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[199] The party tired to avoid such episodes by asking the shelter provider if they were settling any village disputes. If they responded affirmatively, COs would start avoiding that shelter and choose another presuming potential dominance by the shelter provider. This however, sometimes led to annoying the shelter provider and giving in to working with the police. However, shelters in townships were crucial to organizers. They also became structurally important as a place where the organizer and SBC member could meet. Although the CO and SBC member had different shelters (with the SBC member knowing COs shelters), it was necessary to designate some shelters as mixed, so that the

Even so, losing control of party members remained a danger that accompanied the combination of repression and clandestinity. This demonstrates the transmission of the same organizational weaknesses with the utilization of similar organizational structures. The challenge, for the movement, remained in keeping cadre from falling prey to this.

In 1985, the government officially banned SIKASA. Close to sixty organizers had been killed within the five-year period of 1980 to 1985.[200] The area committees (ACs), which consisted of three or four single organizers in each area (since the Singareni Belt Committee could not meet individual organizers), continued to work until 1999, with the number of organizers steadily decreasing. According to an SBC member, "after that only three or four centers had organizers left. We were finally left with only one SBC member, and one AC, with all other organizers killed."

However, despite its shortcomings, and the decline of cells, cell secretaries continued to work. The organizational structures had bred resilience, a class of revolutionary workers.[201]

There were several other workers' groups who were also organized along similar structures, and fell within the purview of the organizational field of the armed peasant struggle. AKASA, the radical government bus drivers union made its presence felt with a 40 day strike in 1996 against the ill treatment of a bus driver by a local political leader. The organization was banned in 2002. The rickshaw pullers, *hamalis* or daily wage labourers, cotton workers, leather workers, auto workers, jeep workers, granite workers, were all organized along similar lines. In every case, the organizational choice was centered around class building, with detailed strategizing of the party with workers depending on local needs. Ultimately, most organizational autonomy remained with the workers.

Armed organizers, in a bid to help the workers negotiate, maintained detailed records of industrial activity, strategized and supported with armed action. For example, an organizer in a town in north-east Adilabad had detailed data on tonnes of production per day from the cotton and paper mills, and the amount of coal transported by the railways —information with which the insurgents helped the workers strategize. Knowledge of the physical geography of the towns where they organized, further allowed the organizers to continue working with the various workers organizations till such time that much of the organizational layer was killed.

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two could to meet. If the organizers showed the slightest carelessness, it led to shelters becoming exposed. But it was difficult to know which shelters had become exposed. The police would keep a watch on some shelters for a few months, before attacking.

[200] According to a cell-in-charge (Interview, February 2014, Coal Township, Adilabad).

[201] In an effort to retain the class organizing effort among workers, Maoists started SAJJAC, Singareni Joint Action Committee, in 1996. The movement initially encouraged the formation of multiple unions in the mine, one for each job to move workers away for the five unions that existed at the time, and then in an effort to unify the workers, and bring the 86 workers associations together, started SAJJAC. Splits in the leadership, and its association with SIKASA brought down the joint committee in 2001.

In sum, the coal workers federation brought in all the organizational layers that made for effective, and class unifying, armed organizing, where the workers led many of the decisions. The Maoists used mobile youth groups to disperse information and provide strength to protests; started different committees in the townships and mines to raise workers consciousness, bring unity and address multiple issues.

The workers linked with one another as well as the more encompassing peasant organization, demonstrated the centrality of the class-building project to the insurgents.

Next, I discuss the movement's interaction with women.

### 4.2 Women's organizations

Women cadres in armed insurgencies have been studied in their roles as full time armed workers. Generally, discussions revolve around which women join, their positions within an armed group, and their experiences on leaving clandestine life. Briefly, most studies boil down to the fact that armed insurgencies leave much to be desired in terms of the range of women's issues taken on,[202] their treatment of women within a masculine, male-dominated insurgent structure,[203] and the challenges such women face in giving up revolutionary life.[204]

So far, however, I have shown the significance of organizational structures beyond the formal armed structure of insurgencies, in determining the strength and sustenance of cadres and movement ideology. I have called out these other structures to exist within the organizational field of the armed insurgency. The worker's union was one, like much of peasant organizing, which occupied a majority of the movement's resources and also remained centered on class building and unity. The workers union also added to the peasant struggle— by radicalizing workers, and building multiple levels of organization, which regularly interacted with the peasants, supporting them as political comrades, and providing shelter during repression.

Women require a separate discussion, since unlike workers and peasants— women's structural position is always spread across multiple all classes. Women didn't constitute a class by themselves, although, significantly, they together with men who

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[202] Kampwirth, K., 2004. *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution*, Ohio University Press: Athens; Kannabiran, V. V. and Kannabiran, K., 2004. "Women, Rights and Naxal Groups" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39 (45): p. 4874-7; Manchanda, R. (Ed.), 2001. *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency,* New Delhi: Sage Publication.

[203] Shayne, J. D., 2004. The Revolution Question: Feminisms In El Salvador, Chile And Cuba, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; White, A. M., 2007. "All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women Are Mourning Their Men, but some of us carried guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon's Psychological Perspectives on War' *Signs*, 32 (4): p. 857–84.

[204] Roy, S. 2012. *Remembering revolution: Gender, Violence and Subjectivity in India's Naxalbari Movement*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

shared the same relationship to production as them, formed a potential class.[205] Having said that, a woman's structural position was determined by two factors. One, like men, her position in the labour market – that is, her occupation and wages. Second, by the indirect consequences of her oppression in a capitalist system. The latter had consequences for her interaction with social, political and economic structures, leading to her restricted mobility, rights and participation, and forced subordination to men.[206]

Since the latter – women's oppressed position with regard to men – affected women from all economic positions, this became the focus of the Maoists in mobilizing women. It became the easier way to gain women's support, without losing that of men, since it didn't threaten men's power in any substantial way, such as, question their rights over land.

Although maintaining such a narrow agenda for several years, which revolved around indirect issues in women's oppression, such as alcohol prohibition, invited criticism against the Maoists, alcoholism among men had negative consequences on the financial and physical health of women from all classes (by creating indebtedness and frequent wife-beating) in the villages. Through taking up the issue of alcoholism, thus, the Maoists were able to mobilize women from multiple economic groups.

This, mobilization of women from multiple economic groups, proved significant in spreading the Maoist agenda to several different village groups— cross cutting those from which men had joined as full time members, as well as those which had chosen to remain outside, like *dalits* in many villages occupied by dominant landlords. Women's mobilization was hence achieved on a broader basis that that of men.

Several studies have found armed insurgencies to attract women on a broader basis, from varied structural positions. This can be deduced from the reasons women join guerrilla movements.

Roy (1992)[207] showed that to many working class rural women, radical movements appealed more greatly because revisionist, slow reformative type movements in one way or another reinforced the norms and institutions that legitimized the very same factors responsible for the deprivation of women. Revolutionary movements held the promise of a break from old traditions and customs.

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[205] Reed, E., 1970. "Women: Caste, class or oppressed sex," *International Socialist Review*, 31 (3): p. 15-17 and 40-41.

[206] See, Gailey, C. W., 1988. "Evolutionary Perspectives on Gender Hierarchy," In Beth B. Hess and Myra M. Ferree (Ed.), *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research* (California: Sage, p. 32-67; Leacock, E. 1979. "Class, Commodity, and the Status of Women," In Stanley Diamond (Ed.), *Toward a Marxist Anthropology.* New York: Mouton, p. 185-201; Sacks, K. B. 1975. "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property," In R. R. Reiter (Ed.) *Toward an Anthropology of Women.* NY: Monthly Review Press: p. 211-234.

[207] Roy, D K S (1992) *Women in Peasant Movements: Tebhaga, Naxalite and After,* New Delhi: Manohar Publications. New Delhi.

Some women's choice to join revolutionary struggles was also driven by their absolute poverty and landlessness,[208] or was centred on getting justice, urging several women to join to fight back.[209]

Women also entered revolutionary movements because of additional advantages it had in terms of mobility and lesser codes of morality. Stories of women from the LTTE in Sri Lanka revealed how several women joined the movement for freedom from what they perceived as constant restrictions placed on them by society.[210] Many women in the Malayan Communist Party echoed this, joining the movement to escape unwanted marriage.[211]

Lastly, apart from class and caste variations in women's entry into armed movements, were generational ones. Often, young women chose to join revolutions because of the inability of formal politics to appeal to them,[212] with women being recognized as political actors for the first time during revolutions.[213] Along with each of these differing reasons, came differing family and financial support, networks, education and political experiences.

Viterna (2006)[214] located women with comparable structurally varied positions in the FMLN guerrilla forces in El Salvador. She found three types of women guerrillas differentiated along the lines of previous political experiences and supportive organizational and family links, and suggested the influence of these varied mobilization paths on how women continued their activism even after the war.

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[208] Hodgson, M (2000) 'Girls swap diapers for rebel life' *Christian Science Monitor,* Vol. 92, No.222: p6.; Roy, D K S, 1992, op. cit.

[209] Gautam, S, Banakota, A and Manchanda, R. 2001. "Where There Are No Men: Women in the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," In R. Manchanda, op. cit. ; Lanzona, V. A. 2009. *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press; Roy, A (2011) *Walking with the Comrades*, New York: Penguin Books.

[210] Alison, M. 2003. "Cogs in the Wheel? Women in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam." *Civil Wars*, 6 (4): p 37-54.

[211] Tan, A. 2008. "The forgotten women warriors of the Malayan Communist Party" *IIAS Newsletter* (Women Warriors), Vol. 48: p 12-13.

[212] Banerjee, P. 2001. "Between Two Armed Patriarchies: Women in Assam and Nagaland," In R. Manchanda, op. cit.

[213] Jaquette, J. S., 1973. "Women in Revolutionary Movement in Latin America" *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 35 (2): p 344-354.

[214] Viterna, J. S., 2006. "Pulled, Pushed, and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army" *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(1): p. 1-45.

Women, coming from differing structural positions, became a crucial link between the movement and masses. They contributed to consolidating peasants, in a different way from which the village peasant committees had been able to do. Hence women's organizations became a part of the larger organizational field, contributing to the larger class-unifying goal of the armed insurgency.

In the following section I discuss two women's organizations, the *mahila sangam's* or village women's committees, and the two-person women's group, which was a part of the armed squad. Through a deliberation on where these organizations were formed, and the issues they addressed, I show the role they played in creating vibrant village dynamics that led to class unifying opportunities.

This does not, of course, take away from wider debates about lack of women's leadership in insurgent movements, or the prevalence of patriarchy in roles often assigned to women cadre. That discussion, however, is outside the purview of this analysis. Here, I focus on where village women's committees were started and compare it to where they were not, the differing agendas that were undertaken with women, and their consequences on the movement at large.

Each of these, I find, was tied to the existing class dynamic in the village, and the mobilization goal of the movement itself—providing evidence of the role of women's groups in the wider mobilization agenda of the movement. These women's groups became a part of the organizational field, complementing the work of the Maoist organizations, as discussed below.

### 4.2.1 Village women's committees

*Mahila sangams* were formed through a similar process as the peasant organizations, where the Maoists, on consultation with the village, chose members. Such organizations, though, did not emerge everywhere. They were most likely present in villages where the Maoists had already established other organizational structures, such as the peasant committee, village development committee, and *gram raksha committee* or village militants' organization. Their emergence, when it did occur, resulted in further consolidation of support and continued movement activity.

The reason behind other organizations opening space for the village women's committee was simple—with a larger number of committees, came more diverse programs and entrenched movement organizations, which the women members then added to, and further sustained. On the contrary, in villages where the movement took up the singular program of land occupation, through the peasant committee, or on their own, only numbered active women from the village joined the movement, since this excluded women from any direct benefits.

In fact, giving women rights over land held the risk of losing men's support in such villages. For example, in Passar village in south-east Warangal province, where the only program the movement undertook was that of land occupation.

Passar was located in a semi-forest territory, where the landlords had diversified to small rice and cotton mills. The Maoists didn't hold any party meetings or develop organizations before establishing their presence with the distribution of 100 acres of a landlord's land to all the landless peasants in the village. The landlord fled to the town in fear, but when police repression increased, was able to not only come back and claim his land, which he later rented out, but also identified three active cadre from the village,

who the police went on to kill. There were no women that were mobilized to take up specific issues in the village, especially since the movement was appealing to the landless; while remaining silent on the lack of women's rights to land, which risked the movement losing its base of male supporters.

This is not to say that there was an absence of women from the village that joined as full time underground cadre; three women did, but mostly out of their poor personal financial situation rather than anything else.[215] This was the result of the distribution of land, which had made for very narrow class appeals, from which women were excluded. Women's committees were not formed in such situations, with the only active committee in Passar being the youth groups.

With the absence of village level committees, the Maoists were also consequently unable to maintain their presence. Hence a vicious cycle was created where village women's committees were not formed, and could not be formed, as the movement chose the modality of pursuing land occupation without the formation of village committees.

The same was witnessed in Relu village in central Warangal, which was a majority *dalit* village without any real landlord, where, initially, apart from the peasant committee, no other committees were developed. The dominant upper caste man was given a warning by the Maoists and later killed. The movement then took on programs of distributing empty government plots to the villagers, and started a campaign against village boys from a local community that extracted toddy from tress, fermented it, and sold it as local liquor. The boys were publicly questioned about harassing women and the squad, which according to a peasant from the village, directly took up an anti-liquor campaign, leading to 23 women joining the party in a single day. A women's committee could have been developed at the time, but since the main campaign had been land distribution, women's committees were not going to serve as a bridge in building class unity, and a large number of women had entered the movement already.[216] Instead, the party started a railway workers union, since several of the peasant families had railway workers, which helped consolidate most of the village. Women's committees remained absent.

In villages in south-west Adilabad province, the same phenomenon, of occupying lands and directly campaigning against alcohol, mobilized some women to join, such as in the majority *dalit* village of Joya. There was no attempt made to bring more classes in to the movement through diverse programs, or establish women's committees. The party put flags on landlord's lands, while fighting against bonded labour and general wage increases.

Sudha, who joined the movement from the village, coming from a bonded laboring family, said the songs by the cultural wing of the party inspired her to join. "There was also a liquor movement started in the village by women in the party, because

[215] As a comparison, nine men had joined as full time and many others became part-time members.

[216] Since the women lacked political training, however, most left within a week and returned to the village.

of which some women joined," she said. Sudha joined the underground squad in 1994 and said the popularity of the anti-liquor campaigns led them to last until 1998.

These anti-liquor campaigns sometimes took place directly through the party, and at other times, through the village women's groups. Where it took place through the local women's groups, the consequence was more than just a few women joining the movement; it was women interacting with several groups of men on the guidance of the party, sustaining the relationship of the party with the masses, and creating a vibrant class dynamic, and unity, by protecting village cadres against state forces. The following example from villages in north-west Adilabad demonstrate precisely that.

In north-west Adilabad, where the party, in contrary to villages like Joya, started numerous committees, to pursue different programs such as irrigation development, seed distribution and school improvement, women's committees with five to six women were started in every village.

In Shalam village, which was occupied by *gond* families, Akhila, a woman from the village who went on to become a section commander in a platoon, spoke about regular meetings of women's committees in the village, and their role in safeguarding village cadre and movement structures against the state.

> Everyone would go for the meeting in the village. I joined the mahila sangam or women's committee. We had five members in this committee. The dalam or squad chose five of us who were educated, who could talk to the public, and were smart. Our job was to question the forest officials and fight; not run away like women, until then, used to do. That way we could support the entire movement in the village, making it stronger. The sangam met when there was an issue to discuss. Otherwise we would meet when the dalam or squad came. They would come often then, and even stay on for eight to ten straight days.
>
> There were also many akkas (women) in the dalam who would have a separate meeting with us. They would ask us about women's problems and teach us about our rights. They taught us that when we are protesting, no man is allowed to lay a finger on us. We would also tell them about problems specific to tribal women, like how we were not allowed to leave our homes even before marriage, not talk to people, forced into early marriages, and oppressed by powerful men in the village (patel-pujari and mahajan) who would tell us what to do all the time. So akkas would teach us how to fight that too.
>
> We as adivasi women were able to collect all men from the village and speak to them about women's issues—initially, only in front of the dalam, since we were afraid to address men on our own. As time went by and men realized we were associated with the dalam's mahila or women's team, we started to address them on our own.

