CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION: IDEOLOGY, NETWORKS, AND ACTION IN PERU AND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

How and why do ordinary people in democratic states participate in violent revolution? This dissertation explores variation in the confluence of civilians’ participation in status quo politics – through electoral channels and civil society action – and in violent insurgencies that seek to conquer the state.

Through a comparative juxtaposition of Peru’s Shining Path and the Naxalite movement in India, I argue that an insurgency’s particular ideological interpretations and conceptions of membership shape civilian support by influencing everyday social relations between rebels and civilians and changing networks of participation. During war, civilians are agents of political mobilization, and rebels exploit social networks, which draw on historical forms of organization and activism and a long trajectory of political ideas about race, citizenship, and class.

I examine people’s varied participation in violent politics in three settings: the regions of Ayacucho and Puno, Peru (1960-1992), and Telangana, a region of southern India (1946-51). Where communities in Peru drew on existing political resources – diverse networks that expressed peasants’ demands for reform and representation, and which emphasized commitment to democratic contestation over armed struggle – people could choose to resist rebels’ mobilizing efforts. Where communities lacked integrated political organization, insurgents implemented violent ideologies by repurposing local networks.
Mobilization in Telangana, in contrast to Ayacucho and Puno, exhibited a fluidity of method that was sustained by peasants’ agency in building a wide-ranging movement, even as it crossed the line into violence.

The study draws on ten months of field research in India and Peru, where I examined local and national archival records and testimonies and conducted interviews with former left party leaders, activists, and civilians in rural and urban areas affected by violence. I develop an ethnography of people’s participation in a range of political activities, from protests and voting to civil resistance and searching for the bodies of victims of massacres. The study emphasizes a distinct ontology of the practice of politics: as a continuum of acts that may emerge as violent, illicit, licit, and non-violent in differing moments and social and cultural contexts, and acknowledges the possibility that violent and nonviolent mobilization may reinforce one another.
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During several years of research, I have incurred considerable reasons to be thankful and multiple debts. These debts constitute opportunities for me to continue working, exploring, and sharing journeys with the people who have inspired and helped me the most. With that in mind, I am very grateful to my committee members for their challenging counsel, understanding support, and faith. It really has made all the difference.

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Chapter 1: Civilian participation in politics and violent revolution: ideology, networks, and action in Peru and India

The drive from Lima, a city ensconced as on a throne at the midpoint of Peru’s coastline, to the mountains and valleys of Ayacucho, takes about eight hours. The distance, about 350 miles, leads you across the sprawling desert lands that surround the capital, south along the Pacific Ocean, and eastward into the interior. The farther one drives, the mountains surround you more fully; continue climbing, and the dry, rocky grasslands yield to slow, roadside streams and switchbacks carved into mossy, green peaks. The appearance of a farm, walled in by a fence made of stones piled on one another, might announce a path into a town plaza, or stand on its own.

With Percy and Gisela, I set out just after sunrise from the EPAF office, which was located in a working-class neighborhood of Lima called Jesús María. As staff members of the Equipo Peruano de Antropología Forense (Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team, EPAF) – a non-governmental organization that works with families of victims of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s – Percy and Gisela traverse the winding, steep roads to Ayacucho frequently. They are communicators, artists, activists, advocates. I am the novice in the backseat. It is June 19, 2013.

As part of his work, Percy tells stories with the photographs and short films he makes in the communities where EPAF works, towns where violence perpetrated by Shining Path rebels
and the government forces left physical and social scars. As a Quechua speaker, he translates much of what EPAF comes to say to local residents into their native tongue.

We stopped in Chincha, a lively coastal retreat, to eat breakfast. I owe Percy 15 soles for my portion: papaya juice, coffee, scrambled eggs and bread – the “American” breakfast.¹

Percy has one brother, who is younger. “Somos dos.” Born in the province of Víctor Fajardo, in the south of Ayacucho, Percy grew up and studied in Cañete, a few hours south of Lima. Later he studied history at Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima.

I asked Gisela what EPAF’s role in the meetings will be in Huamanga, Ayacucho, the 20th and 21st of June. She responded that this time EPAF would be an observer. Sometimes they arrange activities, a protest march, a local commemoration of a wartime event or memory, and they inform people in affected communities about their rights. The organization’s technical work focuses on exhumations, identification of bodies, and connecting people with the remains of their relatives.

Maybe a half hour out of Chincha we cut inward, through a small street, through a worn-in town – a quick turn, and we are no longer tracking the sea.

Now, there are mountains to our left, very close, dark gray. The sun’s light falls on them gently and fully.

Fields of corn distract my gaze, and in the breeze they seem to be growing at vastly different rates as we drive past. Percy passes huge trucks with alacrity, moving the drive

¹ Peru’s currency is the nuevo sol; one United States dollar is equivalent to 3.31 Peruvian nuevo sol.
along. Gisela mentions that she’s the co-pilot: her work is to accompany Percy. So she never sleeps in the passenger’s seat.

A green sign notes: “Ruinas de Tambo Colorado.” We make a stop along the roadside, for three bottles of still water and mandarin oranges.

A valley of houses appears on the riverbed, and scarce water flows over the rocks. A brown horse, his ribs visible, appears on the roadside – he is strong, slim, surrounded by bramble.

The advice that Ricardo, a historian in Lima, gave me comes to my mind: learn some words in Quechua. “People will understand that your intention is good.” “La gente percibe tu intención bien.”

The car has been stopped. Percy shows documents to a highway policeman in Huaytará.

Midday sunshine persists, and I am sleepy. We stop the car to pay a municipal toll. In the distance, a snow-covered mountain emerges, and green waters are moving gently beside the car.

We are descending, and then we are climbing.

Percy honks the car horn the same way to warn dogs, workers on the road dressed in orange, old villagers making their way up the mountainside – a quick, forceful beep followed by a longer blare.

Amid electoral graffiti spray-painted in support of Carlos Jaya and Wilfredo Oscorima, a sign warns of local public works: “Salida de Vehículos – Proyecto el Milagro.”
Percy lets me know that the highest elevation we will reach during the trip is 4000 meters, a little over 13,000 feet. Passing through Huancavelica, we cross Puente Supaymayo and a “zona de derrumbes.” Heavy rains may cause landslides in the area.

I begin to notice women wearing mantas – cloth blankets – of many colors, children tucked inside them on their backs, and bowler hats. On a road into a tiny town, children are wearing backpacks, long, plaid uniform skirts dyed yellow, black, and red. The rain starts to come down, and we are surrounded by rocks.

We have multiple destinations on this journey through Ayacucho that is to last a few weeks. One is the town of Hualla, a district of Víctor Fajardo province, in the central region of the department of Ayacucho. Situated in the Pampas River basin and spanning altitudes of 8,000 to 13,000 feet, the community of Hualla forms part of the inter-Andean valley.

During the civil war in Peru that began in May 1980, Hualla was one of the first strongholds of the Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path (PCP-SL) insurgents. Since the 1970s, the Party had begun operating in towns in the valley by sending young people to teach in schools there.

In the car, we talk about Hualla’s people, economy, rituals.

Corn is the biggest crop. Is the harvest in November? Mining divides the towns. There is no other kind of industry. Alta trucha – a local trout – is the fish that they eat in Hualla.

Women’s lives are difficult, Gisela adds. They suffer immensely.

Another stop, one we make before arriving in Hualla, is the capital of the department of Ayacucho, the city of Huamanga, known itself as Ayacucho. The Battle of Ayacucho,
fought a few kilometers northwest of the city in 1824, sealed the independence of Peru from the Spanish.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga (UNSch) constituted a base, an indoctrination ground, and a diverse network, which brought together young people who hailed from the hamlets and towns of Ayacucho department, the first in their families to attend college, with professors, leftist militants, and philosophers. UNSCH is the only university in the department. Students’ ties to rural areas of Ayacucho proved fruitful to the Shining Path rebels’ project as they sought to inspire the support of peasant communities for their violent struggle.

Just before sunset, from a balcony overlooking the plaza in Ayacucho, one can see the university, the cathedral, couples strolling under trees – and in the distance, layers of mountains – witnesses and scribes.

**Introduction**

A remarkable fact about civil wars is that ordinary citizens may see the advent of violence not as the onset of war but as the beginning of politics – the moment when “politics came to town,” as one of my informants in Peru had it. Yet political science has proceeded as if the opposite were the case: that war signifies the breakdown of political life. We should not ignore this disconnect. Centered on sub-national regions of Peru and India during civil wars, this study constructs local histories of political organization and action with an eye toward contextualizing people’s participation in rebel governance and violence:

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2 Author interview with resident and former local authority, 11 March 2014, Sacsamarca, Ayacucho, Perú.
when rebels arrived, how did ordinary people make sense of protecting and promoting their families and livelihoods in these changing contexts? The project examines how ordinary people participate in politics when civil war occurs in democratic states. The occurrence of war – which makes available violently expressed political visions – constitutes an environment in which ideologies, networks, and actions interact over time. By focusing on ordinary people as political agents, I aim to understand political action from the perspective of those who are participating in it.

By comprehending participation in violence and democratic politics as intersecting and interdependent forms of mobilization, I emphasize an ontology that makes sense of political behavior without relying solely on identity, grievance, greed, selective incentives, or territorial control in explaining them. Varying forms of participation involve many actors, including party militants and leaders; grassroots activists and civil society organizations; rebel commanders and mid-level cadre; elected politicians; and citizens who take on these roles and others – as members of neighborhoods, agricultural communities, and labor unions – as individuals acting in particular political and social milieus. The dissertation is a study of how ordinary citizens participate in democratic politics and violence in the context of two revolutionary insurgencies – the Shining Path in Peru and the Naxalites in India. The two empirical contexts are clearly distinct in history, politics, and culture. The study was designed not as a “paired comparison” of two “cases.” Instead, juxtaposing dynamics of civilian mobilization in the context of violence allows me to cast these distinct processes and histories in different lights by identifying several mechanisms that emerge from an ontological approximation of violent politics and political violence that does not separate the two.
Existing configurations of social and political networks exert determinant effects on how members of communities and localities receive and react to rebels’ efforts to appropriate and exploit connections among neighbors and organizations. In many regions of Peru during that country’s civil war, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels’ relationships with different civil society organizations affected the kinds of participation that were available to ordinary people.

Artificial distinctions between “normal” politics and “dysfunctional” violence prevents us from asking important questions about how people participate – and how this may change over time. These obscured questions include: In what ways does the practice of democracy – through routine activities of enforcement, citizenship, and security – entail violence or the threat of violence? Why do some movements aim explicitly to draw on non-violent methods, and others select violent means – and what are their differentiated effects? How do the kinds of political order constructed through violence respond to or engender new ideas about citizenship and individual agency among different segments of the population?

The distinction between even democratic politics and violence may not always be clear. Indeed, in Peru, the actions of a violent insurgency launched the country into civil war precisely when democratic civilian governance was returning. After twelve years of military rule, Peruvians prepared to elect a president and parliamentary representatives at the end of the 1970s, when General Francisco Morales Bermúdez’ regime announced it would hand over power to those not wearing soldiers’ uniforms. The war’s origin story is ironic: on the night before national elections took place in May 1980, Shining Path rebels attacked the registrar’s office in Chuschi, a small town in central Ayacucho. Rebels burned
ballots and electoral rolls and tied up the registrar. Sendero Luminoso, under the leadership of ideologue and philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán, waged a series of violent attacks in Ayacucho in the days that followed, announcing its war on the status quo bourgeois forces that comprised the political and economic elite in Peru. The Shining Path vowed to destroy the state and construct a new society which would be ruled by a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Not only was Peru’s war a conflict between rebel and state forces, it constituted “a conflict waged upon the terrain of civil society itself.”3 Beginning in the 1960s, small, Marxist parties organized along ideological lines, carving out political positions which led most organizations to participate in elections, with the exception of Sendero Luminoso – and, at first, another Marxist party called Patria Roja (Red Fatherland).

Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated that the war’s violence caused 69,280 deaths, and the Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path (Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso, or PCP-SL), was found to be responsible for 53.68 percent of the killings.4 The war disproportionately affected the indigenous, poor, and less educated Peruvians who lived in the Andean highlands. Departments located along Peru’s central coast, with the exception of the city and department of Lima, experienced considerably less violence than other regions, while the highland departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Junín, and Apurímac were left with the greatest numbers of casualties and destruction. About thirty-eight percent of casualties occurred in Ayacucho alone. The decade between 1980 and 1990 was the period which saw the highest number of democratic electoral

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processes at local, regional, and national levels in the country’s history; this is also the period in which the greatest number of deaths and forced disappearances occurred in Peru.\(^5\)

The ongoing Maoist insurgency in India constitutes a medium-intensity, intra-state conflict. The popular basis of the movement has consistently been tribal and low-caste Indians, reflecting the Naxalites’ roots as a movement that aimed to institute land reform and eliminate caste-based discrimination. The Maoist rebels claim to fight on behalf of the landless poor, opposing the injustice and oppression of the Indian state; their professed ultimate objective is to establish a socialist state by defeating the government through guerrilla warfare. Formed in the late 1960s from a split within the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Maoist insurgency has threatened the country’s internal security, operating primarily in the country’s central and eastern regions. A pronounced ideological decision to move fully from Marxism-Leninism to Maoism made the defeat of the national government – not, for example, land seizures – the defining objective of the “protracted people’s war.” The insurgency has operations in an estimated 20 of 28 states – and approximately one third of the country’s districts. Between 2010 and 2015, around 2162 civilians and 802 members of India’s security forces were killed by Maoist insurgents.\(^6\)

Today Naxalite activity is spearheaded by two organizations: People’s War Group (PWG) and Maoist Communist Center of India (MCC). By linking Maoist mobilization during recent decades with Communist militants’ movement-building efforts in Telangana during the 1940s, I argue that fluidity in the nature of civilians’ participation in rebellion – which

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\(^6\) Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Left-Wing Extremism Division, “Background.”
spans a spectrum from unarmed to armed mobilization – has helped sustain the diffuse Naxalite insurgency.

**Question and argument**

The dissertation explores political violence in these distinct contexts, and its intersection with ordinary people’s participation in electoral politics, social change, and the construction of Left movements in the second half of the twentieth century. Specifically, political mobilization varied in three distinct sub-national areas: the departments of Ayacucho and Puno, in Peru, and the area of southern India known as Telangana, which during the period of interest for this study, formed a part of the princely state of Hyderabad. Interactions of local political structures with insurgent efforts to mobilize support and enact ideological movements led to distinct experiences of violence during wars in the three contexts. In addition to varied levels of violence, distinct kinds of mobilization generally resulted from these interactions. What explains variation in the integration of militants into local politics? How does political mobilization in a given place – including its history and culture – shape the ideologically-driven actions of insurgents who seek to build violent movements? Rebel-civilian and rebel-civil society encounters and relationships generated divergent paths in the three cases, the course of which depended on the nature of articulation of political organizations before rebels arrived – and on whether local actors were integrated with other Left forces that provided them with a narrative linking their own agency in land struggles with a broader yearning for citizenship. Ideology plays a role in explaining differences in rebels’ strategies as they interpreted political realities and opportunities for exploiting existing networks.
My principal argument is that pre-war social and political dynamics, specifically the integration of peasants into expressive political networks and the level of coordination among leftist organizations, affected the responses of communities to, and participation in, wartime violence and politics. Primarily indigenous and tribal citizens, living geographically and institutionally distant from the state, made decisions about participating in, fleeing, or resisting violent changes to their local political environments, decisions which derived from their perceptions of power and community. Strategic choices by rebels, which depend on their interpretations of ideology and willingness to build a broad-based or an exclusive movement, significantly shape the political conditions and opportunities that civilians face.

I argue that patterns of civilians’ responses differed in Ayacucho, Puno, and Telangana, and that understanding this variation is critical to explaining political mobilization in both violent and nonviolent contexts. In Ayacucho, local political actors, marginalized and disarticulated by divisive pre-war mobilization by the Left, collapsed in the face of Sendero pressure, and the rebels constructed support for their violent campaign in many districts of the department through both persuasion and intimidation. In generating and enforcing local participation, Sendero insurgents drew on their previous connections to civil society, but also enervated those ties through its ideological commitment to violence. In contrast, Puno’s political and social organizations demonstrated resilience as they encountered Sendero cadre, which resulted in exclusion of the rebels from the local political scene. How do we understand the divergent responses to rebels’ arrival? Integrated networks of activists and reformers helped catalyze peasants to express their political demands in ways that cut across identities, including indigeneity and class, in Puno. In the
1970s and 1980s, Ayacucho, on the other hand, lacked cross-cutting approaches to building a leftist front that articulated the needs of residents, for instance, a demand for universal, public education.7

Third, in Telangana during the mid-1940s, local activists, including members of the Communist Party, mobilized tribals and peasants in a massive cultural and social organization, the Andhra Mahasabha. Subsequently, communist organizers drew on this organization to build local networks that could be repurposed for armed struggle against local landowners and the ruling Nizam of Hyderabad. The varied responses of local actors and their approaches to revolution generated fluidity in the mode of mobilization – between committed nonviolent action to behind-the-scenes support and outright armed struggle. From the perspective of civilians, the aggregated, iterative effects of providing support to a pro-independence and cultural autonomy movement, which constituted the original and parallel motives of the Telangana armed rebellion, facilitated their participation in violent militancy as the movement evolved. Mobilization in Telangana, in contrast to both Ayacucho and Puno, exhibited a dynamism and ambiguity that originated in the multiplicity of motives for resistance and was sustained by the momentum of peasants’ agency in building a movement, even as it crossed the boundary lines of violence. Drawing on Kalyvas’ emphasis on the interaction between macro-level factors and “peripheral” and local factors in producing violence,8 I stress the significance of India’s post-World War II

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7 This understanding draws on arguments made by Carlos Iván Degregori about the origins and evolution of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho, and José Luis Rénique about peasant and Left activism in Puno. I build on their sociological and historical analyses by demonstrating specifically how political organization operated locally and how it intersected with the ideology and praxis of Marxist and Maoist militants, using concepts of articulation and networks to illustrate these processes.

state formation process in shaping a kind of moving target: contestation over the form and nature of government affected both the object of the Telangana political struggle as well as the composition of alliances that the nascent communist movement was constructing.

People participated in distinct ways as rebels sought to establish violent movements in varied contexts, and these dynamics led to divergent trajectories and outcomes. Where communities drew on certain kinds of political resources – for instance, political networks that expressed peasants’ demands for reform and representation, and which emphasized commitment to democratic contestation over armed struggle – they could choose to resist rebel efforts to mobilize and enforce support. The existing structure of integrated Left networks in Puno prevented extensive penetration by rebels; in Ayacucho, on the other hand, social organization and order eroded in the face of strategic Sendero pressure, and people chose to support the rebel project. Militants in Telangana constructed a movement based on partnerships with tribal peasants who perceived meaning, simultaneously, in both their own continued participation in the communist movement and in powerful social and political organizations that maintained distance from violence. The fluidity of this active, simultaneous support, which originated in nonviolence but developed into a guerrilla movement through family and rural networks, was critical to the gains made by the Telangana rebels against landowners and the state. Rebels relied on practices and social roles that had been molded by peasants’ participation in local networks, to steer the struggle into armed contestation.
Implications of the argument

The implications of the study’s findings constitute several related claims about the nature of participation in politics and violence; relationships between armed rebels, civilians, and civil society; and the consequences of historical modes of political mobilization and resistance for ordinary people’s participation in democratic systems. First, the study stresses the concept of “articulation” as an explanatory mechanism. Ordinary people’s collective political participation is defined in terms of its range of articulation – the extent to which individuals and groups are organized, cohesive, and expressive. It is not necessarily how much people participate in politics – but how they do – that helps explain the nature of social and political relations between rebels and civilians during wars.

Students of civil conflict focus disproportionately on rebel organizations, even as the “sea” in which the guerrillas swim reveals, importantly, how citizens continue to act politically in the context of anti-state mobilization. In Clausewitz’ conception, war, instead, constitutes “a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means,”\(^9\) and we must study not only actors’ military and organizational dynamics, but the varied modes of people’s engagement with efforts to represent, mobilize, and coerce them into participation. To what extent participation is articulated – which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups – influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the state, and the insurgency interact.

The nature of participation – the kinds and extent of the connections among political actors that express and organize for a cause and set of interests – is central to our

\(^9\) “…we also want to make it clear that war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different. In its essentials that intercourse continues, irrespective of the means it employs.” Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 605.
understanding of politics in war. To what extent participation is articulated – which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups – influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the state, and the insurgency interact. In employing the term, I intend for articulated to signify both “articulate,” able to speak for a cause and a group, and “articulated” to imply a sense of being “jointed.” In combination, these two components – political expression and integration – define articulation.  

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

Critical to the notion of articulation is the role of civil society in connecting and expressing the shared political interests and values of class-based groups, like peasants, urban workers, and miners. If the structure of local mobilization networks facilitates tightly

10 In elaborating the concept of articulation, I seek to emphasize a range rather than a dichotomy. This descriptive range is intended to capture both the quality of expression and integration of political actors, and the potential for changes in the ways they are articulated. For me, the concept of articulation emerged clearly in a term more commonly used in Spanish than English, “articular” (meaning to join, bring together). I am grateful to Manny Teitelbaum for pointing out the comparability of this concept of articulation to Stuart Hall’s “articulated lorry,” which captures the organic, adaptable nature of connection through articulated sites, which can occur in varied contexts – political, discursive, and cultural. On Hall’s theorization of articulation, see Jennifer Daryl Slack, “The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies,” in Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies, eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996).
fortified organization within and among different social groups and expresses people’s demands for reform, equality, and citizenship rights, this high level of articulation may prevent exploitation of political space by rebels. I explore the connection of civil society to violent revolution in three ways in the empirical contexts of India and Peru.

In India, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, civil society organizations – which include a range of non-state social and political associations and movements with heterogeneous objectives – have cultivated relations with rebels that have varied widely over time. The interaction and collaboration of Maoist (Naxalite) rebels with student movements, civil liberties groups, and organizations that promote territorial autonomy constitutes an articulated site for “mixed-method” resistance and political struggle. Mobilization by unarmed civil society actors continues during periods of insurgency, and may in some ways intersect with its networks and processes. How and why does this occur? Strategic partnerships and shared activities catalyze the participation of tribal and low-caste citizens in ways that sometimes diverge from and at other times complement their engagement with status quo electoral politics. While many tribals do not reject participation in elections and state institutions, some sympathize with the Maoists’ articulation of mass movements and defense of land and resources in the forests of central and eastern India. The fluidity of participation in political resistance – including civilians’ continued participation in a movement that changed from nonviolent resistance strategies to armed guerrilla struggle – is evident in the Telangana struggle of the 1940s and has contributed to the longevity of the contemporary Maoist movement in India.11

11 This connection is analyzed in depth in Chapter 5.
Another exploration of articulation and participation in the context of violence emerges from the experiences of the regions of Ayacucho and Puno. In the years before and during the civil conflict (1980-1992), a lack of articulated participation in politics significantly fueled the subsequent advances of Sendero rebels in Ayacucho. There, during the 1960s, peasant (campesino) participation in political organizations was weakly organized and poorly linked among different urban and rural constituencies. Few organizations had managed to engender opportunities for cross-cutting identification with political causes and classist interests among peasants; in fact, no regional or communal groups operated in Ayacucho with strong mobilizing power. Particularly in the first few years of the war, Sendero rebels generated significant support in many of the department’s districts, a product of the Party’s strategic local penetration of remote communities over twenty years. In contrast, in Puno, in Peru’s southern Andean high plateau (altiplano), highly articulated participation and integration among diverse political movements – Leftist activists, the Catholic Church, and a departmental peasant federation – coincided with Sendero’s ultimate inability to secure lasting social roots and support there.

Insurgency frequently takes place against a backdrop of prolonged contestation over political ideas – in the contexts of both India and Peru, intense struggle over the content of Left philosophies, mobilizing actions, and the use of violence colored this framework among activists and theorists. An insurgency’s particular ideological interpretations and ideas about membership shape people’s participation in violence by influencing everyday

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12 During the war, Peru’s departamentos constituted the main sub-national geographical and administrative units; these are comparable to states in the United States. In 2002, the country’s 24 departments became 24 “regions,” a change which coincided with a decentralization of central authority to regional governments following the end of the dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori. Each region is subdivided into provincias (provinces), distritos (districts), and anexos (annexes, which form parts of some districts).
social relations between rebels and civilians. The second argument, then, is that rebels’ “ideas in action” shape the kind of participation that results from their efforts to mobilize citizens. Moreover, these efforts are, in part, a product of how rebels understand that they are implementing a particular ideology, whether Marxist, Maoist, or a tailored rendition of these ideas. Rebels’ efforts to attract members and mobilize local residents confront the communal, familial, and cultural practices that characterize a community and a region. As civilians agree – or are coerced – to participate in rebel-led processes of membership-building and violent and nonviolent actions, rebels aim to implement and adapt their ideological interpretations locally, socializing recruits and community members into political rules and roles.

For instance, for the Shining Path leadership, according to the Marxist-Maoist-Mariáteguista thought branded by the Party’s ideologue and founder Abimael Guzmán, Peru’s peasants were to be the executors of revolution through violence; this was their role in the alliance of classes that comprised the forces carrying out armed struggle. The Party was to direct the war, and the masses were to carry it out. Its conception of membership was rigid and totalizing, requiring its recruits to abandon their families permanently, including their names and virtually all aspects of belonging. The “instrumental ethic” that Sendero adopted, as a product of Guzmán’s embrace of the ultra-left ideological strands that put Mao’s Cultural Revolution into motion, was essentially this: “See classes, not people.” For Guzmán, the Cultural Revolution was the major landmark of human history.

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13 Writer, activist, and founder of the Peruvian Communist Party José Carlos Mariátegui’s ideas on indigenous Peruvians and the country’s economic crisis and how they shaped Guzmán’s thinking are explored in Chapter 2.
because it revealed “how to change souls.” Sendero’s instrumentalizing and maximalist interpretations of dogma led to its separation from the thought and practice of much of the Left, and this, in turn, had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war. It broke down local institutions and social ties, and left people with few alternatives to participating in the rebels’ destructive project. In several chapters, I explore these effects as they emerge in the form of opportunities for active – not only complicit – participation in violence, and changes in social networks.

Departing from a conception of ideology as instrumental, at best, in the literature on civil war, this study shows how specific ideologies handed down by rebel leadership operate in communities – as cadre carry them out and civilians respond. During war, civilians are agents and articulators of political mobilization, a process which has a history and institutional form prior to the intervention of rebels – and rebels coopt and exploit extant social and political networks. These webs of relations draw on, embody, and sometimes diverge from historical modes of local organization and activism, as rebels attempt to instill their ideas. How civilians interpret and receive rebel politics depends not only on pre-existing networks and institutions, but also a long trajectory of political ideas about race, citizenship, and class.15

Third, what came before violent conflict matters for how wartime political relationships develop and affect support for insurgency and violence. In both local

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communities and national institutions, the extant nature of political organization – and people’s very conceptualization of what politics signifies – help determine whether rebels will succeed in generating support and advancing their political projects. Both the structure and content of local, pre-war politics matters when an external force like an insurgency seeks to penetrate a local polity. Understanding how participation during war flows from historical processes of mobilization and people’s particular experiences with the state and their own citizenship is imperative, since mobilization by rebels responds directly to political conditions. These local facts are expressed in cultural practices and rituals, but also in how people “do politics” – select or elect local authorities, solve collective action problems, and enforce rules and order. Participation in violent rebellion may change over time; when communal values clash with rebel action and its consequences, civilians may withdraw their support or seek escape from political turmoil, as they did in the mid-1980s in the Ayacucho community of San Pedro de Hualla – dynamics which are explored in Chapter 4. Local histories of political organization and participation help contextualize people’s participation in rebel governance and violence: when a new form of politics came to town, how did ordinary people make sense of protecting and promoting their families and livelihoods in these changing contexts?

Finally, the study emphasizes an implication of these broader arguments about the ontology of violence and politics. The study of participation – a theme at the heart of politics – should concentrate simultaneously and holistically on interpreting the reality of

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political action, which involves not only institutions and elections, but also state and non-state violence. This action, which may be difficult to observe, structures governmental and other forms of power in developing societies. Political motivations and mobilization frequently draw on violence in their enactment and practice, but our studies continually draw on – and reinforce – the binary distinction between “functional” politics and violence as an expression of political and institutional breakdown. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly trace the “reification” of “the boundary between official, prescribed politics and politics by other means” to the 1950s and 1960s.\(^\text{17}\) While political scientists narrowed their focus on institutionalized systems, sociologists studied social movements and “unconventional politics,” but these realms have imprecise boundaries, and the interactions between them also constitute the stuff of politics.

**Intersections with the theoretical literature**

*Blurring the boundaries of participation: an ontology of politics and violence*

I aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on civil conflict, political violence, and political participation in three ways, which I discuss below. Drawing on theories and methods from multiple disciplines – namely, history, anthropology, and sociology – in addition to political science, the project constitutes an effort to generate as much evidence as possible, facilitating the inductive construction of an argument supported by on-the-ground experiences and immersion into thousands of documents and people’s

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lived memories. In what follows I summarize the themes and theories through which the study engages knowledge that has been produced in political science and other disciplines.

First, the project highlights the dichotomous separation of politics and violence that emerges in the political science literature and suggests that our ontologies of participation in these actions are overly bifurcated and distinct. The study of politics would benefit from apprehending agency and action – both in the context of civil war and outside its empirical bounds – not only as fluid and contingent, but inclusive of widely varied kinds of contestation, including different forms of violent struggles. I engage directly with a few threads and arguments in the literature by constructing a conceptualization of political action as multiple, interactive, and complex.

While many scholars view the relationship between violence and non-violence as dichotomous, social and political actions do not fall neatly into one category or the other. The boundaries of actions that seek to change the political status quo often bleed and blur, shifting over time and drawing on varied forms and meanings of participation. Extant empirical investigations and theories often fail to account for these messy, ambiguous processes and outcomes. Instead, violence is perceived as an aberration, rather than a manifestation of political action, ideas, and impulse. Scholarly studies frequently interpret violence as a deviation from the practice of “normal” functioning politics and a result of the failure of political institutions and processes.

A reliance on dichotomies ignores the fact that individuals and institutions – gangs, insurgents, ordinary people, military forces, and bureaucrats – “use violence to impose and
contest notions of order, rights, citizenship, and justice.”\textsuperscript{18} What Arias and Goldstein call “violent pluralism” – a vast diversity of forms of violence – impels us as students of politics to investigate a broad range not only of violent events and kinds, but of their dynamic interactions with democratic politics. The move to take seriously the inter-relationship between violence and non-violence requires that we expand our conceptualization of “the political” to include the practice of politics as it occurs – a continuum of acts that may emerge as violent, illicit, licit, and non-violent at differing moments and in different social and cultural contexts. I follow on Arias and Goldstein’s call for students of violence to trace its manifestations in political practices and contestation and in the workings of state, proto-state, and non-state organizations. This framework also seeks to uncover the ways in which “pluralist” democratic societies in particular – given the ability of citizens and activists to choose from a multiplicity of political behaviors, preferences, and allies – create conditions for violent challenges to inequality of rights, citizenship, and opportunity. I take up this underexplored aspect of violent pluralism by focusing on the changing roles of civil society as connecting ordinary citizens not only with state-administered politics, but with a diverse set of political groups that may represent them.

This conceptualization differs from Kalyvas’ rigid differentiation between war and politics. He dismisses the importance of the study of conflict not centered on violence as unimportant for the study of civil wars.\textsuperscript{19} But this conceptualization reifies the distinction


between “peaceful” contentious politics and wartime, violence-ridden contention; my claim is that all forms of conflict matter, as they simultaneously draw on extant social and political networks as drivers of multiple outcomes like civilian support, rebel control, and selective violence. A range of violent and nonviolent acts of contentious politics – such as a protest of government policy in which a few youths throw stones, or a neighborhood scuffle among business owners that becomes an “ethnic riot” when police fail to intervene – constitute fluid elements of processes of contestation and conflict. The focus on the universe of contentious politics embodied in the work of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly distinguishes between “contained” and “transgressive” contention, the latter involving the formation of new political actors or innovation in the means of political contestation – in rough terms, an effort to transcend the boundaries between institutionalized and informal politics. Their objective in studying episodes of “collective political struggle” is to demonstrate how different forms of contention – nationalism, strikes, revolutions, social movements – result from similar mechanisms and processes.20

This dissertation is aligned with this effort to understand better the parallels and interactions between official politics and “politics by other means.”21 Comprehending how modes of mobilization for violent and nonviolent politics are inextricably connected through social networks and shared ideology is critical to explaining variation in communities’ participation in rebel projects. Historical mobilization for autonomy, group rights, or policy reform may catalyze both illicit and legal contention, and this transmission may shift over time. Civil society organizations interact and share networks with violent

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20 McAdam et al., *Dynamics of Contention*, 4-5.
21 Ibid, 6.
actors whose objectives are to generate political support for the same causes and campaigns – if not through the same means. As boundaries between organizations with distinct methods are perceived to be blurred, democratic states face challenges in targeting violent groups and protecting citizens’ rights to participate in politics.

Theories of collective mobilization and violent rebellion have approached the study of insurgency and civil war more linearly, emphasizing several factors as catalysts of these processes, including: ideology, for example, based on class struggle; ethnic and identity-based grievances;\textsuperscript{22} relative deprivation;\textsuperscript{23} greed and natural resource opportunism;\textsuperscript{24} selective incentives;\textsuperscript{25} and insurgency as a form of protection from state violence.\textsuperscript{26} Existing explanations constitute underlying conditions for the possibility of social mobilization; focusing on one or the other without incorporating the processes that define varying contexts and shifting cultures of political engagement makes for impoverished theorization. A holistic approach to understanding violence and political participation requires that researchers take observed stabilities and changes in processes and networks into account in seeking to understand the interactive social dynamics that influence individual and collective mobilization. How people understand the multiple, often overlapping modes of political expression available to them in the context of civil war is

\textsuperscript{22} Donald L. Horowitz, \textit{Ethnic Groups in Conflict} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
shaped by the extent to which the insurgency is able to occupy and reorient the spaces in which social and political networks already operate.

Few theorists of the links between mobilization, violence, and the state consider the conditions under which the political practices and processes of social hierarchy – for instance, activation of caste, class, and ethnicity – interact with electoral incentives and governance to produce political outcomes. Wilkinson, for instance, is an exception; he argues that ethnic riots are planned by politicians for clear electoral purposes, specifically that electoral incentives at the local constituency level and the level of government that controls the police interact to determine where ethnic violence against minorities will occur, and whether the state will intervene to stop it.27 Other scholars focus on how violence relates to voting processes, and whether armed struggle and electoral politics are complementary or substitutable strategies.28

Further, a few studies take up the complicated connections between the practices of democratic participation and violence, including the implications of combatants’ individual participation in war for their post-conflict political engagement. Past abduction into a rebel group led former young Ugandan fighters to vote more frequently than their peers and become leaders in their communities following the conflict, which Blattman argues is mainly a product of having witnessed considerable violence.29 Chenoweth argues that competition among terrorist groups for limited political influence, in addition to

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Other studies examine the severity of conflict as related to political system type: that a regime is democratic is correlated with fewer deaths resulting from civil war violence.\footnote{Bethany Lacina, “Explaining the Severity of Civil Wars,” \textit{Journal of Conflict Resolution} 50, no. 2 (2006): 276-289.} The emphasis of existing research on predicting aspects of war suggests that our study would benefit from a holistic examination of patterns of alliance and competition among political groups – not only why violence occurs in particular ways in certain regimes or why people join violent movements – but how, through everyday engagement and mobilization, the exercise of politics by various actors in a democracy prevents and shapes the use of violence in civil war and outside it.\footnote{For example, in emphasizing the problems in using “degree of democracy” as a proxy for state strength and repressive capacity, Gleditsch and Ruggeri point out that many indicators used in empirical studies of civil war are relatively crude indicators of the underlying concepts and only vaguely related to the theoretical rationale. See Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Andrea Ruggeri, “Political opportunity structures, democracy, and civil war,” \textit{Journal of Peace Research} 47, no. 3 (2010): 299-310.}

Staniland stresses the need to theorize wartime political orders, varied interactions among states and insurgents which construct political authority and control. His ontological emphasis is on how bargains and rule affect the shifting dynamics of an emergent violent context.\footnote{Paul Staniland, “States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders,” \textit{Perspectives on Politics} 10, no. 2 (2012): 243-264.}

Building on his call for attention to the politics of violence, I seek to broaden what we mean when we discuss political action, which includes attempts at mobilization that a range of agents undertake, drawing on their own roles in networks and their commitment to ideas as resources.
One way that the dissertation addresses the blurred boundaries of political action is by showing how civilians’ membership and participation in what are considered “legal” political organizations and parties are not mutually exclusive of participation in “illegal” organizations that employ violence. In Andhra Pradesh, civil society groups, including low-caste and tribal associations, civil liberties organizations, and the Telangana movement for local territorial autonomy, have at times collaborated with local Naxalites. In the Telangana region of the state, insurgents adopted a range of Maoist and Marxist ideological commitments as early as the 1940s, mobilizing Adivasi peasants to combat unjust landholding and labor practices and promote a local nationalist and anti-colonial struggle. In the state of West Bengal, in contrast, the state’s Communist Left government co-opted many civil society organizations, alliances which sought to destabilize and repress Naxalite insurgent operations during the 1970s and 1980s. I examine this variation in the Andhra Pradesh context historically, in an effort to elaborate the strategies of non-state political and social organizations and changes in their collaborative intersections with rebel forces.

Overreliance on classifying action and actors as violent or illegitimate helps obscure the incidence of non-violent action, in many ways, due to its nature: the commitment of violence is simply more visible, reported, offensive. People’s participation in non-violent action is in fact, powerful; it is effective and strategic, and importantly, it too constitutes contentious politics.35 While some scholars’ efforts have ignited energetic and needed attention to studying non-violent mobilization and its interactions with violence, to incorporate their contributions to the study of contestation meaningfully,36 a holistic

36 For instance, McAdam et al, Dynamics of Contention.
reconceptualization of action may be in order. It may demand that we cease assuming that
the kind of political system, for example, determines the legitimacy and process by which
authority is gained and maintained; it may require that we acknowledge the everyday
ambiguities and injustices of the practice of democratic politics, which may draw on and
produce violence in its operations. Missing from our studies, for instance, is how place,
intimate relationships, familial and social networks, and historical patterns of mobilization
are implicated in the commitment of violent acts. How does violence emerge and reproduce
in a society? How does the practice of politics structure opportunities for individuals to join
forces in violent action?

This orientation to understanding politics and violence ontologically together relies
on a combination of methods in this dissertation: historical analysis, specifically the
examination of materials from multiple local and national archives; interviews with those
who participated in, led, and conceived of the efforts to mobilize peasants and workers in
Peru and India; and ethnographic compositions that seek to capture lived experiences, from
my perspective as a researcher, woman, and outsider.

_Citizens, participants, political agents_

Second, the project’s focus on ordinary citizens constitutes an attempt to try to
understand political action from the perspective of those who are participating in it. Scott
characterizes ethnography as central to social scientific inquiry: “You can’t explain human
behavior behind the backs of the people who are being explained. If you want to understand
why someone behaves as they do, then you need to understand the way they see the world, what they imagine they’re doing, what their intentions are.”

Scholars analyzing civilians’ roles in violent civil conflict have explained participation in rebellion by emphasizing the “pleasure of agency” that individuals may experience in taking risks involved in supporting rebels; differences in the social endowments of insurgent organizations that engender path-dependent rebel-civilian relations; and violence as an interactive process that links peripheral and central actors. I seek to build on these contributions by studying the dynamics of civilian mobilization not only as correlates of violent civil conflict, but as intricately linked to the sources of contentious politics. This approach helps us understand how ordinary people’s participation in insurgency is a political decision with roots in pre-existing forms of social mobilization. I seek to explore a conceptualization of war as a social and political process that emerges in people’s everyday interactions. A social theory of war acknowledges that its occurrence is a function of social changes and that war is a process that leaves enduring imprints on institutional and political forms. A war’s larger social context molds the character of the conflict, and war has implications for society that reflect and may institutionalize patterns of violence and interactions among actors.

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Within civil war studies, macro-level theories typically treat civilians’ reactions as a function of strategic behavior undertaken by states and armed groups. Gradually, studies of the interaction of civilian life and the dynamics of armed conflict are growing in number and specificity. My investigation takes a step farther the claims that Arjona and Mampilly make in suggesting that more research on the context within which civilians live is critical to building theory on the mechanisms that shape civilians’ strategic choices. Arjona argues that some form of civilian resistance emerges against all rebel governance: whether resistance is partial or full depends on the quality and effectiveness of local institutions in place before rebels’ arrival to an area. I pick up directly on this emphasis on pre-war politics, institutions, and forms of authority by examining local relationships at the district and state levels in India and Peru. I integrate this focus on how local institutions affect rebels’ success in administering an area with how civilians’ ideas about the meaning of politics and citizenship interact with rebels’ efforts to appropriate and change existing networks.

This interpretation takes the problem beyond the dilemma of explaining “insurgent collective action” and privileges political change and building authority “from below,” from ordinary citizens’ perspectives. Civilians at times choose to take considerable wartime risks to pursue political desires, and in that process, they seek agency, which is given


meaning through a struggle for change.\textsuperscript{43} The study seeks to renew a focus on peasant politics, which has implications for development and democracy in agricultural societies and sectors, and often for indigenous groups in conflict and tension with the state. The struggles of peasants for economic justice and integration into regional and national markets fuel their participation and embrace of particular ideologically-guided actions like land invasions and violence against landowners. The historical modes of mobilization that these political decisions – to resist the status quo or not to resist – catalyze has effects that shape how leftist militants and insurgents are able to appropriate and adapt existing networks in communities.

\textit{Civil society: connecting organizations, violent actors, and the state}

A central finding of the dissertation is that critical to focusing on civilian protagonism in political mobilization is the role of civil society as a connector between citizens and the broader political system – a set of relations which may be local, regional, or national, and is frequently an interaction of dynamics at distinct levels. Multiple implications follow from the involvement of civil society organizations – the political, social, and cultural groups through which citizens associate and mobilize –which are diverse in their objectives and methods. One consequence is that their efforts bridge not only ordinary people’s relationships to the state and its institutions, but to other political actors and groups, whose mobilizing modes may entail violence or the threat of violence. Students of politics may recognize this point implicitly or informally, but its documentation

\textsuperscript{43} Wood, \textit{Insurgent Collective Action}. 
and implications are not evident in the literature on political violence, participation, and conflict.

Understanding the operations and alliances of civil society – which is not a monolithic actor – helps integrate the study of violent and nonviolent actions and blur the lines between what we consider nonviolent, participatory, and legal. People’s participation in civic and associational organizations can, in some cases, catalyze the production of violence, directly or indirectly. For instance, Sendero militants drew on a handful of “front organizations” – licit groups that the insurgency created before the war as local mass movements – to generate participation in nonviolent street protests, distribute ideological literature, and catalyze workers’ interests in revolutionary action. Sendero strategically maintained connections with these clandestine organizations during the conflict, which facilitated the Party’s access to a realm of public, legitimate participation and debate in the streets – without firing shots or throwing bombs.

Conceptualization of civil society and its portability have long been limited in the study of democracy, democratization, and institutions. Civil society may encompass a broad range of types of organizations and actors who interact and attempt to shape the perceptions of ordinary people and synthesize their interests. In one framework, civil society emerges as an entity separate from citizens and from the state: a private site where associational, cultural, and political life aggregates – a site that is, by definition, inaccessible to the government. One social scientist characterizes it as a “space which exists between the family, on the one hand, and the state, on the other.”

civil society emerges organically and directly from the people who populate its organizations and associations, in the spirit of a Habermasian “public sphere.” Varshney argues that pre-existing networks of civic engagement, particularly those that cross lines between ethnic groups, can restrain violent processes. In contrast, in some of India’s urban, riot-prone communities, strong *intra*-ethnic networks and communal (religious) organizations served to spur and organize violence. In his study of the links between violent ethnic conflict and associational networks that cross faith communities, Varshney identifies two important mechanisms. First, institutionalized, associational organizations express and serve the shared economic and social interests of members of different religious communities, carrying out essential functions not related to communal identities. Second, the experience of sustained, routine interaction can help people manage crisis and tension by forming organizations like peace communities. These bodies provide information to local administrations and police, quashing rumors and helping them to maintain order. In this sense, local civic networks that cross ethnic groups can serve as a constraint on the strategic behavior of Indian politicians, some of whom seek to divide people along Hindu-Muslim lines and promote organized criminal violence. Instead of a


nexus between local state and local civic networks, a distinct pattern of collaboration among social organizations resulted in a defense against rebel violence in Puno, Peru. Various organizations with mutual interests – peasant federations, Church groups, and Left political parties – allied with one another on substantive political goals like land reform. They maintained a nonviolent approach to gradual political struggle, which differentiated their efforts from those practiced by Sendero Luminoso. In Puno, the “legal Left” – a growing number of small parties dedicated to building a nonviolent, democratic front of workers, peasants, and the middle class during the 1970s and 1980s – fought Sendero insurgents, and the local leftists won because their methods and message had earned local legitimacy. This confrontation showed the importance of cross-cutting mobilization, as Varshney’s findings demonstrate, but also the strategic, tightly-woven discipline of a nonviolent front confronting a violent armed actor, even one that espoused similar objectives for the peasantry. Method matters.

Building on the mechanisms linking civil society with violent action that Varshney illustrates, I draw on two formulations of mobilization and violence to construct a sharper, more precise conceptualization of civil society: first, Partha Chatterjee’s concept of “political society”; and second, the idea of violent pluralism. While Varshney emphasizes the potential for civic networks to prevent and address tensions that may arise between communities, they may also connect armed actors with potential supporters by articulating their causes in ways that allow communities to identify common ground and changing opportunities for participation.

Chatterjee points to the absence of a clear terrain within India’s democratic system in which the mediating processes that civil society organizations are expected to undertake
occur, even given the expansion of electoral politics to marginalized citizens over the last few decades. A political society, then, occupies the zone between the state on one hand and civil society on the other – the latter of which continues to be an “energizing” “ideal.” 47 Political society catalyzes the negotiation of claims made by ordinary people – particularly those who are marginalized, considered “squatters,” or lack effective representative in institutional politics with elites and the state. This notion, combined with the framework of the multiplicity of violence in pluralist democracies that Arias and Goldstein advocate, helps emphasize how loose, “transient mobilizations” 48 which occur along cultural and religious lines are, indeed, political – and how the organization of mass democratic politics may implicate violence. A diverse cadre of actors – legal aid providers; political activists; religious leaders – facilitates relations among citizens – and between citizens and the government. Mobilization for violence by actors like insurgents or politicians may occur with the networks that civil society organizations create or provide. These activities and alliances take place in “political society,” a realm on which Sendero and the Naxalites relied as they built support for their ideological movements. Acknowledging the blurry nature of these spaces and processes aids our understanding of how violent political parties and insurgencies draw on existing social ties. In turn, making our conception of who civil society is and what it does more precise will aid researchers’ efforts to comprehend the practice of violence and politics in tandem.

What are the mechanisms that link participation in civil society networks and in violence in support of an insurgent project? In contexts like Puno and Telangana where

communities drew on their robust participation in an extant political movement, people could choose to resist rebel efforts to mobilize and enforce support. The existing structure of integrated Left networks in Puno prevented extensive penetration by rebels, while in Ayacucho, social organization eroded in the face of strategic Sendero pressure. In Telangana, many peasants who were embedded in the Andhra Mahasabha and the local sanghams (committees) that emerged from within it continued to participate in those groups, even as Communist rebels exploited those cohesive networks simultaneously to catalyze armed struggle. Telangana rebels did not enforce participation or commit violence against resistant civilians, as Sendero did in many parts of Peru. But the fluidity of peasant support in Telangana, which originated in nonviolence but developed into a guerrilla movement through family and rural networks, provides an example of how civil society links political actors by relying on both the flexibility and persistence of social roles and practices of its members.

**Networks as sites of interaction and intimacy**

Third, I draw on network structures to help illustrate the historical and spatial interactions among citizens, the groups that mobilize them, and the state – and how they change over time. Wood stresses the agency of ordinary people who seek to realize everyday objectives in the context of war in ways shaped by pre-war social norms and patterns as well as by violence. Processes of mobilization and recruitment and the extent to which local authorities are militarized, gender roles transformed, and economies

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fragmented vary with patterns of violence in civil wars. These processes may be analyzed as alterations in social networks—the creation of new networks, dissolution of some, and structural changes in others. Wood’s argument is that the strategies of armed actors and their distinct patterns of violence shape social processes to varying degrees, fueling some ongoing processes and setting others in motion. Shining Path and the Naxalites encountered and exploited extant networks that possessed varied levels of political consciousness and “articulation” – a term more commonly used in Spanish (articular) than in English – connectedness and joint expression of interests among different groups and sectors. As social structures, networks aid our understanding of political action, alliances, and the role of violence over time. They can help specify the structure and content of connections among different individuals, and how these patterns of interaction constrain social behavior and social change, including participation in insurgency. An individual’s or a civilian group’s position in a network shapes its access to resources and their relative allocation, considerations that affect how people make decisions about their mode of political action and whether they will support rebels or provide them with information. Importantly, if we think of networks as “structured connectivity,” the network approach does not determine method. This study draws on evidence gained through several methods – including interviews with leaders and participants in different social and political organizations and archival sources documenting, for example, points of debate and names of attendees at meetings and congresses; it then maps formal and informal connections among individuals, parties, and rebel organizations.

50 Ibid, 540.
Studying networks and changes in their structure over time has helped social scientists illuminate the organization of rebellion; the systematic intersection of everyday social networks and formal militant hierarchies; and how social and communal membership shapes people’s participation in organizational groups. “Prewar politicized social networks” are the building blocks of insurgent organizations, and these bases provide information, shared political meanings, and intangible social goods like trust. Parkinson argues that our research should take seriously the organizational and social contexts in which militants and civilians operate and how these positions in networks shape the specific kinds of participation in organization that result. Everyday kinship, friendship, and romantic ties between rebels and citizens are critical to the functioning of insurgency; beyond a focus on emotion as a driver of strategic action in high-risk situations, the content of rebels’ ideas – and how rebels practice and “apply” them in interactions with civilians shapes the kinds of support the movement generates. Shah finds that the Maoist (Naxalite) movement in eastern India cultivated in villages it visited a local presence which drew on particular social longings, traditional roles, and the aspirations of community members. By building social relationships, some involving marriage and extended stays, for instance, some Maoist cadre have built trust, affection, and sustained support for their ideas. But the subordination of personal interests of family and kin required by the party’s ideology may create tension...

52 Staniland, Networks of Rebellion, 9.
between newly-built relations of intimacy in insurgency that may undermine revolutionary mobilization.\textsuperscript{55}

In communities in Ayacucho, I find that this strain on social values and practices eventually led people to reject and resist Sendero’s violent means, as the Party alienated people from one another and destroyed ties among family members and neighbors. In contrast to the prevailing focus in studies of civil war and insurgency on the organization of rebellion and exploitation of social networks from insurgents’ perspectives, I take up the study of how ordinary people’s changing participation in preexisting social networks interacts with the ideas and methods of rebels and other political organizations that seek to mobilize them.

Barkey and Van Rossem showed that the position of villages in a regional system shaped how much or how little peasants in seventeenth-century Ottoman villages were affected by changes in the state and the market. The study uses records from local courts to reconstruct formal and informal networks within and across villages, and shows how contention results from villages’ intermediate regional positions.\textsuperscript{56} I draw loosely on this approach to demonstrate how relative positions of certain local and regional peasant organizations in the 1970s and 1980s – both their geographical locations and the level and nature of their articulation with Peru’s national peasant federation – helped show their differentiated “uses” of the CCP in two ways: as a channel of access to the state and as a site of interaction with other peasant leaders and other activists. These different forms of

\textsuperscript{55} Alpa Shah, “The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed or grievance in Maoist India,” \textit{Economy and Society} 42, no. 3 (2013): 480-506.  
interaction affected the kinds of collaboration and ideational content that aspiring local peasant leaders drew on in a political environment characterized by insecurity and violence.

Many civil society organizations – and other radical parties commonly referred to as “the legal Left” (those parties that mobilized without arms) – actively shunned the violence of Sendero, and local contestation over who would mobilize civilians produced violence that had different outcomes for civilian support and participation. In Puno, a robust civil society sustained by scrappy leftist activists and the Church countered rebels’ efforts to coopt peasant struggles in rural areas. In Ayacucho, in contrast, the rebels gained support in many localities, exploiting the weaknesses of a young regional political movement that failed to articulate peasants’ demands and interests. Rebels’ initial success in Ayacucho showed that the social space left open by an ineffective civil society facilitated rebels’ entry and appropriation of local networks, including in the education system, from primary school to the university system. During the early years of war, Sendero became skilled at drawing on social and communal networks – including those that they had cultivated during the 10-15 years prior to the conflict – to generate support and impose violent practices on communities.

But this explanation of differences in the production of violence is unsatisfying. It was not only the pre-existing configuration of social and political networks and the nature of their articulation with broader political organizations that mattered. Prior to the war, a range of Left political actors – leaders and members of parties, student movements, and unions, including PCP-SL – shared ideological lineages and radical mobilizing sites and practices. In the late 1970s, Sendero embraced its decision to withdraw from the political work of building civil society that it had undertaken before the war began in 1980 by
abandoning popular organizations such as the People’s Defense Front of Ayacucho and women’s and workers’ organizations. This withdrawal – and Sendero’s subsequent clandestinity – had deeply damaging effects on networks of political mobilization. Still, during the war, Sendero drew on the connections of these “generated fronts” (organismos generados) to carry out its mobilizing work in urban areas. In Lima, the MOTC (Movimiento de Obreros y Trabajadores Clasistas, or Classist Workers Movement) and other front organizations worked to distribute propaganda under its own banner – that of a legal, nonviolent organization. Sendero used these ties strategically, with no intention of building a sustainable, long-term social movement or any organizations that would mobilize people in the aftermath of the revolution – its anticipated establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Guzmán’s brand of Maoism, societal organizations were no longer necessary for this task – only political bodies and committees that could facilitate the rebels’ military objectives. Mapping changes in networks over time helps capture the blurred lines that characterize relations between what are ostensibly violent and nonviolent organizations during civil conflicts. The substance of the ideas that drive these relations have concrete effects on practice – on how people encounter opportunities to participate.

Ambiguity of participation and memory

Third, the study suggests the ambiguity of participation in violence as it emerges in accounts provided by people who experienced it. This observation constitutes a statement about evidence and how we access evidence of people’s actions both during wars and in contexts of heightened activism amid political violence: after the fact. That is, our attempts
at direct approximation of people’s participation are subject to variation in willingness and ability to recall events which happened to their neighbors and families, or themselves. This affects our capacity to make claims about certain forms of participation, but narratives of violence – as told, remembered, and changed over time – have their own logic, which we should trace and incorporate into our theories.

Among the strategies that Peruvians adopted during the war was perpetuating ambiguity about their own participation in rebel violence. As they described their experiences twenty years later to the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), residents had an incentive to reinterpret their own participation – a means of being able to live again with perpetrators and victims, and of preventing conflict, mistrust, and the possibility of a return to violence. This shift emerged as vague responses, evasion, and omission – not only in testimonies but also in my interviews, which took place ten years after the CVR process occurred. A researcher’s ability to access “the facts” of what happened in a town during a contentious, violent period is intrinsically limited. In discussing research in violent settings, Nordstrom and Robbin emphasize that “any rendition of the contradictory realities of violence imposes order and reason on what has been experienced as chaotic.”

Drawing on Peruvians’ oral testimonies and narratives means accepting that they are incomplete accounts of reality and belong to a particular context in which participants remembered, forgot, and belonged to a social system of networks, structures, and constraints. Memory, in fact, is a social process. In Hualla, one resident who discussed his experiences during the war with researchers from an NGO

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revealed that he and others remember only in small groups; they do not remember the violence when they are alone.\textsuperscript{58}

Some scholars argue that the deviation of people’s memories from ‘what actually happened’ “illuminates values and beliefs.”\textsuperscript{59} Selective and strategic uses of memory may point to the political content of civilians’ interests and desires – for development of their communities; assistance for their families; avoidance of conflict; and the ability to live peaceably with neighbors who may have committed and suffered violent acts during the war. Memories of violence may be “inaccurate,” but they are not random: their change and development occurs for particular cultural reasons.\textsuperscript{60} Olga González stresses one Peruvian community’s long-term negotiation of meaning attached to particular wartime events among residents, who deployed not only the protection of secrets but a subtle, collective process of “forgetting.” A set of cultural practices connected to “realms of ambiguity” regarding sleep and waking existence, and the revealed and the concealed, facilitated this negotiation.\textsuperscript{61} In Hualla, civilians’ strategies of simultaneously engaging and escaping participation with rebels amounted to a kind of “hidden transcript” of resistance. However, in place of a dichotomy between public adherence to political power held by authorities and private subjugation of that power,\textsuperscript{62} I observed a distinct subversion – a set of everyday practices through which Huallinos fled, hid, and retreated to ritual and tradition as a means of coping with persistent insecurity.

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\textsuperscript{58} EPAF, \textit{De Víctimas a Ciudadanos}, 31.
\textsuperscript{59} Wood, \textit{Insurgent Collective Action}, 50.
\textsuperscript{60} Alessandro Portelli, \textit{The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).
\end{flushleft}
Memories may tell us something about how precisely action is conceived — according to what cognitive and emotional frameworks, even how one’s sense of cause-and-effect operates — and how one’s role in an event or story changes over time. Lee Ann Fujii argues that “meta-data” — silences, evasions, and denials which emerge in conversations with informants — is critical to the collection and analysis of evidence. It is a researcher’s responsibility to understand how these occurrences show how the present molds what people prefer to say about violence in the past. I join other researchers in arguing that incorporating memory — and the everyday politics of individual and collective remembrance — into the study of political action in civil war can reveal important self-understandings and relational information about communities and organizations — and their interactions with armed groups and the state.

Memory serves as a distorting mechanism; it also provides a view to how individuals pursue political interests on the basis of their shared recollections, years and decades after atrocities occur. People experience individual acts of violence against husbands, wives, children, mothers, fathers, and brothers and sisters, but the act of remembering — and of protecting the right to hold onto memory — serves to bring people together collectively, as a way to cope and achieve shared objectives. Over the last several decades, mobilization through local and regional associations of relatives of wartime victims in Peru shows how the legacy of mass violence variously informs political struggles. Families, neighbors, and communities search for missing bodies as part of a process of claiming rights as citizens that occurs after war ends. Ongoing searches for

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wartime grave sites and identification of human remains from decades-old crimes and massacres constitute both technical, scientific analyses and catalysts of activism and new forms of political participation. These processes, like wars themselves, implicate many actors – the state, non-state organizations, citizens, and international agencies and courts.

Studying what I call “forensic politics” permits a lens through which the relationship between citizens and the state following a period in which rights have been suspended and violated may be analyzed. Locating and identifying the physical remains of the dead and making demands on the government to find missing persons influences state processes of memory-making, economic development, and justice. Love, belief, and ritual impel participants to bury their dead, an urgent responsibility considered sacred for indigenous campesinos. In some cases – there are over 15,000 persons missing in Peru – families have waited for thirty years for a serious government effort to help them achieve dignity and justice through a national “search policy.”

Not only in Peru and other countries in Latin America – but in Bosnia, Somalia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Poland, and Spain – citizens are searching for the bodies of those they have lost during wars, occupations, and atrocities. Attention to forensic politics furthers efforts to understand how violence shapes people’s participation by creating political entities, alliances, and discourses that do not exist outside of the experience and memory of violence. How people remember and commemorate violence as it occurred in their families and communities has real implications for how they view and participate in politics and comprehend the state’s role in their lives. Sometimes their experience with war confirms their comprehension of the state, and other times it upends this conception.
Comprehending the relationship of the lived violence experienced by civilians (as both perpetrators and victims) to their roles as political agents becomes increasingly important as repressive governments in a range of countries employ diverse methods to silence them. How people organize to address their individual and community needs and interests changes with the availability of violence, within the bounds of civil conflict, and outside them. I discuss forensic politics as a research agenda and its promise for the comparative study of mass violence and politics in the concluding chapter.

Research processes

Method and Evidence

On an early trip to Peru, I found myself attending the trial of former president Alberto Fujimori, who had been charged with violations of human rights and corruption. As a graduate student, I attended as an international observer, not in an official capacity. Fujimori’s trial made history: it was the first time that a democratically elected head-of-state had been extradited to his own country, tried for human rights crimes, and convicted.\(^6\) The proceedings I attended, which had begun in December 2007, were focused on the human rights charges against Fujimori (other cases involve corruption) – two massacres that occurred during his presidency in 1992 – the cases of Barrios Altos and La Cantuta – and the kidnappings of journalist Gustavo Gorriti and businessman Samuel Dyer that occurred in the same year. As I sat outside the courtroom in July 2008, I watched the mothers, sisters, and fathers of victims of the violence committed by death squads, which

were created by the Fujimori regime to stamp out “terrorists.” They did this through extrajudicial killings in Lima and elsewhere, part of a crackdown that occurred after Fujimori’s auto-golpe (“self-coup”) allowed him to seize control of government institutions and dissolve Parliament. The relatives at the trial, who seemed themselves to be a family, shared strategies, communicated with the press, and comforted one another. As they reacted to the details provided by witnesses and the conduct of Fujimori in the courtroom, I began to think about the meaning of violence for these families, whose relatives’ lives were ended illegally and brutally by the state, and the meaning of justice, sixteen years after the violent deaths of their relatives. I wondered how ordinary citizens endure war and the altered relationship that it provokes between citizens and the state. I reflected on how people experience the violent death of a family member personally and politically, and how intimate encounters with a corrupt, lethal government shape one’s political views. A couple years later, I began to study these dynamics through several different lenses – in India, where vulnerable people had access to democracy – and yet the list of violent insurgencies seemed to grow each year. Why do people select violence to express political desires, when they can participate in democratic politics? What explains ordinary people joining violent movements?

In order to get at the micro-level, historical evidence that I needed to pursue these questions, I spent time in different parts of the two countries. In Peru, I visited archives in several cities and towns and interviewed those people who were involved in mobilization in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s – and in post-war political struggles for justice and equality. I passed days and weeks in tiny towns in mountainous, rural Ayacucho, documenting how people select their leaders and celebrate the life-giving nature of corn. By studying political
violence in the places where it had occurred during the war – and where it had not taken so strong a hold – I sought to understand the connections that characterize violent politics “from the ground up.” This has helped illuminate formal politics and how power works.

At the same time, I was looking into questions about the experiences of Indian citizens, some of whom were living in the context of a Maoist insurgency. Why were (some) people in a vibrant democracy supporting anti-state rebels who wielded violence and an outdated ideology? Why were some people participating in the democratic status quo and also supporting the Maoists? What could this confluence tell us about the connections and divergences of the practices of democracy and violence?

The opportunities to uncover the politics of violence and memory in Peru were rich and multiple, and in southern and eastern India, less available, as an ongoing insurgency and cautious funders curbed the shape and extent of my initial field research there. There, I traveled to two cities, New Delhi and Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, to gather information through interviews with activists, writers, and scholars, in an effort to map connections among individuals and organizations over time. Over the course of five weeks, I visited two major archives and gathered accounts of how individuals’ efforts to mobilize people intersected, challenged, and contradicted efforts by violent rebels to do the same. The result, I hope, is a dialogue that brings into close proximity the dynamics of people’s participation in politics and violence – and the connections between those processes – in the distinct contexts of India and Peru.

**Examination of archival materials**

I supplemented interviews and ethnography with examination of archival materials in a number of local and national collections in Peru. The material I gathered from these visits was in no way exhaustive, but it provided ample kindling for almost two years of study and analysis after returning home from the field. These collections have political histories embedded in their pages and the conversations they documented. In the dusty, fire-bitten papers of the Puno regional archive, I recognized the names of former politicians and peasant organizers whom I was scheduled to interview after the archive shut its doors at 3:00 p.m. Other records include correspondence between departmental authorities and local complainants in Puno and Ayacucho, which chronicle how land-hungry peasants and the Left activists and politicians that sought to represent them made demands, formal complaints, and issued invitations to government officials to local political events. One massive national collection, el Centro de Información para la Memoria Colectiva y los Derechos Humanos (the Information Center for Collective Memory and Human Rights, CIMCDH) compiled the testimonies of victims, survivors, and witnesses of wartime violence produced by Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission process: an enormous effort that resulted in video, audio, photographic, and textual evidence.

A path through piles of papers, folders, and cardboard boxes led me to the contents of a recently rescued archive in Lima. Perhaps sometime after Fujimori left office, la Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP) – Peru’s National Peasant Federation – deposited its official and unofficial records in the basement of the Socialist Party headquarters in downtown Lima, in a modest building on the grand traffic circle at Plaza Bolognesi. Only a few people knew that these records had a home there. In the early 2000s...
shortly after the CCP had mustered the funds and personnel to organize its collection, when a portion of the building collapsed, all the materials fell from the second floor to the first and intermingled with debris and dust; the scattered collection remained there for several years. In 2008, historian Ruth Borja and several graduate students rescued the CCP materials from the basement, preserving them in one of the building’s cold, cavernous rooms on an upper floor of what is now the national headquarters of the CCP. The records remain mostly uncatalogued and unexplored, and only a handful of researchers have laid their eyes on the collection. It was an honor when historian and friend Ricardo Caro Cárdenas introduced me to its contents in early 2013, and the many returns I made to the small room where the archive is maintained have allowed me to incorporate evidence on intricate and little-known connections between mass movements, political parties and leaders, and peasant groups – through the documented capacity-building, ideological indoctrination, and financial support that the CCP provided. In addition, through the communications of local peasant affiliates, the records paint a detailed picture of conflicts in small towns in the 1970s and 1980s, facilitating an understanding of the conditions under which peasants encountered the arrival and presence of Sendero and the military in their communities.

The CCP Archive includes materials dating from 1947, when the federation was founded, to the early 2000s. The CCP was – and remains – a catalyst of historical campaigns carried out by indigenous communities to demand land reform, redistribution, and ownership. The records include correspondence between the CCP and its regional and district counterparts on the status of various political struggles; the roles of various “bases” and organizations in these luchas; and individual complaints lodged by campesinos on
behalf of their communities, for armed protection from rebels, and clothing and food aid for malnourished children. I draw on the archive, particularly in Chapter 4, to help demonstrate changes in local political mobilization over time and the expanding agency of rural, indigenous citizens in their fight for land and equality.