Akhila, as an exposed *mahila sangam* member then joined the squad during repression, and along with other women from the squad, became in charge of meeting the village women's groups. She discussed the issue of alcoholism being significant on the

agenda, including other issues that were specific to *adivasi* women and their subjugation, as well as issues that needed sensitive handling. When women's groups became involved in sensitive marital issues, rather than it being left to the commander and armed squad, the decisions were more acceptable to the entire community. This was a learning that came after many bitter experiences of the party in villages where it had become directly involved in personal disputes.[217] As Akhila herself explained it,

> We, women in the squad would go to the villages and meet the mahila sangams, also recruiting women. We would ask about women's problems— if a man hit someone, or if he left a woman etcetera. We would then inform the commander. The commander would guide us about what to do. We would then get back to the village and guide the mahila sangam on whether to punish or leave the person. If a man left a woman, we would ask him to marry the other woman if he wished, but also pay maintenance to the first wife. These were sensitive issues, which could harm support for the movement—so we would assess the feelings of the women's groups, and sometimes leave them to handle it.

In these areas, women cadre further extended the agenda to even take on matters of economic equality, something that few women cadre had been able to do with village women's committees elsewhere. The pattern of issues addressed by the women's groups seem to suggest their correlation, not just with the existence of other village committees (which we have already shown the women's committees to be correlated with), but also specific class compositions in the village.

When majority of the village fell into the same class, as was the case with many villages in north-west Adilabad, and party programs extended beyond land occupation— apart from organically emergent issues around women's general oppression by men (which led to questioning restrictions around her mobility, decision-making, and subjugation to violence by men) — the women took on issues of wage equality. Had the prevalence of patriarchy within the movement been sufficient in explaining the narrow agenda of alcoholism pursued by the insurgents, *mahila sangams* everywhere would have remained bound to it. Instead, the fact that the agenda was broadened in some areas hints at the presence of other dynamics at play.

Women's committees undertook demands of wage equality when both men and women being mobilized into the struggle from the village came from the same class, and the issue extended beyond that of land occupation. The class dynamic created under these circumstances was such, that questioning women's economic position, even early on in

[217] Villagers in north-central Adilabad such as Kobad, an all *gond* village had protested against the direct interference of the movement with personal matters in the village. A peasant recollected the villages terms to the party, "We asked the party not to interfere in personal matters. We said, 'like you take our names, let there continue to be the circumstance where we also say your name.' The commander then spoke to his cadres asking them to rectify."

the movement, was not detrimental to organizing most men and women in the village. That is, although the demand for equal wages in villages of north-west Adilabad went further than just the demand for higher wages, it did not go far enough to result in fissures in movement mobilization by appealing to a narrow group within the village. In such areas, since both men and women who were mobilized belonged to the same class (with a smaller variation in classes within the village), both, economic and non-economic women's issues could be taken up, without alienating potential support for the movement. Thus, in the areas that developed strong and resilient movements, which women's issues were addressed was dictated by local class dynamics, and determined by the local women's organizations who acte.

Since land occupation usually appealed to one class of men more than others, just as women's wage issues were more pertinent to some groups of women—they were not as easily combined with diverse party programs that also appealed to other village groups. Such challenges were virtually non-existent in villages where majority of the population was from the same class. Akhila elaborated the diverse issues the party took up (not always successfully) in the relatively homogeneous villages (caste denomination villages) in north-west Adilabad province, where she mobilized women with the squad for a few months before being posted away to join the military platoon.

> We encountered man-woman sort of problems in all caste denomination villages. These were not problems specific to adivasi villages. The biggest problem in every village was men getting drunk and hitting women. So we would tell men not to drink. Women would be mobilized in such villages to even shut liquor depots. We had a big campaign against alcohol. We, the women squad members, would direct the women's committee according to zila or district committee guidelines. However, we managed to make the greatest changes in women's conditions in adivasi villages. For instance until earlier, widows were not allowed to attend marriages, child marriage was prevalent, also a man of any age who qualified or fit the appropriate god category[218] could sit with a few men from the village and ask to marry a girl. Married adivasi women were not allowed to eat eggs, wear blouses, and made to sleep outside during mensuration. The party questioned these practices through backing the women's committees in the adivasi villages. In such villages, faced with lesser resistance, we also tried equally hard to fight for equal pay for women, although it was somehow never implemented.

In other areas, where village conditions already allowed mixed caste groups to be potentially mobilized into the struggle, such as Benga in central Warangal, where almost all peasants belonged to a similar class: owned between the same, two to four acres of non-irrigated land and had a family member each working in stone quarries — the

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[218] Exogamous phartries of clans that are based on the number of gods worshipped: four-god, five-god, six-god or seven-god groups.

women's committees, again, took up the demand of *higher wages*, since most men and women in the village were wage workers. The other big program organized by the insurgents was the ownership of part of quarrying rights by the stone workers.

The women's committees did not, however, raise the issue of *equal wages* in these setting, since the peasants in Benga village were not as yet a highly coherent class, unlike the *adivasi* villages in north-west Adilabad. In villages like Benga where the wage issue was raised nevertheless, a large number of village women became sympathizers, or members, and contributed gradually towards better class coherence in the village by supporting other committee programs.

In a third category of villages, where land occupation was the focus, but women's groups functioned, and addressed alcoholism, the Maoists always also gave women members training in protecting the village against the police.

Although this did not result in wage struggles by the women, they did lead to women supporting other village groups. For the women that became exposed and joined the underground squad as a result of their political agitations, when they returned to their villages at a later date, the existence of the women's groups guarded them against being questioned in the village. Such women could easily move back into village life without a stigma attached to women cadres in less politically conscious villages. Such previously full time women cadres often become a part of new movement organizations in their villages, continuing to contribute to the movement.

Sneha narrated her story of having to go underground but returning and marrying a member of the village militant organization, the *gram raksha* committee. Women like her, after leaving the underground, kept the movement vibrant in the villages by taking on the work of reaching out to families who had lost a Maoist sympathizer or active member. The families were assisted financially and legally, to the degree possible, but more importantly recognized for the contribution made by their relative to the movement. This spurred a continued discussion about the movement, and kept other village members from feeling their contributions would be left forgotten. Women were integral in forming such structures, which supported the peasant movement in indirect ways, forming a part of the organizational field of the Maoist peasant struggle. Sneha explained the role women played in her village, in central Warangal:

> Women would take food for the party to the forest and attacked police when they hurt people. We would have women's committee meetings, and many of us active women even carried mirchi or red chili powder with us everywhere we went, in case anyone tried to attack us. Women together even freed a comrade from the police by throwing stones and stopped the police when they were trying to take our election boycott posters off. During elections, a woman comrade and I even took the ballot box and threw it in a well and ran away. Village people even started to throw bombs at the police, but the CO later told us not to repeat that, because it could hurt other people too. After this episode, the woman comrade and I returned to the village two days later to find that almost the entire village had been put in jail. I too went underground, and came back to marry a village militant. Women like me have remained active in the movement

through joining other committees. My children are also involved with the movement now.[219]

These cases show the variance in women's groups in villages, and its relation with changing mobilization patterns in the village. This provides evidence of the organizational contribution made by the women's groups; which, not being limited to including the women's agenda in armed revolutions, also supported movement groups in strategic ways at varying times. The formation of women's committees, and the issues they addressed were in many ways tied to the class dynamics within the village.

As I have shown, women's committees' bolstered movement-mass dynamics that were already in place, and in a sense, cross cut caste and class group membership towards creating larger alliances. The two person women's formation discussed in the next section worked in much the same way for the movement.

### 4.2.2 Two person women's formation

The two person women's formation was set up to be a part of the armed squad in villages where the movement had already established its presence. By the early 1990s, the Maoists had come to realize the limitations of the mobile youth groups in class building, and to a degree, of the LGS or local guerrilla squad in doing the same. While the LGS was still utilized in areas where the Maoists had not been able to set up any movement structures, the two person women's formation came to be a good alternative where the movement had some pre-existing structures. Hence, although both, the LGS and two person women's group were a part of the same squad, they catered to completely different villages and functional requirements of the movement.

The two person women's group was set up to work as a smaller mobile organization, something the armed squads always required, not being able to move in large formations in several situations. Their role was to meet and organize the women regularly in active movement villages. But, additionally, to keep the armed cadre informed on matters in the village, in general. The pair (of squad women) soon came to engage with the entire village; with the villagers keeping them safe, as well as safely transporting them to the next village for further organizing. In this way, the women went from one village to the other, setting up women's village committees, and giving political education. Their position became invaluable in maintaining movement contacts in the village, as well as bringing the village together.

Sudha, the woman cadre from Joya village who had come from a bonded labour family, worked in this position for a few years in the central villages of Adilabad. She described how the women's pair functioned:

> Two women from the squad would go in civilian clothes, organize women in the village, and stay there. Villagers would protect them and even get them from one village to the next. While mobilizing, women would

[219] Sneha's daughter was killed in a police encounter in March 2016.

> sometimes face problems from men. But because the party was strong in the villages, when we women would visit, there wasn't much of a problem. If village elders or alcoholics opposed, we would complain to the squad and they would help. We would meet the armed squad once in 15 days to report our progress, in any case. When we first started to organize women in the villages, we had difficulties.
>
> People in the village would stare at us. So to deal with that, many women cut their hair. We took six months to form the mahila sabhas or women's groups in the villages. Then we got many mahila sabhas together and held meetings. In these political meetings, women were given an option to join the party, and were given a preference. Women from many different backgrounds joined.

Sudha said the women's groups they formed were gradually encouraged to become a part of other struggles as well and strengthen village campaigns. Influenced by the coal workers union, the women took up similar struggles in their village. For instance, "there was a *paleru* or bonded labour movement. We asked for the same rights for the bonded labour that SIKASA asked for the coal workers—two days rest a month, one lakh compensation on death, shoes, protective clothing when spraying pesticide, rights to take some crops for a living and so on."

Akhila, who had also worked in a two-woman group in Adilabad for a few months spoke about the methods they used to maximize the support of all groups in the village towards the insurgents, sometimes with fatal consequences.

> I worked with the women's wing along with Jyoti akka. We found it easier to be more effective in the adivasi villages, since we could stay at the village patel's house, who was the most respected person in the village. In plain areas, it was much harder since there was no single respected person in mixed caste villages, and no forest cover. In non-adivasi villages, we were more cautious in our working because sometimes it would result in the villages trying to sit and teach us what to do instead. We couldn't even use a stick on them because that would definitely produce the consequence of us not being let back into the village. Using a stick… that would have been a big mistake. What kind of example would we be setting? We tried, in various ways, to organize in such areas, but after Jyoti akka died in the process, it was stopped for a while.

In the plain areas of Warangal however, the armed squads experimented with starting women's *dalams* or squads in 1997 to back women organizers and groups. Rani, the commander of one such squad, said,

> We had women PRs or provisional revolutionaries, who were a rank above party members. They would sometimes be recruited in the village itself

> and roam in pairs. They informed us of women's problems in their areas. Subsequently, the women's dalam would try also and become involved in solving them. Even as the women's dalam, we always first went to villages where the movement was already strong.

Through the small mobile women's groups, women in the villages were encouraged to help out in the circulation of party magazines, and, though uneducated, with the party inspect *anganwadis* (government run crèches), and mobilize against alcohol, developing a more embedded movement organizational structure into the village. A woman sympathizer from a village in south –Warangal spoke about women being brought together to handle complaints. "Once when the CO, Ashok, was in college in Hanumakonda, a girl complained that a man had run away after promising to marry her. She was a vaishya (non upper caste girl). So all women form the village found the man from Khammam and got them married. Ashok missed his exams because of this."

Women came to contribute to the Maoist agenda of class building, although the decisions made were not necessarily unquestionable.

The two-woman groups "got women out of their homes, and taught them politics," as a woman sympathizer from Warangal described it. The women's organizations — in the squad and village, apart from politicizing women, strengthened the Maoist peasant struggle through widening the reach of the movement and strengthening ties between the village and movement. More importantly, however, they contributed to strengthening the village groups and programs itself, succeeding under many circumstances to bring the village together. There were many episodes where entire populations participated in forcing the police out of their villages when they entered to arrest a woman organizer.

Women organizers and women's groups thus forwarded the movement agenda of class building, indicative from their strategic deployment by the insurgents.

**4.3 Conclusion**

I began this chapter with the aim of examining if class building was indeed the common denominator when the Maoist movement was successful in building an effective and resilient presence in differing areas with differing challenges.

Through an investigation of the insurgents' interaction with two structurally crucial actors organizations in class building: workers and women, that constitute a class-centered insurgencies' organizational field, I examine the characteristics of the organizations built, and their contribution to the larger class building agenda of the armed struggle.

I find the Maoists decision to focus on organizing the coal workers, from early on, to be influenced by the opportunities it created to consolidate varied caste groups into a single labour class. This opportunity was created by the leverage the coal workers possessed over the political economy of the region.

Of the many routes to interacting with the workers, the insurgents chose one, similar to the villages, of building local organizations that led to class building and resilience. When successful, the peasants and workers shared support from each other's movements.

The areas of presence of women's groups in the villages and the two-woman teams, demonstrated similar organizational priorities of the insurgents— of expanding the building and sustaining of class conscious relatively autonomous organizational structures. Women's committees bolstered the movement-mass relationship through strengthening collective actions by participating in village programs and as well as forming a militant force against the police.

The wider dimension of women's structural position, spread across caste groups, created the opportunity to widen the reach of the movement in the village, towards building a class and sustaining presence, through it.

# Chapter 5
# Quantitative Evidence of Organizational Determinants

Investigating insurgence presence though media reports and case files on violent incidents is not new.[220] In fact, violence has been used as a short hand method to decipher the presence (through locating the area of violence) and strength (through the intensity of that violence) of rebel groups.[221] Recent scholarship, by researchers such as Kalyvas, has however pointed to a more complex, and perhaps sophisticated, relationship between violence and rebel group control and presence. In his book, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*,[222] Kalyvas dispelled with the popular notion of the use of indiscriminate violence by insurgent groups. Rebel groups exercised varying degrees of violence, and this correlated, according to him, with the differential strength of the guerrillas. Where armed groups were the strongest, insurgent violence was the least.

Donatella della Porta made a similar case for the widely used label, terrorist organizations.[223] Dispelling common beliefs about the indiscriminate violent nature of such groups, della Porta argued, their actions were best explained by their membership into *clandestine* armed groups. Clandestinity was the major driver of actions.

The implications of clandestinity were directly related to the quality of the armed actors relationships with civilians. Armed underground groups, which lacked sufficient informational sources from within civilians, were driven to using indiscriminate violence, as was the state, without legitimate sources of information. Civilians were crucial to both, insurgents and the state for this reason.

Thus civilians could become agents of the state, or else, agents of the insurgents. Kalyvas suggests the function of violence by both sides (insurgents and incumbents) was to influence that decision of the civilians.

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[220] See, Dasgupta, A., Gawande, K., Kapur, D. 2015. "(When Do Anti-Poverty Programs reduce Violence? India's Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Maoist Conflict. SSRN; Gomes, F.J. 2015. "The Political Economy of the Maoist Conflict in India: An Empirical Analysis." *World Development* 68: 96-123; Sen, R. and Teitelbaum, E. 2010. Mass Mobilization and the Success of India's Maoists. (Working Paper)

[221] Such as, Hallberg, J.D. 2012. "PRIO Conflict Site 1989-2008: A Geo-Referenced Dataset on Armed Conflict." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29(2): 219-32; Holtermann, H. 2014 "Relative Capacity and the Spread of Rebellion: Insights from Nepal," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

[222] Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. The Logic of Violence in civil war. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[223] Della Porta, D. 2013. *Clandestine Political Violence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Insurgents, according to Kalyvas, used violence to decrease the threat of defection of civilians to the state. This, was needed least in areas where the insurgents had complete control, but most where the insurgents had hegemonic, but not absolute control.[224] More importantly, however, was the other parallel phenomenon of denunciations. Violence by insurgents was at the same time also the result of a high degree of intimacy with the community, with civilians denouncing one another, to the insurgents. In areas of contested control, such denunciations were highest, with locals using insurgents to settle village feuds.

Actors in villages and insurgents could therefore gain from entering into a relationship with one another. The insurgents received information from villagers, necessary to convert the area into a base zone. The villagers, in turn, got the guerrillas to sort out local issues for them. Hence selective violence served everyone.[225]

While Kalyvas must be credited with attributing agency to civilians, his widely cited work falls short on one major front: discussing organizations and their consequent impact. It may be perfectly plausible for each actor to work towards maximizing gains, but an equally important dimension of collective action is the *process* of change and the many dialectical dynamics, resulting from a people-movement exchange. That is, unlike the somewhat individual view that scholars of armed conflict have taken, villages that have, even if in the past, been organized into collective action, are likely to have been impacted by it in myriad ways. Unlike markets where exchanges are more impersonal, in movements, these exchanges and organizational forms leave an impact on both sides. To drive the point home, if we assume $t_1$ to be a time before the movement organized in the area and $t_2$ to be the period after, there will be observable differences in a village between $t_1$ and $t_2$, resulting from its interaction with the movement.

Scholars on armed groups have remained silent about these organizational dialectics between armed insurgencies and civilians, which, as I have shown, have a significant effect on movement resilience. This is reflected in the organizational structures of the insurgents.

In this chapter, I analyze Maoist incidents in India through each of their underlying organizational capacities. That is, incidents are reflective of organizational structures of the movement on the ground and a careful examination of such incidents can demonstrate different rebel organizational modalities and enable an examination of their effect on Maoist strength and resilience. The first step towards this analysis would, however, require that we consider all events that are suggestive of a Maoist presence— not being limited by ones which result in a casualty, as has so far been the case.[226]

I have argued that for the Maoist insurgency, class centered organizational strategies— of forming village organizations in an attempt at class creation was pivotal. This would be evident in the quantitative data where,

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[224] Kalyvas, K., N. 2006, op. cit, p 319.

[225] Ibid. p 390.

[226] Refer to footnote 1.

*Non violent incidents are more frequent than violent incidents*. This would indicate that violence (resulting in casualties) was only one of the types of activities carried out by the Maoists. Much of their focus was on non-violent interactions with peasants.

*Village activities are the primary predictor of Maoist resiliance*. If organizing villages was, indeed, crucial to the movement, then they would focus on this aspect in areas where they were present.

*Lower civilian casualties in areas with high Maoist presence***.** Attacking civilians creates an episodic movement presence, thus, areas with consistent movement activity (through the year) should report fewer civilian casualties.

I address the first two propositions in section 5.2 (following data and methods), on organizational modalities in movement strength and resilience, and the third in the section 5.3 on civilian casualties.

**5.1 Data and Methods**

I compiled newspaper reports of Maoist activity for the years 2010 and 2012 from the frequently used terrorism database, South Asia Terrorism Portal.[227] A compilation of reports from all major English newspaper dailies, the portal hosts information on every reported Maoist incident. Thus far, studies have used available data to code and analyze casualty counts. However, I code every report of movement occurrence, designating an organizational tag for each event, based on field observations and interviews from Telangana.[228]

Table 9 shows the list of codes developed followed by examples of the type of events that fell into each category. I divide all incidents into three broad categories:

[227] Several papers have used this as a resource to analyze the Maoist movement, such as Gomes, J. 2015 op. cit.; Kapur et al. 2012. "Renewable Resource Shocks and Conflict in India's Maoist Belt."CASI Working paper; Sen, R. and Teitelbaum, E. 2010. Mass Mobilization and the Success of India's Maoists. (Working Paper) (www.satp.org)

[228] I have already discussed the advantages of accounting for both violent and non-violent events.

**i)** Those which indicated a moderate to strong movement organizational presence in the villages— through holding village meetings, having support in carrying out activities, trainings and taking up local people-oriented issues.

ii) Those that were non- determinative of the strength of the movement's village level organizational structures, such as carrying out anti-state activities. For example, the activity of blasting police vehicles could be carried out both with and without the support of locals.

iii) Those actions, which had a potentially negative impact on movement-village relations, indicating a less-than-positive relationship with the community, such as attacking civilians for being informers.[229]

**Table 9**: Organizational codes and descriptions of newspaper data on Maoist incidents, India

| Code (0,1) | Operationalization |
|---|---|
| **Moderate- strong village organizational structures** | |
| Information- logistics-operational support | Supplying information, literature, arms, food or shelter to the Maoists. Additionally supporting them by assisting them in storing arms or in a Maoist action. |
| Presence | Indication of some organizational support from villages in the area. Maoist activities here include organizing training camps, forest meetings, having bunkers, arms dumps, hideouts, weapon manufacturing units. Maoist posters in the area or using the area for negotiations also indicated presence. |
| Village activity | Holding meetings in the village. Also indicated indirectly through arrests of large numbers of squad members from a village, arrests of two-woman teams, construction of martyr pillars, organizing activities such as unfurling black flags. Also meetings held by cover organizations. |
| People-oriented activity | Engaging in activities aligned to local needs, such as attacking people for harassing *adivasis*, for mistreating labour, demanding an increase in wages, organizing anti-liquor activities, anti-mining activities. |
| **Undetermined strength of village organizational structures** | |
| Anti-state activities | Incidents ranging from attacking police, state political representatives, state property, to putting up anti-state posters and banners. |
| Anti-business activities | Attacking business institutions, equipment, contractors, extracting levy, or disrupting business activity. |
| Encounter(s) with police | An event where police chance upon Maoists and exchange fire. |
| Maoist(s) arrested | Identifying Maoists, and arresting them. |
| Maoist(s) surrender | Officially surrendering to the Indian state. |
| **Negative- less than positive village organizational structures** | |
| Maoist attack on informers | Attacks of civilians alleged to be informers |

[229] Attacking civilians, which I showed in chapter three, often result in an episodic movement presence.

| | |
|---|---|
| Affecting civilians | Directly targeting civilians as punishment, inadvertently killing civilians, issuing threats (of punishment), or partaking in anti-state activity that could also impact civilians, such as stoppage of road construction. |
| Maoist clash | Political clashes with other left political groups |

I present a few examples of incidents under each organizational category, to describe the range of incidents covered in the dataset.

**i) Moderate- strong village organizational structures**

Activities that were indicative of a positive movement-village relationship and village collective action structures were listed under this category. They suggested a regular relationship of armed cadre with the people in the villages, resulting in support for insurgent survival and activities as well as village meetings and people-oriented actions, such as demands to increase workers wages.

The following organizational modalities were coded as indicative of a moderate to strong village organization.

*Information-logistics-operational support*: This category consisted of incidents that indicated the most tangible measure of support from the community to the movement, such as providing the movement with food, arms, information or shelter, and participating in Maoist actions.

If aides, supporters or cadres were arrested from villages, I take this to be reflective of some organizational support from the village of providing shelter or aiding operations, apart from including direct reporting on village organizational support.[230] Such support (of storing arms for cadre and supporting them by providing food, shelter and information), as explained by villagers in Telangana, usually entailed participation of several peasants from each village and was followed by years of village level organizing by the movement.

Examples:

- "Woman cadre arrested with Maoist literature in *x village*"
- "IED weighing 25 kilograms found in *y village*"
- "Maoist sympathizer collecting *tendu* leaves money and storing arms and literature arrested"
- "One Maoist and journalist who helped procure arms caught"

*Presence*: Activities indicating organizational support from villages in the area in terms of supporting armed training camps, and hideouts were suggestive of both Maoist presence and village support. Interviews with Maoist commanders from Telangana confirmed this, with the commanders often mentioning holding Maoist camps and basing hideouts around organizationally active villages. Even pamphlets indicated the presence

[230] Incidents that involved arrests of cadre outside of the village, were coded as non-determinative in terms of Maoist village links, and labeled as *arrest*.

of cadre, and organizational support in its distribution. Interviews with armed cadre from Telangana suggested that they rarely engaged in the task of pasting posters or distributing pamphlets, relying instead on the local community for such tasks.

Examples:

- "NIA says Maoist weapon testing labs set up in *x* forests. Rocket launcher being developed for the past few years. Material coming in trucks from various cities including Kolkata and Mumbai."
- "Pamphlets found saying sacrifice of woman comrade Saguna in May, will not go in vain"
- "Maoist camp, two Maoists, four ammunitions, blankets, utensils, tarred canvas and Maoist literature found"

*Village activity*: Field interviews with armed cadre in Telangana also suggested a fair regularity in attacks by the police during insurgent village meetings, or arrests in large numbers during village activities. Hence any arrests or encounters of large number of cadre within villages were taken to be indicative of an ongoing Maoist village activity. Other more direct instances of village activity were also reported, such as unfurling black flags (showing anti-state sentiment) or organizing village meetings. Village activity suggested a direct engagement in building village level organizational structures, potentially leading to class building.

Examples:

- "1000 elected *panchayat* body members have meeting with Maoists. Threaten to resign if government does not extend irrigation canal as promised."
- "Six Maoists holding meeting in a house with double barrel guns, and 30 villagers arrested"
- 17 Maoists encountered by the police in *x* village"

*People oriented activity*: Activities that closely aligned with local needs and demands of villagers were coded as being people- oriented. They were suggestive of stronger organizational village structures in the villages, since it often involved a longer period of interaction with villagers and other actors, to resolve.

Examples:

- "Maoists put posters and banners demanding a hike in *tendu* leaves procurement rate and support to the two-day *bandh* (closure)."
- "29 persons attending a closed-door meeting convened under the banner of Left Wing outfits like *x* and *y* to discuss problems of the local people."
- "Maoist literature, mobile phones, vehicles recovered after cadre blast bauxite mines, saying against peoples progress."

**ii) Undetermined strength of village organizational structures**

Incidents where the involvement of the community was unclear, were categorized as undetermined of the strength of village organizational structures. That is, the

involvement of the peasants in such activities or the relationship of such incidents on peasant support and village collective action structures was not easily interpretable. This included anti-state activities, anti-business activities, arrests of Maoists, surrenders by Maoists and encounters by the state of armed cadre. An encounter between the state and Maoists in the forests, for instance, did not revel the strength of the Maoists organizational structures with peasants in the area, justifying the label *undetermined village organizational strength.*

*Anti-state activities*: Such activities were generally directed against the police (attacking them or even planning an attack), threatening elected officials, targeting politicians, forest guards and government buildings. In such cases the Maoists links with the villages were unclear.

Examples:
- "25 Maoists blow up empty *panchayat* (local government) building"
- "Landmine weighing 15 kilos concealed under a culvert to kill police, found on the road"
- "Suspected Maoists kill police constable trainee in a crowded market place"

*Anti-business activities*: These ranged from collecting a levy from private contractors to actually impeding the working of private business.

Examples:
- "Maoists blow up a drilling machine of coal survey team"
- "Two Essar company vehicles set ablaze"
- "Maoists kill two CISF in iron ore mines. 24 Maoists, take away two guns"
-

I coded encounters by police, arrests and surrenders, which indicated that Maoists were in the area, as non-determinative of movement-village interactions to remain conservative, rather than overestimate movement-village organizational structures.

*Arrests*: When incidents involved one squad member arrest from a village, I made no assumptions about their activities in the village, presuming the cadre could be on a visit home or to relatives. On the contrary when two women cadres were arrested from a village (with single women arrests being rare), it was coded as village activity, since it was indicative of a village women's meeting or other smaller group meetings organized by the women cadre in the village, described by Maoist women in interviews in Telangana (See, previous chapter on workers and women).

*Surrender*: was viewed as an undetermined organizational activity rather than one indicating a negative movement-village interaction, since field interviews indicated the use of surrender by cadre, most often, as a means to ward off state pressure, rather than a symptom of negative movement presence. On most occasions it did not even indicate a break of cadre from movement activities, and only led to a change in the role served.

**iii) Negative- less than positive village organizational structures**

Incidents that were directly suggestive of a negative movement organizational structure, such as villagers protesting movement actions, or had the potential to dissolve village collective action structures, due to attacks on civilians, were categorized under *negative organizational strength*. It was indicative of a less than positive relationship of the movement with the local community.

*Maoist attacks on informers* and *clash with left parties*, both, for instance, were indicative of incomplete movement support in the area. However, they also had the potential of further distancing peasants from the movement, as a result of civilian killings. When civilians were killed without a mention of being informers, the event was coded as activities "affecting civilians," such as killing local political leaders.

*Affecting civilians*: Activities that directly or indirectly affected or inconvenienced civilians, and potentially negatively affected movement-village ties, were coded as *affecting civilians*. For example, threatening teachers to shut down schools as a symbol of protest against the state or punishing villagers on account of some wrongdoing. Although the decision to punish a civilian could have mass approval, I err on the side of caution, by coding such incidents as ones that could negatively affect insurgent-village relationships. Mistakes, like planting a landmine for police but instead mistakenly killing civilians, were also coded as negatively affecting movement organizing in villages.

Examples:

- "20 Maoists stopped semi-nude dance for a local deity, terming it vulgar. Assaulted ten village organizers."
- "Four Maoists kill *sarpanch* (local head) of village in a weekly market."
- "Maoists abduct railway station master and release him in an hour, unharmed."
- "JCB machine and tipper to construct *ashram* (tribal) school, burnt."
- "In a *jan adalat* (peoples court) Maoists banished six families from their village after finding them guilty of having one member each in the police force."

### 5.1.1 Data Sources

In addition to coding English newspapers, for two states, Andhra Pradesh (containing the now bifurcated state of Telangana, under investigation) and Bihar, I gathered data from regional or vernacular newspapers as well. Regional data ensured the inclusion of local and small-scale activities in the dataset, controlled for biases present in English dailies[231] and allowed for a closer additional analysis, in order to corroborate an insurgent movement sustenance matrix, applicable to the national English newspaper dataset.

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[231] Parameswaran, P. E., 1997 "Colonial Interventions and the postcolonial situation in India: the English language, mass media and the articulation of class." *International Communication Gazette* 59(1): 21-41.

An analysis of additional data from regional newspapers did not significantly change the trend or count of incidents in either Andhra Pradesh or Bihar and were thus added to the English newspaper dataset, for a combined analysis.

The final data set (English and vernacular papers combined) contained sub-national or province/district information as well as sub-province information for each of the Maoist incidents,[232] event time variables, and disaggregated casualty data (See, Appendix 8 for summary of variables).

I primarily relied on the method of ordinary least squares regression and principal components analysis, to parse out the effects of organizational structures on movement strength and resilience, using data for the years 2010 and 2012 (two most current years available in the dataset).

**5.2 Organizational modalities in movement strength and resilience**

In 2012, of the total 1222 Maoist related incidents, 85% of the events did not result in any casualty; that is, they would not, in most studies, fall under the category of violent events, such as killings or injury to police or civilians and be excluded from the analysis.

This demonstrates that a significantly larger number of Maoist events in 2012 were non-violent, confirming our first prediction that *non-violent incidents constitute a majority of the insurgent activities.* This formed the basis for further analysis.

Of all the events in 2012 that indicated Maoist activity in an area, violent ones were less frequent compared to non-violent ones, even when a broader definition of violence was considered. With the inclusion of non-casualty events such as issuing threats, burning machines, state's discovery of a cache of bombs by the roadside, which had the potential to cause casualties at a later date, under the category *violent*, the average number of violent to non-violent events for 2012 remained at 30% (See Appendix 9 for state's share of total violent incidents for 2010 and 2012).

What then predicted the number of Maoist events?

In this section, I analyze organizational factors and their impact on the number of events in consequent years — using number of events as an indicator of movement strength and resilience. In order to test which organizational factors best determined resilience, I use data from 2010 and predict its impact on the number of events two years later, in 2012.[233]

Firstly, the predominantly violent incidents, categorized as negative collective action organizational structures were found to relate poorly to the number of strong organization incidents, already suggesting violent incidents to be a poor predictor of

[232] Several scholars (Gomes 2015; Iyer 2009) have demonstrated the advantages of using sub-national data or data collected at the district level within a country in addressing heterogeneity in collective action within a country.