In the Regional Archive of Puno, located in the capital of the region, the city of Puno, I studied government documents from as early as the 1940s, through subsequent decades and especially the late 1970s and 1980s, when conflict between local Left parties and Sendero generated headlines and pleas for assistance from affected communities. I spent two weeks in August 2012 in this archive, located in a municipal building on Avenida Ayacucho. Reports of infrastructure bombings, hijackings, and raids of university halls populated the pages of the daily *Los Andes*. Reviewing these documents allowed me to comprehend the local political alliances and rifts that characterized the decades leading up to and during the war and how they related to violence and political trends nationally – in conjunction with the district-level electoral results I obtained from Peru’s national electoral body, the ONPE (*Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales*).

The third archive I visited in Peru is housed within the Office of the National Ombudsman, *la Defensoría del Pueblo*, in the colonial streets of the center of Lima. The CIMCDH painstakingly collected hundreds of thousands of files that resulted from the more than 17,000 testimonies that the CVR collected starting in 2002 throughout the country, an effort to amass systematically the oral accounts of those who experienced the violence and its social and political effects.\(^66\) I reviewed approximately 400 testimonies and...
interviews, including those given by the inhabitants of Hualla and other districts of Víctor Fajardo province in Ayacucho. I also reviewed testimonies from several Puno districts. I interrupted weeks of early morning trips to the CIMCDH archive with visits to Ayacucho and Puno, returning with a renewed sense of place and historical action as I imagined it. As Mark Thurner remarked about his time conducting research in downtown Lima during the civil war, reading in the CVR archive brought me in contact with “live” politics – including the noisy, prolonged encounters of SUTEP (the national teachers’ union) protestors with shield-bearing police officers on horseback in the streets two stories below. 

I visited the Political Parties Archive located in the impressive library of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) in San Miguel, Lima. This collection, curated by the librarians of the Social Sciences Documentation Center (CEDOC), provided me with access to a range of materials produced by or about political parties – posters, flyers, news reports, ideological treatises, press releases, and meeting minutes. On multiple occasions, I visited the hemeroteca of Peru’s Biblioteca Nacional (National Library) to consult periodicals for reports on events that occurred during the period 1960-2000. The Gustavo Gorriti collection housed in two locations – in Lima at the Institute for Peruvian Studies (IEP) and in a duplicate archive donated to Princeton University – includes “ephemera” that Gorriti, Peru’s most esteemed journalist, collected during his investigation of politics and violence from 1960 to 1989. I spent weeks in Princeton and Denver

work of humans suffered by other humans.” The entire Final Report is available online: http://cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/index.php

67 “Reading often heightened my sense of what was happening in the streets or in the hills, particularly when tear gas wafted into the reading room of the National Library as a protesting crowd was herded into waiting personnel carriers in the street below, or when the National Archive’s unpaid staff decided to stage a lockout.” See Mark Thurner, From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Postcolonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
reviewing the many rolls of microfilm on which this vast collection is printed. Gorriti compiled pamphlets printed by student movements, unions, peasant federations, Sendero Luminoso, Vanguardia Revolucionaria, PUM, APRA, MIR, and other political organizations. His acquisition of wartime intelligence and military reports and documents helped me adumbrate relations between Sendero and the state in various communities. Finally, I consulted the private collection of local scholar Ana Pino, who generously shared the obscure historical writings, memoirs, and monographs found in her personal library in Puno.

In Andhra Pradesh, a southern state in India, the state archive was closed when I visited – the kind of information that I sought but did not receive before traveling to the building and the country. My visit coincided with a major election that unfolded over several weeks, the vote that brought Narendra Modi to power as Prime Minister in May 2014. I wish I had known before I arrived that all members of the archive staff were required – as state employees – to serve as election workers and assigned to posts at voting sites throughout Hyderabad and surrounding districts. This meant that the archive would remain closed for several weeks. While I had imagined that conducting research in India when an important election was taking place would help inform my analysis, at that particular moment when I approached the wrought-iron fence guarding the Andhra Pradesh State Archive and Research Institute, that romantic notion quickly faded. Timing made it difficult to return to the archive for this study. In New Delhi, I consulted materials in the National Archive of India for information on early political campaigns in Andhra Pradesh,

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68 The “Collection of ephemera from the Peruvian insurrection” is available through Inter-Library Loan: http://www.worldcat.org/title/collection-of-ephemera-from-the-peruvian-insurrection-first-series/oclc/176570767
government management and police activity with regard to uprisings there, and the central state’s relations with state governments. Spending a couple days in the British Library in London allowed me to read memoirs of political leaders, biographical materials, and other secondary sources on the Nizam’s transition from power in Andhra Pradesh and the early nationalist struggles that informed communist mobilization there in the years following India’s Independence in 1947.

**Interviews**

In Peru, I interviewed a number of individuals over the course of three extended trips in: 2012 (July-August), 2013 (May-September), and 2014 (February-April). The interviews were widely varied in terms of subjects, milieu, and content. In Lima, I met with former activists of several Left parties, including Izquierda Unida (IU), PUM, VR, and MIR, sometimes in repeated interviews. Their accounts and reflections helped me understand the role that their organizations played in mobilizing different constituents and contestation over the form that struggle would take – whether the Left should take up arms, as it had in the mid-1960s and failed tragically, or pursue class warfare with mass protests, strikes, and sit-ins. The experiences of the 1970s, when an enormous number of Peruvians filled the streets to support popular movements in anticipation of the military’s exit from power, sharpened the skills of Lima-born leftist militants whose organizing work brought them to the far-flung regions of Puno, Cusco, Ayacucho, and the northern coast. The opportunity to ask questions about the politics of the pre-war era, the conflict itself, and the

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69 Georgetown University’s Institutional Review Board approved this research on human subjects through IRB Protocol 00000741.
decades since shaped my perspectives and analyses of changes in participation and mobilization over time. In Puno, I interviewed women leaders who had been active since the 1960s in organizing women, peasants, and artisans in the region; among the interviewees was a Puñeno peasant leader who served as the Secretary General of the CCP in the late 1980s and 1990s. Interviewing members of the clergy who had spent up to four and five decades in Peru working in various districts in Puno allowed me to understand the complex and important role of the Catholic Church, particularly the Maryknoll order, in helping to construct local social and political organizations and defend their rights.

Spending weeks at a time in several provinces of Ayacucho – and the department’s capital, Huamanga (also itself called Ayacucho) facilitated space and interactions that allowed for strands of conversation to continue and be renewed at distinct moments and over time. In Hualla, in Víctor Fajardo province, I interviewed the town’s “memoirist,” who had written the book on the community’s place in history – in particular, its role in the political violence of the 1980s. His “long view” helped contextualize the town and the war; it also highlighted his own protagonism as a local authority and traditional elder. I interviewed retired teachers in Hualla, former and current officials, and widows who cared for their children without husbands or social assistance. In the district of Accomarca in eastern Ayacucho, where on April 14, 1985, the Peruvian Army killed 60 civilians, I interviewed a local activist who was engaged in an effort to redesign the remaining structure of the ex-military base there as a lugar de memoria – a memory site. Here, on a guided tour of the facility, he pointed out the dining hall where soldiers socialized, the plaques on which the officers carved their names, and the ovens where they burned the bodies of suspected terrorists and civilians. The juxtaposition of people’s memories – like
those of the activist – and their current political efforts and priorities consistently generated a compelling puzzle, a kind of agency revealed through their suffering.

In India, I interviewed journalists, activists, former rebels, student leaders, lawyers, labor organizers, and professors – a community of interlocutors that helped delineate historical relationships, power dynamics, and contemporary political campaigns. In February 2014, two months before I arrived in Andhra Pradesh, the Telangana region that had fought for autonomy for decades became India’s twenty-ninth state, and the momentum of this long-standing movement’s political success emerged in many conversations. The intersections of the party politics, hunger strikes, and backdoor negotiations that made Telangana’s statehood possible were bound up with the history of the Maoist rebellion, and interviews in Hyderabad pointed to both the sensitivity and salience of these connections.

**Ethnography**

The practice of ethnography requires a certain “sensibility” and a commitment to narrate the lived experiences of people, accounts absorbed from the extended time that a researcher spends immersed in particular contexts, and in dialogue with a place, a set of problems, a group of people. Lisa Wedeen argues that connecting those experiences with scholarly questions and theories forms a critical element of doing ethnography. Trying to identify the meanings that political actors attach to practice is an integral component of ethnographic research. These meanings, in turn, emerge in the interaction of different actors and processes, which are shaped not only by broad, sweeping structural factors but also

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formed in contingent micro-processes of contestation and resistance. If one shares the conviction “that how things happen is why they happen,” then ethnography’s advantages over conventional methods of social science help us understand causal relations.

Not all social scientists share this conceptualization of causality. But while ethnographic activities facilitate access to political dynamics of intrinsic interest in their own right, they can show how power is perceived and built, and how it operates “in the world,” through routine social interactions and practices like taking cattle out to pasture or registering a child for school. Ethnography frequently, but not always, involves studying people at the margins, not those who occupy positions of formal power and authority. It aims to capture how people see the world and how those self-understandings constitute reality – the production of social meaning. But research from below – “close to the source” – shows how politics works, and not only how its meanings are understood. This kind of study holds the possibility to reveal incentive structures, patterns of action, and causal mechanisms that drive what are considered higher-level, formal politics. As Charles Tilly put it, “political ethnography brings field workers into direct contact with political processes instead of filtering that knowledge through other people’s testimony, written records, and artifacts of political interaction.”

In an examination of people’s participation in political resistance, I embrace two empirical themes on which ethnography as a method is well-equipped to shed light. One is

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the notion of “clandestine connections,” which I discuss below in the context of linking violence and politics ontologically.74 The second is the concept of repertoires of collective action,75 which urges examination of patterns and regularities in the way people make claims on the state and how they collaborate and organize to pursue their shared interests. Over the last twenty-five years, by engaging in searches for mass graves and the identification of disappeared and massacred relatives, family members of the war’s victims in Peru demand their rights as citizens, calling on the state to provide reparations, prosecute criminals, and rebuild their communities. Their efforts to organize collectively lead them to remains buried in riverbeds a few miles from their farms, meetings in municipal building basements, and courtrooms housed within prisons tucked away in shantytowns of the country’s capital. A mother’s personal, intimate search for a disappeared child’s remnants of clothing – sandals, a belt – allows her to claim political agency and approach the state in ways that the occurrence of violence has made uniquely possible. In Huamanga, Ayacucho, I attended a convention of associations of family members of victims, with one organization representing each province of the region. They came together in June 2013 to elect new leaders of the national victims’ organization (CONAVIP),76 a process fraught with the inequalities that the experience of violence inflicted on communities. Activists from some areas were quieted, never received the microphone, and they felt that their contributions did not matter. A power struggle emerged among groups, based on strength of victimhood and proximity to the state; representatives of the regional government, who

76 CONAVIP stands for Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones de Afectados por la Violencia Política, or National Coordinating Body of Organizations of People Affected by the Political Violence.
should have remained neutral in the selection process, created confusion by taking part in
nominating leaders. Some attendees from the province of La Mar, claiming that the
government had “captured” the regional association and was using it for its own ends,
stormed out of the gymnasium. Often we as researchers are interested only in outcomes of
political processes of conflict and negotiation among governments and non-state actors, but
how people who have shared experiences of violence draw on, interpret, and express those
experiences shapes political discourse and institutions. There is hierarchy in victimhood
and memory, and contestation over the emergent order and authority persists long after
massacres and disappearances take place, as the politics of reparations and reconstruction
color local and national efforts to pursue interests.

Attentive to “the ways in which big changes indirectly shape collective action by
affecting the interests, opportunities, organizations, and identities of ordinary people,”\textsuperscript{77}
repertoires are processes in formation that draw on interaction among participants. As
Auyero and Joseph emphasize, repertoires are political – as sites of contestation – and
cultural, in the forms through which they emerge. They are also rooted in everyday life and
the social networks embedded in routine practices and relationships. In the final chapter, I
narrate and analyze an event that I observed in a small town in the southern Andes where a
procession to a cemetery – one event of several that occurred on the town’s annual \textit{Día de
Memoria} (Day of Memory) – became, through mourning, singing, and a kind of collective
protest – a site in which attendees voiced concerns about their own financial insecurity,
distrust among neighbors, and a lack of physical infrastructure. At the same time, they

\textsuperscript{77} Javier Auyero and Lauren Joseph, “Politics Under the Ethnographic Microscope,” in \textit{New Perspectives in
demanded a real cemetery, like other towns have, and state assistance to locate their loved ones’ bodies. The town’s mayor, a young boy when his father was killed during the early 1980s, responded to their concerns patiently. The widows and children of those who had been killed created politics through their own memories – at a gathering intended both to mourn their deceased relatives and clamor for economic reparations for their suffering and war-related losses.

Finally, a note on the ethnography of history: Many of the contentious episodes and processes on which I focus occurred in the past. The “real time and space” of ethnographic study make demands on an investigator, limiting one’s opportunities to embed herself in a foregone place and era. The ethnography of history poses real challenges, and according to some scholars, takes decades of ongoing conversation with those who have experienced events. I learned how important the memories – individual and collective – of people who had participated in mobilizations, protests, rebellion, and movements for rights – were in accessing the meanings of these events and their own roles in them. These memories, articulated in early morning conversations over boiled potatoes, small gatherings around fireplaces, public fora like memorial services, and written memoirs, have changed, shaped by passing years and physical aches, by a desire to forget in order to endure suffering, and by knowledge of a consensus forged in the community or even the nation. What remains and comes through in memories of violence and political action is a purposeful, selective account, one that responds to local needs, values, and meanings. To help overcome this seeming gap between experience and memory, I placed the testimonies collected by the
CVR in Hualla in conversation with my experiences and conversations in the town ten years later.  

**Reflection on problem, place, and theory**

Having elaborated on the study’s intersections with extant arguments and agendas in political science, I offer a reflection on how local, contextualized understanding relates to broader theoretical arguments in the project. In attempting to understand how ordinary people participate, I privilege not only place, people, and local and national histories, but also knowledge about particular political problems and struggles. In doing so, the analysis wrestles with the scholarship and criticism of Peruvian and Indian scholars and students of the political world, in an effort to engage with findings beyond social science theories that predominate in the United States and Europe. These writings constitute esteemed historical scholarship – including on the Maoist revolutions under study, state and private counterinsurgency efforts, democracy and political institutions, and the cultures and practices of the indigenous peoples in each of these plural and multi-ethnic societies. It is important to me that I am held accountable, through my evidence-gathering, analysis, and

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78 By spending extended, multiple periods of time during different seasons and years in Hualla and integrating what I learned there with community members’ oral testimonies to the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), I tried to gain a distinct kind of knowledge about the events that residents narrated to the Commission over ten years prior to my arrival. This integration of documentary evidence with people’s spoken reflections and interpretations had several effects on my understanding: listening to community members’ versions of wartime events helped fill in holes that emerged in the CVR testimonies; revealed particular incidents and individuals on which and on whom contradiction and confusion centered; and demonstrated how time had altered the content of the telling of these lived experiences – and perhaps people’s motivations to tell them.
writing, to the people whose lives and struggles I study; and to the researchers who have expended considerable effort to study these particular questions and problems in context.

During (and subsequent to) my work in the field, I have benefitted immensely from some of these scholars’ investment of time in my research questions and in my efforts to pursue them. As I consulted and consumed the immense micro-level scholarship which Peruvian scholars have produced on the civil war and its political effects, I decided to examine closely the politics of “what came before” the outbreak of war and the relationship of historical forms of collective mobilization to the politics of wartime participation and violence in communities of Ayacucho and Puno. This decision was a result of my own approximation of what existing studies failed to uncover or left open to interpretation, a judgment based on conversations with local scholars and study of periodicals, archival documents, and micro-histories of several towns and organizations.

Peruvian scholars’ focus on the social and political conditions and causes of war, the emergence of Sendero, and the different forms that violence took in distinct areas of Peru have helped me comprehend what is important and what empirical knowledge we lack. They also helped me understand which schools, plazas, and churches were sites of contestation and massacre; which leftist actors allied with whom, behind the scenes; and the geographical confluences of Ayacucho’s rivers. This, indeed, is rich knowledge. As a political scientist, I sought to identify two-way connections between the substantive empirical priorities that these studies had helped reveal and the theoretical concerns that seize researchers of civil war and political violence in comparative and international studies. This process is an exercise in translation, a tacking back-and-forth between gaining “local knowledge” and sorting through theoretical arguments on the role of non-state armed
actors in civil conflict; territorial control; rebel governance; and the conditions under which civilians take great risks to support an anti-state insurgency.\textsuperscript{79} The role of violence undertaken against and by civilians – its commission and aftermath – occupies scholars from security studies to international relations to comparative politics.\textsuperscript{80} A lack of historical continuity in scholars’ observations of politics before and during civil conflicts – and, in many cases, the absence of politics from studies of war and mobilization – stood out.

In researching dynamics in India, this process of translation adopted a different form. As I charted electoral and demographic data and statistics estimating violent incidents onto geographical and temporal maps, a curious finding emerged: in several districts of the country in which Naxalites waged violent attacks and could count on the support of some proportion of the population, people were voting vibrantly and engaging with democracy. This suggested an effect on politics that the political science literature on social mobilization and insurgency in India was not capturing: the confluence of different kinds of participation – violent and nonviolent, illicit and licit – on a continuum of political processes, including voting, protest, formation of new, hybrid movements, and collaborative relations maintained by parties and insurgents – what Javier Auyero calls “clandestine connections.”\textsuperscript{81} These hidden relationships capture alliances and everyday


\textsuperscript{81} Auyero, \textit{Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina}; Auyero, “Clandestine Connections.”
cooperation among political actors that can result in the production of violence. In my analysis of participatory processes in both India and Peru, democracy can render the clandestinity of these connections rather, in fact, open – for example, through civil society organizations’ partnerships with multiple actors, including indigenous groups seeking land reform and rebel groups with alternative goals and methods.\footnote{Auyero, writing on the joint production of food riots in Argentina by political parties, activists, and police, cites Paul Brass’ concept of “institutionalized riot systems” as conveying clandestine connections and control exerted by political party leaders over “violence specialists.” See Paul Brass, \textit{The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India} (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004). See also Steven Wilkinson, \textit{Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India} (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004).} Importantly, Auyero argues, “those who can set in motion these connections will be capable of creating civil disturbance and of keeping it at bay.”\footnote{Auyero, “Clandestine Connections,” 131.}

Conducting field research in the southern city of Hyderabad – specifically, interviews with activists, student movement leaders, politicians, legal aid providers, and journalists – showed that mobilization for everyday political struggles in Andhra Pradesh has at times historically intersected with mobilization by Maoist insurgents. In fact, at some junctures, the efforts and supporters of these varied movements were inextricably connected. As early as anti-colonial struggles, peasants in Telangana fought against landlessness, indebtedness, and land inequality, and opposed, on nationalist grounds, the Nizam’s refusal to accede to the Indian Union when the British departed in August 1947. From the early 1940s, communists working within the Andhra Mahasabha, which began as an organization dedicated to the social and cultural interests of the people of Telangana, organized rural dwellers, forming village committees (sanghams) to articulate grievances and engender widespread membership. In late 1946, mobilized villagers took up arms
against the Nizam’s government. A series of alliances and cooperative arrangements between the insurgents, trained and mobilized by the local branch of the Communist Party of India (CPI) allowed nationalist and pro-peasant causes to be fused and pursued through the sanghams and a combination of violence and state-building.  

Decades later, in a context of expanded political rights for low-caste and tribal (Adivasi) Indians through constitutionally reserved seats and social benefits, magnified opportunities for participation coincided with the continued use of violence by both parties, militant religious organizations, and anti-state groups like the Maoist Naxalites. Writings on the founding political philosophy of the postcolonial Indian state and its constitutional responsibility toward the poor and marginalized seemed particularly relevant to the study of the multiplicity of forms of political participation. To acquire an understanding of novel opportunities and strategies for the political participation of Dalit and Adivasi citizens demanded I draw on the perspectives embodied in the subaltern studies literature, beginning with Ranajit Guha’s *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*. The scholars who studied and wrote about Partition violence, repression of political activists and intellectuals during the Emergency (1975-77), and the landlord-peasant struggles that defined years of communist mobilization in eastern and southern India informed ideas on

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how violence and politics occur inextricably together. Again, there was the question of how to articulate the evidence and findings emergent from India with social science theories of insurgency, state in society, and identity-based violence.

As Naxalite insurgents carried out brazen attacks in the early-to-mid 2000s, a renewed, heightened state of war was unfolding, and so was the state’s counterinsurgency response at local and national levels. Theories about states’ efforts to “make their populations legible”\(^88\) emerged as salient, as India’s counterinsurgents sought to decrease the distance between tribal and low-caste Indians and local representatives of the state in rural, long-contested areas. Integrating the theory-empirics hybrids that emerged from the study of local political mobilization in different areas of two countries constitutes a significant challenge. The Naxalites and the Shining Path constitute long-running insurgencies that take place in functioning democratic states in which governments had recently undertaken significant social and political reforms. As their primary supporters, the movements draw on indigenous groups that have been institutionally marginalized and excluded from the benefits of economic development. The insurgencies share Maoist ideology – though their particular interpretations vary – and decentralized organization, with regional and local committees coordinating mobilization and operations in accordance with the central leadership. In the two societies, the broader Left has embraced a long-term ideological commitment to class-based revolution which has nonetheless spawned a divided, heterogeneous spectrum of leftist militants and strategists.\(^89\)

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\(^89\) The Sino-Soviet split in 1964 had immediate effects on communist organizations and debates in both contexts. In India it precipitated the division of the Communist Party of India and led to the first split of the Peruvian Communist Party and the creation of the PCP-Bandera Roja (Red Flag) in 1964. In both contexts, an
In India and Peru, as insurgents organized and built popular bases, existing political systems were open and reform-minded. Aside from the 21-month Emergency period during 1975-77 in India, national politics have been conducted democratically. A military regime governed in Peru starting in 1968 and moved in 1978 to hand over power to democratically elected leaders two years later; since the country’s independence in 1821, military coups have frequently interrupted civilian governments. For ideological reasons, the two insurgent movements formally rejected participation in democratic elections. But taking seriously the frequent, if varied, collaboration among rebels, political parties, and civil society organizations in both contexts is critical to understanding ordinary people’s participation in rebellion and resistance.

Clearly, India and Peru in the second half of the twentieth century are distinct in their history, culture, and politics. Juxtaposing dynamics of civilian participation in democratic politics and violence facilitates the identification of a few mechanisms of mobilization and shows different aspects of the violence-democratic politics nexus. In India, people’s participation in insurgency sometimes emerges through activists’ and party workers’ efforts to connect across legal and illegal processes, legitimate and illegitimate systems of acting politically. By at times fusing activities and mutually pursuing shared objectives, insurgent cadre and legal political organizations, use, for instance, electoral campaigns as opportunities for ideological proselytization. The juxtaposition of these processes and analysis of their occurrence in context permits us to document the diversity

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additional division a few years later led to the creation of violent insurgencies: the Naxalite (CPI-Maoist) sect in 1967, and in 1970, the PCP-Sendero Luminoso, or the Shining Path.

90 Author interview with the candidate of a small, communist party in Andhra Pradesh and director of a mass women’s political organization. 23 Apr 2014. This is sometimes the case even when, ideologically and rhetorically, CPI-Maoist rebels reject participation in democratic politics as a rule.
of forms that the obscured connections between political groups with different methods express. When do we see collaboration among civil society and rebel organizations as in Telangana, and under what conditions do we observe a coexistence – and at times, a more contested, competitive relationship – among mass movements and a violent political party, as during Peru’s civil war?

**Plan of the study**

In their form and content, the chapters that follow argue that violence must be understood as both embedded in a particular political and social history, and with local political consequences and memories that occur after civil conflict and influence the meaning and recurrence of violence. Chapter 2 illustrates the history of nonviolent and violent political organizing in Peru, grounding the exploration of people’s participation in Peru’s civil war in the country’s trajectory of ideas, intellectual culture, and political economy – factors which shaped the ideology of Sendero Luminoso and other Left parties and groups and the strategies they selected in constructing distinct political projects. Political conceptions of peasant agency and armed struggle had deep roots in theories and categories of indigeneity and socialism that circulated in the 1920s and 1930s, including those of José Carlos Mariátegui and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Prior to the return to electoral democracy in 1980s, the shifting sands of civilian participation were, in part, a product of intra-Left contestation over principles, the restructuring of parties and alliances, and expectant uncertainty about social revolution. The third chapter’s focus is how forms of civilian mobilization for revolution and violence differed in the regions of Ayacucho and Puno before and during the war, and explains this variation by emphasizing the level and
nature of articulation of peasant interests and identities by civil society, grassroots movements, and institutions like the Church and political parties.

Sendero’s interpretation of the peasantry as the executor of revolutionary violence led to its separation from the thought and practice of much of the Left, and this, in turn, had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war. It broke down local institutions and social ties and left people with few alternatives to participating in the rebels’ destructive project. Following the comparison of mobilization dynamics in the two departments, Chapter 4 brings the interpretive lens to the community of Hualla, Ayacucho, examining the ambiguities and contradictions in rural communities’ conceptions of and participation in politics during the war, particularly their responses to Shining Path. In Hualla, even as participation with Sendero rebels catalyzed opportunities for “off-stage” resistance, the space for hidden transcripts,91 Sendero was stripping those social and political spaces of their meaning.

In Chapter 4, I briefly explore varied civilian resistance to violent revolution in two Ayacucho localities, Sacsamarca and Hualla. The relationship between resistance as a political action taken by communities and the damaging effects of Sendero’s operations on networks of the Left, which included ties between parties and mass organizations is examined in the department of Ayacucho. As Sendero increasingly and instrumentally moved toward “closing” its political network during the period from the early 1960s to the 1980s, the space for citizen participation in grassroots politics – particularly in opposition politics – underwent significant changes. These distortions in opportunities for Leftist parties and mass organizations, specifically the Peasant Federation of Peru (CCP) to

operate are detailed and theorized. Ordinary people’s ties to the CCP and local organizations enabled them to resist Sendero and continued violence, as peasants and communities developed strategic relations in order to access national politics and resources.

Next the study turns to the connections between politics and violence in southern India in the middle of the twentieth century, during a period in which processes of state formation, communist insurgency, and state counterinsurgency coincided. Chapter 5 is focused on the Telangana peasant rebellion which occurred (in a territory that now forms parts of the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) in 1946-1951, a struggle that had various targets: land equality and freedom from social and economic exploitation of peasants; an end to rule by the Nizam of Hyderabad; and cultural and linguistic autonomy for Telangana.

The chapter argues that the Telangana rebellion is linked inextricably with the origins of the Maoist insurgency in India, which is viewed as a major threat to domestic security. The claim regarding the Maoist movement’s origins in Telangana is supported by evidence from militants’ memoirs and ideological texts. Communists in Hyderabad state embraced Maoist doctrine as early as 1950, a decision which catalyzed guerrilla strategy in the forest and debates and divisions over ideology for over five decades. Rebels’ “ideas in action” – how they viewed their task of implementing ideological doctrine – intersected with extant political struggles and grievances in the communities in which they sought to mobilize peasants and workers. Since the 1950s, Maoists’ operations, guided by both ideology and political conditions on the ground, at times involved varied forms of collaboration with other movements and parties along caste-based, nationalist, and pro-

reform lines. Participation in rebellion can frequently not be reduced to practices of either “violence” or “nonviolence,” and the tenuous spaces for mobilization and collaboration that various forms of militancy open up may create opportunities for new, dynamic participation by ordinary citizens.

The dissertation concludes with a synthesis of the study’s findings and an adumbration of a research agenda that I call “forensic politics.” Emergent from the study of the participation of ordinary people in wartime politics is their role in the nation and the community when war has ended. Ongoing searches for grave sites and identification of remains from decades-old crimes and massacres constitute both technical, scientific analyses and catalysts of activism and new forms of political participation. These processes, like wars themselves, implicate many actors – the state, non-state organizations, citizens, and international agencies and courts. Locating and identifying physical remains of victims and making demands on the government to find missing persons influences political processes of memory-making, economic development, and justice. Studying forensic politics allows us to interrogate the relationship between citizens and the state following a period in which rights have been suspended and violated – through the lens of bodies, which are numerable, evidentiary, and intimate vessels of memory.

The right to know what happened to a family member, however and by whomever they were killed, is a political right that “distant citizens” – disenfranchised, excluded, or geographically remote – have invoked not only in Peru, but in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Bosnia, Somalia, and throughout Eastern Europe. The final chapter makes an argument for answering questions not only of state culpability and accountability for crimes, but the ongoing negotiation of political consequence of the violence of war. How bodies are
counted, named, and used as a focal point – their physicality undeniable but its interpretation consistently in question – of long-standing struggles and debates over citizenship and defense of individual rights are fundamentally political questions. As Snyder wrote of his study of the violence suffered in the expansive “bloodlands” of Europe, the “human geography of victims” holds its own logic, and has much to teach us about how and why violence happens the way it does.

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93 Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin (New York: Basic Books, 2010), xviii.
Chapter 2: A social history of mobilization in the decades before armed conflict in Peru, 1950-1979

“Indigenous hope is absolutely revolutionary.”

- José Carlos Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1928)\(^1\)

“The masses will respond to the call of a revolution that is able, with its first successes, to show them a new form of struggle.”

- Luis de la Puente Uceda (1964)\(^2\)

Prior to the organization’s deployment of violence in 1980, Sendero Luminoso rebels’ cultivation of membership took the form of first constructing and later coopting social and political organizations. This strategy originated in the party’s desire to generate recruits who would give their lives to the revolution and know that the value of their sacrifice was limitless. However, once armed struggle was on the immediate horizon, the importance of generating sustainable social organizations ceased to exist for Sendero leader Abimael Guzmán, and implementation of Sendero’s ideas meant that it withdrew from

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1 José Carlos Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1979), 35n.
pivotal roles in local groups and in some cases undermining their mobilizing capacity. In fact, when Sendero extracted itself from the social movement scene in the 1970s, its absence as a facilitator of burgeoning groups and associations, a role born and sustained during a mass-scale campaign for universal education in Ayacucho, frustrated civil society’s efforts to continue developing and making demands. In this volatile, conflictive organizing environment, Marxist and Maoist groups differentiated themselves through distinct interpretations of ideology and approaches to political mobilization, particularly the role of the masses in the ongoing revolutionary struggle and in a future, envisioned polity.

During the war (1980-1992), Sendero leveraged its convening authority and mobilizing potential through *organismos generados* (“front organizations”), small, cohesive units that helped connect the masses and the Party in an effort to carry out political and military actions. But its commitment to nurturing new, lasting organizations dropped off as it increasingly endorsed an ideological vision of destroying society’s structures and institutions. The political, social, and intellectual environment in which PCP-SL and other Left organizations began building radical movements and attracting membership is the subject of this chapter. The implications of Sendero’s ideological interpretations – ideas that flow from a long-running history of radical ideas and racial distinctions – for how people joined and supported the movement are many. In a setting characterized by rhetorical debates occurring within a spectrum of Marxist groups, differences in militants’ interpretations of dogma had consequences for their approaches to civilians. In particular, the theorized role of the masses in the revolution and post-revolution polity informed these ideas and shaped the participation of both civilians and armed cadres.
Rebel-civilian relations were continuously being constructed as Sendero introduced violence into its political struggle. In the decades before the war began, Sendero and other Left organizations engaged in extensive politicization of campesinos and residents of cities and towns throughout Peru. In focusing on distinct patterns of mobilization by Left movements and militants during these pre-war years, I highlight both the precursors of – and divergences from – civilians’ participation in violence and other forms of political struggle during the conflict. Ideological principles significantly shaped Sendero’s cultivation of relations with peasants, specifically the wartime role it envisioned for indigenous recruits and the communities from which they entered PCP-SL’s ranks. Put into practice, the notion of peasants as executors of violence and the promised influence that they would gain in the post-revolutionary government mediated rebel-peasant relations. Alienation from the families that they left behind to seek educational or economic opportunities led potential joiners, many of them young and ambitious, to seek belonging in a group identity that Sendero consistently provided.³ The attacks on infrastructure and killings of local officials which Guzmán tasked the cadres with carrying out showed the leader’s internalization of a historical revolution that the masses implement and “the Party directs.” Guzmán and his Sendero colleagues acted on a specific interpretation of socialist and guerrilla ideologies that privileged peasants as instruments of violence, assumptions made without taking into account their motivations to participate in politics.

The origins of Sendero’s ideas about the peasantry as a monolithic, combative class can be traced not only to the racist undertones of the agendas of intellectual elites from

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Peru’s provinces,⁴ a group to which Guzmán and other leftist leaders belonged, but also to the particular nature of the future senderista state that Presidente Gonzalo, Guzmán’s self-designated nom de guerre, envisioned: a socialist republic in which the Party continued ruling a society of the victorious masses. Early assessments of Sendero’s successful mobilizing power in Ayacucho misapprehended the indigenous nature of peasant support: the PCP-SL was not an inherently peasant movement immersed in and responsive to an “Indian” tradition of resistance to authority. In contrast, the insurgents’ cause, as outlined in Party documents and evident even in early actions, was not attuned to peasants’ specific needs or demands, like increased access to markets or better roads. Instead, Sendero forced peasants in some areas to stop cultivating some crops and closed regional markets and trading routes.