[233] I analyze the years 2010 and 2012 since they formed the two most recent years in the dataset, and could hence be corroborated even with contemporary Maoist incidents in India.

strong movement organizational structures. Table 10 shows the results of a zero inflated poisson regression for the number of negative organization incidents for 2012, using the constituents of strong organization and undetermined organization incidents for 2012.[234]

**Table 10**: Predicting count of negative organizational incidents in districts in 2012

| **Organizational Modalities 2012** | **Number of negative organizational incidents 2012** |
|---|---|
| STRONG ORGANIZATION | |
| Information-logistical-operational village support (log) | 0.41<br>(0.30) |
| Indication of village organizational presence (log) | -0.03<br>(0.27) |
| People-oriented activity (log) | 0.08<br>(0.29) |
| Village activities | 0.10<br>(0.28) |
| UNDETERMINED ORGANIZATION | |
| Anti-state activity | 0.55**<br>(0.25) |
| Anti-business activity | -0.05<br>(0.35) |
| Encounter | -0.001<br>(0.23) |
| Surrender | -0.11<br>(0.31) |
| Arrest | 0.12<br>(0.25) |
| *Constant* | -1.71***<br>(0.31) |
| N | 129 |
| Mean VIF | 1.81 |

Note: Log Likelihood= -76.90092; Chi square= 31.61 (p <.001)

Apart from the variable anti-state activity, none of the other variables, all non-violent seem to be good predictors of the count of negative incidents, thus demonstrating limitations in traditional measures of violence in explaining Maoist strength.

The same trend was found within incidents in 2010, with strong non-violent organizational incidents being poor predictors of negative violent activity. Table 11 shows the results of a zero inflated poission regression predicting the count of negative incidents in 2010, using the independent variables of the sum count of strong and undetermined incidents for the same year.

[234] A zero inflated poission regression was found to be most appropriate for two reasons. One, the occurrence of negative organization incidents seemed to be independent of the previous event, indicated by the lack of over-dispersion in the data (Over-dispersion log likelihood p>.10). Second, a majority of the count data converged around zero.

**Table 11**: Predicting count of negative organizational incidents in districts in 2010

| **Organizational Modalities 2010** | **Number of negative organizational incidents** |
|---|---|
| Strong organization | 0.29<br>(0.22) |
| Undetermined organization | 0.56**<br>(0.22) |
| *Constant* | -1.80***<br>(0.33) |
| N | 140 |
| Mean VIF | 2.07 |

Note: Log Likelihood= -102.94; Chi square= 42.48 (p <.001)

The count of strong organizational variables in a district were found to be non-significant in determining negative organization, validating again, the weakness of predominantly violent acts in relating to other organizational modalities of the movement.[235]

To deconstruct the organizational modalities and their underlying dynamics in predicting the number of incidents (strength and resilience) of the Maoists, I ran an ordinary least squares regression. I used incident counts of organizational modalities of the Maoists in the year 2010 to predict variance in the number of incidents in districts in 2012. Three organizational variables seemed to be particularly crucial to movement strength. One, informational-logistical-operational support, a tangible measure of strong community support for the movement; two, village activities, and three, anti-state activity. Table 12 shows the results.

[235] See Appendix 10 for distribution of casualties by state in 2010 and 2012.

**Table 12:** 2010 organizational determinants of number of incidents in districts in 2012

| Organizational Modalities 2010 | (1) One-factor Strong org components [i] | (2) Two-factors | (3) Three-factors | (4) All factors combined |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information-logistical-operational village support (log) | 0.42*** (0.11) | 0.21 (0.18)** (0.12) | 0.33 (0.19) ** (0.12) | 0.13 (0.07) (0.13) |
| Indication of village organizational presence (log) | 0.05 (0.14) | | | |
| People-oriented activity (log) | 0.17 (0.19) | -0.04 (-0.01) (0.25) | | |
| Village activities (log) | 0.17 (0.16) | 0.14 (0.04) (0.21) | 0.70 (0.23)** (0.35) | 0.53 (0.17) (0.34) |
| Anti-state activity (log) | | 0.77 (0.55)*** (0.12) | 0.83 (0.60)*** (0.12) | 0.69 (0.49)*** (0.12) |
| Village activity- Anti State (Interaction) | | | -0.27 (-0.25)** (0.14) | -0.28 (-0.25)** (0.14) |
| Arrest (log) | | | | 0.34 (0.20)** (0.13) |
| Attack of informers (log) | | | | 0.40 (0.14)* (0.19) |
| *Constant* | -0.12 (0.09) | 0.70*** (0.08) | | 0.63 (0.08) |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.10 (pseudo) | 0.49 | 0.51 | 0.53 |
| N | 184 | 184 | 184 | 184 |
| Mean VIF | 1.84 | 2.03 | 3.75 | 3.45 |

Note: First number refers to unstandardized coefficients, second number (in bracktes) refers to standardized coefficients. Numbers below show standard errors.
* significant at .10 level; ** significant at .05 level; *** significant at .001 level
[i] Poisson regression results.

Model 1 shows the results of a poisson regression. An OLS regression was found to be inappropriate since the variables were found to violate the assumption of homoskedasticity, suggesting non-linearity in their relationship with the dependent variable.[236] A test for over-dispersion showed poisson to be the most appropriate model.[237]

The model demonstrates the effect of strong organizational modalities of the Maoists in 2010, in predicting the number of incidents in 2012. Of the four organizational modalities, a unit increase in information-logistical-operational support in the villages in 2010 increased the number of Maoist incidents in 2012 by 0.42. Further, adding the other statistically significant variable of anti-state activity in model 2 did not significantly dampen the effect of tangible support from villagers predicting Maoist incidents at a later

[236] Breusch-Pagan $chi^2 = 5.32$ ($p<.10$)

[237] The log likelihood for a negative binomial mode was found to be insignificant. (LL=3.05; p >.01)

date. Together, community support and anti-state activity by the Maoists explained 40% of the variance in the number of incidents in 2012.

However, village activity such as holding actions and meetings in the villages, a variable of interest due to its suggestion of attempted class building by the insurgents in the villages, seemed to combine negatively (and significantly) with anti-state activities in determining future incidents. That is, when combined with anti-state activities, it reduced the effect of each of the variables individually on movement incidents.[238] Each organizational factor, by themselves, showed a positive and significant effect on the number of incidents in the following years.

A one standard deviation increase in anti-state activity in districts in 2010 increased the number of incidents in 2012 by .60 and village activities, by .23. Village activities by the Maoists, separate from anti-state activates by the Maoists, led to immediate resilience. This was probably explained by a great amount of state repression experienced by villages where the Maoists engaged simultaneously in class formation as well as anti-state activities. Anti-state activities displayed the ability of the movement to protect civilians against the state, while also directly contesting state control. This resulted in greater counter-violence by the state.

Model 4, which includes all factors, showed the significance of arrests in increasing subsequent incidents, but at the same time, showed the significance of attacks on informers. Although arrests had a stronger effect on the number of later incidents than attacking informers, indicating the state mechanism of arresting cadre and village supporters to in fact result in strengthening the movement, combined with attack on informers by the movement, it cancelled out the positive and significant effect of village activity. Attacking informers hence probably contributed to an increase in particular types of incidents in 2012, rather all incident types.

In order to test the impact of organizational modalities in 2010 on the type of incidents in 2012, I tested the determinants of counts on two types of incidents, tangible support for the community and anti-state activity. These two, as shown in the above table (model two), were most crucial in explaining resilience of movement incidents and were found to also load heavily on factor 1 and factor 2 separately, in the principal component analysis carried out for 2012, shown in Table 13 below.[239]

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[238] In order to correct for multicollinearity resulting from the interaction term, I also ran the model with a centered village activity term. That did not change the adjusted $R^2$ or the coefficients. The interaction terms presented are hence with non-centered log variables. Allison (2012) discusses interaction terms in large samples as a case in which a high VIF is not a problem and can safely be ignored.

[239] A principal factor analysis was found to be an appropriate method to identify variable clustering. Since all variables were count and the sample size large, they met the assumptions of a principal factor analysis method. I use a varimax rotation due to low to moderate correlations between the organizational variables (see Correlation Matrix, Appendix 11). Results from an oblique rotation closely matched those from the orthogonal or varimax rotation. Eigen value for factor 1= 5.12; factor 2=1.0. Further, the same variables made the cut off of .50 used, which clustered to explain organizational modalities in violent districts with Maoist strength. Information, presence and arrest had

This suggested the significance of anti-state activity and information-logistical-operational support in showing movement strength, but perhaps in two different directions. One taking on more violent activity, and the other taking on low levels of violence, yet indicating an equally strong Maoist presence.

**Table 13**: Principal Components Analysis, 2012

| F1: Organizational modality in violent districts | F2: Organizational modality in districts with low levels of violence |
|---|---|
| **Anti-state activities (0.87)** | **Info-logistical-operational support (0.77)** |
| Attacking –informer (0.87) | Arrests (0.77) |
| Encounter (0.71) | Indication of presence (0.70) |
| Village activity (0.78) | Affecting civilians (0.44) |
| People-oriented activities (0.60) | Surrender (0.40) |
| Affecting civilians (0.51) | Village activity (0.33) |
| Indication of presence (0.36) | Anti-state activities (0.29) |
| Anti-business activities (0.32) | Anti-business activities (0.25) |
| Info-logistical-operational support (0.27) | Clash (0.24) |
| Surrender (0.26) | Encounter (0.22) |
| Arrest (0.24) | Attacking –informer (0.18) |
| Clash (0.16) | People-oriented activities (0.07) |

Note: N= 129 districts
Varimax rotation used. Cut off=.50.

Table 14 below shows the results of the ordinary least squares regression in predicting the count of informational-logistical-operational village support and anti-state activities in the year 2012, using organizational predictors from 2010.

Both show the interaction of anti-state activity in combination with village activities to be most significant in determining tangible support from the villages and further anti-state activities in consequent years.

In other words, when the Maoists engaged in class formation in the villages, but combined it with a demonstration of their ability to fight against the state by engaging in anti-state activities such as attacking forest officers, police and state officials, speaking against state policies and holding anti-state demonstrations, they showed resilience: one in the direction of greater Maoist violence and the other in non-violence.

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factor loadings above.80. All the remaining variables had loadings below .50. Additionally, the eigen values for both methods of rotation were nearly the same. Factor 1, the phenomenon of tangible support had an eigen value of 3.26. F2 had an eigen value of 0.96.

**Table 14**: 2010 organizational determinants of tangible community support and anti-state activity in districts in 2012

| **Organizational Modalities 2010** | **(1) Tangible community support in 2012** (Information-logistical-operational) | **(2) Anti-state activities in 2012** |
|---|---|---|
| Information-logistical-operational village support (log) | 0.04 (0.04)<br>(0.09) | -0.08 (-0.07)<br>(0.12) |
| Village activities (log) | -0.17 (-0.10)<br>(0.25) | -0.62 (-0.32)**<br>(0.31) |
| Anti-state activity (log) | 0.05 (0.06)<br>(0.08) | -0.16 (-0.18)<br>(0.11) |
| Village activity- Anti State (Interaction) | 0.31 (0.53)**<br>(0.10) | 0.55 (0.77)***<br>(0.13) |
| Arrest (log) | 0.10 (0.12)<br>(0.08) | 0.12 (0.11)<br>(0.11) |
| Attack of informers (log) | -0.28 (-0.20)**<br>(0.14) | -0.03 (-0.02)<br>(0.17) |
| Clash with other left parties (log) | -0.35 (-0.25)**<br>(0.13) | -0.18 (-0.10)<br>(0.15) |
| *Constant* | 0.43***<br>(0.06) | 0.48***<br>(0.07) |
| $R^2$ | 0.09 | 0.10 |
| N | 184 | 184 |
| Mean VIF | 3.28 | 3.30 |

Note: First number refers to unstandardized coefficients, second number (in bracktes) refers to standardized coefficients. Numbers below show standard errors.
** significant at .05 level; *** significant at .001 level

The occurrence of the incident type tangible support in 2012 increased by .53 with a one standard deviation increase in anti-state and violent activities together. However, attack on informers and clash with other left parties in 2010 negatively impacted such incidents in the consequent years. Attacks on civilians in the villages led to a decrease in tangible community support for the movement two years later. With each unit increase in attack in informers in a district in 2010, there was a .35 decrease in the number of Maoist incidents in the district in 2012.

In sum, the analysis seems to indicate the significance of village class activities by the movement in combination with anti-state activities in determining the two distinct modalities in districts with strong insurgent presence. One, of leading to tangible community support in consequent years but in combination with little violence and two, leading to further anti-state activities that combined greater violence. State repression probably dictated the path a district took, with the insurgents remaining resilient through either means (of non violence or violence against the state), but only when based on the foundation of class formation in the villages with the ability to contest the state.

Thus, both resilient information-logistical- operational community support and anti-state activities were built on the foundation of strong class building activity by the movement in the villages, strengthened by a successful opposition to the state.

### 5.2.1 Three Telangana districts

In order to explain these dynamics, I take up an examination of the three familiar Telangana provinces, used in the previous chapters. Table 15 presents the break up of activities in Adilabad, Warangal and Khammam for the year 2012.

We know from previous chapters, that Khammam had the fewest number of autonomous village level organizations, with village organizing by the Maoists being more recent. The Maoists efforts in Khammam were primarily hindered by the presence of other left groups and the emergence of capitalists in a number of districts bordering Andhra Pradesh. In contrast, both the forested and *gond* dominated province of Adilabad, and the mixed caste plain and hilly areas of Warangal had been organized to build class consciousness and organizational foundations for class unity in the villages in the early 1980s.

All three districts showed insurgent activity in the year 2012, with Khammam recording amongst the highest incidents.

**Table 15**: Incidents in three Telangana provinces, 2012

| Organization | Adilabad | Warangal | Khammam | Telangana |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Info-logistics-ops village support | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| Indication of presence | 4 | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| People-oriented activities | - | - | 3 | 5 |
| Village activities | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Anti-state activities | - | - | 12 | 13 |
| Anti-business activities | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Arrests | - | - | 5 | 5 |
| Encounters | - | - | 3 | 5 |
| Surrender | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Attacking informers | - | - | 3 | 4 |
| Affecting civilians | - | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Clash with left groups | - | - | 3 | 4 |
| **Total** | **8** | **7** | **43** | **67** |

If we look closely at the two strong movement organization provinces, of Adilabad and Warangal, that dealt with severe state repression through much of the 1990s and 2000s, we notice the occurrence of information, logistical or operational support from villages and an indication of presence through training camps, forest meetings, hideouts etcetera.[240]

This corroborates with our larger district data findings, that once strong organizations were in place in the villages, times following repression still saw insurgent

[240] Surrender was the third type of incident reported, whose inclusion in the regression in Table 12 on effect of organizational modalities in 2012 on the number of incidents in 2012, showed no impact. Surrender, as already stated in the previous chapters, didn't indicate a breakage of links with the Maoists.

presence, perhaps accommodated by more secret village meetings, as some respondents had suggested. Tangible support for the movement with presence indicated non-violent rebel activities in an area and indicated their continued strength, despite almost no insurgent violence.

The district of Khammam, displayed the other, more violent mode of Maoist strength, reporting high anti-state activity, in addition to other incident types.

In the previous chapters I described Khammam to have the presence of a large number of left organizations that had managed to retain their hold in some areas (those where they had invested in building autonomous village level organizations). As a result the Maoists faced strong opposition from the left parties and state forces that worked alongside them. However, in several districts, I had suggested, the Maoists, utilizing existing organizational foundations, had begun to organize, demonstrated in the combination of different activity types in the area.

Khammam was strategically important to the insurgents since it neighboured provinces of strong movement presence in the north, with cadre often traversing Khammam. Hence, as cadre from Khammam had explained, the goal was to strengthen the movement in Khammam.

The three districts of Adilabad, Warangal and Khammam, thus also ascertain the pattern of clustering of organizational modalities in districts shown in the above PCA (Table 13). The second clustering of activities was found around the modality witnessed in provinces of Adilabad and Warangal, which having formed strong organizational foundations, continued to indicate insurgent resilience through providing support and less violent activities, during and following- state repression.

These findings, to a degree, validate Kalyvas's findings: that lowest insurgent violence was found in territorial strongholds of the movement. However, the case of provinces such as Khammam indicate more proximate boundaries between what Kalyvas designates zone one and zone five, with zone one having complete state control and five being one with complete insurgent control. Villages with complete Maoist control were often located close to those where the state had full control (being located close to main roads and in close distance of police stations). Thus provinces experiencing violence, had both, violent Maoist incidents as well as ones which focused on building local organizational capabilities.