Years of efforts to construct a viable and effective political Left preceded the violence of the 1980s. The formation of ideas, strategy, and tactics that constituted the Left’s political construction took a sudden turn when Guzmán’s vision for Peru resulted in bloodletting, internal displacement, and social alienation. A movement for reforms to state education policies coalesced in Ayacucho in the 1960s, as Sendero’s earliest roots took hold among students and peasants during these years of protest in the Andean highlands. Elsewhere in the country, peasants’ efforts to address inequality of land ownership defined these decades, which were characterized by economic recession and a growing divide between the elite coast and the impoverished sierra. Peasants began organizing land takeovers and campaigns for ownership rights starting in the 1950s.

The social networks that Sendero developed among peasant communities and university students at different moments intersected with, diverged from, and destabilized the relations being forged between civilians and other Left organizations. In addition to novel forms of organizing among campesinos, comprehension of the range and fabric of Left militancy during this period requires an exploration of the ways in which party activists entered rural communities and extended the reach of development and education institutions that the state failed to implant in rural districts. It became steadily clearer that peasants would become – and were demanding to be – active participants in the political and social reform or revolution that was imminent in the imaginations and expectations of many Peruvians. Leftists who comprised a spectrum of belief from reformists to radicals grappled with how to incorporate and empower peasants in their political visions and campaigns. As Ponciano del Pino wrote about the civil war itself, the complicated process of movement-building in the 1960s and 1970s constituted “a trajectory shaped by the criss-crossing actions of distinct political forces, as well as by the diverse positions and responses among the population.”

During the decades leading to 1980, Sendero’s political organization developed within the context of the organization’s preparation for armed struggle – training of individuals and groups that would execute it. Guzmán viewed this foundation as central to bringing social revolution to fruition through his interpretations of Mao’s thought – and that of other thinkers who were more familiar to Guzmán’s own countrymen, including Peruvian sociologist José Carlos Mariátegui. But Sendero altered its role as a constructor of

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networks as it prepared militants more precisely for actions that would take down state officials and leftist activists. The progressive social ties that it had cultivated during the preceding decade suffered as a result, and some of these vulnerable networks later became fertile ground for manipulation by Sendero’s war-making activities, on rural soil that it had previously tilled.

**Ideology, networks, action**

First, this chapter addresses the social, economic, and political struggles in which Peruvians – particularly peasants and rural inhabitants – were engaging during the twentieth century. Starting in the early part of the century, philosophers, artists, and writers brought ideas about the nation to bear on philosophical debates about economic development, with a particular focus on the lives and participation of indigenous citizens as a motivation for social change.

Keeping these efforts for political voice and representation in mind, I outline the ideological principles that guided Sendero Luminoso’s party line and actions, contextualizing them in the history of Left ideas and mobilization in Peru and elsewhere. Various interpretations of Leninist, Marxist, and Maoist ideological lines constituted the rules with which political organizations made decisions about the nature of social struggle, the leaders who would carry it out, and the character of membership in revolutionary groups. During the 1970s, this conception of membership was of a particular nature: interconnected, networked, and oriented toward “democracy” and in opposition to military dictatorship. Added to personal animosities, institutional biases, and complicated
relationships among Left leaders, the specific ideational delineations that set political organizations apart from one another solidified and found expression as identity markers for young students, many of whom had recently left behind their families and communities of origin.6

I show how Left political organizations, including PCP-SL,7 began to draw on existing social networks to construct and execute their agendas. In the 1950s and 1960s, Peruvians were mobilizing for social reform and resistance to prevalent inequalities related to land and education. An air of revolutionary inevitability pervaded the minds of militants and activists who took note of the unlikely revolution that transpired in Cuba in 1959 and sensed a new momentum in the multiple emergent forms of activism in their own country. In some areas, parties and other organizations coopted and penetrated family, labor, and religious networks that were flourishing. In other contexts, they upheld ongoing, but faltering social struggles, infusing them with the cohesion that a body of ideas can lend to acts of collective resistance and demand-making. The implementation of distinct ideological interpretations – and intense internal struggle within and among various sects of the Left – through political parties’ organizing work generated a new confluence of opportunities and incentives for ordinary Peruvians to participate in local and national politics. The particular ways in which Sendero and other Left organizations cultivated membership and support in highland communities long before the anticipated “armed struggle” began – in part, whether the network relationships they established in mobilizing

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7 I use PCP-SL (Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso, or Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path) to refer to “Sendero” or “Shining Path” as political party or political organization. These terms are interchangeable throughout the text. I employ the term “senderistas” to refer specifically to cadres or active militants of the insurgent organization.
supporters were fluid and inclusive, or rigid and exclusive – had significant effects on the
nature and amount of support they generated during the 1980s.

Leftist groups’ heuristic frameworks originated in the political milieu of the 1960s,
when the prospect of armed struggle and the campesino as revolutionary actor were central
elements in their evolving conceptions and plans. These very conceptions had deep roots in
theories and categories of indigeneity and socialism that circulated in the 1920s and 1930s.
In the years and decades before the return to democracy with presidential and parliamentary
elections in 1980, the shifting sands of civilian participation were, in part, a product of
intra-Left contestation over principles, the restructuring of parties and alliances, and
expectant uncertainty about social revolution. The changing consciousness of peasants as
they increasingly claimed their rights, emboldened by their own efforts to resist their long-
standing marginalization and by the military’s agrarian reform, affected the ways in which
political ideas and practices shaped their participation.

**Indígenismo, socialism, and mid-century political mobilization**

The middle of the twentieth century in Peru constituted a moment of heightened
social consciousness and action. Hierarchies of race and class pervaded rural society in the
1950s, as communities had inherited legacies of relative economic position and political
possibility from the practices of colonial rule. Agricultural production and cultivation,
which formed the backbone of rural livelihoods, suffered from an exploitative system of
labor and land ownership over which *gamonales* (local land-owning strongmen) and
hacendados (owners of large landholdings) presided for several hundred years. The structure of land ownership had concrete influences on the modes of political contestation that emerged over the next fifty years in the sierra of central and southern Peru and the plantations along the Pacific coast. While land possession persisted on highly unequal terms in both regions, the dynamics of political mobilization in response to these conditions differed significantly in the two areas. These actions formed part of pervasive calls nationwide for social and economic transformation by Peruvians from different class backgrounds and political sympathies. The revolution in Cuba showed people throughout Latin America and the world that radical transformation through scrappy guerrilla warfare was possible, and militants in Peru took this seriously. These revolutionary aspirations—and the ideologies that embodied them—were grounded in the development and diffusion of ideas about national renewal that began in the early part of the century.

*Early socialist ideas and the intellectual forging of the revolutionary path: 1920s – 1960s*

Following the 1929 financial crash, the country’s export-oriented economy suffered particularly poor consequences, and in Peru, as in other Latin American nations, professional military institutions rose to prominence, tasked with managing the political instability that accompanied economic shock. At the same time, new political alliances emerged during the early 1930s, as middle-class and working-class groups began to claim expanded access to political power. Peruvians were accustomed to the injustices and

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arbitrariness of distant rule by oligarchs and generals, patterns embedded in political life since the country achieved independence from its Spanish rulers in 1821. As military men from the 1930s onward continued to see themselves as more capable of administering their societies than civilian governments, they distrusted populist politics and rejected civilian political parties as institutions capable of governance. These orientations had significant implications throughout the region, as military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile became increasingly repressive as the decades wore on, reaching a feverish and violent pitch with the radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Masterson argues that in Peru, the roots of the military’s enduring cynicism originated in the circulation of revolutionary discourses – particularly socialism – among growing constituencies in the 1930s.

But socialist ideas were not a novelty. In the 1920s, Peruvians became voracious readers, demanding libraries, bookshops, and access to the growing number of periodicals being published in the country, including Claridad and Nueva Revista Peruana. Migration from the provinces to larger cities on the coast increased during the decade, and people flowed back and forth with more facility enabled by improving infrastructure and transportation. A national university reform in 1919 spurred popular interest in the enhanced quality of instruction and broader access, as enrollment steadily rose, including in cities other than Lima.\(^\text{10}\) As the middle classes gradually solidified their earnings and educational credentials, people sensed the broadening intellectual spirit of debate and exchange that writers, philosophers, and artists were consciously cultivating, which had at its substantive crux opposition to oligarchic government. Peruvians increasingly encountered two ideas since the late nineteenth century: that class-based revolution was

\(^{10}\) Alberto Flores Galindo, Obras Completas II (Lima: Fundación Andina, 1994), 253-263.
possible, and that the problems of economic development and prosperity should be considered “national”: what lay ahead was the construction of a national society.

Following Peru’s humbling defeat by Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883), “a crisis of national morale” penetrated the introspective considerations of Peruvian writers, with an emphasis on modernization and countering the dominant classes.\(^{11}\) Infusing these evolving ideas was a singular focus on incorporating mestizo (mixed-race) and Indian masses into national society, a preoccupation which became a movement visible in painting, literature, and philosophy. The novel became a mode of social criticism, drawing attention to the inequality and exploitation that defined life in the Andean highlands, as in Clorinda Matto de Turner’s fictional treatment of a small indigenous village, *Birds Without a Nest* (1889), and Enrique López Albujar’s *Andean Tales* (1920), a collection that illustrates the Indian peasant’s humanness by recounting his everyday experiences. During the 1920s intellectual circles sprang up throughout the provinces – Puno, Arequipa, Ayaviri, Cusco, and Trujillo.\(^{12}\)

From the “Bohemia de Trujillo” group emerged a student leader and later prominent politician Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, who put forth a series of proposals to replace the ruling oligarchy, stimulate modernization, and create space in society and politics for the peasantry. Haya de la Torre had founded a pan-regional movement, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in 1924 while he was exiled in Mexico. While Haya de la Torre’s ideas were not tied to socialist revolution, the ideological orientation of APRA

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\(^{11}\) Verity Smith, ed., *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 530-32. Writer and thinker Manuel González Prada is most credited with encouraging the reflective navel-gazing after the loss of territory, humiliation, and destruction that the War of the Pacific brought about in Peru.

\(^{12}\) Galindo, *Obras Completas II*, 263.
called for the development of state capitalism and the destruction of the feudal economic system, ideas which, for Apristas, relied on considerable foreign investment, industrial development, and the construction of labor organizations. In Peru, APRA swelled into a political party headed by Haya de la Torre, who called famously for “action against yankee imperialism.” For three decades following the party’s founding, military regimes who resented its proposals frustrated APRA’s electoral bids and efforts by Haya de la Torre to gain institutional power. Still, APRA organized unions and generated widespread enthusiastic support among workers throughout the country. While Haya de la Torre’s early influence on the Peruvian Left is undeniable, it has been undermined by the party’s subsequent pragmatic compromises and alliances. APRA’s work in the countryside and cities helped to make a varied Left discourse a viable political option in the heady days of the 1920s and 1930s.

A second figure who rose to intellectual prominence during this decade seized the ideological and social consciousness of multiple generations of Peruvians. José Carlos Mariátegui incorporated what he called the “Indian problem” directly into philosophical dissections of the need for social revolution to overcome Peru’s semi-feudal status, a situation perpetuated by the traditional cultural attitudes of the elite who controlled agricultural production and were subservient to foreign economic interests. The indígenista movement of which Mariátegui was a pioneer, reflected seriously, for the first time, on the importance of Indian culture and practices in Peruvian political society and

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13 Sendero Luminoso derived its name from the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario por el Sendero Luminoso de Mariátegui (Revolutionary Student Front for the Shining Path of Mariátegui), which was a student organization based in the UNSCH. Guzmán’s specific interpretation of Mariátegui’s thought shaped Sendero as a political organization and its orientation to the peasantry. For a thorough synthesis of Mariátegui’s thought, intellectual contribution, and the consequences for ideological debates and interpretations made by Leftists, particularly Shining Path, in the latter half of the twentieth century, see Taylor, Shining Path, 9-22.
economy. As the country’s first Marxist interpretation of Peru’s history, the young thinker’s analysis of the country’s economic and social system demanded an emphasis on the indigenous Peruvian as *citizen*, and more specifically an envisioned role for Indians and peasants in the revolution. He comprehended “el problema del Indio” as the dilemmas produced by the socioeconomic inequalities and discrimination faced by indigenous Peruvians and how to address them, given the society’s particular structural and political circumstances.

Mariátegui’s writings were a product of this heightened consciousness of indigenous political agency and a driver of it. In the journal *Amauta* which he founded in 1926, Mariátegui brought together perspectives of thinkers who advocated indigenous causes and rights in a concerted, purposeful effort to catalyze an intellectual movement that self-consciously sought to share experiences as a generation, not only in the pages of the journal but in their collective commitment to indígenismo and a national imaginary.

Mariátegui described the conditions of the Peruvian economy as feudal, based on centuries of exploitation, chronicling these conditions from the socialistic, subsistence-based economy of the Inca Empire to the colonialism following the Spanish Conquest and its emphasis on extractive mining and agricultural enterprises, both dependent on Indian and slave labor.\(^\text{14}\) Peru’s independence from the Spanish largely substituted one foreign elite for a creole elite,\(^\text{15}\) with no real change in living standards or social relations. Mariátegui characterizes the guano and nitrate boom of the 1840s and subsequent decades as an era of growing international trade and foreign dominance over the Peruvian economy.

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\(^{15}\) “Creole” or *criollo* as a racial category invokes the notion of a “native” or “local” person in a given Latin American country – that is, not a foreigner – but one who is of European extraction.
and most importantly, the shift in economic power from the Andean highlands to the coast as a signal of the “social dualism and conflict” which he saw as the nation’s most persistent and entrenched problem.¹⁶

In an important collection of essays published in 1928, Mariátegui argued that “the constitution of a political party of the working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry and the other oppressed sectors of our society is capable of achieving power and constructing a new society.”¹⁷ Mariátegui founded the “class party,” the Partido Socialista del Perú, in the same year, which became the Communist Party after his early death in Lima in April 1930. Mariátegui’s writings captured the imperative for land equality through the dismantling of the landowning system in order to resolve the indigenous question. As long as feudal control by landowners, who were above the law and, in fact, protected by the state, persisted, any policy or proposal to address indigenous poverty and inferior social conditions would be superficial.

While Haya de la Torre’s vision of the requisite political movement was a unified front of multiple classes, built on the shoulders of the middle class, the peasantry, and the workers, Mariátegui emphasized the centrality of socialism – the unique forms of mobilization for revolution that it could engender – as fundamental to the solution to the Indian problem. It alone could target class domination maintained through profoundly inequitable, entrenched economic conditions.

¹⁶ Taylor, Shining Path, 9-10.
¹⁷ José Carlos Mariátegui, Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad Peruana (Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1979), 70-71. Translation by author.
Practically all theories about the indigenous problem...have only served to obscure or distort the reality of the problem. The socialist critique discovers and illuminates it, because it seeks its causes in the country’s economy and not in its administrative, juridical, or ecclesiastical procedure, nor in its duality or plurality of races, nor in its cultural and moral conditions.  

Mariátegui specifically advocated the formation of a united proletarian alliance (given the absence in Peru of a bourgeois class prepared for revolution, as had existed in northern Europe) and a separate Socialist party that would be attentive to the particular circumstances of oppression and development of Peru’s political economy. Urban workers and miners, by this time well-organized and class-conscious, constituted only one-fifth of what Mariátegui called “the Peruvian masses.” The mining proletariat – that is, wage earners who were employed in manual labor in the mining industry – as Mariátegui saw it, was in the vanguard of the nascent workers’ movement, but because of its relatively small size and despite its highly organized nature, workers alone would not be able to effect a revolution. This meant that the rural agricultural class would play “a decisive role”: peasants and workers, who had connections to the miners (often mobile migrant workers) in the countryside, would forge a formidable alliance.

The other “80 percent” of the masses that Mariátegui had in mind comprised rural proletarians and peasants, who he argued had to be mobilized with regards to land issues and against abuses of power by corrupt local authorities – struggles that these groups had taken up in the recent past. The Pro-Indigenous Tawantinsuyo Law Committee, founded in 1920, was one of these antecedents of organization and representation of indigenous peasants, in which members advocated for protection of indigenous workers and

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18 Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos*, 35.
19 Galindo, *Obras Completas II*, 243.
communities and defense against abusive authorities.\textsuperscript{20} In the early years of the twentieth century, Tawantinsuyo messengers from the southern province of Puno traveled to Lima to register complaints before national officials,\textsuperscript{21} and these indigenous envoys initiated a tradition of confronting authorities and invoking political rights that influenced subsequent campesino movements.

While Mariátegui argued for the organization of different rural groups into national federations, he argued that activists should disseminate, discuss, and train local residents in rural areas. His emphasis on the peasantry gradually brewed severe disagreement with the Communist International based in Moscow, which distrusted peasants and comprehended revolutionary action with “the party line” as its basis. Once the party line was substantively developed and affirmed, it could be implemented throughout “the world countryside.”\textsuperscript{22} Mariátegui’s approach to politics rejected such homogenous and formulaic notions of revolution, and instead, he pointed to race and ethnicity as singular problems to be addressed by and through political action in Peru. He argued against an “ethnic solution” to the indigenous problem proposed by some observers; he dismissed the idea of an “active crossing of the indigenous race with white immigrants” as backward, “cheap” and “antisociological.”\textsuperscript{23} In addition, he refused to accept the insistence of fellow leftists that class was the sole basis for organizing the peasants. The heterogeneous and racially complex nature of Peruvian society called not for the elevation of the proletariat as the driver of

\textsuperscript{20} Heilman, \textit{Before the Shining Path}, 45.
\textsuperscript{21} José Luis Réñique, \textit{La batalla por Puno: Conflicto agrario y Nación en los Andes Peruanos} (Lima: Casa de Estudios SUR, 2004), 47-49. See also Galindo, \textit{Obras Completas II}. The “mensajeros” occupy an important role in the history of indigenous mobilization in Puno, and Mariátegui developed personal ties with those ambassadors who journeyed from Huancané and other parts of Puno to Lima, where they visited the socialist thinker in the early 1920s.
\textsuperscript{22} Taylor, \textit{Shining Path}, 12.
\textsuperscript{23} Mariátegui, \textit{Siete ensayos}, 37.
revolution but rather an equal role for peasants and workers in the revolution. Against the
grain of international socialism, Mariátegui called instead for a more inclusive Left and a
Socialist Party that could unite and generate broader support in a political climate of
authoritarian repression.\textsuperscript{24}

In what historian Jaymie Heilman calls the “literacy politics” of the 1940s and
1950s, struggles for local power in Andean communities emerged from conflicts over the
manipulation of education by elites and their efforts to retain political control by keeping a
tight hold on the reins of access to schooling and literacy, toward which, as a result, some
residents had ambiguous feelings.\textsuperscript{25} Mariátegui insisted that it was not education, or any
civilizing process, that “raises the soul of the indio,” but rather the myth, the idea of
socialist revolution.\textsuperscript{26} Mariátegui – and subsequently the ideas he left behind – constituted a
kind of filter, a lens, an interpretation of changes and possibilities that he saw as emergent
in the social discourse of Peru. His vision brought together socialist thinking and “the latent
subjective elements of the collective Andean soul,”\textsuperscript{27} constructing a “myth” that renewed
the socialist Incan past in the actions of young indigenous militants. His calls for particular
kinds of mobilization linked campesino activists and “masses” with the socialist
“vanguardistas” who sought to organize newly-formed political constituencies and class
allies.

\textsuperscript{24} Taylor, \textit{Shining Path}, 13.
\textsuperscript{25} Heilman, \textit{Before the Shining Path}. See Chapter 4, “When the Ink Dries.” Heilman notes that while many of
the people who joined Sendero Luminoso were first exposed to the party in high school or university, often
the first targets of Sendero violence in a given community would be the “local notables” who shared the
senderistas’ privileged access to education.
\textsuperscript{26} Mariátegui, \textit{Siete ensayos}, 37.
\textsuperscript{27} Rénique, \textit{Batalla por Puno}, 108.
As the next decades wore on and various branches of the Left incorporated Mariáteguista thought into their ideologies, indigenous campesinos became the fundamental actor in the consciousness of activists preparing for rebellion, and their participation in new political movements was deeply coveted, if not fully understood by Leftists. It was not only those who saw themselves as part of the vanguard of radical political change that devoured Mariátegui’s work; the most read book from the 1930s to the 1980s in Peru was his iconic *Seven Essays on the Interpretation of Peruvian Reality*.\(^{28}\) One leftist activist, José Ortiz Reyes, wrote that when he could not comprehend the Marx and Engels texts he was reading, which Mariátegui had inspired him to do in the first place, he revisited *Seven Essays*, in which the activist’s “marxism” remained firmly rooted.\(^{29}\) In the 1960s and 1970s, Abimael Guzmán would pick up on the specifically Peruvian nature of Mariáteguista thought and aim to incorporate it into his own brand of revolution.\(^{30}\) The leader of Sendero, with little adaptation and reflection on particular conditions in Peru, inserted Mariáteguista interpretations into his justification for armed struggle and copied Mao’s strategic and tactical ideas on class-based revolution. As he prepared for guerrilla war, Guzmán assumed that deep understanding of the social processes at work in Peru was less relevant than manipulating the forms they would take.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 121. Rénique highlights the oral tradition that perpetuated Marxist interpretations when activists were in clandestinity or prison together, which also shaped their personal understandings of radical philosophy.

\(^{30}\) Mariátegui’s complete works were published in a volume entitled *Peruanicemos al Péru*, or “Let’s Peruvianize Peru” in 1970.
Land and labor as an early basis for organizing peasants politically

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, plantation workers in coastal areas of northern Peru, where cotton, sugar, and other minor products were farmed and exported, began organizing against landowners. Their efforts developed in parallel to demands in Lima for improved working conditions and university reform. This early mobilization of the popular sector had catalyzed the formation of APRA and the Communist Party (Partido Comunista del Perú, or PCP) and resulted in surging class consciousness in many parts of the country. The mobilization of northern peasants coincided with the emergence of new social sectors, social values, and institutions. “The university professors, intellectuals, urban workers, miners, and peasants found themselves in a joint process of political mobilization, although fragmented and without institutional coordination until the emergence of the APRA and Communist parties.”

Haya de la Torre’s APRA established ties with workers and unions on coastal plantations from the 1930s, and these joint efforts generated a productive, symbiotic relationship. Unions became channels of claims for public services in communities, and union leaders filtered these demands through APRA, which used its positions in parliament to pursue and fulfill them.

Between 1945 and 1948, APRA organized several hundred unions and sharecropper associations on the coast. This coincided with the party’s initial period of participation in national politics as a legal party. Between 1948 and 1956, APRA was banned from

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 310.
participation in politics by the Manuel Odría regime, and during this period the party split into two groups, one faithful to Haya’s original ideology and the other, which included Haya himself, that was prepared to make numerous political compromises in order to attain the presidency. APRA never won the presidency, and defectors in the early 1960s from APRA (who formed the “Rebel APRA” group) generated enthusiastic, young forces for the future guerrillas of MIR and ELN, which were gradually constructing their programs and personnel. The APRA split produced a vacuum and confusion in the Left, at a time when activists and leaders were making decisions about the ideal form and purpose of political mobilization.

Over time, APRA’s unionized workers on the coast became primarily conservative forces satisfied with maintaining the concessions they had won from the state: minimum salaries; improved working conditions, and community facilities constructed and provided by companies.\(^{34}\) In contrast, in the sierra, toward the end of the 1950s and into the early 1960s, rural residents began to unionize and make claims to hacienda lands, engage in strikes and protests, and seize lands directly. In an era of heightened consciousness about the urgency of radical reform or revolution, the bold actions of campesinos in the southern highlands motivated young activists who were forming and joining dozens of different leftist parties.\(^{35}\) In those years, “the peasantry” was not a significant voting bloc – in large part because illiterate Peruvians were barred by law from enfranchisement\(^{36}\) – and the

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 308-11.

\(^{35}\) Heilman, Before the Shining Path, 120-121.

\(^{36}\) Howard Handelman, Struggle in the Andes: peasant political mobilization in Peru (Austin, T.X.: University of Texas Press, 1975). Literacy levels on the coast far exceed those in the highlands. In 1965, the almost 6 million inhabitants of the sierra constituted 51 percent of the nation’s population and only 26 percent of its voters. While coastal residents comprised 40 percent of the population, they made up 69 percent of its voters (and 79 percent of its adult literate population). These figures are drawn from Handelman, Struggle in the Andes, 21.
development of new forms of organization, such as sindicatos (unions) and district and regional peasant federations generated opportunities for peasants to make demands in ways that had not existed before. This mobilization affected, in particular, the peasants who lived in various kinds of labor servitude and the indigenous communities of central and southern Peru.

The southern Andes, specifically in Cuzco, were the site of extraordinary peasant uprisings beginning in 1958 and led by young Trotskyite Hugo Blanco Galdós. Blanco, who is now an iconic figure of the peasant struggle for land and dignity, catalyzed the organization of peasants in the rural province of La Convención in Cuzco. The farmers, who employed force to defend themselves from the military as they seized land holdings in the province, were largely successful. Throughout the sierra – not only in Cuzco – an estimated 300,000 peasants seized nearly 400 haciendas between 1963 and 1964.37 Blanco interpreted the peasant union as an important new instrument for reform and revolution. His Trotskyist-Leninist orientation was toward that of “permanent revolution,” characterizing Peru not as feudal but as a critical part of an imperialist system: “We must concern ourselves with spreading the movement rather than deepening it,” he said in 1962.38 Blanco’s ideological vision put him at odds with Marxist militants, many of them urban organizers in Cuzco. But land invasions transpired in parallel to peasant demonstrations in the cities of Quillabamba and Cuzco, where workers, students, and some civil servants participated and strengthened what was becoming a national, pro-peasant movement.39

37 Handelman, Struggle in the Andes, 121.
38 Gott, Guerrilla Movements, 377. Gott quotes a letter that Blanco wrote to the comrades of the Valley of La Convención.
When the military seized power in a short coup in July 1962, it adopted a more interventionist policy toward the mobilizations in La Convención and dispatched a considerable number of troops to the region to arrest Blanco and his “defense units.”\(^{40}\) Most historians agree that the military government’s political promise of national agrarian reform, which followed the crackdown on Cuzco campesinos, combined with police and soldiers’ recent repression of peasants and activists involved in land takeovers, served to quiet the unrest and effectively put an end to land seizures. Peasants there had already gained materially from the takeovers, and the expanding organizational infrastructure – which included constructing links with urban students, lawyers, trade unions, and other social groups – facilitated indigenous communities’ integration into the political system. Campesinos who formed local unions and village federations were joining broader regional peasant organizations, and the CCP, the national peasant federation, was beginning to mobilize and incorporate these groups. University students who traveled to rural communities as part of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry’s national Popular Cooperation program helped associate peasant movements with student organizations, urban unions, and political and religious groups.\(^{41}\) Historians, social scientists, and radical militants alike were focused on understanding the “revolutionary potential” of peasants, a thematic emphasis which continued in subsequent decades.\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\) Handelman, *Struggle in the Andes*, 81-2.

\(^{41}\) Cotler and Portocarrero, “Peru: Peasant Organizations,” 312-13. These various (primarily urban) actors sought to help institutionalize the peasant movement by serving as legal advisers, propagandists, and organizers. Cotler and Portocarrero emphasize that leadership of the movement remained in peasant hands and it was not dominated by outsiders.

\(^{42}\) The work of Samuel Popkin, Eric Wolf, James Scott, and Theda Skocpol, among many others, reflect this long-standing scholarly focus. Eric Hobsbawm suggested that peasant movements were “prepolitical,” carried out by “people who had not yet found...a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world.” Quoted in Handelman, *Struggle in the Andes*, 126. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in the Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1959), 2.
Major political parties were not motivated to participate in the promotion and capacity-building of the increasingly organized peasantry for a couple reasons: campesinos remained mostly irrelevant in electoral contests and their actions could have threatened the extant political order.\footnote{Cotler and Portocarrero, “Peru: Peasant Organizations,” 313.} Meanwhile, more radical forces were providing support to the CCP, lending legitimacy to the struggles of peasants in the sierra, and preparing for the revolutionary moment. While the efforts of Blanco and the peasants in the Cuzqueña sierra and those of other organizers made revolution seem imminent to ordinary Peruvians, it made a national agrarian reform imperative for the government. Amid widespread mobilization of peasants against landowners, the Belaúnde government passed a minimal reform law, a shadow of the unprecedented agrarian reform that the military regime would launch nationally in 1969. While the early land reform was inadequate, it dampened the revolutionary verve of the peasants, and brutal state repression ensured at least a temporary calm. Under Belaúnde, police killed as many as 300 peasants during the 1962-1964 period and imprisoned thousands suspected of ties to campesino organizing.\footnote{Ibid., 313-314.}

**Armed struggle as the answer: Leftist guerrillas move to the hills and highlands**

By the mid-1960s, there was little consensus within the Left that Peruvian society was ripe for revolution, given the changing economic and social conditions that were unfolding during these years. Francis Bourricaud argued that an oligarchy of powerful elites ruled the country and made use of the political system to serve its own interests.\footnote{Francois Bourriçaud, *Poder y sociedad en el Perú contemporaneo*, trans. Roberto Bixio (Buenos Aires: SUR, 1967).}
Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano wrote that the mobilization of the peasant was necessary before economic and social development could take hold in Peru.46 While anthropologist José María Arguedas portrayed “the unresolved conflict between the Andean peasant world and that of capitalist urban Peru,”47 many disagreed with his anti-modernizing, even anti-political defense of Indian culture as a direction for social change in the country. Luis de la Puente Uceda, one of the APRA defectors and a leader of the burgeoning guerrilla organization Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) compared Peru’s situation to the agrarian reform and revolutionary effort undertaken in Cuba, and called for even more radical action to destroy the large estates and challenge the oligarchy.48 De la Puente and other militants’ characterization of Peru’s economic and social conditions as feudal urged the move toward guerrilla war. But even within the MIR disagreement remained about the need to initiate armed struggle, and doubts about the revolutionary readiness of the peasants pervaded their debates. Even Hugo Blanco dissented from de la Puente’s extreme readiness to arm the peasants.49 More traditional members of the Left at the time, many of whom were not yet willing to embrace an outright armed path, dissented from the guerrillas, stressing that Peru first had to enter late-stage capitalism before it would be ready to wage an effective revolution against the state.50

But de la Puente and his close comrades had decided that revolution was inevitable and elections did not constitute a genuine political option. In his view, oligarchic rule,

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49 Ibid., 405.
electoral fraud, and military intervention would prohibit meaningful structural changes in society. In 1964 de la Puente, who had embraced the Cuba model, argued that “a new form of struggle” would emerge through the unified efforts of the worker-peasant base, the small and middle bourgeoisie, and all those opposed to oligarchic rule. De la Puente wrote that the unity of the Left, an indispensable aspect of the revolution, would be born in the process of struggle.\(^51\) His forceful, if vague, pronouncements led to the retreat into clandestinity of the guerrilla leaders and their followers into several foco bases in the mountains, from which they imagined their soon-to-be-successful revolution expanding to the Peruvian coast.

In June 1965, several guerrilla fronts ignited their actions in the Andes.\(^52\) They were met by security forces operating with free reign granted by the Belaúnde government; and intelligence officers had been prepared for the potential for armed revolt, as they had been tracking the frequent land mobilizations in Cuzco and other parts of the central sierra. The guerrilla effort failed within seven months of its initiation, and the consequences were dire for de la Puente, who was killed with several of his soldiers in the eastern Andes near La Convención.\(^53\) While numbers are disputed, the guerrilla operations resulted in the deaths of as many as 8,000 people and the burning of nineteen thousand hectares of land. The capable and aggressive response of the armed forces illustrated its capacity to defeat an internal rebellion; the stakes for the military as an institution and the stability of the government were high. In addition, the guerrillas’ swift defeat in 1965 may be attributed to

\(^{51}\) Gott, *Guerrilla Movements*, 411.
\(^{52}\) A second guerrilla organization, the National Liberation Army (ELN) also launched operations in 1965. While ELN was not affiliated with the MIR, the two groups later attempted to coordinate operations. Héctor Béjar, the leader of the ELN, wrote an analysis of the guerrilla movement from prison during the late 1960s. See Héctor Béjar, *Perú 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).
leaders’ misunderstanding of the Cuban and Chinese models they were following and the nature of society’s demands, including peasants’ demand for land reform, which had been temporarily sated by the minor Belaúnde agrarian reform. The split in the Communist Party between pro-Moscow and pro-Beijing factions in 1964 complicated matters. Guerrilla leader Héctor Béjar later stressed relations with peasants as the critical vulnerability of the guerrilla forces, specifically the inability to communicate with peasants in Quechua and a general cultural distance between community members and urban, highly-educated leaders and cadres.

The decision to employ violence at the particular political moment of the mid-1960s had a significant influence on the guerrillas’ ability to generate support. While Blanco had initially organized peasants without guns or guerrillas, together they seized land and ignited an already growing radical consciousness. While de la Puente’s guerrillas did, in fact, have arms, they “had no peasants to defend.” This series of missed opportunities and misinterpretations by one strand of the Left laid the groundwork for a preemptive embrace of radical reformism by the military and a gradual move away from armed struggle – and ultimately toward electoral contestation – by some Marxist parties. In the meantime, Guzmán and his associates were quietly organizing a different kind of rebellion. The interim period of fifteen years before civil war began was, for Sendero Luminoso, a period of preparation, first through grassroots mobilization in the highlands and later clandestine operations and withdrawal from overt organizing work. Sendero emerged as a product of the range of Left organizations with which it had developed and debated over the years.