A PCA of districts with no casualties (Table 16) showed a similar clustering to F2: around the organizational modality showing tangible support, followed by people-oriented and anti-business activities.[241]

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[241] An oblique rotation, which assumes a relationship between the variables showed similar results as the varimax rotation. Information, presence and arrest had factor loadings above.80. All the remaining variables had loadings below .50. Additionally, the eigen values for both methods of rotation were nearly the same. Factor 1, the phenomenon of tangible support had an eigen value of 3.26. F2 had an eigen value of 0.96. I use a varimax rotation due to low to moderate correlations between the organizational variables (see Correlation Matrix, Appendix 11)

**Table 16**: PCA of districts with no casualty, 2012

| F1: Phenomenon of Tangible Support | F2: Activities |
|---|---|
| Info-logistical-operational support (0.88) | People-oriented activities (0.67) |
| Indication of presence (0.80) | Anti-business (0.66) |
| Arrests (0.79) | Affecting civilians (0.40) |
| Anti-state activities (0.45) | Anti-state activities (0.33) |
| Affecting civilians (0.45) | Encounter (0.22) |
| Surrender (0.44) | Village activity (0.23) |
| Village activity (0.39) | Info-logistical-operational support (0.13) |
| Encounter (0.30) | Arrest (0.12) |
| Anti-business activities (0.10) | Clash (0.03) |
| People-oriented activity (0.07) | Surrender (0.0) |
| Clash (0.03) | Indication of presence (-0.03) |

Note: N=84
Varimax rotation used. Cut off= .50.

A regression of sustained insurgent presence through the year (measured as the number of quarters in the year with reported incidents in a district) also showed both F1 (organizational modality of violent districts) and F2 (organizational modality of non-violent districts), to be statically significant.[242] This demonstrates that non-violence was an equally strong predictor of Maoist strength, measured through both—the number of events in a year and the evenness of presence throughout the year. (See Appendix 12 & 13 for complete OLS regression on non-casualty events in districts and scatter graphs showing the impact of organizational modes on the number of non-casualty events in districts. Information-logistical- operational suppor`t and presence were significant predictors.)

A PCA without the outlier district (located in the state of West Bengal) for 2010, demonstrated a similar dynamic as our organizational modality in violent districts (F1) and those which experienced low-levels of violence (F2).[243]

Finally, the consistency of non-violent organizing in districts is evident from results of the pair-wise t tests of the number of incidents under each organizational modality. While there were significant differences in the number of Maoist activities related to undetermined and negative organizational activities within districts between 2010 and 2012, the only incidents that remained quantitatively consistent were those pertaining to strong organizations in villages, presented in Table 17.[244]

[242] f1(.379)*** and f2(.188)***

$R^2$= 0.41; F (2,126) p<.001. Average vif=1.0. Breusch Pagan $chi^2$= 4.91; p>.05. Note: the dependent variable was log (all quarter presence).

[243] See Appendix 14 for incidents in the three Telangana provinces for 2010.

[244]A positive mean difference between 2010 and 2012 indicates that the means for the category were higher for the year 2010 as compared to 2012 (Mean difference= Mean2010 – Mean2012)

**Table 17**: Repeated measures t test for incidents in districts by organizational modalities, 2010 & 2012

| Organizational Modality | Mean Difference | T score |
|---|---|---|
| Strong organization | 0.35 | 0.90 |
| Undetermined organization | 0.71 | 1.42* |
| Negative organization | 1.16 | 1.98** |
| **Strong organization categories:** | | |
| Village Activity | 0.09 | 1.10 |
| Presence | -0.08 | -0.81 |
| Info-logistics-ops | 0.41 | 1.75* |
| People-oriented | -0.07 | -1.21 |

Note: df= 184 (total districts with Maoist activity in 2010 & 2012); Mean difference refers to mean2010 minus mean2012.
* significant at .10 level; ** significant at. 05 level.

The number of activities in the three Telangana provinces, we discussed earlier, also remained statically insignificant between the two times periods (2010 and 2012), indicating their somewhat consistent activity levels. (See Appendix 14 for 2010 activities in Adilabad, Warangal and Khammam provinces).

Thus, strong organizational structures in the villages were determinative of stronger and more consistent insurgence presence. Put differently, insurgents remained strongest where they built local organizational structures.

### 5.3 On civilian casualties

Civilian killings, especially those in the name of informers, cause an episodic movement presence. Yet, our factor analysis scores showed informer killings to load heavily on the first factor, along with anti-state activity, people-oriented incidents and village activities. Attacking informers in 2010 was also found to be positive and significant in determining the number of Maoist incidents in 2012. However, they had a negative effect on tangible village support in consequent years and a non-significant effect on anti-state activities.

I analyzed organizational modalities that best predicted the number of civilians killed in a district, to find out it's relationship to strong movement village organizational structures.

Since the variable, number of civilians affected, along with all organizational variables had high kurtosis values (see Appendix 8, variable summary) and remained highly heteroskedastic,[245] with the predictors showing a large diversion from linearity, the poission regression was found to be an appropriate test.[246]

Results of the poission regression, shown in Table 18, indicated three organizational modalities to have a significant effect on the number of civilians killed,

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[245] The kurtosis values were found significant in the sktest($p<.001$) and retained heteroskedasticity despite taking a log of the variables

[246] The dependent variable met all the assumptions of being measured as a count, and did not indicate an over-dispersion (Negative binomial 6.07e-08; $p>.05$).

wounded or abducted: anti-state insurgent activity, activities affecting civilians (such as punishments or erroneous killings) and clashes with other left groups. Attacking informers did not figure as significant in civilian casualties and abductions.

**Table 18**: Analysis of the number of civilians killed, wounded or abducted, 2012

| **Organizational Modalities** | **Number of civilians negatively affected (log)** |
|---|---|
| Information-logistical-operational village support (log) | -0.14<br>(3.19) |
| Indication of village organizational presence (log) | -0.04<br>(0.29) |
| People-oriented activity (log) | -0.58<br>(0.35) |
| Village activities (log) | -0.01<br>(0.35) |
| Arrest (log) | 0.33<br>(0.30) |
| Anti-state activity (log) | 0.94**<br>(0.31) |
| Anti-business activity (log) | -0.03<br>(0.37) |
| Encounter (log) | -0.37<br>(0.23) |
| Surrender (log) | -0.49<br>(0.30) |
| Affecting civilians (log) | 0.62**<br>(0.31) |
| Attack of informers (log) | 0.49<br>(0.42) |
| Clash with other left groups (log) | 0.99**<br>(0.39) |
| *Constant* | -2.39***<br>(0.33) |
| $R^2$ | 0.41 |
| N | 129 |

Note: Average VIF= 2.10
** significant at. 05 level; *** significant at .001 level.

The data seems to suggest that while informer killings were probably related to village activities, they were not very numerous (relative to other civilians deaths). Civilians attacked most often were related to mainstream or other left political parties, thus reflected in their significant relationship to anti-state activity and clashes.[247]

This, perhaps, suggests a more selective choice in violence towards civilians, towards preserving movement presence.

[247] See Goodwin, J. 2006 "A Theory of Categorical Terrorism" *Social Forces* 84(4): p 2027- 2046, for an analysis of when this is more likely to occur.

### 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to show the impact of different organizational modalities on movement strength and resilience; something scholars on armed groups have failed to address.

Through using learnings from field observations and interviews in three provinces in Telangana, I was able to deduce the organizational modality of the insurgents through commonly reported incidents.

I have demonstrated, using various methods which, accounting for the different organizational patterns, lends great insights into the working of the insurgents in an area. I found village activities, indicative of potential class building in combination with anti-state activities to protect civilians and show movement strength against the state to be crucial in determining the non-violent indices of Maoist presence, as well as the violent ones of anti-state activity in consequent years.

One variable that stood out and resonated with our conclusions from the previous chapter was the significance of information-operational and logistical support from the villages. Tangible support in this form, we found previously, was attributable to the dual structures set up by the party: of relatively autonomous village organizations alongside armed party structures. Information was crucial to translating the ideology of the party to the people as well as in relaying village dynamics to the armed group. Both these processes were what lent the movement the ability to increase class-consciousness and result in class formations that were willig to engage in class struggles. Without it, insurgent resilience was doubtful.

These findings hence confirm the role of organizational village structures in creating movement strength and resilience while at the same time dismissing the prominence of violent acts by such groups. I show violent activities to form a fraction of movement actions. In fact, where violence was the least, it indicated greater movement strength. I also find activites such as tangible support from villagers towards the movement to be present in areas of low to absent violence; further validating the ineffectiveness of violence as an indicator of insurent strength or resilience.

# Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to understand what made armed groups resilient. I used the case of the Maoists in India, marked by their persistent presence over four decades, to examine the dynamics that underlie the sustenance of peasant insurgencies.

Although previous research has shown the pertinence of variables such as the state, political economy conditions and numerous network ties in explaining insurgencies, I find that these factors only laid the foundations for an armed rebellion. Local social and economic configurations, in the villages, in combination with the above stated factors determined the actual presence of an insurgency. Thus, conditions in villages or territories where armed movements operated were critical in dictating both, the presence and longevity of armed groups. The organizational or social superstructures of collective action in the villages, in the presence of several secondary factors, were found to be the principal factor in governing Maoist resilience.

In tracing the historical factors determining contemporary trends in economic disparities *within* and *across* the three chosen districts in Telangana, I found five means of wealth accumulation that took place during the reign of the Nizam and continued to impact economic patterns in the state, even after the merger of the Nizam's areas with the Indian state. More pertinent to understanding the collective protest trajectory, however, were the organizational foundations I traced. Although particular economic conditions were associated with greater levels of exploitation and immiseration, such as the *deshmukh* and *jagirdari* systems I discuss, past ability to collectively protest the state and win concessions, I found, were better at explaining where consequent protests occurred. I use the case of the *gond adivasis* to show how their collection action foundations and successes won against the state as early as the 1940s, continued to determine their active participation in protests, even a century later. Differing economic dynamics *within* each of the provinces, modulated, by the organizational dynamics flowing from the history of social protest in the areas determined further engagement in protest movements.

On the contrary, lacking the organizations for class formation, as often observed among landless *dalit* peasants that were overly reliant upon landlords for every aspect of their lives, resulted in a failure of the *dalits* to see themselves as a *class* in opposition to the landlords. This led to fewer immiserated *dalits* joining the Maoist movement. Marginal farmers who depended on earnings from agricultural wage work, but also had small landholdings to fall back on, were on the other hand, a major source of Maoist activists and the principle locus of support, regardless of caste affiliation. The landholding, though usually not accounting for more than 50% of their income, nevertheless provided them with a security that landless agricultural workers lacked. Peasants without this independent source of income hesitated to join armed struggles that pitched them directly against the very people that provided them with their primary source of income and failed at creating foundations of a class organization among them.

I show agricultural workers who constituted the overwhelming majority of the subaltern classes in the area to be the exception. In such cases, I suggest, the agricultural workers achieved a kind of leverage that did not exist in mixed class settings, where, if

organized, they could apply the traditional pressure of striking, with the rich landowners having no alternative labour.

Class based organizations and subsequent participation in the armed Maoist movement was thus based on the specific economic structures in which the subaltern groups were embedded. A simplified peasant class could neither be assumed nor formed. Their class formulations varied, determined in turn by the village economic configurations, which impacted their organizational potential as a class. However, once organized, as evident from the *gonds*, the collective logic superseded the economic one, with the *gonds* even engaging in collective action under more prosperous conditions.

A comparison of villages across the three provinces of Telangana of the organizational abilities of the Maoist movement in forming and retaining a peasant class, showed particular organizational forms to be most effective at achieving sustained class struggles. While traditional guerrilla literature discusses the role of the vanguard party in the development of class-consciousness—as a necessary intervening variable in interpreting peasants or workers experiences in the context of a class struggle[248]—I find the relative autonomy of local organizations to be more effective. Relatively autonomous village organizations, a part of the dual structure of the movement, that were embedded in local systems were most effective in creating armed movement resilience.

The presence of guerrilla squads in the absence of village organizations that were relatively autonomous from the party, often resulted, I demonstrate, in party programs that did not culminate in a complete buy-in from the peasants. I find the primary reason for this to be the inadequate information gathering capacities of the squads from existing village structures, such as different caste groups. Such information, however, was necessary for planning movement action that resonated with the peasant support base, and built class-consciousness. Additionally, squads also had poor information disbursal capacities, which was crucial in providing peasants with an adequate understanding of the reasoning behind movement activities. Thus the village organizations became crucial through their understanding and discussions, oriented within local economic and social systems in building class-consciousness, unity and sustained movement support in a village.

An analysis of the decline of the movement where deployment of the mobile RYL or revolutionary youth league prevailed showed the inadequacy of party organizations in the absence of local groups that were neither embedded fully in the party nor the villages where it operated. However, in areas where the Maoists were able to transform the youth league into multi-level relatively autonomous village organizations that were embedded in local systems such as the peasant committees, the armed movement gained success at remaining resilient.

Villages that had established working committees, which continued to function relatively autonomously (with guidance from the party), even during repression, I find—persisted in interpreting movement politics through the village groups, even in the absence of direct contact with the party during long periods of heavy repression. I provide several examples to show how this resulted in keeping up the task of building and strengthening the revolutionary class base in the village.

[248] See, Blanc, P.1993. *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party*. Haymarket Books: Chicago.

Further, multiple levels of membership within the established local committees increased their ability of the local gruops at providing the movement with various degrees of information, coordinating between different village committees, and during repression, protected the committees and movement from completely dissolving relationships, by keeping some members protected at all times.

Village militants, who came to share the closest working relationship with the armed wing of the party played the role of protecting the village committees as well as establishing direct party-village relationships. They, however, were most effective when working with pre-existing organizational village structures as well as supporting a large number of village sympathizers.

I demonstrate that although environmental factors created pre-conditions, which determined the ease with which such organizational structures could be built in the villages, in many circumstances the movement overcame organizing challenges in unpropitious circumstances by finding organizational models that could produce this symbiotic duality, and failed in very promising locales when tendencies toward party dominance eroded village autonomy.

In chapter three, I discuss the engagement of the Maoists with two groups, outside of the peasants, workers and women, to examine the wider political project of the Maoists. I argue, resilient insurgent movements create organizational structures that not only cater for the production and control of violence, but also strived to create a unified class willing and able to act collectively. This intent, irrespective of its full realization, seperates revolutionary projects from other forms of armed organizing.

I find the organizational structures of the workers movement to reflect the same essential organizational priorities as the general village organizations discussed earlier: to set up multiple levels of groups with political training that could operate non-violently, with relative autonomy, along guidelines set by the party. The women's village groups were similarly built in villages with the aim of strengthening the political consciousness and unity of the village groups. Much like the peasant organizations, these groups sustained the class building and unifying purpose, which took place alongside armed activity, demonstrating the centrality of the class unifying agenda of the insurgents.

Focusing first on the coal mine workers, who had a greater leverage on the local economy, the Maoists started local level organizations among them. Similar to the peasant groups, such organizations worked in symbiosis with the party, retaining relative autonomy and building class-consciousness. Further, like the women's organizations, which came to serve the goal of linking dispersed groups and struggles, SIKASA, the coal workers union, was also oriented to work in symphony with the dual party organizations established in the villages among the peasants. The workers and women hence became a part of the larger effort towards creating Maoist resilience through class forming and unifying efforts.

Finally, through a quantitative analysis of current Maoist incidents, I find evidence of the prominence of different organizational modalities on movement strength and resilience. I find, in congruence with my previous findings, the role of moderate to strong organizational variables such as village activity and tangible village support to be crucial in creating sustained movement presence, in combination with anti-state activities undertaken by the movement. This reflects the importance of strong local organizations

capable of continuing class struggles in tandem with measured violent activity that can win concessions for the peasants, to be crucial in producing resilience in armed groups.