54 Campbell, “Historiography of the Peruvian Guerrilla Movement,” 46.
55 Béjar, Perú 1965, 95-99; 109-111.
56 Gott, Guerrilla Movements, 372.
The group’s decisions in the 1960s and 1970s influenced other Leftists’ efforts to build a political movement capable of social change.

**Peasants, radicals, and generals: the 1969 agrarian reform and its consequences**

As confidence in Belaúnde continually dropped and parliamentary infighting intensified, the military, led by General leftist Juan Velasco Alvarado, deposed Belaúnde in October 1968. The armed forces unified behind Velasco, seizing on the zeitgeist that had captured many militants and governments in Latin America since the end of the Second World War: agrarian reform as the driver of social change. The ideological debate that drove Mariátegui’s and his interlocutors’ engagement during the 1930s reemerged during the late 1960s as plans for the agrarian reform were secretly developed and publicly announced. Mariátegui’s insistence on the dismantling of the indentured servitude and exploitation intrinsic to the landowning system pervaded the ideas behind Velasco’s land reform. At the same time, these ideas were claimed by militants of the Marxist left who saw themselves, by definition, in opposition to the Peruvian state. Viewed in this light, Velasco’s radical reformism was unprecedented, an effort to take away from the long-omnipotent landowners all that they had – land, labor, and productive capacity – and redistribute these resources to the workers of the land themselves. Announcing the reform on June 24, 1969, Velasco told the peasants – and all citizens: “the landlord is no longer going to eat from your poverty.” Ten years later, the drastic reform had expropriated 15,826 properties and about 9 million hectares. The land, which was collectively adjudicated as

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worker-managed cooperatives, also flowed into the hands of previously existing peasant communities (and new “peasant groups”) as collective enterprises infused with innovative technology and market-oriented directives. Ultimately, the cooperatives failed to prosper and were mismanaged locally by regime-appointed bureaucrats; in the 1980s, their members organized to disassemble them and distribute the land among themselves.\(^{58}\)

The state, as much as the Left, misunderstood the growing participation of peasants in new forms of mobilization. The National System of Social Mobilization (SINAMOS) created in 1971, two years after the initiation of the agrarian reform, was an institution through which the military regime attempted to generate limited popular participation in the reform process. Not a political party or organization, SINAMOS became a bureaucracy, which promoted revolutionary discourse locally. The institution was “characteristic of the era in which the government tried to incorporate the masses while controlling them at the same time.”\(^{59}\) Velasco’s successor Morales Bermúdez shut down SINAMOS in 1976, but it had lasting effects on the ways that peasants in Ayacucho and other departments understood their roles in the reform and the revolution—circumscribed by the foregone conclusions of decisions made by bureaucrats and staged, with the result that their participation did not affect the land reform process.

The fact that a wide-ranging, top-down reform was breaking up traditional estates and farms throughout the country presented the struggling, divided Left with peculiar difficulties. If a socialist military regime could legislate and carry out a massive restructuring of the country’s landholding system, what would leftists fight for in the

\(^{58}\) Ibid.
\(^{59}\) Mayer, \textit{Ugly Stories}, 34-5.
countryside? Militants and activists asked themselves what their responses to Velasco’s efforts should be: what political work remained that Left actors could organize and carry out? Would workers in the cities benefit from these structural changes? The reform’s occurrence and implementation created serious challenges for Left groups, changes that from a certain perspective obviated their existence. In addition, in later years, the regime’s repressive measures and leftist groups’ limited mobility among those they claimed to represent made the strengthening of their movements particularly fraught and difficult. Further, in response to sustained pressure from leftist activists, the Velasco regime decided to release from prison Hugo Blanco, Héctor Béjar, and other militants who were captured during the mid-1960s.

While many opposed “the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces,” some leftists joined the regime’s efforts to implement reform measures through newly-formed local cooperatives and official institutions. Cooptation of passionate radicals served the regime well, as they established access to and control of a large union, the General Workers and Peasants’ Federation (CGTP), which the regime recognized as the official union of Peruvian workers. The decision by some Leftists to ally with the regime allowed them to organize workers and peasants with the imprimatur of the government, but it changed their subsequent prospects for mobilizing these same constituencies. For instance, the PCP-Unidad (Peruvian Communist Party-Unity), a moderate, pro-Soviet party, forged a collaborative arrangement with the military regime until 1976, which facilitated PCP-U’s operation, the dissemination of its publications in a tightly controlled information environment, and its influence in the CGTP. This later prevented PCP-U activists from reaching workers outside the CGTP, while other leftist parties like the Maoist Patria Roja
(Red Fatherland, or PR) gained ground in organizing students, teachers, and young people. Many leftists sought to differentiate themselves from the regime, casting its reformism as “state capitalism.” These more radical groups remembered with bitterness the armed forces’ destructive actions against the 1965 guerrillas. The intensifying repressive measures embraced by the regime as the Velasco (1968-1975) and Morales Bermúdez (1975-1980) governments progressed constituted evidence, perhaps, of the Left’s and the military’s unaligned objectives – and certainly, methods. In some ways, leftist organizations’ divergent responses to the military reformers weakened their overall political vision and operations.

During the 1970s, as the paltry fruits of the reform’s implementation were becoming clear, about twenty, small, semi-clandestine leftist political parties emerged from existing forms and factions that had operated – with little consistent success among peasants – in the previous decade. These Marxist groups continued to support and organize peasant federations to oppose the national government. As the regime gradually moved away from reformist beginnings and became more repressive, participation in leftist movements intensified throughout Peru—foremost in unions and peasant federations that challenged the military’s own worker and peasant organizations—in both urban and rural areas.

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61 During the latter years of Velasco’s tenure, the government persecuted Revolutionary Vanguard (VR), Patria Roja (PR), and SUTEP, the national teachers’ union. The regime became more conservative as it prepared to turn over power to civilian government by holding elections, and in this process, it arrested and deported many labor leaders and leftist activists that were critical of the regime. See Hinojosa, “On Poor Relations and the Nouveau Riche,” for a nuanced treatment of these years.
Ideological responses to economic and social demands of campesinos and workers

Following and emergent from the peasant mobilizations and guerrilla campaigns of the 1960s throughout Peru, leftist organizations made critical decisions, mostly clandestinely, about their ideological and strategic visions. These ideas would have significant consequences for the political environment in which violent and non-violent tactics were employed during the civil war. The boundaries among Leftists were not always clearly delineated, as many leaders and organizers held shared origins and ruptures in the radical actions of the 1960s. As the organizations that formed this landscape gradually defined their positions on participation in elections and society’s readiness for armed struggle, an unprecedented movement toward organizing peasants by a spectrum of Left forces materialized.

The Left grappled with three critical themes as it developed and changed: the political agency of peasants; its own self-conceptualization with regard to the revolutionary posture of the military regime; and its orientation to participation in elections – and by extension, violence. Sendero Luminoso was an outgrowth of this Left in formation, a product of the energetic mobilization that took place over these decades. This section outlines how Sendero’s ideological and strategic development tracks the pressing themes with which the broader Left struggled.
The centrality of the peasantry was a shifting target for different leftist factions. The division of the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) in 1964 originated in disagreement over the path of revolution, with dissidents criticizing the incumbent PCP for adopting conciliatory positions toward armed struggle. As early as the 1950s and through the following couple decades, two central elements had motivated the internal controversy within the PCP: first, the ideological divide between Moscow and Peking; and second, a debate occurring in Peru among leftists about their positions with regard to campesino movements, a social force, it was undeniably clear to everyone, which was on the rise. How to incorporate peasants and peasant movements tactically filled hours of debates among PCP militants of various stripes.

A pro-Chinese faction led by the lawyer Saturnino Paredes splintered from the PCP in January 1964, forming the PCP-Bandera Roja (BR) and leaving the residual PCP-Unidad as its pro-Soviet counterpart and foe. BR absconded with most of the PCP’s youth cadres and various regional committee members, including those responsible for party activity in Ayacucho. BR turned to the Chinese Communist Party for assistance and sent several large groups of party members to China’s cadre training schools starting in 1964. Abimael Guzmán, then a BR regional committee member for Ayacucho and responsible for agitation

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63 El Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso (PCP-SL). “La guerra popular es una guerra campesina o no es nada.” Pamphlet reproduced in Rogger Mercado, El Partido Comunista del Perú (Lima: Ediciones de Cultura Popular, 1982), 28-47. “The people’s war is a peasant war or it is nothing.” Sendero documents referred to the peasantry as the “fuerza motriz principal” (“principal motor force”) of the revolution, hewing closely to Mao’s writings. This phrase was also used in the PCP-SL document “Let us carry out guerrilla war.” See Comité Central del Partido Comunista del Perú, Desarrollemos la Guerra de Guerrillas (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, 1982).

64 José María Caballero, “Sobre el carácter de la reforma agraria peruana,” Latin American Perspectives 4, no. 3 (1977): 146-159.

65 Taylor, Shining Path, 3.
and propaganda nationally, traveled to China several times, where he learned a range of academic and organizational skills, like how to organize peasants and maintain party cohesion, as well as studying Mao’s work; and received military instruction, in the form of tactics, and weapons and explosives training. A year later, BR leadership put him in charge of the party’s “special projects” and creation of the military wing, two assignments that gave him wide purview and access to resources and new recruits.

The guerrillas’ failed experiences in 1965 served to prove to other Left militants, in particular Maoists, that the *foquista* approach to rural revolution was ill-suited to Peru. The criticism that BR and other factions emphasized was that the MIR and ELN guerrillas had lacked the critical support of the peasants, which had disastrous consequences for rural residents whom the military killed in its search for the fighters. In addition, the practice of categorizing socio-economic groups that was central to the process of Left identification and deliberation – characterizing the economy as “feudal” or “semifeudal”, or the government as “fascist” or demonstrating “fascist tendencies” – continued throughout the 1960s. These distinctions continued to draw lines among Marxist groups, and fragmentation persisted. The “New Left” comprised by the MIR and Revolutionary Vanguard (VR) emerged as a force differentiating itself from the “Old Left” – a spectrum corresponding to the Soviet-Sino split and divergent attitudes toward the importance of the countryside, the peasants, and the imminence of armed struggle. The Old Left included the PCP and its offshoots: BR, Sendero Luminoso, and PR.

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‘Ideology of the proletariat’: Sendero’s guiding vision for violent revolution

Out of this ideological ferment and competitive tension among Left organizations came the Shining Path. Guzmán exited BR in 1970 and officially founded and named the organization he had already spent years cultivating: the Communist Party of Perú-Shining Path (PCP-SL). The name derived from that of a radical student group in Ayacucho claiming to be following the “shining path of Mariátegui.” Guzmán, who had come from a middle-class family in the town of Mollendo in Peru’s southern coastal desert, had taken a position as a professor of philosophy at the University San Cristóbal in Huamanga (UNSCH), Ayacucho in 1962. As personnel director and a member of the faculty, Guzmán had control over course content, hiring and firing, and the distribution of financial aid to students from poor provinces of Ayacucho and elsewhere. University students, many from families who farmed and raised cattle, sought not only social change but group identity by joining BR, Sendero, PR, and other organizations preparing for struggle. Guzmán was able to leverage university resources as inducements to rural students, and the students’ immersion into Marxist texts at UNSCH generated the militant support of some, which Sendero exploited as access to the hamlets of Ayacucho and Huancavelica from which the students came. Many recruits to Sendero in the early years were high school and university students from Ayacucho’s shantytowns and more remote villages, where they made regular visits and organized indoctrination sessions among community members. It is difficult to underestimate the importance to the Sendero project of two groups: the

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UNSCH students from rural towns, and those whose families had recently migrated from the countryside to the *pueblos jóvenes* that were developing on the outskirts of Huamanga city. This aspect of membership in PCP-SL facilitated the organization’s path into communities where residents might have viewed visitors as suspicious and foreign.⁶⁹

Sendero’s ideology was embedded in a particular interpretation of Mariáteguista thought, which Guzmán reinvented to address national problems, in an unprecedented effort that he considered the forefront of the international socialist revolution. The organization focused its efforts on proselytizing among students and defining its ideological position, which, according to Sendero leadership, was approaching “the correct line.” This period of study and introspection concluded in 1972, and the party decided it was the right moment to return to the masses.⁷⁰ While between 1973 and 1977 Sendero encountered greater competition in its mobilization and recruitment efforts in Ayacucho, including from social organizations that had carried out massive strikes and demonstrations in the 1960s,⁷¹ the organization had opted for a rigid, politico-military structure and a strategy that steered clear of ties to mass social movements like peasant federations and industrial unions. The move to semi-clandestinity allowed Sendero to strengthen its internal military and political machine, while other parties were organizing unions and strikes and battling the military regime. The popular schools Sendero set up in rural areas during the mid-1970s allowed it to develop peasant support bases a couple years later.

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⁷⁰ Ibid., 5-6.
⁷¹ These organizations include the Departmental Federation of Communities and Campesinos in Ayacucho (FEDCCA), the Neighborhoods Federation of Ayacucho (FBA), and the Front for the Defense of the People of Ayacucho (FDPA). Various actors and mobilization processes and their interactions with the efforts of Sendero Luminoso are explored in Chapter 3.
When recruitment for war-making assumed a more immediate urgency, Sendero drew on its previous mobilizing experience in the 1960s, specifically the tightly-controlled, intense groups of students and professors who were traveling and spreading the movement’s ideas in different parts of the countryside and some southern highland cities. Experienced student leaders were dispatched to provincial capitals throughout the country: Puno, Huancayo, Chiclayo, and Lima, where universities provided a fertile home for Sendero’s prophetic revolutionary ideas. Between 1978 and 1980, Sendero managed to coopt some dissatisfied militants from rival radical organizations like the MIR, BR, and PR, activists who were impatient with their parties’ cautious approach to armed struggle. PCP-SL became a well-organized political apparatus, with a centralized, decision-making hub in Ayacucho (Huamanga) and the formative spokes of recruitment fanning into the highlands. By the end of the 1970s, Guzmán judged that the moment for revolution was at hand. At the closing of the Party’s First Military School in April 1980, he saluted the oppression and hardship suffered by the masses, who are the inevitable, heroic militants in the people’s war.

Comrades, our unarmed labors have concluded. Today our armed struggle begins: to lift up the masses, to lift up the peasantry under the infallible banners of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought. One era has ended. The preparations for a new one have been completed... The key is action. The objective is power. This is what we will do. History demands it. The masses demand it. The people have foreseen and want it. We must fulfill our duty and we will do so. We are the initiators.  

Maoism’s emphasis on the peasantry as combatants in the revolutionary struggle constitutes an ideological focus shared by Mariátegui. However, Mariátegui wrote at length

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72 This is an excerpted passage of a speech given by Guzmán on April 19, 1980. The speech was reprinted in Carlos Iván Degregori, Robin Kirk, and Orin Starn, eds., The Peru Reader (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 310-15.
about the role of race as a critical and actionable element of identity, in addition to class. The contemporaneous writings of Mao emphasized the industrial proletariat as the most progressive class and the leading force for revolution in China, who in combination with the rural proletariat and lumpen proletarians – peasants who have lost their land and handicraftsmen who cannot get work – are most prepared to wage radical struggle.\(^73\) In accordance with Mao’s “scientific socialism,” Sendero leaders, particularly Guzmán insisted on characterizing Peru’s society as semi-feudal, despite decades of changes in land ownership, intensified migration to the cities, and significant social and political action by peasants. For Sendero, the military government was “fascist,” a reference to its repressive actions and embrace of state corporatism.\(^74\) These categorical moves allowed Sendero to duplicate Mariátegui’s descriptions of the Peruvian economy in the 1920s and 1930s, preserve them, and fit them to the reality of the 1970s, a moment of profound social and political change. Incorporating Mariátegui’s ideas directly into Sendero’s “general political line” and integrating their meaning with Mao’s teachings meant an obsessive focus on the peasantry as the “principal motor force” of the revolution, a force engaged in fomenting rebellion in the countryside and ultimately encircling towns and cities. This instrumental view of campesinos betrayed a striking lack of examination or analysis on Sendero’s part of the social conditions and demands of peasants; their relations with parties and other political organizations; and their everyday needs and experiences as participants in a regional and national economic ecosystem.

\(^74\) Taylor, Shining Path, 19.
While many early observers painted Sendero as a “peasant movement” with deep
roots in Andean and indigenous spiritual traditions and practices of rebellion, they were
mistaken.\textsuperscript{75} Sendero’s ideology avoided making any appeal to peasants’ Indian origins. The
leadership’s emphasis on the formulaic application of class struggle trumped all other ways
of seeing the Peruvian people and their desires and frustrations. No Sendero document
discusses the salience of ethnic, racial, or cultural elements in the philosophy or strategy of
the organization. When Sendero does mention cultural change, it seeks to point out the
destructive and creative force of the revolution of the proletariat:

\begin{quote}
The Revolution of New Democracy, which means new economy, new politics, and \textit{new culture},
obviously demolishing the old order and raising up the new with guns, the only way of transforming
the world.\textsuperscript{76} (Emphasis mine)
\end{quote}

Rather than seeking to preserve or lift up Andean culture – what it called the
“magic-whining nationalism”\textsuperscript{77} of indigenous life, Sendero’s rational and scientific
approach to revolution and war made that diverse set of cultures and practices a target. The
Party saw racial taxonomies and hierarchies as “false consciousness,” but in the process,
Sendero elite justified these racial hierarchies through its ideas about the “deformation” of
“race-culture” by peasants who try to survive by taking on roles and livelihoods outside of
traditional agriculture, as itinerant merchants, temporary workers, and migrants. According
to prominent Sendero ideologue Antonio Díaz Martínez, these unnatural activities

\textsuperscript{75} A British journalist claimed that Sendero rebels were the “children of the magical world of the Indians.”
\textsuperscript{76} “No Votar, Sino Generalizar La Guerra de Guerrillas Para Conquistar El Poder Para el Pueblo.” Pamphlet,
Caja PCP-SL, Political Parties Archive, CEDOC, Lima, Peru.
\textsuperscript{77} Poole and Renique, “New Chroniclers of Peru,” 144.
deformed the pure Indio, and the PCP-SL had to defend the Andean culture-race in an effort to restore the natural evolution of the productive forces.” In the late 1960s, Díaz Martínez argued for the preservation of communal Andean traditions like ayni – obligatory collective work performed together by community members. He advocated the involvement of peasants in changes to land-owning structures and agricultural processes – steps that would prevent the imposition of expert, outside specialists on “the practical knowledge accumulated by Indians over the centuries.” Díaz Martínez’ interpretation of Chinese history and Maoist thought directly informed the political categories that Sendero adopted, suggesting a prolonged peasant war is one step on the path to socialism. But Sendero also incorporated Mao’s pragmatism into its strategic action, which helps to explain the incongruity between Díaz Martínez’ desire to prevent the “deculturation” of the peasantry and the bold instrumentalization of the peasant evident in Sendero doctrine.

Throughout Peru’s history, intellectuals’ racist conceptions “weighed down” the categories of “peasants” and “workers”: “classist” intellectuals topped the pyramid, with workers – who were liberated by political militancy – at the center, and peasants the base. Sendero amplified its position at the top of the pyramid, privileging “the Party” as an entity above social hierarchies of class and race. Later, peasants and students sought to ascend within the social pyramid by joining the Shining Path and acceding to its scientific theory of change, an aspirational decision which legitimized and perpetuated the organization’s hierarchy and on which it depended. Sendero promised its recruits a role in the revolution

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78 de la Cadena, “Insurgent Intellectuals,” 54.
80 de la Cadena, “Insurgent Intellectuals,” 43.
that would bring them “the pleasure of agency” but also a position of authority in the post-revolution state.

Sendero elevated “the Party” to the heights of command and responsibility for the direction of the revolution, a group of men who apply Marxism in its purest form – scientifically, precisely, and with unquestioned authority. In turn, the party’s internal organization replicated the social and ethnic hierarchies of regional society: “a privileged elite of white professionals commanded a mass of brown-skinned youth of humble origin.” Again, clear, categorical distinctions fail: Degregori emphasizes the “intermediate extraction” of many mestizo Sendero cadres who did not fit neatly into the “brown” Indio or the “white” criollo category. They felt different from the campesinos, and at the same time, they felt the necessity of allying with and imposing themselves on the indigenous peasantry.

Like the provincial intellectuals that had come before them, Guzmán and his close associates were of a political-intellectual class that “sought to invent the Peruvian nation in order to govern it.” But Sendero, in contrast to its predecessors, pursued the dream through brutal violence, the essence of the revolutionary action that defined Guzmán’s imported and scientific conceptions of progress. Sendero’s faith in “revolutionary violence as universal law without exception,” was in fact, a religious commitment, the loyalty of a

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84 Stern, Nightwatch, 405.
85 Degregori, Qué difícil es ser Dios, 188.
devotee who has found liberation and ease in his guru’s teachings. An ambiguous focus on promoting socialist ideas among ordinary people by subjecting them to violent acts – as witnesses and victims, it turned out, as well as perpetrators – betrayed the authoritarian character of Sendero’s vision.

The masses have to be taught through overwhelming acts so that ideas can be pounded into them…the masses in the nation need the leadership of a Communist party; we hope with more revolutionary theory and practice, with more armed actions, with more people’s war, with more power, to reach the very heart of the class and the people and really win them over. Why? In order to serve them – that is what we want.\(^8\)

For Guzmán, the formation of the new state would occur through the development of the armed struggle.\(^9\) This kind of process-oriented approach to armed revolution made violence meaningful and validated the organization’s exclusive hope for a radically new form of governance. Precise attention to elaborating and achieving the phases of Sendero’s efforts in documentation; speeches made to insiders and leaders; and pictorial propaganda demonstrates Guzmán’s obsessive focus on process. In fact, Sendero saw the ideological struggle with other Marxist groups throughout the 1960s and 1970s as a necessary step toward revolution, not a burden.\(^9\) In other ways, Guzmán was interested only in the product – the inevitability of the historical achievement on the brink of which Sendero was standing – the fulfillment of which awaited only the spilling of “rivers of blood.”

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\(^9\) Gustavo Gorriti, “Recordar lo Que no Se Conoció,” *Caretas*, May 21, 2015, http://caretas.pe/Main.asp?T=3082&idE=1208&idS=512#.V60USJgrfI2. This struggle took the form of intense debates in the University of San Cristóbal in Huamanga, where Marxists defending various ideological threads argued over a number of years. In the late 1970s, as some groups began to campaign for democratic elections, Sendero militants threw rocks and used coercion to intimidate opposing cadres. See Gorriti, *Shining Path*, 10-13.
Networks of mobilization for war and democracy: how the Left diverged on the revolutionary road to civilian governance

Sendero stayed out of the social fray in the 1970s and did not make much noise as the military government waged its radical battles against landowners, and later, the Left. Shining Path did, however, selectively maintain ties with SUTEP and some radical organizations, relationships which enriched its subsequent recruitment efforts. The Velasco regime’s “preventive counterinsurgency” – a campaign of repression, censorship, and cooptation of leftists – was successful against the movements inspired by Castro and foquismo, but not against “Maoist radicalism,” which benefited from the Marxist and pro-Castro groups’ withdrawal from the countryside. This withdrawal occurred as a result of two forces: military persecution, and left organizations’ gradual preparations for electoral campaigns, which focused their efforts increasingly in urban areas.

The gradual incorporation of the non-Sendero Marxist Left into the mainstream political system proceeded throughout the late 1970s as the return to electoral democracy became more and more imminent, a process that left behind “a wake of acronyms” and complicated alliances. As leftist groups prepared for election campaigns, they adopted different positions regarding the revolutionary struggle for which they had all been preparing, in distinct ways, for decades. The Maoist Patria Roja (PR, or Red Fatherland), which in the next decade contested elections as UNIR, perceived the moment for armed revolution far off in the distant future; the party abandoned socialism as the driver of the proletariat’s tasks, which they then viewed as “democratic” and “anti-imperialist.” At a

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91 Gorriti, “Recordar lo Que no Se Conoció.”
92 Gorriti, Shining Path, 10.
1972 conference, PR interpreted its new project: building the alliance of all oppressed classes and social groups in the transformation of Peru to a free, democratic society. It was a move not uncontested by various members of the party; its subsequent electoral success further moderated PR’s discourse.

The radical left parties did not formally renounce armed struggle, which generated “ideological schizophrenia,” a series of contradictions and conflicts that different parties experienced internally, but that were felt across the Left as a whole.94 Sendero had words to describe these vague, unprincipled imposters: “These ‘Marxists’ are nothing other than opportunists, “false Mariáteguistas,” “hardened revisionists,” and “agents of the bourgeoisie infiltrating the heart of the workers’ movement.”95 The confusion that Sendero eventually inspired among Peruvian Leftists manifested in the latter part of the 1970s and during the war, when the rebels’ turn to violence ended debates about readiness for revolution. In early ideological battles, many leftists saw Sendero as “infantile” and overly dogmatic and rigid. But Sendero’s decisive path of violence and the ideological arguments of the 1980s “artificially divided reformists against revolutionaries,” leaving many issues about the content of the Left agenda unresolved.96

Preparation for elections, meanwhile, forged ahead, and formed an integral component of a broader process of vibrant, unprecedented social mobilization that was happening in the late 1970s. A range of leftist actors was strengthening its relationships with mass organizations and riding a wave of popular consciousness as the end of the

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95 These characterizations are found in the following document: Federación Estudiantil Revolucionaria (FER), “Órgano del Comité Nacional, Año I. No. 1,” 1974, Political Parties Archive, CEDOC. The FER – or Revolutionary Student Federation – was a primary entity of the National Committee of the PCP.
military regime appeared visible on the horizon. Sendero played no role in organizing workers during these demonstrations, and in fact it did not take part in the historic strikes, which in 1977 and 1978 drew millions of people to the streets. In 1979, the 40 federations of the CCP throughout the country mobilized 600 bases and 250,000 campesinos and agricultural workers as members. It was the most robust organization in the countryside, demonstrating that politically, the peasants had turned away from APRA and dogmatism and begun to take action through the popular movement against the failed Velasco land reform.97 In 1979, representatives from many Left parties – including VR-PC and MIR-IV – joined leaders of the CCP for its first National Council meeting in Huaral, just north of Lima. There a diverse set of party actors pledged to fight for the unity of the peasantry and expressed solidarity with SUTEP members who were engaged in a hunger strike against the military dictatorship.98 Left activists’ penetration of the national CCP and large unions was the result of years of organizing work in the country and solidarity with land resistance movements.

While refusing to build the sustainable bonds and capacities that constitute the fabric of social movements, Shining Path gained favor and cover within popular organizations.99 It showed no interest in approaching other Left parties to form alliances, and it rejected purposefully all the other groups with which it once had commonalities. Sendero attacked civil society organizations, representatives of the progressive Church, and

NGOs, claiming solitary authority to educate the masses.\textsuperscript{100} As early as 1974, the student organization FER, which was allied with Sendero employed the language of war as opposed to social construction, referring to “the necessity of creating combat machines, and not machines of bloated and bureaucratic organizations,” which would ensure “organic construction from top to bottom.”\textsuperscript{101} But senderistas managed to develop and build on ties with sub-groups and individuals within mass organizations, connecting them to the Party itself through front groups. PCP-SL’s isolation from the rest of the Left shielded it when the latter was undermined and persecuted in the 1970s. Sendero took advantage of how much the state underestimated it. During the war, Sendero maintained its presence outside the democratic experience of the legal Left, and grew within “extra-legal spaces” that much of the Left had vacated, exploiting the overall deterioration of the country.\textsuperscript{102}

\section*{Conclusion}

The different forms of political action that resulted from Leftist groups’ leverage of social struggles and networks in the 1960s and 1970s proved critical in the following decade, when the violence of civil war defined and distorted social life in many areas of the country. Many of these political efforts suffered from a lack of understanding and familiarity with campesino practices and culture. As war approached, Sendero maintained a selective, strategic distance from peasant struggles and refused to ally with mass political organizations. The ideological decisions and tactical strategies of Leftist organizations,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{100} Degregori, “Return to the Past,” 58.
  \item \textsuperscript{101} FER, “Órgano del Comité Nacional.”
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Hinojosa, “On Poor Relations and the Nouveau Riche,” 77.
\end{itemize}
including Sendero, in these early decades – in an environment of tense competition and contingent formation of oppositional politics – shaped the choices they faced when the prospect of participation in elections arose. In a setting characterized by debate over rhetorical distinctions made by Marxist and Maoist groups, differences in how leaders interpreted dogma affected their approaches to civilians, particularly the role of the masses in both the revolutionary struggle and in a future, envisioned polity. The particular ways in which Sendero and other Left organizations cultivated membership and support in highland communities long before the anticipated “armed struggle” began had significant effects on the nature and amount of support they generated. The social networks that Sendero developed among peasant communities and university students at different moments intersected with, diverged from, and destabilized the relations being forged between civilians and other Left organizations. Guzmán and his Sendero colleagues acted on a specific interpretation of socialist and guerrilla ideologies that privileged peasants as instruments of violence without taking into account their motivations to be participants in politics, much less revolutionaries. Over time, this clashed with peasant society and politics in many Ayacucho towns.

At a time when indigenous identity and grievances were becoming increasingly salient drivers of political mobilization, Shining Path’s ideological principles lacked a direct appeal to Andean roots or “Indianness.” In fact, the movement’s leadership sought to obscure racial categories and hierarchies. Scholars have benefited from the retrospective examination of people’s sympathy for Shining Path and the political dynamics conditioning this support. But early assessments of Sendero’s successful mobilizing power in Ayacucho got this wrong: the PCP-SL was not an inherently peasant movement that drew on Indians’
traditions and long-standing spirit of resistance to authority. Nor were structural conditions of agrarian revolt among subsistence farmers driving peasants to support the rebels. In fact, the “totalitarian racism” of Sendero had important influences on its revolutionary action. Instrumental views of peasants were not limited to PCP-SL; in 1957, de la Puente urged “a very bloody awakening of the Indian peasantry” as a platform for international Communism. His efforts to implement that conceptualization did not end well. Despite the pervasive trope of peasants as class warriors, two salient elements of the political struggle against inequality and underdevelopment – the indigenous campesino and the wielding of violence to take power – were not meaningfully linked, integrated, or purposefully considered together. In other words, what would be the role and outcome for peasants – as indigenous people, as Peruvians, as victims of marginalization but also as political participants – in the struggle that demanded so much from them?

The focus of some Left actors on sustainable and movement-oriented organization targeted the need for reform and structural change. In interviews, Leftist activists emphasized the growing, unprecedented role of indigenous campesinos in the 1960s, a phenomenon that was understood and anticipated throughout the country. By the 1970s, ties between peasants and parties were more widespread, and their approaches had coalesced into more programmatic, if more controversial programs. “The idea was to strengthen and construct a space that would allow for a formal and legal defense of the peasant movement,” one activist said of his experience as a VR activist in Puno. The

104 de la Cadena, “Insurgent Intellectuals,” 54.
105 Gott, Guerrilla Movements, 380.
106 Author interview with Fernando Rodríguez. July 2013. Lima.
organizing work that he and fellow party workers undertook involved training campesinos for social and political campaigns, but these efforts were building on the direct mobilization for land reform and redistribution in which campesinos had been engaging since the 1960s.

In contrast, Sendero’s ideas about race, ethnicity, and national construction affected the ways in which it defined rebel membership and developed local networks of support. The organization’s interpretation of Peruvian society derived from its particular reading of Mao’s and Mariátegui’s ideologies, which had manifestations in practice that shaped the way that rebels perceived and interacted with civilians. Race, while no longer the central analytical category of Peruvian society, continued to infuse the social hierarchies that mediated relationships between intellectuals like Guzmán and their analyses of class. Guzmán’s strategy diverged sharply from Mariátegui’s emphasis on the socialist potential of “the indio” and his inherent rights as a citizen of Peru with an equal – if not superior – claim to belonging to the nation. The infallibility claimed by Sendero elites as opposed to the openness in Mariátegui’s writings exposes the teleology of the unquestionable authority of the PCP-SL and its armed revolution. The consequences of Guzmán’s perfunctory translations of Mao and Mariátegui became evident in the 1980s when the communities he claimed to raise up through armed struggle were falling into rivers of blood.

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107 These processes are explored in Chapter 3 in the contexts of Ayacucho and Puno.
108 Mariátegui emphasized that indigenous claims to citizenship were unfulfilled. Sendero claimed that the Party’s ideology is “exact” and “scientific”; it is “all-powerful because it is true.” See PCP-SL, “Documentos Fundamentales del Primer Congreso del Partido Comunista del Perú (Congreso Marxista-Leninista-Maoista. Pensamiento Gonzalo),” El Diario, January 8, 1988, CEDOC, Political Parties Archive.
Chapter 3: Political agency and articulation in wartime mobilization: peasants, rebels, and the Left

Civilian mobilization in Ayacucho and Puno

In 1980, the gobernador of Hualla, Indalecio Huarcaya, came home to see a note on his door, a series of threats written in red ink.

“How much do you get for being an informer?” How much do they pay you for kissing their ass?”