My research thus shows relatively autonomous organizational structures for collective action, embedded in the villages, to aid in class formation and as a result of this mechanism, to be of foremost importance to continued insurgent activity. These structures were able to withstand state repression and circumvent economic logic, resulting in armed movement resilience. To be sure, non-violent insurgent peasant organizing activity in the villages (rather than violent ones), most determined armed groups resilience.

When Maoists were able to form village level organizations that built class-consciousness, they entered a cycle of deeper trust with the peasants as well as enabled the interpretation of the armed struggle through local social, economic and political circumstances. Village organizations that were located outside the formal party structure, with a more open organizational logic, allowed the movement to function in sync with local level fluctuations. That is, they allowed the insurgents to change form and function according to local needs— which became imperative in sustaining the armed movement.

This research thus contests conclusions made by most current research on insurgencies focused on the militaristic aspects of armed groups.[249] In contrast, I show that organizational structures, local village level factors, and non-violent rebel activities played a far more important role in explaining insurgent strength and sustenance.

Militaristic-based studies on insurgencies have alternated between psychological explanations, such as processes of othering, group identity formation, fear creation and more instrumental ones, which focus on terrorist attack strategies, incentives and cost calculations, state deterrence and defense mechanisms.[250] Due to a lack of systematic access to the organizations under investigation, and the narrow demands of counter insurgency strategists, these studies have relied heavily on mathematical modeling and simulations based on limited secondary data, hence restricting their analysis to few variables. Political scientists have taken a similarly instrumentalist approach, focusing on state-elite constellations in creating opposition or engaging in a cost benefit analysis of actors.[251] This has led to incomplete and often faulty conclusions about insurgent movement functioning.

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[249] See, Kilcullen 2006; Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas 2003.

[250] See, Feinstein, J.S. and Kaplan, E.H. 2010. Analysis of a Strategic Terror Organization. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(2): 281-302; Shapiro. J.N. and Siegel, D.A., 2007. Underfunding in Terrorist Organizations. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 54(2): 281-302; Whitehouse, H. et al., 2014. Brothers in arms: Libyan revolutionaries bond like family. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111 (50): 17783-17785; Weinstein, J. 2010. Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 49(4): 598-624.

[251] Humphreys, M. and Weinstein, J. M., 2008, “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436-455; Kalyvas, S. N. and Kocher, M. A., 2007. How ‘free’ is free-riding in Civil War? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem. *World Politics*, 59:177–216;

Through an ethnographic analysis, I showed that armed movements were strongest where their village level organizational structures were most flexible and diverse—creating the ability for quick and effective responses to local issues, class formation among the peasants and a recognition of their class interests. This finding goes beyond the scope of risk-calculation or violence production shown by other scholars this far.

It is only recently that armed groups have been analyzed theoretically as social movements. My research contributes to furthering that field of study in the hope of better understanding where such movements emerge and persist.[252]

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Leventoğlu, B. and Slantchev, B. L., 2007. "The Armed Peace: A Punctuated Equilibrium Theory of War." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 755-771.

[252] Furthering the work of scholars on organizations and movements. See, Schwartz. M., 1976. *Radical Protest and Social Structure: The Southern Farmers' Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890.* University of Chicago: Chicago.

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# APPENDICES

**Appendix 1**:Description of villages and interviews

| Village | Interviews | Village Composition |
|---|---|---|
| **ADILABAD*** | | |
| V1: Mysure | Focus group of 11 dalits. Individual interviews with two non movement SCs, one Kapu, one Rao. | Mostly dalits. (70 madiga hhs; 77 mala hhs); Yadavs, Rao<br>Majority landless. Work on Kapu community lands (OBC) |
| V2: Rotigudem | Interviews with two non-movement Kapus. | Only Kapus-OBC (400 hhs)<br>2 acres land (avg.) |
| V3: Khala | One former movement member, SC. | Munnur Kapu (OBC-Category D) 40 hhs. 2 acres land (avg)<br>Goni Kapu (OBC-Category D) 40 hhs- 2 acres land (avg.)<br>Other 40 hhs (OBC)<br>Shala<br>Peraka<br>Gouds<br><br>Own very little land:<br>SC/ST (Gonds)- 60 hh.<br>Muslims= 40 hh<br>Washermen (dhobi) = 40 hhs<br>All these groups have 2-3 acres land<br>Fish catchers= 40 hhs<br><br>Lambada tribals have all the land. Harvester machines come form outside.<br>8-9 tractors in the village |
| V4: Mela | One non-movement Kapu mine worker and 1 dalit farmer. | Munnur Kapus (OBC). 5 acres land.<br><br>Mine workers also.<br><br>SCs own very little land. Agricultural wage workers |
| V5: Roja | One dalit movement sympathizer, one non-member dalit woman. | Majority coal workers.<br><br>SC majority. 99% landless<br>Kapus= 2-3 acres<br><br>50% in the village have no land.<br><br>Upper caste Reddys' and Vellamas' own most land |
| V6: Belur | One OBC movement sympathizer | SCs majority- illegal lands( in forests)<br>OBCs |
| V7: Towri | One upper caste movement member. Two surrendered movement members, one non-member student. Two upper caste women movement sympathizers. | Town with mixed castes. |
| V8: Joya | One surrendered dalit woman, two non-member dalit men. | Sc majority (Madiga= 200 hhs. 2-3 acres;<br>Mala= 20 hhs. 2-3 acres<br>Reddys= 250 hhs most own 15-20 acres land |

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| | | OBC's together= 600 hhs (Chakali, Mangali, Shala, Vadla, Khammari, Kumari, Reddy Kapu) |
| V9: Bela | One movement member. One SC movement sympathizer. | Mixed caste village- no landless. 25% people rent 1-2 acres.<br>Padmashali (OBC) take land on rent.<br><br>Close to 45% in village are agricultural labourers<br><br>SC:<br>Mala. 2-3 acres;<br>Madiga. 2-3 acres)<br>ST:<br>Naikpod= 60 hhs 5 acres;<br>Lambada- 5 acres)<br>OBC:<br>Munnur Kapu= 60 hhs<br>Aare= 60hhs<br>Padmashali<br>There are 10-12 moneylenders. |
| V10: Saru | One former dalit movement cadre | Upper caste Reddy majority in village. 600hhs<br><br>SC- madiga, mala<br>OBC- Padmashali, Mangali<br>ST- naikpod, gond.<br>SC, ST were bonded or wage labour<br>Only 2-3 SC, ST had lands. |
| V11: Narimund | One non-member dalit man. Focus group with a dalit family. | SC village<br><br>Madigas= 100 hhs. Very little land. 50% landless. 50% 1 acre<br>SC Mala= 200hhs. Average 10-15 acres<br><br>OBC<br>Chakali= 25 hhs<br>Mangali= 15 hhs<br>Muslims= 250hhs. 2-3 acres<br>Kapu= 5 hhs<br><br>STs (migrated here. They don't own any land but for where their house is constructed)<br>Lambadis= 50hhs<br>Mathuru= 50 hhs<br>Gonds= 40 hhs<br>Naikpod= 30hhs |
| V12: Jagga | Focus group with 30 village members. Individual interviews with two movement members, and one movement sympathizer. | All gond. 4-5 acres land |
| V13: Shalam | Former woman cadre. | 100% ST village<br><br>Only Gonds and Naikpods. Mostly Gonds. All had forest land, 3-4 acres. Some had 10 acres. |
| V14: Badhra | One movement sympathizer and one non-member. | Gond village<br>70-80hhs. |

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| | | 5-10 acres land (avg)<br><br>Half the village are agricultural wage labourers because of poor quality lands.<br><br>Work for upper caste Reddys. |
| V15: Neni | Three non- member upper caste men and women. Focus group with 10 dalit men and women. | Mixed. Mostly BCs followed by SC. Few landless<br><br>150 hhs OCs: Brahmin, Baniya (Vaishya), Reddy and Velama<br><br>500 hhs OBCs: Mudiraj (majority), Munnur Kapu, Padmashali, Gundala (fishermen- large population), Gouds, Golla/Yadav, Darji, Vadla (carpenters), Kumli (potters), Chakali (washermen).<br>300hhs<br>SCs: Mala, Madiga<br>Very new Naikpods.<br>From most families people migrate to dubai for labour. |
| V16: Lokesh | Focus group with six non-member women. Individual interview with one non-movement man. | All lambada |
| V17: Inder | Focus group with seven movement sympathizers and non-movement men. Individual interview with non-movement man. | All Gond<br><br>Average land= 5 acres.<br>4 hhs have 10 acres.<br>No irrigation, so many work as landless labour |
| V18: Giri | Movement sympathizer Pradhan man. One non-movement Pradhan man. | Mixed. ST<br>Pradhans= 100 hhs; Gonds = 100 hhs<br><br>Only 10% pradhans have land: just 2-3 acres |
| V19: Veram | One former movement lambada man. | Town |
| V20: Kela | Three non party members. | 100% Kollam tribe.<br>Average 2-3 acres |
| V21: Bagi | One movement sympathizer, one non movement man. | All gond.<br><br>65 hhs.<br>6 acres land (avg.)<br>-2-3 landless and do wage labour in this village + in neighbouring village.<br>6 people also do construction work |
| V22: Sima | Two non- movement dalits, a man and woman. | Majority SCs<br><br>SC (Madiga= 50 hh- only 5-6 have lands of 1-2 acres). Rest do wage labour for OBCs and Reddys;<br>Mala= 70 hhs. Only 6 have land. Rest agricultural labour.<br><br>ST:<br>Naikpod= 50 hhs. 1- 1.5 acres land<br><br>OBC<br>Padmashali= 100 hhs. Average land 2-3 acres. (150 acres total) |

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| | | Chakali<br>Mangali<br>Kumari<br>Kamari<br>Muslims- only 10% have land (2-3 acres). Rest landless.<br><br>Upper castes:<br>Reddy- 20 hhs. 6-7 acres avg land |
| V23: Sam | Dalit movement sympathizer and one non-member. | Majority SC |
| V24: Parle | Two movement sympathizers, one former movement member, two non- movement peasants. | Lambada tanda<br><br>180 hhs<br>-Avg land= 4-5 acres. Some have 25 acres. 10-15 are landless. |
| V25: Parle1 | Focus group with four non-movement men. Individual interview with one non-movement man. | Gond Guda-<br>75hhs= 5 acres.<br>Few families had 15-20 acres. Now divided among sons.<br>4 hhs have no land |
| V26: Nagar | One former party member. | Town |
| V27: Kobad | One party sympathizer, one non member woman, one movement member. | Gond village<br><br>25 gond families.<br>Average land= 25 acres.<br>Landless= 5 families<br>5 Pradhan hhs== avg 5 acres land |
| V28: Welam | Three non-movement Pradhan peasants. One dalit man. | Majority BC<br>500 hhs<br>Land- max 30 acres—2 hhs<br><br>Gandla/Teli= 500 hhs. Avg 100 acres. 100hhs landless<br><br>SC:<br>Mala = 30 hhs max 2-3 acres. 10-15 hhs landless (have lands but no patta because own land in agency areas)<br><br>Madiga= 40 hhs. max 2-3 acres. 10-15 hhs landless (lands but no patts also)<br><br>ST: Gonds=6 hamlets. Total 200 hhs.<br>Pardhans= 50 hhs (no hamlets—in this vill). Avg 5 acres. Max 10 acres. 3-4 landless.<br>BC:<br>Golla/Yadav= 150 hhs. 5-10 acres<br>Tota Mali= 50 hhs. 2-3 acres. 2-3 landless<br>Dhobi, Bhoye (fishermen), peraka, kumari |
| V29: Jhola | Three non-movement peasants; one woman. | Gond village |
| V30: Kumar | One non-member gond man. | BC- gonds, Mali, Bare Mali<br><br>SC- Mala (150 hhs), madiga (1 hh)<br>ST- Gonds<br>OC- Muslims 1 hh |

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| V31: Temil | One movement sympathizer | Gonds |
| V32: Cheli village | Focus group with six party sympathizers and non-members. Individual interview with one movement sympathizer. | All gond<br>70hhs. All landed. Avg land= 5 acres. Max= 15 acres<br><br>50% no patta |
| V33: Romi | Two movement sympathizers, one non-member. | Gond: 3 acres average land. Max- 10 acres<br>Naikpod- 3-4 acres<br>Pardhan- 10-12 acres<br>Kollam- 3-4 acres<br>Sc- Madiga= 2-3 acres<br>OC- Baniyas (2 hhs)- business- kirana shops |
| V34: Challa | One party member. | Mixed Vill<br><br>SC dominated<br><br>BC= Gollas (Yadavs) 20-30 hhs<br>OC= Reddy 15 hhs<br><br>No landless |
| V35: Suman | One movement sympathizer woman and two men. | Mixed<br><br>OC= Reddys . most of them have a lot of land. 90% have an average of 7 acres.<br><br>BC= Gollas (50% have no land—are shephards), Shals- have an avg of 5-6 acres<br>SC= Madiga, Neitakani, 2-3 mala hhs. Most Scs have 2-3 acres land. |
| **KHAMMAM** | | |
| V36: Singer | Two movement members. | Majority ST- Lambadis<br>50 acres. Some have 150 acres<br>SC= Madiga 2-3 acres; mala 2-3 acres<br>BC- yadav, gouds, vadrengi 5-6 acres<br><br>Khoya= 5 acres<br>All SC and BC do agricultural wage labour. |
| V37: Remi | One non-member and one party sympathizer. One non-member woman. | Majority SC- Christians<br><br>Plant rice and maize<br>But very few farmers have patta here.<br>city surroundings farmers grow cotton, mirchi, and others grow rice, maize |
| V38: Aarti | Two movement sympathizers, one non member. | Mixed<br><br>BC= Gouds (10 acres), Komati (10-20 acres), etc<br>SC colony= 1-2 acres. Very poor families.<br>Lambada tanda |
| V39: Batta | One non-member | Khoyas- STs |
| V40: Gudem | One member, two party sympathizers. | ST- Khoyas 90hhs<br><br>Have 2-3 acres pattas+ 20 acres podu (none of which is patta land). |
| V41: Janne | Focus group with four dalit non movement women and | SC colony<br>22hhs |

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| | men. | All landless |
| V42: Gundu | One former woman cadre and former male cadre. | ST and SC<br>20 mala households, rest Koya – 500 households. 3 ward members. Average land = 20 acres. Crop on half.<br><br>Malas don't do coolie, have their own land, pattas. New ones, since 2004 don't have pattas. |
| V43: Baya | One former movement member and two non-members. | OBC- Yadav- majority<br>Reddy- 20 hhs. 2-5 acres avg land<br>Padmashali- 25 hhs. 10 have land—1- 1 ½ acres<br>Yadav- 85 hhs. 2-3 acres. Also have a lot of sheep etc. They are the most developed caste in this village.<br>Gouds- 5 hhs<br>SC (Mala, Madiga)= 50 hhs. 1 acre.<br>Muslims= 25 hhs<br>Chakali (BC)= 8 hhs<br>Lambadi (ST)= 30 hhs. 2-3 acres<br>Mudiraj= 8hhs<br>Telaga= 2 hhs<br>Vedrangi= 8 hhs |
| V44: Etur | Two non-movement women. | ST village<br><br>80 Khoya hhs. 2-3 acres average land+ 2-3 acres of non-patta land<br><br>Telaga 4 hhs- do kaol (sharecroppers)<br>Muslim= 1 hh. Small shop |
| V45: Ram | Five radical movement members. | ST majority village<br><br>Khoyas = 60hhs. 5 acres<br><br>Lambada = 50 hhs. 5 acres<br>OBC: Yadav= 40hhs 5 acres<br>Mudiraj<br>Chakali<br><br>Vellama= 1hh. 3 acres<br><br>SC: Madiga, Mala. 5-6 hhs. 3 acres<br><br>Khamma 2hh. 3 acres<br>Muslim= 3hhs |
| V46: Ochi | Two former movement members, man and woman. | Mixed vill<br><br>Khammas= 5 acres. 5 hhs have 20 acres.<br><br>ST= no land<br><br>Madiga= 70 hhs<br>Mala= 40 hhs<br><br>Lambadi= 8hhs<br>Vadla (BC)= 7 hhs. Landless<br><br>Gollas= 120 hhs. 3-4 acres avg. 6 people have 10 |

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| | | acres.<br><br>Grow chili, paddy, maize, vegetables. 20 people go to do mestry work in Khammam which is 20 kms away (auto, bus). Most are SCs. |
| V47: Tane | Two non member Khammas.<br>Two dalit sympathizers. | SC majority vill<br>SC-Madiga = 300 hhs. ½ acre. 10% landless 450 voters.<br>BC- Vadera= 80 hhs. 1 acre.<br>Mudiraj= 80 hhs. 1 acre<br>Gouds= 15 hhs. 2 acres<br>Kapu= 50 hhs. 2 acres<br>Yadav= 20 hhs. 1 acre<br>Vaishyas= 15hhs. 2 acres<br>Chakali= 10hs. 1 acre<br>ST: Dakkala = 4 hhs. landless<br>Erula= 4 hhs. landless<br>OC Khammas= 10 hhs. 4-5 acres.<br>Muslims= 100 hhs. 1 acre<br>SCs, STs and BCs do coolie.<br><br>70% SCs are Christians<br><br>Grow lots of cotton and some rice.<br><br>All have patta<br><br>Many times, big traders come themselves and get crops.<br>There is a small rice mill close by. |
| V48: Sela | One non-member | Town |
| V49: Lampu | Two movement sympathizers. | Mixed population. Town like.<br>Palm oil, bananas, cashew, mango here<br><br>2 OC mines |
| V50: Kommu | Three non-movement peasants.<br>One radical party member. | Only STs, no SCs<br>Few have pattas<br>200 podu police cases on people from this mandal. |
| V51: Keda | Focus group of four movement sympathizers and non-members. Individual interview with movement sympathizer. | Majority ST Village.<br>120 households Khoya, ST<br>30 Households BC - Yadav<br>Few Muslims<br><br>Peraka- BC are the dominant caste |
| V52: Yenga | Three non-movement peasants. | 22hhs—all ST- Khoya<br>Kothuru has 3 gumpus. Have 4-5 acres old lands and now cut 10 acres on which only some have got pattas.<br><br>Grow cotton, few grow mirchi and rice.<br>No irrigation. |
| V53: Kottu | Five movement sympathizers.<br>One non-movemement peasant. | Majority SC<br><br>95hhs are ST<br>5hhs OBC |

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| | | 2-5 acres land and some 10 acres. 10 families are landless because they have not done podu—fearing the forest officers and police cases |
| V54: Bellam | Two non-member BC peasants. One non-member dalit family. | Vaddi (BC)= 400 hhs. 10 acres avg land<br><br>SC: Mala. 100 hhs, most are landless. Only 2-3 have land; few Madiga.<br><br>ST: Khoya= 250-300hhs<br>Tobacco grown. |
| V55: Puch | Two non-movement peasants. A man and woman. | Konda Reddy tribal village.<br><br>Ride boats, sell forest produce. |
| V56: Amala | Two non-movement peasants | BC dominated village<br><br>Khamma = 40 HHS. 20 acres.<br>SC/Madiga = 80 hhs. Almost completely landless. Most sold lands.<br><br>Mala = 4 acres.<br>Naitakani = 4 acres.<br>There are 7 churches in the village.<br>50% SC are Christian.<br><br>Most SCs do agricultural wage labour work |
| V57: Wazi | Movement sympathizer | SCs: Madigas = Landless.<br><br>STs: Khoyas<br><br>OBCs: 30 – 40 Rajus from Rajamundry |
| V58: Edje | Two non-movement peasants. | Majority ST.<br><br>Both mandals are famous for chili cultivation. |
| **WARANGAL** | | |
| V59: Kata | Three former movement members, two sympathizers, one non-movement peasant. | Majority BC (1-2 acres)<br><br>SC (Madiga christians) (1 acre)<br>All marginal farmers |
| V60: Kesari | Two former movement cadre, three sympathizers, one movement member, two non-movement peasants. | Mixed<br>1-2 acres avg land<br><br>STs are roman catholic ad SCs are protestants. |
| V61: Sawai | One movement sympathizer | 60% SC<br>1-2 acres avg |
| V62: Venkat I | One movement member, two movement sympathizers, one former cadre. | Mixed:<br>SC (1 acre)<br>OBC (5-6 acres)<br>ST (10 acres)<br>Landlords (OC) held rest |
| V63: Ila | Focus group with non-movement peasants. Individual interview with two movement members. | Mixed:<br>ST, SC<br>BC (yadav, gouds)<br><br>Upper castes (Reddy)<br>Avg 2-3 acres |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 10 OBC families have avg of 7-8 acres<br>Earlier only ST village. SC and BCs came in 70s and 80s |
| V64: Balu | Interview with non-movement women and man. | Mixed:<br>OC (Reddy)<br>(avg 25 acres)<br>ST (avg 2-3 acres)<br>BC (Yadav) ( avg 10-15 acres) |
| V65: Santpalya | Two movement members, one former woman cadre, one non-movement peasant. | Majortity SC village (Neitakanis)<br>ST (naik pods), BC<br>15% population landless. Avg. 1-2 acres |
| V66: Sheikh | Two non-movement peasants. | Majority BCs |
| V67: Talli | Focus group with non-movement dalits. Interview with former movement cadre. | Majority BC (Peraka) avg 10 acres land<br><br>SC<br>Madiga) landless<br>ST (Naikpod) (no patta),<br>OC<br>(Khamma 15-20 acres)<br>Malas and Naikpods don't have enough money to cultivate their land, so rent it to Perakas and Khammas. Do agricultural wage labour themselves. |
| V68: Passar | Two movement sympathizers, four non-movement peasants; three women. | Mixed:<br>OC<br>(Reddys) above 5 acres. Max 20 acres<br>SC<br>(Madiga= 2-3 acres &10-15 landless),<br>OBC<br>(Gouds 2-3 average ), BC (Muslims 1-3 avg(10-15 landless) |
| V69: Seema | One movement sympathizer | Mixed:<br>Upper caste (Vellamas- majority land)<br>OBC (Yadavs 10 acres avg)<br>SC- marginal farmers |
| V70: Halli | Former movement cadre, one movement sympathizer, one non-member. | Majority BC (Mudira 5 acres)<br><br>SC ( Madiga 1-2 acres avg)<br>Upper caste (Reddy- majority land) |
| V71: City | Two movement sympathizers | City |
| V72: Manekallu | Two movement sympathizers, one member, one non-member. | 50% BC (Munnur Kapu, Padmashali, few Yadavs)<br>50% SC Madiga<br>Majority land with OC= Reddy. |
| V73: Poja | One movement member, one sympathizer, two non-members. | Majority madiga- 80% landless<br><br>Mudiraj BC- 90% landless<br><br>Vellamas have most land here avg 15-20 acres avg<br>Reddys 15-20 acres avg |
| V74: Rama | Three former cadre, two sympathizers, one member. | Majority BC (Peraka- 10 acres avg)<br>SC (Mala, Madiga- most landless coolies) |
| V75: Finnu | Movement sympathizer, two non-members. | Majority BC (Munnur kapu, chakali, mudiraj, kumari, vadrangi, gouda, mangali)<br>Few SC |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | BC and SC<br>40% vill landless. Avg 2-3 acres land<br>Cotton, then maize and veg, milk. Sell produce to money lender. |
| V76: Relu | Four movement sympathizers, one former cadre. | Majority SC (Madiga- 80% landless- gov employees)<br><br>Upper caste (Reddy avg 4-5 acres, BC<br>(Gouds,<br>Mudiraj- only 3-4 have land;<br>Yadav<br>Munur kapu<br>Padmashali |
| V77: Benga | One former cadre, one movement member, one non-movement peasant. | Majority BC (Gouds, Yadavs- 3-4 acres avg)<br><br>SC (Madigas 40% of village avg 2-3 acres land- 10-20 landless;<br>Upper caste (Reddy10-15 acres avg);<br>ST<br>(Erukala Coolie) |
| V78: Ghala | Three movement sympathizers. | Mixed:<br>BC (Mudiraj= 2 acres avg); SC<br>(Madiga= 1-3 acres); OC<br>(Reddy = 40-50 acres avg)<br>Several other BC |
| V79: Chala | One movement sympathizer | Mixed. Similar to Ghala. |
| V80: Pelli | One movement member, one non-member. | Mixed- SC and BC<br>Sc's do coolie on Peraka land<br>Lambadas |

* In Addition to the stated interviews in Adilabad, nine interviews were conducted in towns and the coal mines with miners.

**Appendix 2**: Annual growth rates of crop-area in Telangana

| Crop | 1970-85 | 1985-01 | 1970-72 (average of gross cropped area) | 1999-2001 (average of gross cropped area) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paddy | 0.3% | 3.3% | 16.9% | 29.2% |
| Jowar | -1.3% | -3.7% | 31.0% | 11.2% |
| Bajra | -2.1% | -4.3% | 4.3% | 0.9% |
| Maize | 1.7% | 3.1% | 4.7% | 7.8% |
| Groundnut | 0.5% | -1.9% | 7.7% | 5.8% |
| Cotton | 3.9% | 17.2% | 2.0% | 13.4% |
| Chilli-Pepper | 1.2% | 2.6% | 1.4% | 2.2% |

Source: Vakulabharanam, 2004

**Appendix 3**: Human Development Indicators, Telangana (2011, 2013)

| Sl. No | District | Total Literacy (%) | SC Literacy % | ST Literacy % | IMR* (2013) | MMR* (2011-2013) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mahbubnagar | 55.04 | 47.72 | 42.29 | 53 | 98 |
| 2 | Rangareddy | 75.87 | 64.72 | 56.05 | 33 | 78 |
| 3 | Hyderabad | 83.25 | 77.28 | 69.34 | 20 | 71 |
| 4 | Medak | 61.42 | 53.42 | 44.73 | 49 | 90 |
| 5 | Nizamabad | 61.25 | 52.88 | 45.92 | 48 | 79 |
| 6 | Adilabad | 61.01 | 58.46 | 51.35 | 48 | 152 |
| 7 | Karimnagar | 64.15 | 58.84 | 51.49 | 37 | 74 |
| 8 | Warangal | 65.11 | 61.79 | 48.45 | 49 | 78 |
| 9 | Khammam | 64.81 | 62.9 | 51.59 | 45 | 99 |
| 10 | Nalgonda | 64.2 | 60.75 | 48.08 | 47 | 90 |
| | **Telangana** | **66.46** | **58.9** | **49.51** | **39** | **92** |
| | **India** | **72.99** | | | **40** | **167** |

Note: IMR (per 1000 live births); MMR (per 1 lakh population); Source: Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare, Hyderabad.
Literacy Source: Census of India, 2011

**Appendix 4**: Population proportions of different classes in Telangana (1983 to 2000)

| Category | 1983-84 | 1987-88 | 1993-94 | 1999-2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Large Farmer | 10.55 | 7.27 | 6.40 | 4.21 |
| Medium Farmer | 10.01 | 9.29 | 9.99 | 9.52 |
| Small Farmer | 11.18 | 10.39 | 11.07 | 11.57 |
| Marginal Farmer | 6.92 | 9.54 | 15.07 | 11.25 |
| Agri Labour | 34.96 | 35.78 | 33.62 | 42.05 |
| Non-Agri Self | 14.19 | 12.61 | 12.22 | 10.94 |
| Non-Agri Labour | 4.85 | 7.60 | 5.23 | 5.20 |
| Others | 7.34 | 7.23 | 6.46 | 5.25 |

Source: National Sample Survey

**Appendix 5**: District Wise Forest Area (Percentage)

| District | % of Forest Area to Geographic Area |
|---|---|
| Khammam | 52.64 |
| Adilabad | 44.84 |
| Warangal | 28.88 |
| Nizamabad | 22.78 |
| Karimnagar | 21.52 |
| Mahabubnagar | 16.45 |
| Hyderabad & Rangareddy | 9.75 |
| Medak | 9.34 |
| Nalgonda | 5.88 |
| **Telangana** | 25.46 |

Source: Chief Conservator of Forests, Hyderabad

**Appendix 6**: Tribal Population, Taluk wise, 1340 fasli, 1931 census

| Sl. No | Province | Taluk | Total Population | Tribal Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Warangal | Warangal | 300571 | 12054 |
| 2. | Warangal | Mahbubabad | 210228 | 32570 |
| 3. | Khammam | Khammam | 165846 | 12127 |
| 4. | Khammam | Madhira | 142510 | 9721 |
| 5. | Khammam | Yellandu | 54591 | 28237 |
| 6. | Warangal | Parkhal | 74633 | 7547 |
| 7. | Warangal | Mulugu | 39329 | 7410 |
| 8. | Khammam | Palvancha | 35112 | 3582 |
| 9. | Khammam | Palvancha (samasthan) | 64973 | 26251 |
| 10. | Adilabad | Adilabad | 86674 | 7652 |
| 11. | Adilabad | Asifabad | 70263 | 7349 |
| 12. | Adilabad | Rajura | 61462 | 13742 |
| 13. | Adilabad | Chenoor | 84609 | 5487 |
| 14. | Adilabad | Luxettipet | 87379 | 5604 |
| 15. | Adilabad | Sirpur | 87032 | 12155 |
| 16. | Adilabad | Utnoor | 20639 | 11628 |
| 17. | Adilabad | Nirmal | 102816 | 2748 |
| 18. | Adilabad | Boath | 64756 | 16565 |
| 19. | Adilabad (now Maharashtra) | Kinwat | 71919 | 19284 |
| 20. | Karimnagar | Yelgadap (Paigah) | 23481 | 2593 |
| 21. | Karimnagar | Jagtiyal | 292553 | 2348 |
| 22. | Karimnagar | Sultanabad | 164920 | 751 |
| 23. | Karimnagar | Karimnagar | 221947 | 1238 |
| 24. | Karimnagar | Sirsilla | 188221 | 368 |
| 25. | Karimnagar | Huzurabad | 173761 | 2171 |
| 26. | Karimnagar | Parkal | 116493 | 280 |
| 27. | Karimnagar | Mahadeopur | 83510 | 3238 |

Source: From Reddy (1987)
H.E.H the Nizams Government, Hyderabad District Gazeteers, Table volumes: 1340 & 1345 Fasli (1931 & 1936), Warangal, pp. 10 & 11; Karimnagar pp 10 & 11 & Adilabad, pp. 10 & 11.

**Appendix 7**: Cause for coal worker strikes between Jan 1983- Sept 1984

| | Cause | No. of strikes | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Work allotment and work load | 202 | 25.35 |
| 2. | Lay-off, muster roll disputes, lockout wages | 146 | 18.32 |
| 3. | Housing, drinking water, medical facility, transportation, police arrests | 81 | 10.16 |
| 4. | Working conditions- Accidents, safety | 73 | 9.16 |
| 5. | Improper management-worker relations | 68 | 8.53 |
| 6. | Death of a co-worker | 65 | 8.16 |
| 7. | Disciplinary action | 53 | 6.65 |
| 8. | Sympathy with other striking workers | 38 | 4.77 |
| 9. | Supply of tubs | 29 | 3.64 |
| 10. | Other | 42 | 5.27 |
| | **Total** | **797** | **100** |

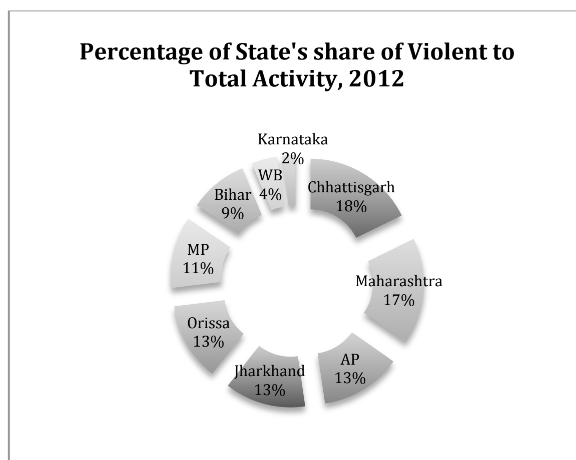
Source The Personnel Department, the Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. in Reddy R. R. 1990, p 189.