This is the third time we’ve warned you – hand in your letter of resignation, or the consequences would be fatal, the note from Sendero Luminoso urged. As an established authority in the town, having served several terms, Huarcaya had not dwelled on the first couple rounds of threats. But after thinking about it for a week, Huarcaya went to see the sub-prefect in Huancapi, the capital of Víctor Fajardo province, and gave up his post. When he resigned, it was 1980. Three years later, while he was out of town, the senderistas killed his wife.\(^1\)

During the early 1980s, the Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path (PCP-SL) gained the sympathy of many residents of Hualla, a district in the central zone of the department of Ayacucho, which constituted the geographical and political hub of the senderista movement in the early months and years of insurrection. The Party had selected a town nearby as the site of the initiation of its armed struggle, the burning of ballot boxes

\(^1\) Centro de Información para la Memoria Colectiva y Derechos Humanos (CIMCDH), Defensoría del Pueblo, Lima. Interview (Testimonio) 200793.
in May 1980 on the eve of the national election. The writing was on the wall, however, as Gustavo Gorriti points out in his chronicle of the war’s early events: pro-Sendero graffiti on the walls of plazas and school buildings throughout Cangallo and Víctor Fajardo provinces, which were the epicenter of the armed struggle in its first few months, presaged the violence that Guzmán had planned. Early in 1980, in Huancapi, Cayara, Hualla, Tiquihua, and Canaria, rebel graffiti called for an “election boycott” and “to begin armed struggle.”

Over the next two years, the rebels had consolidated control in the villages and hamlets of the “liberated zone.” The plan, according to Guzmán’s interpretation of Maoist thought, was to “strengthen the Popular Committees, develop the support bases, and advance the People’s Republic of New Democracy.” In practice, the process grew increasingly violent, escalating from the Party’s early dynamite attacks on bridges and radio towers to the burning of farms and capturing and killing of estate owners. Sendero cadre threatened and often killed political authorities in small towns, one by one eliminating the executors and representatives of the status quo institutional order. In tearing down local political structures and traditions, in their place, cadre constructed alternative “popular committees” and banned communities from planting crops and trading goods, isolating them from markets. Intimidated by frequent attacks on rural posts, the police withdrew from the region in 1981, leaving a critical vacuum of recourse to state witness and protection.

By 1982, the Party had set up local committees led by their handpicked authorities and popular schools used to train young people for military action. Sendero’s early

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2 More information on what is considered the first incident of the war, which took place in the district of Chuschi, is provided later in the chapter.

3 Gorriti, Shining Path, 59-60.

successes in indoctrinating communities of Víctor Fajardo and Cangallo resulted from both the diffusion of its ideas through the formal education system and the Party’s ability to exacerbate local conflicts and power struggles by eliminating wealthy landowners and those perceived to be corrupt or thieves. In addition to adopting these judicial functions, Sendero constructed parallel institutions oriented to fulfill its needs for supplies and recruits, enforcing a new order in the liberated zone. In December 1982, declared a state of emergency in the national government dispatched the national army and counterinsurgent police (“Sinchis”) to the declared emergency areas, including all of Ayacucho department.

The focus of this chapter is how forms of civilian mobilization for revolution and violence differed among peasant communities in the regions of Ayacucho and Puno before and during the war. It advances an argument about how and why this variation occurred and the effect it had on support for Sendero. Assessing and comprehending participation in Sendero’s project is an elusive task, as civilians’ support for rebels varied within districts, and the movement’s emphasis on different Ayacucho villages and provinces shifted over the course of the 1980s. For instance, in the district of Accomarca in Vilcashuamán province, everyday life changed gradually in response to the initial presence and growing influence of Sendero in the district, with little change in economic and educational systems during the first couple years. In a few districts, like Sacsamarca, early participation in rebel activities ultimately resulted in organized resistance, once the armed forces became involved in local security and Sendero’s destructive modes of doing politics were revealed. New opportunities for educating children and teenagers responded to peasants’ aspirations

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5 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo IV, Cap. 1.1.5, 46-7.
6 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo IV, Cap. 1.1.5, 47.
7 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo VII, Cap. 2.15, 155.
to escape the manipulative domination of educated elites – “salir del engaño”\textsuperscript{8} – and a powerful, state-funded vehicle for proselytization by senderistas. The encounter of indigenous mobility and rebel efforts to penetrate local communities was institutionalized in the school system in Ayacucho starting in the 1960s.

At that time, activists who later formed the leading ranks of PCP-SL mobilized peasants to demand universal education, leaving a comprehensive mark on towns of the Ayacucho countryside. A few years later, in these rural towns, a network of university and high school students was tasked with spreading the ideas that were congealing as the particular version of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought that Guzmán developed. However, Sendero’s decision in 1970 to withdrawal from the active construction of a social and politically connected movement in the Ayacucho region had implications for support and participation of peasants not only in insurgency but in all forms of organized politics. How did networks of political mobilization change as Sendero executed a transition to violent struggle? What were the consequences of these changes in networks?

In the Ayacucho communities I examine, primarily Hualla, but also Sacsamarca and Accomarca, these changes meant that the communities’ ambivalent relationship with the state – and with politics – influenced their responses when Sendero arrived and took steps to achieve local political dominance. For residents of Hualla, the absence of an articulated political relationship with other citizens pursuing shared interests and a vision based on class or another kind of consciousness created space for rebels to provide an opportunity for alternative participation. The late-1960s regional mobilization for universal education reached residents of Hualla and other towns in the Pampas River Valley – los interiores, or

\textsuperscript{8} Degregori, \textit{Qué difícil es ser Dios}, 224-228.
“people of the interior,” as they were called by more connected and better-educated elites in nearby towns – in an indirect way. Huallinos benefited from the overall diffusion of educational coverage, that is, the increasing number of teachers and resources increasingly stationed in all parts of the country. This trend began in Peru in the middle of the twentieth century, though it was poorly financed by the government, and intensified as more educated young teachers returned to their hometowns to teach and generate awareness. But Huallinos’ attitudes toward politics – a phenomenon which they experienced as the organization of communal projects and decision-making, primarily made by authorities who were often corrupt – reflected a desire for government investment in the social and economic development of their hometown. In the chapter that follows this one, I describe the social and political practices of participation during war in the community of Hualla, specifically how Sendero’s approach to implementing its ideology resulted in strong support, at times forcibly extracted from residents, who hid, fled, and engaged strategically with both rebel and military presence as violence and community disintegration worsened.

Second, beyond the boundaries of Hualla, in the broader region of Ayacucho, radical activists and militants either found themselves swept deeply under the influence of Sendero’s planning for armed struggle, or they remained embedded in the constructive and eclectic work undertaken by other Left parties organizing peasants and workers in departmental capitals and regional towns. Guzmán was plotting the breakaway from PCP-Bandera Roja (BR) to an independent, reconstructed PCP-SL that would move to incite armed struggle, leaving the “revisionists” on the left to their movement-building. Some mass organizations that were integral to activists’ mobilizing efforts, such as the People’s

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9 Author interview with Lucio Flores*, March 2014, Hualla.
Defense Front of Ayacucho (Frente de Defensa del Pueblo de Ayacucho, or FDPA), for instance, suffered the consequences of Sendero’s pullout from the social movement scene. Its withdrawal deprived local activists of a critical bridge among different factions, a coordinating mechanism, and leadership. After its founding in 1966, FDPA, originally formed to defend the financial solvency of the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga, encompassed a multitude of movements and local organizations – from the Ayacucho Provincial Peasant Federation and teachers’ unions to the Chamber of Commerce and market vendors’ groups.\(^{10}\) FDPA flourished during the movement for education in the latter part of the decade and shortly thereafter suffered the disarticulation that Sendero’s withdrawal from society left behind.

Third, leaders and activists on the Left continually confronted the debate over whether to engage in violence; the challenge of how to attract and mobilize supporters in a range of sectors and classes, including those targeted by Sendero; and the task of how to prepare for a return to electoral contestation. Limitations on political participation during the military regime (1968-1980) and legal restrictions during civilian governments facilitated the emergence of the university as an independent space for political socialization and indoctrination, where parties and organizations trained young students.\(^{11}\) The Maoist parties\(^{12}\) aimed to distance themselves from the pro-Soviet strands of the Left and shared a characterization of the Velasco regime as “fascist.” Peru’s Maoist parties primarily failed to catalyze the membership of workers and peasants whom they sought to

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\(^{10}\) Degregori, *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso*, 106-7.
\(^{11}\) CVR, *Informe Final*, Tomo III, Cap. 2.4, 162.
\(^{12}\) The primary, self-declared Maoist parties included PCP- Bandera Roja (led by Saturnino Paredes); PCP-Patria Roja, which had broken off from BR in 1969, and PCP-Sendero Luminoso (headed by Abimael Guzmán), which separated from BR and formed an independent party in 1970.
represent, while they saw themselves as the vanguard leaders of the urban and rural proletariat. The PCP-SL is the only party that emerged from clandestinity to carry out armed struggle; this decision, carefully planned and implemented by Guzmán and his colleagues, meant that violence would condition opportunities for local participation. Differences in ideology across the Left molded network changes by determining the processes through which leftist political parties – many of which had not yet contested an election – carried out mobilization.

Once armed struggle began, society as a concept and objective ceased to exist for Guzmán. In other words, as Sendero rebels undertook to execute the movement’s political and military campaigns, the roles that the leadership envisioned for campesinos – and “the masses” more broadly – in the revolution determined the recruitment of youth and their responsibilities in violent attacks, particularly during the first few years of the war. Peasants were to be the executors of revolution through violence; this was their role in the alliance of classes that comprised the forces carrying out armed struggle. Their actions would ensure the advent of a utopian “new democracy,” and Guzmán’s writings specified that the Party would continue at the helm of power during the future “dictatorship of the proletariat.” PCP-SL, then, viewed peasants as instruments of the necessarily bloody revolution that would break down Peruvian society and rebuild it. Over time, this interpretation led to a dramatic divorce of Sendero thought and mobilizing actions from those of other Left groups, many of which had decided to contest elections. This separation had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war. It broke down local institutions and social ties, and left people with few alternatives to participating. The results ordinary civilians in the villages and towns in Ayacucho were a stark existence.
defined by constant fear and a desire to flee the insecurity engendered by the presence and threats of both Sendero Luminoso and the security forces.

With their participation as political agents circumscribed in this way, first by Sendero and later by government armed forces, civilians living in Ayacucho towns faced the instrumentalization of their actions in various ways. Many sought to escape politics – symbolized by Sendero’s ideas, meetings, and propaganda – because for them that meant participation in inherently risky behavior. Survival instincts – and perhaps a yearning for “the pleasure of agency”13 – led some people to support the senderistas, who made local rounds and initially attracted many villagers with ideas of justice and equality. The cadre demanded food and supplies as they walked from town to town through the Andean moors and highlands. But farmers, shopowners, and cattle traders ultimately found little agency in the process of revolution envisioned and undertaken by PCP-SL leadership. After enduring two years of the group’s incursions and impositions of authority, some Ayacuchano towns – Sacsamarca, for example – resisted the erosion of social relationships and fought against the transformation of their communities.

Sendero’s strategic cultivation of support through the destruction of existing governance and social structures constructed repurposed, focused networks comprised of rebel enforcers who would ensure participation in a town’s ideological indoctrination sessions and party rituals. This allowed the party to exact violence on representatives of the state and eliminate class enemies. In some cases, senderistas carried out local score-settling

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and doled out corporal punishment to long-offending cattle thieves and corrupt bureaucrats.\textsuperscript{14}

Following a discussion of electoral participation during the war, the subsequent two sections examine three aspects of political mobilization in two regions: Ayacucho and Puno. Varied forms of participation by civilians in each region take shape under the influence of: political parties and peasant federations in the 1970s and 1980s, and relations between these groups; second, the agrarian reform that the military government enacted beginning in 1969; and third, the role of the Catholic Church in influencing the political awareness and mobilization of peasants, particularly in rural areas. I suggest that the nature of participation—the kinds and extent of the connections among political actors that express and organize for a cause and set of interests—is central to our understanding of politics in war. To what extent participation is articulated—which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups— influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the state, and the insurgency interact. In employing the term, I intend for \textit{articulated} to signify both “articulate,” able to speak for a cause and a group, and “articulated” to imply a sense of being “jointed.” In combination, these two components—political expression and integration—define articulation.\textsuperscript{15}

The level of articulation is assessed through a qualitative approximation of efforts by political actors in Peruvian society to mobilize in the context of violent insurgency. It is

\textsuperscript{14}Miguel LaSerna, \textit{The Corner of the Living} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012). There was wide variation in the occurrence and reception of these practices, as LaSerna notes.

\textsuperscript{15}In elaborating the concept of articulation, I seek to emphasize a \textit{range} rather than a dichotomy. This descriptive range is intended to capture both the quality of expression and integration of political actors, and the potential for changes in the ways they are articulated. Stuart Hall’s “articulated lorry” captures the organic, adaptable nature of connection through articulated sites, which can occur in varied contexts—political, discursive, and cultural.
not necessarily the amount of participation in existing institutions and elections, but rather how people’s interests are expressed and organized through political actors and how these forms integrate with other bodies and structures of organization—for instance, how multiple political parties, or a party and a regional movement join forces to mobilize support for reform. This articulation is reflected not only in voters’ participation in elections, but in people’s engagement with reform movements and mobilization for access to land and education.

In Peru during the civil conflict, electoral participation was low in areas heavily affected by rebel violence. In the department of Ayacucho, participation was frequently quite low. Participation achieved higher levels in Puno, but its inconsistency points to the difficulty of making claims based solely on electoral turnout and parties’ vote shares. Still, in an environment of assassinations and disappearances, politics went on. To gain an understanding of participation requires that we look beyond electoral turnout, to examine systematically the links between historical forms of social mobilization, local conflict, and alliance patterns. The final sections of the chapter are focused on changes in social and political networks engendered by Sendero’s ideological interpretations and actions; and the role of peasant activists and other Left organizations to develop strategic ties within the National Peasant Federation (Confederación Campesina del Perú, or CCP).

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16 Voting in elections is obligatory by law for all Peruvians aged 21 and over; compulsory voting was made law in 1931 for all literate men over the age of 21, and in 1955 for women. See Fernando Tuesta-Soldevilla, Representación Política: las reglas también cuentan (Lima: Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 2005), 450.
Participation in elections: a new form of political mobilization

Analysis of electoral data on turnout and parties’ vote shares in Peru reveals some patterns over time—for instance, the gradual advances that the political Left made in the mid-1980s in mobilizing workers and peasants in rural areas. But focusing exclusively on electoral results obscures the processes of organization and participation that voting and other forms of citizen engagement—protests, strikes, involvement in land takeovers, and the formation of local, anti-rebel committees (rondas campesinas)—reflect. In the 1960s and 1970s as political groups sought to mobilize in the face of a military regime, a range of factionalized leftist parties who tasked themselves with constructing a socialist political system were confronted with a unique and surprising challenge: a military government who saw its self-appointed mandate as enacting massive social reforms, including an iconic land reform project. The resulting processes of policy evaluation, social mobilization, and political party construction form the basis of activity for the Left during these years, setting the stage for political contestation during the internal armed conflict that dominated and bloodied the 1980s in Peru.

Sendero leadership criticized the 1970s military regimes of Velasco and Morales Bermúdez for their own brand of bourgeois failure, which came in the form of the 1969 agrarian reform. The rebels were forced to adjust to the structural changes that Velasco’s land reform effected—despite its shortcomings in implementation and management—in particular, the disappearance of powerful landowners from the Andean interior of the country. The insurgents, however, underestimated or ignored these shifts and the
implications they had for the rising middle classes, considering the return of the democratic
government in 1980 to represent “fascist continuity.”

How did the presence of Sendero Luminoso – officially a Peruvian Communist
party – change the nature of electoral participation? The rebels directly and explicitly and
violently targeted democratic politics – and the opportunities to participate that it offers
citizens. According to the movement’s leader Abimael Guzmán, the culmination of the
proletariat’s armed struggle to eliminate “the old reactionary State” would be the birth of a
“Nueva Democracia.” The new democracy of Sendero Luminoso would,

under the dictatorship of the working class, directed by its political vanguard, resolve the historic
demands of the most oppressed, principally those of the peasantry, submerged in a merciless, semi-
feudal exploitation.

In practice, Sendero Luminoso physically attacked democratic actors, including
elected officials and grassroots organizations like Church-run rural training institutes. It
announced the launch of its violent struggle in Chuschi, a small district of central Ayacucho
on May 17, 1980, burning voting rolls and ballot boxes on the eve of the first presidential
election in 17 years. For the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideologues, in Peruvian society,
contesting elections meant “leaving to the people the election of their oppressors.”

The limits of studying electoral participation during the 1980s

Electoral results and turnout data only indicate so much about participation for
several reasons. First, electoral democracy was reinitiated in Peru in 1978, when elections

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18 Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, Por la Nueva Bandera, in Luís Arce Borja, ed., Guerra Popular en el Perú: El
pensamiento Gonzalo (Brussels: No Publisher, 1989).
19 Favre, “Perú: Sendero Luminoso, horizontes oscuros,” 27.
took place for a Constituent Assembly that would rewrite the Constitution. Given the centrality of understanding political engagement in the 1950s-1970s – the decades leading up to the internal conflict – we must examine patterns of mobilization that do not necessarily involve electoral participation. Second, in 1980, some citizens were not equipped with the ability to understand a new process. That year, a number of voters could not read, including a considerable percentage of rural, indigenous residents. Illiterate citizens were legally eligible to vote in Peru for the first time in the country’s history. They encountered complex printed ballots that required them to mark or write their vote. In addition, widespread displacement in the 1980s during the conflict—particularly following the declaration of emergency at the end of 1982—prevented some Peruvians from voting since citizens are permitted to cast their votes only in their hometowns.\footnote{Poole and Renique, “The New Chroniclers of Peru,” 184. fn. 59.}

Third, participation in elections is mandated by law in Peru. While this may, according to one reading, enhance the study of participation by ensuring a “representative” sample of all citizens—rather than whatever percentage of Peruvians turn out—it may, in fact, make the decision to vote less indicative of an individual’s preferences and more about their interest in complying with the law and avoiding a fee. On the other hand, due to mandatory voting, variation in rates of abstentionism from elections in the 1980s can reveal much about the demographic and security climate in a given district or province.

During the 1980s in many regions of the country, elected municipal-level officials were assassinated or resigned from their posts. Sendero persecuted and at times killed peasant organizers, leftist activists, and other political leaders such as local priests. Drawing conclusions based solely on electoral participation omits the role of individuals, civil
society groups, and insurgents in determining and shaping local-level governance and forms of participation. An account told by a prominent peasant leader in Puno\textsuperscript{21} suggests that indigenous Peruvians in the region refused to accept the leaders that Sendero named to replace an individual in a local post – for instance, a mayor, town councilor, judge – who had fled following threats from rebels or had been assassinated. The leader indicated that villagers would select their own replacement in community deliberations to fill the vacated position; in his opinion, this defiance pointed to the democratic nature of peasant political organization and governance. Even the political choices most menacingly imposed by cadres with guns—and which help define wartime political orders—are subject to particular patterns and instincts of civilian agency.

\textit{Electoral turnout and poll results, 1980-1990}

Some scholars argue that political participation during the 1980s in Peru was vibrant and widespread; grassroots movements were operating—for example, unions and neighborhood associations—and in opinion polls, people expressed support for democracy.\textsuperscript{22} McClintock suggests that the persistence of democracy during the 1980s was a product not of the strength of democratic institutions, but of strategic calculations by elites, who anticipated that the costs of returning to authoritarianism were precipitously higher than those of maintaining the status quo. But I argue that a return to democracy

\textsuperscript{21} Interview with Héctor Cruz, 14 August 2013, Juliaca, Puno. Héctor Cruz is a pseudonym, as are the names given to most interviewees in this paper. Pseudonyms are denoted by an asterisk.

meant that people were voting and exercising their rights to engage in reform and protest; the opportunities offered by electoral institutions formed only one aspect of participation in post-dictatorship Peru. Still, it is important to have in mind the broad contours of voting amid violence as we consider participation in all its forms.

How did participation change during the course of the war? In 1978, the military regime initiated the process of handing over authority to a democratic government by holding elections for a Constituent Assembly. This would result in 100 electors—allocated by party vote share—that would write a new constitution to replace the 1933 version. Turnout in these elections was strong throughout the country, including in Ayacucho (80.5%), despite a boycott by PCP-Sendero Luminoso and the refusal to participate by primary leftist parties Red Flag (BR) and Red Fatherland (PR).

Puneños (residents of Puno) came out in force to vote as well, with 85% participating in the first election in more than a decade.23 In 1980, Fernando Belaúnde Terry—whose tenure as president in the 1960s had been interrupted by a bloodless military coup—won re-election as the Popular Action (AP) party candidate, winning 44.9% of the national vote. Leftist parties were not prepared or mobilized at the national level to contest the election seriously. In Ayacucho, people supported the center-right Belaúnde, who secured 56.3% of the vote there, with APRA achieving second place (17.3%) and a coterie of five left parties, running separately, managing to garner a combined 22% of the vote. Absenteeism in Ayacucho (24.3%) climbed since 1978, and was even higher in some of the poorest provinces.

In Puno, where voters have historically been ardent supporters of the electoral Left, Belaúnde achieved one quarter of the vote, while the leftist parties received about the same (24.9%). In Azángaro, the province of the Puno altiplano (southern high plain) that would be hardest-hit by violence during the conflict, absenteeism was comparatively low at 14.4%.24

President Belaúnde called municipal elections immediately, but people did not come out to the polls with as much enthusiasm as they had in national-level elections, as demonstrated by 52.2% absenteeism in Ayacucho region and 24.8% in Puno, strikingly elevated figures. Residents of Víctor Fajardo province, one of the poorest and most remote provinces of Ayacucho, provided no votes to the United Left (IU) party in these municipal elections; instead their votes went primarily to AP (66.2%). However, Ayacuchanos’ faith in the Belaúnde government would be shaken over the next few years by its weak and unsuccessful efforts in combating the attacks and threats of Sendero. The number of invalid votes (14.6%) shows that voters were still figuring out how to mark—or purposefully sullying—their ballots; absenteeism overall in Peru reached 30.9% in the municipal elections in 1980.

Three years later, municipal elections brought limited but tangible success for the burgeoning Left, which defeated APRA in key departments like Cusco and Puno; but in Ayacucho the IU achieved only 15.6% of the vote. The 1985 presidential and parliamentary elections demonstrated strong support for the center-left APRA party led by Alan Garcia—including in Ayacucho, where in provinces highly affected by violence, including abuses by the armed forces—voters showed that they were not swayed by the Left’s program. In

24 Tuesta-Soldevilla, “Politika.”
Víctor Fajardo province, IU achieved only 25.7% support to APRA’s 56.9%. Nationally, the Left suffered in the 1985 election and failed to fully regain a foothold among voters, as active persecution of leftist leaders and politicians intensified during the García and Alberto Fujimori governments.

In 1990, Fujimori won the presidential election in a second-round upset, achieving more than 62% of the national vote on a populist platform and with a new party. As disastrous economic conditions – primarily astronomical hyperinflation - and spreading violence plagued Peruvians, voters punished APRA for its failures, electing a technocrat with little political experience to turn things around. The IU was routed, achieving less than 10% of seats in the Senate, reflecting its fractured leadership. This brief analysis of electoral results suggests that people’s participation in voting after more than a decade of military rule and during the launch of a violent insurgency can directly reveal few salient patterns about the nature of participation and its connection to people’s support for, or opposition to, Sendero.

**Ayacucho: political parties and campesino federations in flux**

Political participation in Ayacucho peaked at a crucial moment in the late 1960s, when a region-wide movement for universal access to free education surged, filling the streets with young people, their parents, and their teachers. Through the efforts of swelling peasant federations, teachers’ unions, and student associations, who were fighting for the negation of a law that the Velasco regime had enacted in March 1969 which mandated that families pay tuition for students who had failed courses the previous year, people demanded
that the government respond. The law represented a significant change from a system in which all public education was free.\textsuperscript{25}

In Ayacucho during the 1960s and 1970s, campesino communities in the northern-central provinces formed part of an interwoven social network characterized by very weak articulation to the state as well as to the market. For instance, communities in Víctor Fajardo and Cangallo provinces, nestled in the valley of the Pampas and Qaracha rivers lived without access to basic services—medical posts, highways, water, and electricity. Residents had little experience or contact with the state, and traditional authorities were “named” by the community. For the residents of these rural areas public education was perceived as critically important, as the way to escape—through their children—decades of poverty and marginalization.\textsuperscript{26}

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

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

\textsuperscript{25} Degregori, \textit{El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso}, 51.
\textsuperscript{26} CVR, \textit{Informe Final}, Tomo IV, Cap. 1.1, 41.
insurgency or electoral politics), the range of opportunities for participation shifted for citizens of Ayacucho. By the 1970s, the Maoist parties – Patria Roja and Bandera Roja – had fragmented. PR gained hegemonic control of most teachers’ unions, including the massive Sindicato Unitario de Trabajadores del la Educación del Perú (SUTEP, the national teachers’ union), and formed part of the United Left electoral alliance starting in 1980. BR, in contrast, was embedded in the peasantry, maintaining control of the national peasant federation, the CCP. However, by 1974, BR proved incapable of channeling the demands of the peasants and withdrew its leadership. Other small left parties took over, strengthened the CCP, and later contested elections.27

During the 1960s and 1970s, in the absence of strong political parties, people participated in communal assemblies, primarily by democratic vote, to make decisions regarding specific local affairs.28 Until 1980, local authorities – including governors, mayors, and town councilors – were appointed by the national government. These authorities possessed a considerable amount of power, and people in remote towns of Ayacucho were generally excluded from decision-making, which occurred mainly at the level of the central government in faraway Lima.

In 1984 French sociologist Henri Favre wrote that no political party in Peru had achieved – or proposed – a popular framework for mobilization in Ayacucho. In the early 1980s, the national parties – Popular Action (AP), the Popular Christian Party (PPC), and the United Left (IU) – “shone for their absence” in the region.29 When in interviews I asked

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28 Author interview with Ernesto Ortiz. * 26 June 2013, Hualla, Ayacucho.
29 Efforts by the state – for instance, the military regime in the 1970s – fell drastically short, as did political parties’ attempts to generate people’s participation. See Favre, “Perú: Sendero Luminoso, horizontes oscuros,” 28.
Ayacuchanos about the presence and activities of parties, peasant leaders and rural residents usually responded vaguely that they remember AP and APRA – both of which, at varying moments over the last decades, have achieved a range of center-left, centrist, or more conservative partisan positions. Percy Otero, a regional peasant leader from central Ayacucho, mentioned that the parties he recalls – AP, APRA, and the Christian right party, PPC – were quieted when Sendero arrived in his town, which was besieged by violent attacks and from which the rebels recruited many young people.30

Some scholars assign considerable responsibility for Ayacuchano communities’ acceptance of Sendero violence to the perverse effect of Velasco’s influence and pledges of improved economic conditions. For instance, Jaymie Heilman shows how the unfulfilled promise of land reform in Carhuanca – a district of Vilcashuamán province in southern-central Ayacucho – created a critical opportunity for Sendero’s violent “justice” to be executed there. Between 1982 and 1984, Carhuanca emerged as a liberated zone, securely held by Sendero rebels as a result of armed activities and the support of its residents, specifically for the publicly punitive actions taken against corrupt local authorities. In Luricocha, in contrast, a district of the northern Huanta province, Heilman found that landholders were long involved with political parties and movements with a range of political agendas during the twentieth century, while the peasants there “shied away” from joining parties and movements and emphasized their allegiance to the Peruvian state.31

While the corruption of leaders of the agrarian cooperatives created in the land reform process engendered the radicalization of local, wealthy elites in Luricocha, poor peasants

30 Author interview with Percy Otero. 21 June 2013, Huamanga. Later in this chapter local governance and politics in areas where Sendero operated are discussed.
31 Heilman, Before the Shining Path, 8.
did not rise up, and Sendero rebels did not make advances there – this despite the fact that Augusta de la Torre – rebel leader and wife of Guzmán – hailed from a Luricocha family.

Contrary to what some studies and interpretations of the movement purport, Sendero did not speak for the peasant in Ayacucho nor did it seek to organize peasants to reclaim land and rights. “The perspective of seeing the small, arrogant nobleman expropriated may be able to arouse envy, the egalitarian spirit, or the desire of the people for revenge, but it is not enough to mobilize the whole of the campesinos, for whom investment in the Sendero insurrection is almost null, behind the banner of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought.”

Sendero’s dismissive attitudes toward constructing peasant organizations helps explain changes in the structure of its networks over time. In fact, Sendero destroyed commercial networks, forcing residents to close weekly markets that formed the basis of commerce for rural Ayacuchanos, resulting in a return to the unequal economic relations that they experienced under abusive landowners. Senderista communications in the early 1970s did not address peasant concerns or the agrarian reform. Rather, their efforts were concentrated against the state and other political parties. In “Desarrollar la Guerra Popular sirviendo a la revolución mundial” (“Develop the Popular War in the service of the global revolution”), a pamphlet published in 1986, Sendero argued that peasant membership in the cooperatives established under the agrarian reform law constituted servile relations of production. This dogmatic assertion was unlikely to have been understood by peasants as a genuine extension of support to their both long-standing

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32 Favre, “Perú: Sendero Luminoso, horizontes oscuros,” 32.
33 Poole and Renique, “The New Chroniclers of Peru,” 183, fn. 51.
and immediate struggle. Certainly, the rebels were not building a “pro-campesino” force by helping peasants reclaim their rights through mobilization for reform.

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

The Catholic Church contributed to the disarticulation that characterized the 1970s and 1980s. Church officials were allied with conservative causes in Ayacucho, to a greater extent than in other regions; they were among the more powerful landowners who held onto considerable territory. The region’s bishops pursued a political struggle with the University of San Cristobal in Huamanga during the 1970s, revoking its radio license and accusing it of “attacking the faith.” During the war, conservative bishops had a strong presence in the three departments in which the principal regional committee of Sendero operated—Apurímac, Huancavelica, and Ayacucho, an unfortunate coincidence because in these poorest regions, the Church did not denounce military abuses.

35 Author interview with Father Roberto Hoffman, 5 August 2013, Puno.
37 Author interview with Javier Salazar, *23 August 2013, Lima.*
Mobilization and integration of peasants in the Altiplano: parties and federations in Puno

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

Agrarian contestation and participation in an integrating civil society

A series of mobilizations for land reform—and the social struggles and alliances that these efforts required—resulted in the development of a strong regional campesino federation in Puno, the FDCP, founded in 1978 by Zenobio Huarsaya and other local leaders. The mechanisms that catalyzed changing centers of power and participation are
bound up with the 1969 agrarian reform and the particular ways in which it restructured political space.\textsuperscript{38} The reform created opportunities for some peasants to seize greater authority at the local level and for numerous other contenders to compete in that same local space.

Despite expropriating around two million hectares and destroying the landlords as a class, land reform failed to improve the economic and social situation of most rural peasants in Puno. Nine out of every ten hectares taken from the landowners were incorporated into cooperatives run by managers appointed by Velasco’s Ministry of Agriculture, as in other regions. Less than 20 percent of rural families received any land. Although peasant communities and small freeholders comprised 43.3 percent of beneficiaries, they received only 9.1 percent of expropriated land.\textsuperscript{39} By 1980, land, livestock, and capital became more concentrated because of the way in which the reform was implemented—for example, by combining multiple ex-haciendas into one unit. Indeed, the benefits of the reform were designed not to facilitate increased access to and ownership of land by peasants. Instead, the change in structure meant that workers would receive wages, social services, profit distribution, and development assistance as allocated to communities and cooperatives.\textsuperscript{40} In theory, the cooperatives were designed to continue the technological and productive practices found in the more advanced, centralized areas of the haciendas.\textsuperscript{41} But even as wages increased over time, the condition and productivity of the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{40} Enrique Mayer, \textit{Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 22.
\bibitem{41} Excluded from the centralized areas were subsistence plots that peasants farmed. The enlargement and advancement of the productive areas were the objectives of the reform in its effort to generate profit from
\end{thebibliography}
cooperatives declined. While a textbook devotion to communist collectivization may have driven the military’s bureaucratic and academic planners, the reform replicated and preserved inequity in land ownership, transferring the problems from one system to another, even as one-third of Peru’s land was expropriated. Conflicts developed within cooperatives and between peasant communities and cooperatives, and the government responded with hierarchical management techniques and structural tweaks.

Political participation in the government-sponsored campesino movement, the CNA (National Agrarian Confederation), was fairly weak. Land invasions continued even as estates were being expropriated, demonstrating peasants’ dissatisfaction with the resultant conditions of land tenure and competition. After 1969, then, unsatisfied expectations raised by Velasco’s reform in Puno generated opportunities for newly established leftist groups to enter the region and take advantage of the weakened local political power of landholders in the countryside. Revolutionary Vanguard (Vanguardia Revolucionaria, or VR) was most successful in constructing support among peasants and became the driving force behind the CCP nationally; in Puno, VR activists started to draft recruits and organize people for land invasions in 1975. Ricardo Arias, a VR land organizer in Puno during this time, emphasized that “to take the land” (tomar las tierras) meant to redistribute it. The seizure was a symbolic action, and after the takeover, the members of the land cooperative would formally request a land title from the Agriculture Ministry.42

Several waves of land takeovers between 1985 and 1987 resulted in the eventual conclusion of an agreement between Puno’s peasants and the national government to

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restructure the land for the second time. CCP leader Héctor Cruz explained why a “reform of the reform” was necessary.