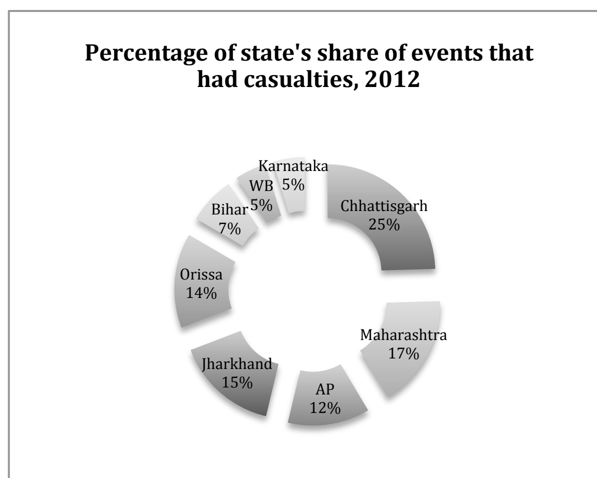
**Appendix 8**: Summary Statistics of variables for 129 districts, 2012

| Variable | Mean | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis | Description | Variable type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total casualties | 3.39 | 10.75 | 6.72 | 59.10 | Police and civilians wounded or killed | Count |
| Total civilian casualties | 1.27 | 3.18 | 3.24 | 31.77 | Civilians wounded or killed | Count |
| Total police casualties | 2.12 | 8.67 | 7.24 | 64.48 | Police wounded or killed | Count |
| All quarter presence | 2.36 | 1.33 | 0.19 | 1.27 | Number of quarters in which incident occurred | 1 to 4 |
| SD time difference evenness | 7.33 | 2.42 | -0.96 | 4.01 | SD calculation of mean distance event time from 91 (a quarter) [SD==SQRT(((meantimediff-91+1)^2))/91)] | Count |
| SD from beginning to end year | 7.02 | 5.81 | 1.91 | 6.85 | Standard deviation of time difference between events per district (including time from year start to first event, and last event to end of year) | Count |
| Number of incident blocks/sub-provinces | 2.99 | 3.19 | 1.55 | 5.39 | Number of blocks in which incidence occurred | Count |
| SD start to end year evenness | 4.83 | 2.70 | 0.06 | 2.09 | SD calculation of mean time of event (including from start of year to first event), from 91 SD==SQRT(((meantimefromstart-91+1)^2))/91) for each district | Count |
| SD beginning to end year | 71.25 | 47.91 | 0.42 | 2.05 | SD calculation of mean time of event (including from start of year to first event, and last event to end of year), from 91 SD==SQRT(((meantimefromstarttoend-91+1)^2))/91) for each district | Count |
| Info-logistics-ops incidents | 1.46 | 2.26 | 3.09 | 15.71 | Info-logistics ops incidents | Count |
| Incidents indicating presence | 1.08 | 1.97 | 3.23 | 16.08 | Presence incidents | Count |
| People-oriented activity | 0.41 | 1.11 | 3.65 | 17.70 | People oriented incidents | Count |
| Village activity incidents | 0.50 | 1.39 | 5.09 | 33.89 | Village activity incidents | Count |
| Anti-state activities | 2.04 | 4.07 | 3.43 | 17.69 | Anti-state incidents | Count |
| Anti-business activities | 0.39 | 0.92 | 3.88 | 23.76 | Anti-business incidents | Count |
| Encounters | 0.45 | 1.27 | 5.27 | 39.78 | Encounters | Count |
| Incidents affecting civilians | 0.58 | 1.33 | 2.98 | 12.28 | Incident affecting civilians | Count |
| Attacking informers | 0.38 | 1.20 | 5.22 | 34.40 | Incidents of attacking informers | Count |
| Surrender | 0.45 | 0.99 | 2.82 | 11.97 | Incidents involving surrender | Count |
| Clash with left groups | 0.19 | 0.61 | 3.94 | 20.02 | Incidents of clash with left groups | Count |
| Arrest | 2.04 | 3.00 | 2.79 | 14.80 | Incidents of arrest | Count |
| Number of civilians affected | 2 | 5.64 | 4.52 | 26.33 | Number of civilians wounded, killed or abducted | Count |
| Number surrendered | 1.95 | 8.82 | 7.29 | 60.70 | Number of Maoist s who surrendered | Count |
| Number arrested | 7.15 | 11.99 | 3.18 | 15.49 | Number of Maoists who were | Count |

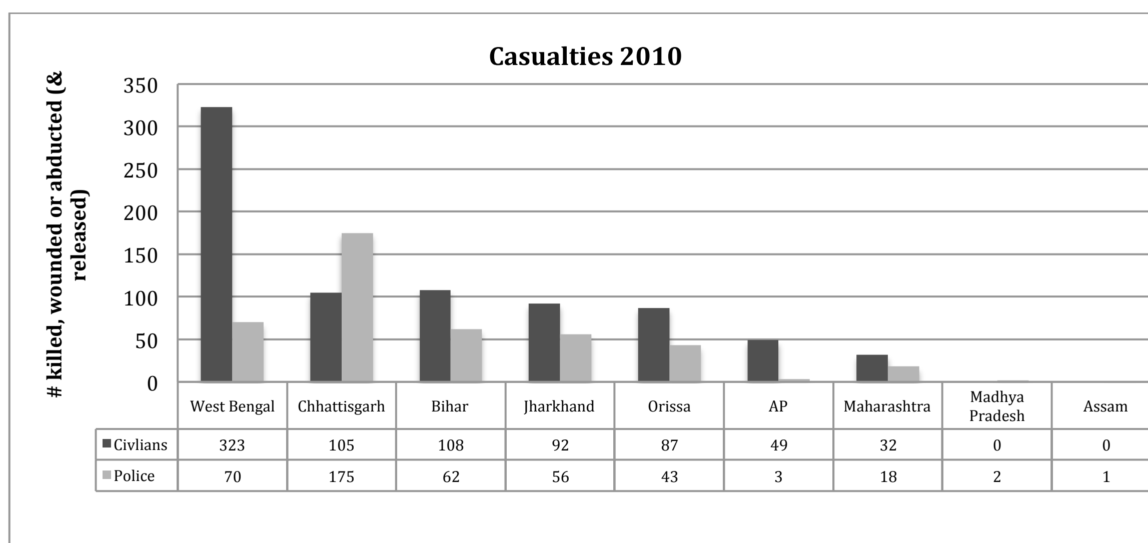
| | | | | | arrested | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Violent activities | 2.89 | 5.71 | 3.50 | 18.97 | Number of activities that involved attacks or indirect forms of violence like threats, placing bombs on roads | Count |
| Disruptive activities | 0.29 | 0.93 | 5.34 | 34.85 | Activities that involved stopping traffic, blocking roads. | Count |
| Infrastructure damage | 0.64 | 1.32 | 2.84 | 12.47 | Number of activities that involved destroying infrastructure | Count |
| Number of types of incidents | 3.09 | 2.26 | 0.72 | 2.20 | Number of different types of incident types | Count |
| Proportion of varied incident types | 0.63 | 0.32 | 0.05 | 1.39 | Proportion of varied incidents to total incidents | Count |

**Appendix 9**: Percentage of State's share of violent to total activity, 2012



**Appendix 10**: Distribution of casualties by state in 2010




| Civilians killed (no. & %) 2010 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Railway attack incident | 148 | 24.22% |
| Politicians or supporters | 117 | 19.15% |
| In police attacks | 42 | 6.87% |
| Village heads | 18 | 2.95% |
| **Total** | 325 | 51.19% |

Note: WB accounted for 50.4% of civilian deaths, with one district (of a total of 140 districts in India with activity) contributing most.

Top 10 districts contributing to total casualties, 2012

| District | % |
|---|---|
| Gadchiroli | 22.53 |
| Dantewada | 7.45 |
| Jamui | 7.26 |
| Latehar | 5.21 |
| Malkangiri | 5.03 |
| Gaya | 4.28 |
| Sukma | 4.10 |
| Bijapur | 3.91 |
| Aurangabad | 3.72 |
| Koraput | 3.54 |
| Total | 67.04 |

Top 10 districts contributing to civilian killings, injuries and abductions, 2012

| District | % |
|---|---|
| Jamui | 14.50381679 |
| Gadchiroli | 14.1221374 |
| Malkangiri | 7.251908397 |
| Koraput | 6.870229008 |
| Bijapur | 4.961832061 |
| Khammam | 4.961832061 |
| Hazaribagh | 4.580152672 |
| Gumla | 4.198473282 |
| Munger | 3.816793893 |
| Sukma | 3.435114504 |
| Total | 68.70 |

N=537
Note: Only 36.23% districts reported any casualties (47/129)

**Appendix 11**: Correlation Matrix (District organizational variables)

| Correlation 2010 | Info-logistics-ops support | Indication of presence | People oriented activity | Village activity | Anti-state activity | Anti-business activity | Encounter | Surrender | Arrest | Affecting civilians | Attacking informers | Clash with left groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Info-logistics-ops support | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Indication of presence | 0.8318 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| People oriented activity | 0.5159 | 0.5373 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Village activity | 0.6813 | 0.6776 | 0.5998 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Anti-state activity | 0.6896 | 0.6877 | 0.7599 | 0.7185 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Anti-business activity | 0.3359 | 0.3214 | 0.5955 | 0.4064 | 0.678 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Encounter | 0.6942 | 0.5922 | 0.4852 | 0.4762 | 0.7261 | 0.3545 | 1 | | | | | |
| Surrender | 0.4042 | 0.3566 | 0.2899 | 0.413 | 0.3235 | 0.1893 | 0.2189 | 1 | | | | |
| Arrest | 0.7349 | 0.6306 | 0.3561 | 0.504 | 0.5933 | 0.3863 | 0.4791 | 0.3647 | 1 | | | |
| Affecting civilians | 0.8793 | 0.8208 | 0.5496 | 0.7255 | 0.7674 | 0.3474 | 0.7148 | 0.3351 | 0.6278 | 1 | | |
| Attacking informers | 0.604 | 0.5577 | 0.5974 | 0.8435 | 0.7041 | 0.4476 | 0.5852 | 0.4872 | 0.4694 | 0.6629 | 1 | |
| Clash with left groups | 0.8238 | 0.7496 | 0.4335 | 0.6845 | 0.5175 | 0.1379 | 0.5371 | 0.2635 | 0.5181 | 0.8454 | 0.531 | 1 |

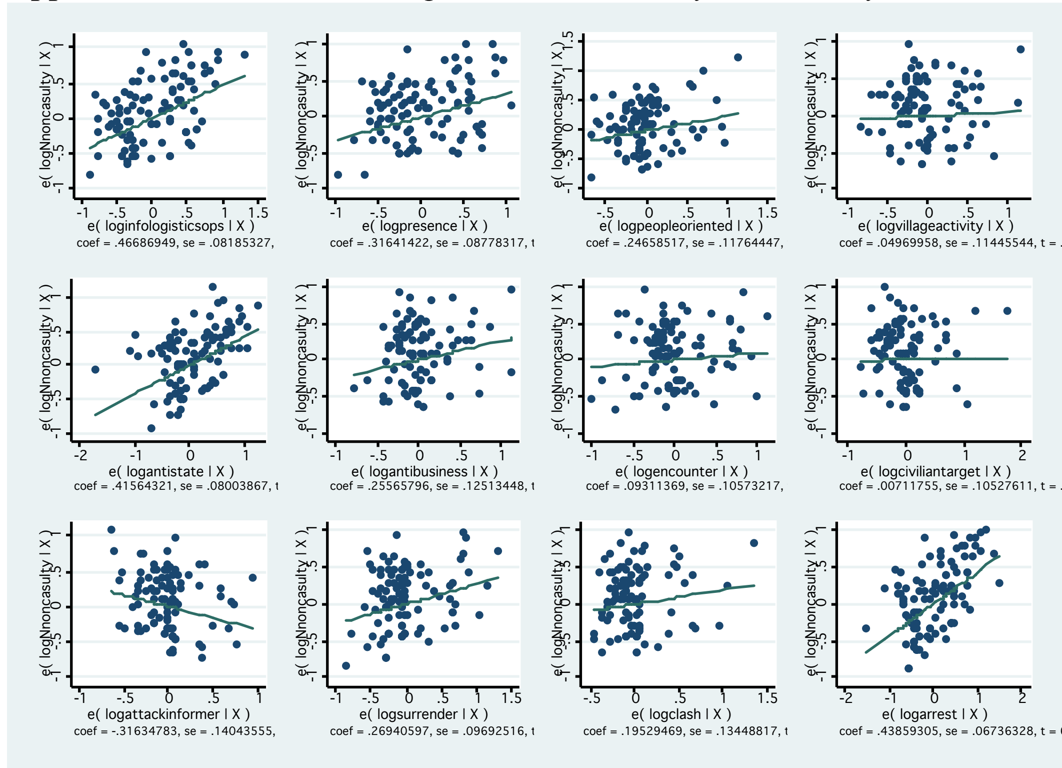
| Correlation 2012 | Info-logistics-ops support | Indication of presence | People oriented activity | Village activity | Anti-state activity | Anti-business activity | Encounter | Surrender | Arrest | Affecting civilians | Attacking informers | Clash with left groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Info-logistics-ops support | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Indication of presence | 0.6562 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| People oriented activity | 0.1852 | 0.2738 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Village activity | 0.4877 | 0.5757 | 0.4177 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Anti-state activity | 0.4617 | 0.4729 | 0.5695 | 0.7369 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Anti-business activity | 0.2911 | 0.1423 | 0.403 | 0.2608 | 0.4184 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Encounter | 0.4128 | 0.3711 | 0.3378 | 0.676 | 0.7305 | 0.2209 | 1 | | | | | |
| Surrender | 0.3508 | 0.4669 | 0.2114 | 0.3393 | 0.3969 | 0.1362 | 0.209 | 1 | | | | |
| Arrest | 0.6907 | 0.6374 | 0.2076 | 0.4364 | 0.4284 | 0.3812 | 0.3505 | 0.3144 | 1 | | | |
| Affecting civilians | 0.536 | 0.4475 | 0.2953 | 0.5231 | 0.664 | 0.2311 | 0.4403 | 0.3241 | 0.4416 | 1 | | |
| Attacking informers | 0.3501 | 0.5368 | 0.5595 | 0.8292 | 0.7789 | 0.2374 | 0.6413 | 0.2733 | 0.3538 | 0.5153 | 1 | |
| Clash with left groups | 0.206 | 0.117 | 0.2025 | 0.1432 | 0.1972 | 0.2641 | 0.2185 | 0.0606 | 0.3439 | 0.1765 | 0.1433 | 1 |

**Appendix 12**: OLS Regression of non-casualty events in districts

| **DV: Non-casualty event (log)** | |
|---|---|
| Information-logistical-operational village support (log) | 0.46*** (0.08) |
| Indication of village organizational presence (log) | 0.31*** (0.08) |
| People-oriented activity (log) | 0.02 (0.12) |
| Village activities (log) | -0.02 (0.11) |
| Arrest (log) | 0.47*** (0.06) |
| Anti-state activity (log) | 0.51*** (0.08) |
| Anti-business activity (log) | -0.18 (0.13) |
| Encounter (log) | 0.04 (0.10) |
| Surrender (log) | 0.26** (0.09) |
| Affecting civilians (log) | -0.03 (0.10) |
| Attack of informers (log) | -0.20 (0.14) |
| Clash with other left groups (log) | 0.26** (0.13) |
| *Constant* | 0.07 (0.05) |
| $R^2$ | 0.90 |
| N | 124 |

Note: First number refers to coefficients, second number refers to standard errors.
** significant at .05 level
*** significant at. 001 level
Average VIF= 2.11; Breusch-Pagan $chi^2$ = 13.05; p>.05
The model excludes three outlier districts, which had a residual score above two.

**Appendix 13**: Distribution of organizational modes by non-casualty events, 2012




**Appendix 14**: Incidents in three Telangana provinces, 2010

| Organization | Adilabad | Warangal | Khammam | Telangana |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Info-logistics-ops village support | - | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Indication of presence | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| People-oriented activities | - | - | - | - |
| Village activities | - | - | 7 | 8 |
| Anti-state activities | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Anti-business activities | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Arrests | - | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| Encounters | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Surrender | 1 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| Attacking informers | - | 3 | 8 | 12 |
| Affecting civilians | - | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Clash with left groups | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | **4** | **18** | **33** | **65** |

**Appendix 15**: State-wise monthly incidents