These three models of associative enterprises—SAIS, CAPS, and ERPS—possessed large extensions of land. The peasant communities had small extensions of land, and some did not have any. Also, those that they had were the most infertile lands. So, facing this situation, the Departmental Peasant Federation [of Puno] began to organize the struggle for the land. Then, there were meetings, assemblies, forums, debates, and finally mobilizations.43

When the government opposed these actions, first the (second) Belaúnde and later the Garcia administrations, the peasant federation carried out land takeovers. Cruz described the purpose of the takeovers as “recovery” of lands: to obligate the government to listen and consent to the reasons that the peasant communities were retaking them. These actions, which began in December of 1985, resulted in the promulgation of two laws, one at the national level and one that was specific to restructuring in Puno. These laws amounted to a full reform of the previous legislation and delivered a considerable portion of the lands that had been given to associative enterprises and collectives to the peasant communities.

The changes in political organizing that resulted from efforts to reform the agrarian law were clear to participants even as they were experiencing them. “The agrarian reform changed land ownership, the gamonales disappeared, but a new form of organizing arose,” one former PUM militant and organizer of land takeovers explained, referring to as early as the mid-1970s when broader movements, with more programmatic approaches, began to develop.44 This novel kind of mobilization formed part of a national trend – a continued rise in the role of the peasantry. As Cruz described it, “the struggle for the land was not only about land.” “Democratization” was occurring in parallel to the mobilization for land, as

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43 Author interview with Hector Cruz*, 14 Aug. 2013, Juliaca, Puno.
44 Author interview with Alvaro Gutierrez*, 3 July 2013.
well as a process of regional decentralization in Puno.\textsuperscript{45} Awareness of these gradual processes among peasants, as articulated in successive regional and national peasant federation congresses, made their engagement in land reform meaningful, connected to a broader political change and movement. In addition to left party organizers, Church-sponsored training institutes and development NGOs supported their efforts.

Sendero understood that land mobilizations were critical to gaining the support of Puneño peasants. Beginning in March 1986, the rebels attempted to co-opt the process of land takeovers, offering armed protection for the lands that were taken over and directing its armed actions against the associative enterprises. The rebels showed up to a previously organized land invasion, offered weapons to participants, and in some cases forced them to burn the records of the cooperative or hacienda. These efforts were rejected by peasants, who suffered the consequences of these violent actions when the senderistas fled the scene and ran to the highlands, leaving the people to face arrest and torture by the authorities.\textsuperscript{46} In contrast to the planned, structured process that the regional peasant federation organized, when Sendero attempted to co-opt the land takeovers, there was “chaos, disorder”—the rebels would come in, burn buildings, and give out livestock to whoever was there.\textsuperscript{47} Sendero did not understand the mass action embodied in the \textit{tomas de tierra}, VR and later PUM militant Arias said. This failure to understand that the tradition of mass struggle was not violent was detrimental to the rebels’ strategy in Puno.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Interview with Héctor Cruz.
\textsuperscript{46} Author interview with Enrique Vallejo*, 25 July 2013, Puno.
\textsuperscript{47} Author interview with Héctor Cruz.
\textsuperscript{48} Author interview with Ricardo Arias.
A primary obstacle facing the insurgency in Puno was its political activity in the region for a comparatively short period of time. Radical priests and PUM formed the strongest leftist forces there; as a means of constructing a base of support among peasant leaders and people, PCP-SL embraced using arms to reclaim lands and eliminate other leftist officials and activists. Sendero leaders misinterpreted the nature of the objectives and practices of campesino mobilization. Peasant leaders in Puno consistently seek to differentiate their historical struggle from that of Sendero Luminoso: “We were a democratic, organized, disciplined organization. We did not take up arms.”

Sendero lacked the military strength to provide protection for those who participated in land takeovers, leaving campesinos vulnerable. Overall, the rebels’ armed actions in the region resulted in fewer deaths and disappearances than in other departments like Apurímac, Huancavelica, and Ayacucho. In Puno, the rebels were focused less on eliminating recalcitrant or resistant civilians and more on recruiting key individuals who were trusted and respected in Puno’s towns and villages. This strategy is indicative of the level and kind of mobilizing potential that Sendero leadership perceived and craved in Puno. However, they were not able to wrest a sufficient level of support from the “reformist” leftists.

Coordination among the FDCP and party militants of VR and PUM resulted in a successful defense against the incursion of Sendero. Evidence of leftist groups’ mobilizing advances came in the form of the rebels’ responses: targeted attacks on IU and PUM officeholders and peasant leaders. In April 1987, after issuing him several warnings,

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49 Interview with Héctor Cruz.
50 Taylor, *Shining Path*, 145.
51 Rénique, *La batalla por Puno*.
Sendero cadres assassinated Zenobio Huarsaya, FDCP founder and then-mayor of a district in Azángaro province, as he supervised the reconstruction of a bridge that had been dynamited by Sendero in the past. The confrontation with federation leaders and leftist militants bred opportunities for clandestine armed action by non-Sendero political parties against IU leaders and FDCP activists in the region. In Azángaro in February 1987, an arms cache was found in the home of a high-level APRA official in that province; police sources said the weapons were bought with regional government funds. At the time, IU congressman Alberto Quintanilla asserted that APRA paramilitary groups in Puno were operating not only against leftist activists and politicians, but also against the Church and popular movements. Overall, the direct confrontation between specifically leftist party leaders and associates on one hand and senderistas on the other was unique to Puno. The targets of Sendero violence were mayors, town councilors, prefects, governors, NGO officials, and all APRA party representatives. In addition to targeting leftist politicians, Sendero burned municipalities and agricultural cooperatives in multiple districts and destroyed the facilities of rural education institutes, like the IER-Waqrani in Ayaviri.

The Catholic Church in Puno as articulate political actor

After the 1963 Vatican II conference, Catholic priests and bishops in Puno, many of them not Peruvian by birth, had an opportunity to reflect on their work in communities that held particular cultural ideas and practices—for instance, a belief in the sacred nature of the

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52 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.17, 550.
54 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.17, 559.
“Pachamama”—the conception internalized by Quechua and Aymara peoples of “mother earth.” The space for shared reflection—which was institutionalized in the form of ONIS, the Church’s National Office for Social Information—among many priests working in the southern Andean region resulted in their sustained support for campesinos, the poor, and the struggle for land. In the words of a Maryknoll priest who has worked for decades in Puno, “This was a big change. [Until this time] the Church was associated with the rich.”

Following Vatican II, many priests returned to seeing the mission of the Church as “helping people live human life more fully—having access to good education, enough to eat, being proud of their culture, customs, language.” This new understanding of the Church’s mandate, Hoffman believes, permitted priests and sisters working in the Southern Andean Church (Iglesia del Sur Andino, or ISA) to redirect the focus of their efforts to support peasants; foreign clergy who worked in Puno studied Aymara and Quechua, “so they could speak with the people.”

Laypeople were involved in the process of making the “revolutionary discourse” embodied by the Velasco reforms and that emerged from the Church in Puno a reality. A human rights defender in the region emphasized the work of several Catholic laypeople who chose “the political option”—by becoming leftist leaders, party militants, and NGO workers in vulnerable rural areas—due in part to the Church’s heightened emphasis on social justice.

In addition to the spiritual guidance of sisters and priests, the Church’s profound investment in providing support to those fighting for the rights and lives of poor peasants came in the form of several long-term initiatives: developing and supporting Radio Onda

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55 Interview with Roberto Hoffman.
56 Ibid.
57 Interview with Javier Salazar.
Azul, a journalistic, educational, and catechistic station based in the city of Puno that was attacked twice by Sendero in the 1980s; establishing indigenous language and cultural institutes, part of an effort to validate indigenous identity during a period in which class identity reigned; and constructing rural training and economic development institutes in poor areas where farming and animal husbandry were central to people’s livelihoods.

Shining Path sought to infiltrate Church networks to generate recruits to the movement, and when these efforts did not succeed, Church institutions and social programs became targets.\(^{58}\) The first violent attack in the region, in August 1981, occurred at a Church-run rural education institute (IER) in Juli, in the Aymara zone. A large contingent of armed senderistas besieged the IER Palermo building that housed the institute, wounding at least one Maryknoll sister. The incident generated mistrust among residents and spurred an impassioned rejection of the rebels and violence by community members.\(^{59}\) Sendero retreated from the Aymara zone, by 1982 transferring the center of its actions in the region to the rural northern provinces.

Fitzpatrick-Behrens argues that the Catholic human rights network in Peru, which formed part of the international progressive movement in the Church led by the Maryknoll missionary order, evolved from church structures established during the preceding decades to serve the poor. Such efforts brought them legitimacy, and the fact that the Church was targeted by both Sendero and the armed forces allowed it to serve as a mediating force in society.\(^{60}\)


\(^{59}\) Interview with Roberto Hoffman.

\(^{60}\) Fitzpatrick-Behrens, *Maryknoll Catholic Mission in Peru.*
When Sendero began killing peasant leaders and trusted leftist activists and party officials, people turned actively against the organization in Puno.61 “[Sendero] was…killing people, destroying the works that the people had built,” peasant leader Héctor Cruz emphasized.62 In 1988 and 1989, the senderistas confronted with force the popular backlash that this generated. The rebels had made some gains in the few universities in the region and among young Christian groups. Ultimately, the social mobilization that had succeeded in achieving a second agrarian reform for peasant lands in Puno and generated greater levels of participation and leadership among women in Quechua and Aymara communities helped prevent Sendero from establishing a genuine foothold in the department – and to keep violence as a revolutionary path from infiltrating their methods of organization. Sendero cadre were considered illegitimate outsiders, who by assuming they could inspire violence among communities struggling for reform, showed their lack of understanding of local politics and social relations and an adherence to a struggle that transcended arms. As Héctor Cruz emphasized, the struggle for the land transcended defending rights to work and own land; it was about democratic participation and decentralizing decision-making power. In 1991 and 1992, PUM, IU, and the leftist parties in Puno crumbled due to internal divisions and disagreements among cadres about the nature of the revolutionary path – whether or not it should involve armed struggle. The retreat of Sendero from the region followed, not far behind the dissolution of the Left.

Comprehension and promotion of social struggles and everyday processes of community, labor, and membership – as forms of belonging, joint sacrifice and effort, and

61 Interview with Ricardo Arias*, 12 Jun 2013.
62 Interview with Héctor Cruz.
shared identity – to emerge from demands from within allowed the Left and its allies to organize democratically and without violence in Puno. In Ayacucho, imposition of a political model failed to changes peasants’ roles in society or their relative inequality. Extracting recruits from their communities and demanding the ultimate sacrifice led to peasant disarticulation and Sendero’s ultimate failure when communities organized to resist the rebels and defend their values.

Changes in Left networks: Sendero’s influence and peasant political strategies

In Lima, the early moments of Shining Path’s armed struggle called on the participation of not only rebel recruits but also propagandists and organizers. On June 16, 1980, a month after the burning of ballot boxes in Chuschi, 200 people gathered and burned the municipal building of San Martín de Porres, a lower-class neighborhood near downtown Lima. The building burned for two hours. Some in the crowd handed out red printed flyers, aiming to engender support for the broadly-conceived Classist Workers’ Movement (Movimiento de Trabajadores Clasistas, or MOTC). The popular organization, through a “reconstituted” Communist Party, claimed to support the proletariat’s wave of strikes, lift up the poor peasantry, and initiate armed struggle.63

At the time, analysts, the media, and ordinary Limeños had not detected or considered the little-known MOTC’s ties to Sendero. With a targeted, destructive strike at a local manifestation of government in a poor section of Peru’s capital city, the MOTC announced its intent to be a part of the effort to tear down the old order. In the flyer, the

MOTC claimed to be working to delegitimize and debilitate a range of those calling
themselves Left political actors: Trotskyists, APRA, the massive, national labor union
(CGTP, or General Confederation of Peruvian Workers), and “revolucionaristas” - the latter
a derogatory reference to all those claiming to plan, so far without action, radical
campaigns in Peru. Directed to other forces on the Left vying for radical space, the message
that the MOTC propagandists aimed to send was clear: we are waging the real struggle,
with guns and bombs and flames, and you are weak, illegitimate revisionists without a
vision for reshaping society. It later became clear that the MOTC shared networks and
mobilizing efforts with Sendero, and at least some MOTC members shared in its belief that
a new society would result from the violent efforts of workers and peasants.

Before 1980, a range of Left political actors – leaders and members of parties,
student movements, and unions – shared ideological lineages and radical mobilizing
practices. Sendero was part of this tangled family tree, but by the late 1970s, the
organization had withdrawn from the political work of building social movements that it
had once undertaken, going underground and abandoning popular organizations such as the
FDPA and women’s and workers’ organizations. This withdrawal – and Sendero’s
subsequent clandestinity – had deeply damaging effects on Left networks of political
mobilization.\textsuperscript{64} Still, during the war, Sendero drew on the connections of the “generated
fronts” (organismos generados) it had nurtured to carry out its mobilizing work in urban
areas. In Lima, the MOTC worked to distribute propaganda under its own banner – that of a
legal, nonviolent organization. Sendero used these ties with “front organizations”

\textsuperscript{64} Degregori, \textit{El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso}.  

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strategically, with no intention of building a sustainable, long-term social movement or any organizations that would mobilize people in the aftermath of the revolution.

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

The distinctions between Sendero and other Left parties were a product of Guzmán’s construction and enactment – through ideological discourse and organizational action – of an all-encompassing, almost religious vision of truth. The “absolute confrontation” into which Sendero entered with all other social and political actors came from its universalist ideology of mobilization, trained on violence and not edification of social ties. As a leftist writer and PUM activist wrote during the war, “The machiavellian objective of the Sendero leadership and its propaganda strategies is to try to resolve ideologically the moral and political problem of attacking with arms the leaders and cadres

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65 Degregori, Qué difícil es ser Dios, 224.
proven in the struggles of the people.”

The teleological nature of Guzmán’s theory of the mode of political action relied on a particular idea: “actions prove it” – “los hechos lo demuestran” – absolving the Party, once it had committed to armed struggle, of the need to engage in meaningful political debates with other strands of leftist thought and those who articulated them. This atmosphere, drawing on the inevitability of violence and sharpened by fear of its incidence, created conditions for activists and leaders of PUM, MIR, VR, IU, and other groups that limited their options for continued mobilization of the growing social movements that emerged – amid repression by state forces – in the 1960s and late 1970s.

Contestation over ideology and practice within the Left

To understand the nature of mobilization and participation before and during the civil conflict, we must examine the forms and contexts in which these processes emerged. The debate on the Left over the nature of representation that occurred in Peru from 1960 to 1990 has implications for political participation and citizens’ responses to parties and social movements. On the eve of 1980 elections, after twelve years of a socialist military regime which repressed political dissidents, the Left suffered from internal disagreements about how to wage revolutionary struggle, how to characterize the state and economy (semi-feudal, capitalist, etc.), and the role of electoral politics in the struggle. In question were the nature of representation and the role of the party in organizing citizens—or speaking as elite leaders on their behalf. A letter of resignation from Pineda, a leader of Revolutionary Vanguard (VR), a group of socialist leaders and a party that helped found the United Left

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(IU) alliance in 1980, demonstrates this tension between the active participation of those whom a political party or movement seeks to empower and their representation by powerful officials.

The notion of representation guarantees the substitution, postponement, and exclusion of the workers from power. It is for power through and for the working class that we fight and not for the power of and for the officials who speak in the name of the proletariat.67

Pineda critiqued VR’s embrace of Maoism, arguing that the movement had lost its socialist goals, and as a result, the working class, the masses, had lost their voice in the political struggle. For Pineda, the party had to determine whether “the party represents the working class, or the working class is politically organized.”68 The latter path required that the party organization be a creative force capable of developing novel solutions to the challenges of the class struggle.

At this time, prior to the outbreak of violent rebellion, Sendero was struggling to install a new set of leaders through the masses. As a means of recruitment, the party had promised positions in a future government to young people—many from peasant families, some of whom were the first in their families to attend university—who became guerrilleros. According to Sendero’s ideology and practice, the process of transformation enacted through the armed struggle requires a “god” – a deified leader – and an elite leadership to guide the party’s line and its subsequent actions. But these chosen rebel leaders do not represent the peasantry and working class; Sendero’s central committee did

68 Ibid.
not aim to speak on behalf of the indigenous and the poor, but to enact violence by changing and imposing politics.

These divergences in ideology, which were the subject of debate over decades among Left activists and leaders, demonstrate how leftist groups that were not part of Sendero viewed participation differently than those who chose violent rebellion. How ideological differences shaped forms of membership in these distinct political organizations and the ways in which leaders and mid-level cadre constructed social relations with ordinary Peruvians are a critical part of understanding the ways that people participated. The ideological principles of a political organization shape its everyday experiences and cultivate the development of supporters and the kinds of social relations it encourages between them.69

As the campaign for tuition-free education in Ayacucho gained ground in both Huamanga and Huanta, social organizations like the People’s Defense Front of Ayacucho (FDPA) and the Ayacucho Neighborhoods Federation (FBA) grew and strengthened their mobilizing power following confrontations with state security forces. Various organizations were connected through the education campaign and other efforts to struggle against the unjust effects of the agrarian reform. The university had facilitated the emergence of the Left as a political force with strong prospects, and the diminished reach that the military government had imposed on some leftists during the reform’s implementation had begun to erode as the country prepared for a return to electoral contestation. Through UNSCH and organizing work in the neighborhoods of Ayacucho, Sendero connected to a spectrum of

69 Shah, “The intimacy of insurgency,” 495. Ideological abstractions – for example, the production of the future proletariat through the remaking of peasants – may influence social relations between rebels and civilians in specific ways, as Sendero’s actions in Hualla show (see Chapter 4).
organizations, including the FBA and the FDPA. These links transcended Huamanga and included regional and district capitals and towns in Junín, Chiclayo, and Lima, for instance. Through the Federación Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER) student movement, Sendero built ties with leftist university groups in other departments; this was also the case for regional teachers’ unions and workers’ associations. In a few years after its founding as an independent party, the PCP-SL occupied a central node in a vibrant, fairly open network of leftist actors – based in Ayacucho but with ties that emanated to other regions. While the overall structure was open and densely connected, Sendero’s move to tighten its diffuse connections was imminent.

Throughout the 1970s, building on its stronghold in the university in Huamanga, Sendero aimed to construct “an ideologically rigid network of cadres.” Its weakness in urban and peasants’ organizations contrasted with the deeper influence of other leftist groups in those realms, despite senderistas’ efforts to occupy spaces such as industrial unions and new urban settlements (barriadas) in an effort to weaken the support base that other Left parties had within these organizations. Over the course of the decade, Sendero tightened its network ties by withdrawing from many social movements and mass organizations in Ayacucho, privileging ideological coherence and training of cadres. Sendero alienated much of the Left through its exclusive and narrow conception of radical politics, and after 1975, Degregori argues, its presence in urban areas and local federations in Ayacucho declined. Around the same time, it lost its prominence at the UNSCH. 

Millions of Peruvians took part in the general strikes in July 1977 and May 1978, which

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71 Degregori, *Qué difícil es ser Dios.*
became landmark events in Left history, but Sendero ignored or undermined these efforts. As Sendero prepared for armed struggle, its political network became semi-closed. While it was less dense overall, the Party’s ties to a smaller, select number of actors became stronger, for instance, to the “generated fronts” FER and MOTC.

As the 1980s wore on and the PCP-SL intensified its violent attacks in a tightly controlled system, its network structure, too, reflected this approach to strategy and action. Sendero’s ties were increasingly internal – to regional Party committees throughout the country and front organizations in larger cities. It rejected grassroots organizations completely, in favor of lubricating the mechanical, micro-operations of politics and violence it was building in the countryside. By the early 1980s, Sendero had managed to close its network fairly thoroughly, resulting in a hub-and-spokes structure that resembles a graphical representation of its ideology in practice – circular, unbending, and self-perpetuating. Degregori characterizes Sendero as a “dwarf star,” a kind of star in which matter becomes so compressed that it acquires a “great specific weight, disproportionate to its size.”

How did changes in Left networks influence ordinary people’s opportunities and ability to participate? Amid these shifts in relations and weakened ties, peasants and communities developed strategic links with mass organizations to access national resources and political debates. Rural citizens’ ties to the CCP and other unions and federations enabled them to pursue their own politics, even if these organizations were in a weakened state. Some communities were rejecting Sendero’s political project, and others were

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resisting local interference and abuses by the armed forces. Many others were supporting Sendero, whether or not it was a product of belief in its ideas or of coercion. Mass movements in formation, PCP-SL, and other parties of the electoral Left coexisted in tension before the war; once it began, the rebels sought to co-opt or eliminate its rival leftists, attacking and killing many elected politicians, activists, and leaders working for or with other parties.

The different ways in which people reacted to Sendero by resisting its project – and the ambiguity of their participation in it – meant that a primarily local kind of resistance emerged from within communities. Partnerships with and petitions to the CCP and other mass organizations helped some peasants realize their goals, but full resistance\(^{73}\) was a locally determined political phenomenon. Peasant communities undertook particular strategies to “do politics” in the context of a violent insurgency by exploiting the CCP’s connections to wider networks and its own position as a hub. This affiliation allowed peasant militants and organizations access to a forum for political debate and exchange; to make linkages to the state and its resources; and to join and occupy nodes in changing networks.

**Peru’s National Peasant Federation as mediator, ideological forum, and training site**

Weak articulation of social movements and political organizations in Ayacucho in the years before the war began gave way to Sendero’s development of social relations and governance in rural areas, through which it put into practice its ideology of violence.

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\(^{73}\) Arjona (2016) defines “full resistance” as (civilian) opposition to rebel governance altogether, in contrast to partial resistance, in which people oppose specific actions of the armed governing force.
Mobilization efforts by leftist organizations continued during the war, in a bid for votes and the recovery of political space lost to the rebels in some areas. In addition, civilians drew on increasingly available resources and alliances made possible through competitive mobilization by different Left actors to demand structural changes and an end to land inequality and abuses by state and elite actors. While the CCP sought to indoctrinate and catalyze debate among peasant activists and local and national political militants, peasant organizations took advantage of the broker role that the CCP was poised to play. As an intermediary between poor and landless peasants, organizers, legal Left parties, trade unions, and the Lima-based Left leadership, the CCP connected sometimes disparate actors and processes.

During the 1920s, as Chapter 2 outlined, “the peasant problem” was given attention by cultural theorists and writers, but it did not enter the mainstream political debate until a few decades later. In the 1950s, peasants, through tomas de tierra (land takeovers) and strikes, themselves became a fundamental political actor. The agrarian reform that the Velasco regime carried out began at a moment when the peasant movement was in decline, following its severe repression by the state in the 1960s. Indeed, the reform process constituted an effort by the regime to prevent the kinds of mobilization that eventually emerged, despite the regime’s efforts to coopt and engineer popular participation. As the land invasions and extra-legal actions that Hugo Blanco and his fellow organizers adopted in the southern sierra gradually took shape and succeeded, the CCP was reorganized in 1962, following a period of repression and atrophy of the federation starting in the late

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By the early 1970s, Bandera Roja, the Maoist party out of which Sendero was born, had lost its control of the CCP; BR’s tenure at the helm of the federation had meant a stream of ultra-radical thinking and isolation from peasant struggles in the country. When VR militants begin to exert influence on the CCP in 1973, the federation oriented its efforts to class-based struggle (“clasismo”) and building a broad popular movement that includes unions – of teachers, miners, and other workers – and other sectors of the lower and working classes.

Notes on proceedings from the CCP’s first National Council meeting in September 1979 show that the organizations and bases that comprise the federation expressed their commitment to a holistic form of political struggle. Electoral and other modes of contestation relied on unity among left forces: “the struggle of the teachers is no longer only that of the teachers, it is the struggle of all people.” While land mobilizations had achieved much during the course of the 1960s and even during the land reform, peasants had not achieved the construction of a centralized national movement. In the 1960s, peasants were organizing in various parts of the country, primarily in response to local dynamics – a result of agricultural cycles and specific political and social processes in each locality or region. With its restructuring in the mid-1970s, the CCP, then, was tasked with a unifying function driven by both ideological commitments and the need to build a united front for contesting elections. “We are forming the base committees of the UDP,” a militant remarked at the National Council meeting. SUTEP, the CGTP, and the CCP were the

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national mass organizations that formed the UDP (Unidad Democrático Popular) coalition that was part of IU, the main leftist opposition party during the war. The decision to foster “unity of the Left” was important and reflected the political leadership’s focus on constructing a movement to win elections.

IU socialized and trained peasant militants directly through the CCP. After the municipal elections that occurred in November 1980, IU’s talking points for the CCPistas emphasized the popular sector unity on which the party depended to generate support and win elections. Its messages to peasant activists were both hortatory and strategic: the CCP has helped to organize the peasantry, but throughout the country, many peasants were yet to be mobilized, and this constituted an important task for the party and the federation. Also, the party asserted, the people need IU as a broad force that could bring together disparate collectives with shared interests, and argued that unions and federations were insufficient as political actors without a unifying mechanism.

Through education and debate facilitated by the CCP, peasant federations claimed that they were taking possession of their political paths from corrupt officials and the old order. In a May 1981 pamphlet produced by FECVRA, the Peasant Federation of the Apurimac River Valley, the militants sought to indoctrinate peasants and activists, but also to motivate their actions in support of revolutionary class struggle. “Instead, if the workers of the country and the city make our own politics,” the pamphlet read, “we will be able to take power from the exploiters, we can make the organization of the people bigger and stronger and we will be able to change society.”

80 “FECVRA Pamphlet: Algunas Cuestiones Sobre Sindicalismo, CCP Archive, May 18, 1981 (Received by CCP). No number.
resistance in Peru, the pamphlet urges class-based organization and “creating actions,” “which requires forging our own leaders and our own political party.”81 During the 1979 Council, a delegate from the provincial federation of Chira, in northern Peru, emphasized the learning and exchange that occurs at CCP summits. “I come to these events that are schools for our struggle.”82 Massive issues that the agrarian reform brought about remained unaddressed by the government, in Chira and elsewhere. Many peasant organizations came with a purpose – to learn how to direct their struggles and convert reform cooperatives (like SAIS and CAPS) into “peasant communities” – a change in status that required mobilizing local forces because of the difficulty of officially breaking down the failed cooperatives.

Communications produced by the social movements that associated and assembled with the CCP also made claims on local and national state institutions for improvements in governance and the eradication of corruption. In January 1986, the FDPA issued a public letter directed to its militants, political party leaders, and the people of Ayacucho. The missive put forth a number of demands, including an end to the national government’s state of emergency and military control in the department. The FDPA called for the evaluation of the distorted system of “Agrarian Credit,” which had been intended as government lending assistance for poor peasants, but that had been exploited by powerful businessmen with small lands who successfully obtained large loans to finance their businesses. It also demanded a restructuring of the department’s state judicial body, Poder Judicial, to “eliminate bribe-takers and incompetent people.” “No moralizing effort has arrived to our pueblo,” the FDPA letter said, referencing the campaign promise of recently elected

81 Ibid.
President Alan García Pérez, whose government, six months into its tenure, had already elicited denunciations of its human rights violations and massacres by death squads.

The list of “bases” – the Front’s affiliated or partner organizations – that support these demands is wide-ranging, demonstrating the FDPA’s comprehensive influence in social and political networks – and its role as a powerfully connected organization outside the network. They included the Departmental Federation of Peasant Communities of Ayacucho (FEDCCA); the FDBA (the departamental neighborhoods federation); the Workers Federation of Ayacucho; the Departmental Committee for the Defense of Human Rights; SUTE-Huamanga, the local teachers’ union; and the Ayacucho Association of Relatives of the Abducted and Detained. The FDPA and the electoral left also enjoyed a mutually supportive relationship. IU, in its training materials for peasant leaders, stressed its support for local participatory organizations like the Front, other regional fronts, and popular assemblies. The importance to IU of ensuring votes for the coalition at election time is clear, but it stated that it was also interested in constructing and strengthening the processual aspects of local political participation – what it calls “authentic democracy” – through which people demand solutions to their problems from the government and fight against unfair economic and political decisions.

At a time of renewal within the Front – what it called “institutional reactivation” – the Front saw its role as struggling for the development and strengthening of popular institutions, which are “the base of authentic democracy.” The willingness of the FDPA, an organization from which several leaders and activists had entered Sendero ranks, to

84 “El Frente de Defensa del Pueblo de Ayacucho, Carta Pública,” 11 Jan 1986, CCP Archive, Jul. 4, 1986 (Received by CCP). No number.
announce its demands in a public manner signals its intention to work within public offices and existing institutions – and not to work for their demise and destruction. Six years into the war, with Ayacucho suffering the consequences of widespread casualties in rural and urban areas, state surveillance and repression, and economic recession, the Front struggled to recover its own viability within the weakened social and political organizing scene, which Sendero had damaged.

In addition to providing a space for building movements, the CCP played an important mediating role between peasant communities and organizations and the state, broadly defined. This intervention took various forms, including providing contacts in Lima to host and orient a peasant activist traveling to the capital from the highlands, to connecting peasant groups with the office of a Senator or government official who may invest in their effort or request, and bureaucratic assistance with forms and arranging meetings. In March 1986, the FDCCA sent a letter to the Secretary General of the CCP Andrés Luna Vargas, requesting the CCP’s assistance with legal complaints against the Federation’s leaders, denuncias that labeled them “terrorists.” The FDCCA secretary, an authority in the town of Quinua and author of the letter, asks the CCP to help clear up the legal troubles peasants are facing. “They are being attacked while working and participating in community projects (faena comunal).” In registering a petition for assistance, the FDCCA asserts its own role as the “backbone of the defense of human rights” of peasants, ensuring their safety at a time of increased activism, repression, and attacks by police and military forces.

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CCP connected poor peasants with those who could give them voice and communicate their experiences and needs. Authorities in the district of Sarhua, in Víctor Fajardo province, wrote a letter in December 1981 to the editor of CCP’s publication, requesting that he publish news about the invasion by Sinchi counterinsurgency forces of Sarhua a couple months earlier. The Sinchis came to accuse peasants, authorities, and teachers of “terrorism” and arrested several people. The Sarhuinos wanted people to know the “real situation” in their town, and to send a message, at an early moment in the war, to activists and other communities that the state had shown up to investigate the kinds of organizing that were taking place. The Departmental Agricultural Federation of Ayacucho (FADA) saw its own role to be a kind of spokesperson for peasants, and communicated its need for financial support to CCP to carry out this mission. FADA maintained a “Peasant House” in the city of Ayacucho, a space for agrarian cooperatives, peasant groups, and peasant communities to gather and register their demands. FADA then communicated these claims to political and judicial authorities. The federation was seeking to fund its “solidarity bonds” program, through which it finances peasants’ travel to Huamanga to report problems and seek legal redress.

A year earlier, in a statement signed by CCP president and senator-elect Andrés Luna Vargas, the CCP laments the lack of expressive, articulated politics that the ongoing war was preventing. “The right to socio-economic development as the base of well-being; the right to develop organizations and express your point of view have been and are bring

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86 Letter to “Director del Periódico de la CCP from Administrative Council of the Community of Sarhua,” Dec. 2, 1981 (Received by CCP), CCP Archive. No number.  
87 “Letter to CCP from FADA, Nov. 20, 1984, CCP Archive.
crushed with violence,” the statement read.\textsuperscript{88} By stressing “respect for the first right of every person, which is the right to life,” the CCP leader called for “the strengthening of our Communal Assemblies, union organizations, local governments, and other forms of expression of our pueblos.” At a moment when regional political devolution dominated government plans and activists’ agendas, the CCP called for a strong and inclusive regional government in Ayacucho that would respond not only to people’s immediate needs, but also to “the historical demands of the pueblo of the south-central Andean region.”\textsuperscript{89} As a network in which peasants acted strategically to meet their own needs and align politically with other groups – in an effort to articulate cross-sector and cross-class interests – the CCP also privileged the interactive and expressive processes of building a political order that Sendero rejected.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Sendero’s efforts to instill rebellion in Ayacucho and throughout Peru did not encounter a blank political and social slate. Local histories and conceptions of politics in Puno and Ayacucho shaped how the PCP-SL attempted to build support for its movement. The nature of participation – and the kinds and extent of the connections among political actors that express and organize for a cause and set of interests – is central to our understanding of politics in war. To what extent participation is articulated – which implies

\textsuperscript{88} “Moción: Gobierno Regional Como Paso Necesario Para Conquistar Paz con Justicia en la Región Centro Sur,” Jun. 16, 1985, CCP Archive. No number.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups – influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the state, and the insurgency interact.

Drawing on Guzmán’s hybrid conception of Maoist-Leninist-Mariáteguista thought, PCP-SL viewed peasants as instruments of the bloody revolution that would break down Peruvian society, directed by the Party. This interpretation resulted in a clear divergence of Sendero thought and mobilizing strategy from those of other Left groups, many of which had decided to contest elections. This separation had serious effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war, breaking down local institutions and social ties, and at the same time, leaving people with few alternatives to participating in the rebel political project. Leftist organizations continued to mobilize people and build mass movements during the war, however. These efforts aimed not only to achieve electoral victories, but also to foster a consciousness and construct an alliance based on class and shared interest.

In Puno, where the shortcomings of Velasco’s agrarian reform helped open opportunities for an organized departmental peasant federation, the Catholic Church and Left party activists generated an articulated front, a buffer against Sendero’s efforts to coopt and control political networks and processes like tomas de tierras. Ayacuchano political society lacked articulation leading up to the war, and Sendero leadership exploited its influence within rural communities through the organizing its cadres and student leaders had carried out years before. But some peasants pursued their basic objectives – economic and social assistance and survival of themselves and their families – through interaction and
participation in local federations and the CCP. Ideological questions pervaded the CCP-facilitated fora that brought together militants, particularly in the divisive years preceding the conflict’s beginning, with peasants, to address both everyday concerns and conflicts, as well as questions of whether the democratic path to revolution was possible in Peru. IU’s base of support among various social groups grew, but the party failed to resolve the ideological tension embodied in its efforts to develop popular organizations to participate in democratic institutions or to build a socialist system.

Events in Ayacucho provide evidence for the claim that the war was fought on the terrain of civil society. As Sendero gradually closed its networks of organization leading to the early 1980s, it alienated Left actors ideologically and through its methods. During the 1980s, the “horizontal links” between and among social groups and their political representatives weakened, as worsening violence and economic recession made building strong political parties and inclusive coalitions difficult. This disintegration proved true not only in Ayacucho, but also in Lima and other regions, as Sendero and military violence spread and deepened. The following chapter, on people’s participation in violence in Hualla, aims to struggle with the ambiguities and contradictions of local political mobilization, particularly with how people respond to Sendero when it brings a certain kind of politics to their town.

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90 Burt (2007) describes a comparable role played by neighborhood associations and community kitchens in the barriadas of Lima during the war to meet people’s basic needs but also serve as a platform for organizing.
91 Burt, Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru, 3.
92 Carlos Iván Degregori, Sendero Luminoso: Parte I: Los hondos y mortales desencuentros; Parte II: Lucha armada y utopia autoritaria (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1986).
Chapter 4: “When politics came to town”: wartime violence and memory in Hualla, Ayacucho

“According to town belief, when blood is shed, the earth cries out, demanding more souls....”

- Mauro Tucta Crisante, “memorialista” of Hualla

At 3:00 in the afternoon of Sunday, July 11, 1982, while the residents of Hualla were planting trees, five strangers, dressed like civilians, their heads covered by balaclavas, appeared near Curuchucu. “They didn’t tell us who they were. We didn’t know them.”1 Approaching the groups of residents working, they said they were looking for the Lieutenant Governor, the Justice of the Peace, and the Mayor of Hualla. One visitor was carrying a machine gun. A couple brandished revolvers.

Most Sundays, residents would go out early to work on a communal project, in a traditional practice they call a “faena comunal.” This Sunday’s faena was a special task and an enormous undertaking: the planting of 15,000 eucalyptus trees at a site called Puruchuco, about three miles from the center of town. Peru’s Ministry of Agriculture financed the project. People worked in squads, organized according to Hualla’s four

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1 Author interview with Mauro Tucta Crisante, 25 Jun 2013, Hualla, Ayacucho.
neighborhoods – Barrio Andamarca, Barrio San Pablo, Barrio San Cristobal, and Barrio San Miguel, plus two squads formed by ex-soldiers and former authorities.² At 8:30 in the morning, each worker was assigned his share of the digging – 25 holes – and once that was completed, he could go home and rest, around midday. All of Hualla’s authorities were present at the faena. Stepping up after lunch, megaphone in hand, mayor Juan Inca Allccaco had announced plans for the town’s upcoming celebration of Qeruwantuy, an ancestral festival and another work day.³

As hundreds of alarmed people watched, the outsiders closed in on Puruchuco. “Our comrades have arrived,” the mayor said anxiously. “Ha llegado nuestros compañeros.” [sic]⁴ Juan Inca handed the megaphone over to the man with the machine gun. He seemed to be in charge.

“This wretch has deceived the town.” Immediately, the men with guns seized Juan Inca and Blas Quispe Inca, the town’s governor, tied their hands, and dragged them toward the main plaza of Hualla. The invaders found Demetrio Ipurre García, the lieutenant governor, playing soccer on the field by the plaza and grabbed him too, freeing Blas Quispe somewhere along the way.

At Puruchuco, those who had been digging holes stopped. Too scared to say anything to the outsiders, they abandoned the work and quickly returned home. With a third of Hualla’s residents gathered in the plaza, the armed visitors threw Juan Inca and Demetrio

³ Ibid.
⁴ Tucta, Willakuy Qorillacta, 56.
Ipurre in front of the church, under its imposing tower. They tied them up as though they would be crucified: each body formed a cross. By this time it was five o’clock.

The outsiders, who everyone knew were senderistas, announced that the two authorities would be submitted to a public trial for their “authoritarian” conduct. The townspeople cried out in the plaza, hands raised, mimicking the *vivas* and mottos of the Party that the masked men were shouting. They knew that there would be consequences if they did not raise their voices. Moments later, the rebels turned their guns on Inca and Ipurre, sending a bullet through each of their heads. The Justice of the Peace, Mauro Tucta Crisante, was at home with some visitors, and he rushed to the plaza when he heard the deafening shots. Relatives of the victims held vigil, staying all night with the bodies, which Tucta had lain at the door of the municipal building, just across the plaza from the church. When they informed Ipurre’s wife of his assassination, she was laid up in bed, having just given birth to their child.

The senderistas fled on foot after they executed the men.

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In Hualla in 1982, the presence and movements of members of Sendero Luminoso influenced community members’ interactions and choices as they sowed and harvested crops, celebrated traditional festivals, and selected the district’s authorities. The senderistas, those that people called “the walkers” – *los caminantes*, or in Quechua, *los puriqkana* – arrived very late at night or early in the morning, having hiked through the darkness in remote passes to descend on the town. In the beginning, the rebels raised their red flags
imprinted with hammer and sickle, and they gathered Huallinos in the town plaza and explained why they had come: to create a world in which the poor are equal to the rich, when all will have what they need. To carry out their struggle, the senderistas, usually hooded (encapuchados) and armed with rifles, said they depended on the people’s support.

Drawing on my interviews with residents of Hualla, a district in the department of Ayacucho, and 240 testimonies provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I argue that theoretical models of competition between state and rebel forces fail to account for how and why people participated in insurgency. Because Huallinos historically experienced politics as the practices of corrupt, powerful politicians and the sparse presence of the government, rebels’ incursions meant that an external force, at once foreign and intimate, provided a distinct kind of agency for peasants in Hualla. Sendero created an identity and conception of membership in a political movement as universalizing, self-evident, and omnipotent.

Sendero’s ideological conception shaped peasants’ roles in the alliance of classes engaged in armed struggle: they were the executors of revolution. But Sendero’s extreme violence broke down local institutions and social ties. This praxis influenced rebel-civilian social relations and the opportunities for political participation that indigenous, marginalized citizens encountered. Describing their own victimization and that of relatives and neighbors, people sought to obscure active support for Sendero, generating ambiguity through narratives of fear, flight, and hiding.

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5 Residents of the pueblo of Hualla, a district of Víctor Fajardo province, department of Ayacucho.
Hualla’s memories, violent markers of time, and the ambiguity of support for rebels

A couple years before their arrival in Hualla, Sendero had initiated its war with the state by burning ballot boxes in Chuschi, an Ayacucho town 55 miles northwest. On May 17, 1980, five hooded senderistas entered the voter registration office in Chuschi, tied up the registrar on duty, and set fire to the ballots. It was the night before the country’s first democratic election after twelve years of military rule. This incident, told and retold countless times, came to be known as the spark that ignited the armed struggle – *Inicio de la Lucha Armada*, or ILA – and is indelibly enshrined in the mythos of Sendero action. Sendero planned its signature attack on electoral symbols; it did so in Chuschi not because it was a stronghold of the movement but rather because Sendero leadership decided to take advantage of the opportunity to generate a “repressive reaction” from security forces and force local residents to “renounce passivity.” These consequences did not come to fruition right away, but in the long-term, Guzmán’s gamble on Chuschi paid off.

Speaking in Spanish rather than the Quechua understood by everyone who had grown up there, the senderistas intimidated and confused the Huallinos. It was not only a linguistic differentiation that obscured their motives but a lack of residents’ exposure to Marxist ideology. “What is Mao? What is socialism? If you aren’t educated, you don’t know.” Don Lucio Flores, a long-time schoolteacher in Hualla, emphasized that without previous understanding of ideological principles such as those that the senderistas brought to town – including those of Lenin, Marx, and Mao – they were not able to comprehend what the movement’s goals were. “The community did not understand.” As a result, he

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said, they reacted “humbly” when Sendero made demands. That is, they paid with their lives.

Nestled in the southeastern region of the left-facing boomerang formed by Víctor Fajardo province, Hualla is a quiet farming town, with a few shops, two schools, and steep, sprawling lanes of tiny houses, roofs made of corrugated aluminum (calamina). By 1982, as Sendero carried out more and more attacks in Ayacucho, people in Hualla came under the grip of the senderistas. In particular, Sendero found widespread support there in the early days: several teachers at the José Carlos Mariátegui (JCM) School were indoctrinated and tasked with recruiting students and young people.

At 11, 256 feet above sea level, Hualla – a word which signifies a kind of local, golden flower in Quechua – sits in the valley of the Cuencas River, about 400 miles from Lima. The intersection of the Cuencas with the Pampas River has generated a network of bridges, streams, crossings, and switchbacks, which lace the area surrounding Hualla. The town lives shaded and protected by the surrounding mountains, which are called Antapillo and Illawasi. To the west across the hills lay Sacsamarca, Huanca Sancos, and Lucanamarca, towns whose war histories are bound up with Hualla’s. The valley spans perhaps more than a hundred miles, and the terrain changes as one traverses it, ranging from the flat, calm puna, the highest habitable ecological niche, to the foothills, to the peaks of the Andes. The air is thin and crisp, and the sun shines intensely on the arid, rocky sprawling lands. People live in houses made of adobe, clay, and stone. The population is primarily Quechua-speaking, while some are bilingual, speaking Spanish in addition to

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their native tongue. Throughout its history, Hualla has developed an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry, and their products are primarily for personal consumption, though a trading network has long existed in the Pampas valley.\(^9\)

The crop of which the townspeople are proudest is corn. Hualla famously grows thirty-three varieties of corn, and for this they honor the *sara mama*, or “mother of maize,” a revered figure who bestows blessings for the harvest and is celebrated once a year in June. In addition to corn, Huallinos grow wheat, potatoes, alfalfa, and other crops. Residents spend much of their time raising livestock and farming. At Wachwaccasa, a site in the puna at 13,780 feet, farmers have created a lake for fishing, where they harvest trout.\(^10\) In 1979, there were 6,000 people living in Hualla. Now, there are about 3,550.\(^11\)

The town’s history as an area of Shining Path’s *Comité Zonal Fundamental* – the “red zone” of rebel activity – makes it a compelling site for understanding how and why people supported Sendero. In Víctor Fajardo province, in addition to the neighboring province of Cangallo, senderista cadre sought to establish popular committees to reproduce and sustain bases of support. As a result of severe violence by both Sendero and the armed forces in the central-southern region of Ayacucho and displacement to coastal cities, Hualla’s population declined steeply over the 1980s.

After the *desconocidos* – unknown people – killed the mayor, they gave out the merchandise in his shop to the people who had gathered there. Others remember that all the residents of Hualla received a portion of Inca’s distributed goods. Years later, many people

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\(^11\) Ibid.
in Hualla recalled that Juan Inca was shot in front of the church while many residents looked on.\textsuperscript{12} Someone said they killed him [Inca] with a pick-axe to save bullets.\textsuperscript{13} As Julia Ancasi, who was 13 years old in 1982, remembered the day the mayor was killed, she was certain that it happened on a day when they were all doing communal work.\textsuperscript{14} Indalecio Huarcaya, who had served as an authority in Hualla until 1980, said those who killed Juan Inca were dressed like soldiers ("vestían de tropa"), wearing military-issue pants.\textsuperscript{15} Inca belonged to the Popular Action party, Huarcaya added. Others also specifically noted the attire of those who came to kill the authorities: they wore boots and looked like “sinchis.”\textsuperscript{16} Variation emerges from testimonies about the time of day the men were killed; some mention the site of the crime as the door of the church, but others omit that detail. Only some residents mention the killing that day of Demetrio Ipurre. Some get the authorities’ names wrong. If there is one point of concordance among locals, it is that they killed the men in the center of town.

Many people from Hualla mention the assassination of Juan Inca in the course of their testimonies about particular incidents of their own – or their family members’ – victimizations during the 1980s; it may be the most commonly told memory of the early years of the conflict. The event, whether the narrator claims to be a firsthand witness or third-hand storyteller, is important as an initial display of what Sendero Luminoso meant

\textsuperscript{12} In oral testimonies given to Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), members of the community offered details about incidents of violence and displacement that occurred in Hualla. In my research in the Center for Information on Collective Memory and Human Rights (CIMCDH, its acronym in Spanish), the archive of the CVR, I located 272 testimonies which mentioned “Hualla” or “Huaya.”

\textsuperscript{13} CIMCDH, Interview 200482.

\textsuperscript{14} CIMCDH, Interview 1000547. The practice of the “faena” might involve one of a number of different community projects that members take up together in an organized fashion, like building irrigation canals and maintaining shared resources like roads and streams.

\textsuperscript{15} CIMCDH, Interview 200793.

\textsuperscript{16} Sinchis were members of the national counterinsurgency police who appeared in localities throughout Peru during the war.
when it said that the old, stale structures of power had to be torn down. Inca’s killing – as it is told and retold and interwoven with subsequent remembrances of fear and violence – took on a meaning for Huallinos. The armed struggle had begun to draw lines, and people quickly understood what they meant. With no military officers yet assigned to patrol in Hualla and no police presence in the town (a glaring absence to this day), and with sightings of senderistas increasingly frequent, many began to perceive a shift in local control. During the first few years of the 1980s, Sendero enforced its growing authority by instituting mandatory participation in regular political meetings; recruiting young students to join the organization; and demanding changes in people’s economic and social behavior.

The killing of Juan Inca formed a kind of historical marker in the memory of Huallinos, and of Hualla, creating a symbolic “before” and “after.” Regardless of how much one might have known about the wanderings and plans of the senderistas before the eleventh of July in 1982 – and some Huallinos knew more than they let on – that day made it clear. The senderistas had staked their claim and demonstrated what they were willing to do to bring the revolution to fruition in Hualla. This, at least, is the version that emerged from truth commission testimonies and many of my interviews. Starting on July 11, 1982, declared Ernesto Ortiz, whose father was later killed by Sendero, the terrorists entered the area. He mentions how there was a piece of communal land up in the hills, and that day everyone was working on it. Five unknown people entered, and they took the mayor, shot him in the plaza, and sacked his shop. “That’s how it was. [It] started there.” In other testimonies, people suggested that Sendero cadre first arrived to Hualla as early as June or

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17 Author interview with Ernesto Ortiz*, 26 June 2013, Hualla, Ayacucho.
October of 1981.\textsuperscript{18} People remember the rebels’ moment of “entry” as having occurred at very different times. As Ponciano del Pino suggests in his field study of northern Ayacucho, precise dates are of less significance than how people in affected areas remember events.\textsuperscript{19} Importantly, Juan Inca and Demetrio Ipurre were “the first victims,” a phrase that Huallinos use to locate the event in the history of the war and the town.

A few months passed after July 11, but Huallinos soon saw a response from the Peruvian state. The Sinchis – specially-trained units of the national police force – arrived in Hualla and began raiding houses, searching for people and incriminating evidence of their involvement with Sendero Luminoso. As Don Mauro Tucta tells it, on November 10, 1982, the Sinchis showed up in Hualla. From his house on Ayacucho Street, the Sinchis stole a military uniform, algebra books, two radios, a Singer sewing machine, the family’s clothes, and 8,000 nuevos soles in cash.\textsuperscript{20}

While few Huallinos admit in their testimonies – recollections provided almost twenty years after the events took place to a state-sponsored memory project – that they actively supported the rebels, their complicity and reactions to insecurity occupied a broad range of supportive action. Those who spoke with CVR interviewers frequently refer to a time of fear and fleeing, but also to being caught between the military and the senderistas, whose tactics were comparable in the level of brutality and repression. Following Sendero Luminoso “taking her town” between 1982 and 1984, one Hualla resident said the security forces came to take control of the situation, but “they killed campesinos just as the

\textsuperscript{18} CIMCDH, Interviews 201724; 100021; 100592.
\textsuperscript{19} Ponciano del Pino, “Family, Culture, and “‘Revolution,’”” 191. fn. 9.
\textsuperscript{20} CIMCDH, Interview 200131.
senderistas did.” Emergent from the testimonies is also people’s strongly conveyed sense of cause and effect: because Sendero came and imposed authority and created violent insecurity, the military arrived, eventually building a base and sending patrols into the town. But these recorded remembrances often do not incriminate particular individuals directly. Mostly, they do not involve comprehensive analysis of politics and social relations at the time, though a few respondents offer interpretations of how the system failed and generated the circumstances under which Sendero was able to make headway in the district.

The ambiguity and subtle imprecision of memory in Hualla makes it difficult to identify and compare specific levels of local support for Sendero. Still, manifestations of regret, paralyzing fear, and deep confusion in their accounts may illustrate how hard their choices were. They may choose to remember their own actions and decisions differently. As a result, apprehending people’s understandings of threat and choice may tell us something about how support for rebels is constructed. By supporting Sendero, Huallinos would, perhaps, have experienced a pleasure in agency through “the successful assertion of interests and identity.” But this participation involved extreme risk in the face of counterinsurgent forces, and subsequently, the violent reprisals of senderistas who resented the resistance that civilians in Hualla and other parts of Ayacucho began mounting after a few years of support. In addition, the degree of coercion and forced recruitment carried out by Sendero makes the motivations for people’s participation opaque.

In interviews, many Huallinos began by referencing a sort of vague consensus: at some point, a transition occurred, when the tranquil, social harmony that defined life in the

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21 CIMCDH, Interview 1000547.
town was transformed, gradually, into insecurity, fear, and distrust. The point of bifurcation coincides with the arrival and growing influence of Sendero in Hualla. “Through their narratives, [Huallinos] humanize time, attributing different meanings through a storyline that interweaves what happened then, what happened later, and what is hoped happens in the town,” wrote the authors of a study of memories of violence in communities of the Cuenca River Valley. Tracing a “before” and “after” of the violence became a collective expression of a desire to reconstruct the community and forget the suffering they experienced in the past. In the early 1980s, one Huallino told the CVR, “Life was beautiful, but what spoiled it was the terrorism.” Numerous testimonies begin with a description of Hualla before the senderistas arrived and the stability and calm of everyday life was threatened.

We were very peaceful, even though we were only farmers, we didn’t cry so much, nor did we suffer. We lived peacefully, feeding our kids. We grew up without any suffering. But when the terrorists appeared, we left even our houses abandoned, our town remained empty, and it was just the dogs, howling.

Particular events emerge as prominently and collectively remembered moments – repeated and interpreted since they occurred – that sent Hualla’s fortunes in this or that direction during those years. The assassination of Juan Inca constitutes one of these moments, in addition to a few other events like the capture of a Sendero commander that took place later in the decade. As hitos, or milestones that mark a road, these incidents appear and reappear in people’s memories and retellings. They are known instinctively to

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24 CIMCDH, Interview 100050.
25 EPAF, De víctimas a cuidadanos, 21. EPAF researchers cite an interview with Constantina, a 50-year-old campesina.
form part of the common remembrance, to the extent that it can be conceived of as a singular element, which appears in people’s consciousness about the violence and instability of war that occurred in Hualla. Residents refer to the period as “the social-political violence” in ordinary conversation; this label has acquired its own power of embodiment. Before this, social movements had not reached the heights of Hualla, and the influence of parties had not prepared the community for the incursion of ideas and methods that Sendero brought.

But this collective memory was cultivated as part of a political process. People were willing to share painful memories because they thought it would result in the government providing support to the community, investing in rehabilitation, education and development, and individual reparations for damages and losses. Later, however, Huallinos began to realize that their revelations of crimes, violence, and disappearances would not engender the interest and support of the state, and assistance was not likely to come soon.26

Individually, Huallinos have their own stories to tell, in which their own actions may stand out in particular ways. Narratives of violence in Hualla help to illustrate villagers’ agency in response to their political options, including engagement with Shining Path and the security forces. Their decisions to participate and at times, simultaneously disengage through ambiguity and flight show that support for rebels is contingent and

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26 EPAF, De víctimas a ciudadanos, 32-33. Despite their pessimism, Huallinos continue to make demands on the central government within a framework of reparations for violence and disappearances. On the community’s annual “Day of Memory,” on June 26, 2013, residents processed after morning Mass to the cemetery, where for at least a couple hours during an assembly with the mayor, residents detailed the specific losses and damages and debts they incurred as a result of a relative’s death or destruction of property. Among other petitions, they requested state support for scholarships, a demand since before the war, and the construction of a new cemetery in Hualla. To “reclamar” (to articulate a demand or complaint that requires a response) is an activity integral to Huallinos’ struggle for state assistance and compensation and a form of participation in politics.
dependent on local social relations and the balance of authority. Huallinos retell their participation during war through lenses of both individual and collective memory – specifically drawing on strategic silences and the bifurcation of time to convey experiences that they say they would rather forget.27

Forms of “doing politics”: hacer política in Hualla

What existed in Hualla politically before the arrival of Sendero? How did people make demands, and how were they governed? Why was Sendero able to build a strong base in Hualla? What did Sendero mean politically for Huallinos? These kinds of questions remain unanswered for historians and social scientists who study the districts and provinces of Ayacucho and their experiences during the last several decades. Heilman emphasizes the continuity of politics over almost a century in the sierra, including decades of peasants’ frustrations about their own powerlessness in the face of local officials’ corruption and impunity, which made their support of Sendero’s assassinations comprehensible.28 Miguel La Serna argues that people supported Sendero in areas where local injustices were common, in the hope that the rebels would punish those in long-standing violation of shared social values and norms.29 But Degregori attributes Sendero’s mobilizing success in Ayacucho to people’s willingness to support “a benevolent new landlord” who imposed a new, hierarchical, and more just order in the absence of a strong state.30 Del Pino asserts

27 Ibid, 31. Melquíades, a 56-year-old campesino, said, “I have already forgotten. No, now I want to forget, I don’t remember, now we are happy.” Other residents of Hualla stated that they remember only in small groups, among family members, but they do not remember the violence when they are alone.
28 Heilman, Before the Shining Path, 192-3.
29 La Serna, The Corner of the Living.
30 Degregori, Sendero Luminoso, 43.
that the senderistas provided, through armed struggle, concrete political alternatives to peasants who were confronting marginalization and poverty.\textsuperscript{31} Jo-Marie Burt posits the insurgency and the state as constructors of political projects executed through violence, which silenced civil society.\textsuperscript{32} No single explanation seems to account for varied dynamics of political mobilization and support for rebels throughout the country. In Hualla, in particular, civilians’ strategies of ambiguous participation and disengagement reflected the extreme insecurity of daily living, but also the gradual rejection of the instrumental role that Sendero had reserved – in its ideology and practice – for peasants.

While quantifying or defining people’s support for rebel movements may often be difficult for a number of reasons,\textsuperscript{33} the study of war and politics demands that we contextualize people’s participation historically and spatially, and allow people’s remembrances to tell us something about their political behavior. In a social environment in which stigma, guilt, shame, and “remembering to forget”\textsuperscript{34} pervade and inform people’s motives, understanding the events and emotions they recount and the ways in which they deploy their memories is critical.

One important element of contextualizing historical participation is the relationship between local politics in Hualla and national politics. Members of the community perceive a negligent distance between the central government and the Ayacucho region, which they articulate as a lack of visibility of the state and its efforts to improve their economic

\textsuperscript{31} del Pino, “Family, Culture, and ‘Revolution.’”
\textsuperscript{32} Burt, \textit{Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru}.
\textsuperscript{33} These may include the incentive for civilians to misremember or misrepresent their involvement with insurgents; the inadequacy and imprecision of measurements and substitute measurements for “civilian support”; and the varied, and at times, abstract quality of provision of support.
\textsuperscript{34} González, \textit{Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes}. 

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situation. They feel they are owed, intrinsically, stronger access to government resources and protection of rights. Their relationship with the ultimate governmental power that resides in Lima is mediated through corrupt politicians and wide open spaces, symbolically and geographically. The discourse of “distance” and “the politics of abandon”\textsuperscript{35} have long been familiar to those living in Ayacucho. Without the physical infrastructure required to maintain markets and regional trade routes, Huallla was isolated, a situation in which nearby districts also found themselves.

“We woke up,” former teacher Lucio Flores told me as we sat in his airy, two-room house on a foot-high stone bench, covered in worn, cushiony wool. Rows of corn, purple and brown, were drying out on the earthen floor. Don Lucio’s dark, smooth face betrayed years of working outdoors, raising animals, and talking with neighbors, as I had seen him doing that morning on the road, standing in the sun looking out at the mountains.

Organization in Huallla was not good, he said, prior to 1970. People did not really participate. Gradually, then, as roads were built to connect Huallla to the coast, when people started moving back and forth, and when schools arrived, the community began to awaken and connect to wider networks and processes.\textsuperscript{36} At that time, in the 1970s, the powerful mandamaces - patrons or local bosses who were descendants of the Spanish settlers – began to disappear and lose influence as people became more educated and made demands drawing on the law. Before that, Don Lucio continued, people in Huallla could not read or travel, and their political actions were limited by the influence of better-educated, worldly colonialists. Only Quechua was spoken in Huallla. “KEEchuwa,” he repeated the word,

\textsuperscript{35} Heilman, \textit{Before the Shining Path}.
\textsuperscript{36} Author interview with Lucio Flores*, 8 March 2014, Huallla, Ayacucho.
quietly enunciating and accenting its first syllable. By the time Sendero began organizing in Ayacucho towns in the early 1970s, Hualla’s doors and roads were open, and they began to claim a role in the region’s education system, as schools were established and teachers traveled there from Huamanga and other towns.

These processes of awakening and deeper connectivity of Hualla to broader political and economic processes occurred gradually as Velasco’s military reformist government diminished the power and reach of landowners and traditional “local notables.”³⁷ While the central government in Lima appointed mayors, governors, and other local and departmental officials until 1980, in Hualla (and some other districts) a dual system of institutional authority prevailed. The institution of “alcaldes varas,” traditional authorities whose power depends on faith in customary law and which is symbolized by a staff, or vara, comprises one pillar of this duality. As officials, the varayuqs – those who hold the vara – are amply endowed with authority and responsibility, including keeping watch over communal lands and relations among residents.³⁸ The municipal government forms the other pillar, headed by an appointed mayor and his team. Both institutions fall under the purview of the Communal Governing Board (Junta Directiva Comunal), which is charged with administering communal lands and resolving conflicts that arise within the community. A body called the “Junta de Regantes”, or Managing Board, regulates the use and access to water, and Fathers’ Clubs and Mothers’ Clubs create membership and activities for families, which constituted integral units of Hualla’s social and political matrix.

³⁷ Heilman, Before the Shining Path; LaSerna, The Corner of the Living.
Between 1935 and 1995, Huallinos who had migrated to other cities gradually founded five organizations that institutionalized connections between Huallinos on the coast and those who stayed in their hometown. These groups aided in the donation of construction materials for infrastructure and building projects in Hualla and helped facilitate the movement of people to safety during the war. In a sense, these social organizations play the political role of linking Hualla with the resources and skills found in the capital. The system of communal work has long existed as a form of participation in the social and political life of the community – a response to the burden perpetuated by the absent state and the numerous public tasks left to leaders and residents. “Ayni,” as defined by the teacher Lucio Flores, is “collective, joint work,” a social tradition that Huallinos inherited from their Incan ancestors. Still, the virtual absence of the state – including police forces and a medical post – made Huallinos self-sufficient and insular. They developed a limited system of trading cattle, vegetables, and other products brought from the coast with the closest neighboring communities.

How do people in Hualla make sense of political representation and their place in the political system? Mauro Tucta, who is known locally as the “memorialista de Hualla” – the town memoirist – sees its encounters with terrorism in the 1980s as the third episode in a historical arc, which expresses its participation in the nation. Starting with a major battle in 1540, an Incan guerrilla leader from the puna of Hualla fought the Spanish invaders and died valiantly, struggling in a war that ended in many deaths and the establishment of colonial rule in the area. Second, in 1823 in the battles of Trigopampa and Huallapampa,

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39 EPAF, De víctimas a ciudadanos, 17-18.
40 Interview with Lucio Flores.
Huallinos fought for the liberation of Peru from the Spaniards, and they were victorious. The independent Peruvian government honored Hualla as a district of rebels against Spanish rule. From then on the town was forgotten.\textsuperscript{41}

Together with the political violence in the 1980s, the battles inform a triad of interpretations that emerges in various histories and works written about Hualla.\textsuperscript{42} The pueblo’s place in the nation is secured through resistance and courage, but no government recognizes it, and the people carry on. Such notions of abandon by the state and of unmediated distance between the Andean pueblo and the government in Lima are pervasive in traditional and conventional narratives in Hualla.

When asked in 2013 about the presence of political parties in their town, several men, a few of them local authorities, said they vaguely remembered Acción Popular and APRA banners and candidacies. Activist Percy Otero said he also recalled the presence of the PPC, the Christian Democratic Party, but the parties “fell silent” – “\textit{se callaron}” – when Sendero arrived. His father, who was an Aprista, was killed by Sendero. Many of the peasants were supporters of Belaúnde.\textsuperscript{43} Huallinos and others in Ayacucho understand that abandonment of their towns and resultant struggles facilitated the penetration of Sendero. The lack of state attention persists to this day. Huallinos were not voting in the 1980s; daily life was too dangerous, with violence and threats coming from both sides – Sendero and the military.\textsuperscript{44}

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\textsuperscript{41} Tucta, \textit{Willakuy Qorillacta}.
\textsuperscript{42} Aroni, “Sentimiento de pumpín,” 60-61. These works include two books that narrate Hualla’s history and two doctoral theses in Anthropology at the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga, all written by Huallinos.
\textsuperscript{43} Author interview with Percy Otero*, 24 Jun 2013, Huamanga.
\textsuperscript{44} Interview with Lucio Flores.
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The practice of electoral politics as a formal, regular institution stands in contrast to the traditional ways in which local authorities were selected – named – by the pueblo. Huallinos see the mode of participating democratically – “one person, one vote” – in an election, usually held in the church, as the original way of choosing the town’s leaders. Though by design this approach captures democratic elections in Peru, the traditional system diverges in practice, as Huallinos see it. In the past, local residents made decisions about candidates based on the kinds of projects and public works (obras) that they proposed. The authorities worked for the people, unlike today, when “personal interest” and corruption prevail. “Now we have campaigns, parties that they [local candidates] belong to.” The politicians steal the budgets and enrich themselves, Flores said. In the 1980s, when national elections began again, Sendero disrupted people’s access to participatory processes in Hualla.

Finally, Sendero’s local efforts to implement its ideological commitments had concrete effects on the ability of Huallinos to govern themselves in an era of violence. Sendero’s ideological principles and strategies dictated what it sought to achieve in Hualla and Víctor Fajardo: build popular committees, reproduce the Party at a local level, and recruit and train an army of peasant militants. The rebels’ mission to eliminate authorities and local power-holders – who were upholding the rule of the illegitimate, democratic state – generated a vacuum of governmental action in response to Huallinos’ personal insecurity, loss, and need for protection and redress. This deepened the political crisis that residents experienced as part of their isolation and lack of membership in political organizations with ties to movements and ideas larger than Hualla. The killings and resignations of authorities helped

45 Interview with Lucio Flores.
fulfill Sendero’s objectives, and for the first two to three years of its presence in the town, its political project succeeded. Imposing Sendero rule locally constituted one of the party’s territorial objectives, but its military action demanded a greater sacrifice: recruits.

Indalecio Huarcaya, whom Sendero had forced to resign from his post as gobernador in 1980, met the senderistas in the moor (puna) over a decade later. One night in April 1983 while he was not at home, the rebels killed his wife, Sergia Dueñas, stabbing her in the neck with a knife, in their home on Calle Maravillas in Hualla. By 1991, the senderistas had not been seen for a while, Huarcaya recalled, perhaps for a few years. He remembered seeing them walking in groups as late as 1986. Huarcaya was certain that they killed Dueñas because they wanted to punish him for his role as an authority. Out in the puna, he asked the rebels: “What are you accusing me of? I am not from any political party. I’m not from the mayor’s party. El pueblo me nombre. The village selected me.”

The assassinations and resignations of the 1980s formed part of “a process of disarticulation of political organization.” Schools closed, funeral rites ceased being performed, and people’s “life projects” were truncated. Because of Sendero’s actions, local and regional authorities were not available to act as mediators – typically residents’ only mode of political connection to higher levels of government – at a time when violence, death, and loss occurred frequently. Authorities disappeared; no safe mode of resistance existed; and daily activities became suffused with fear, though they were still carried out. The Party’s incursions into the town demonstrated their insensitivity and lack of knowledge.

46 CIMCDH, Interview 20079.
47 EPAF, De víctimas a ciudadanos, 19.
of local traditions, and their retreat to a racist framework in which peasants, starting at younger than 12 years of age, were forced to fight and die.

**Teachers and students: Sendero’s anchors in Hualla**

The Senderistas’ earliest footprints on the terrain of Huallinos’ memory came as incidents involving their schools, institutions at the heart of an educational system without many resources. Claudio Pariona, a native of Hualla and teacher in the José Carlos Mariátegui School, occupied a local leadership role in Sendero. Some community members remember that he took over rebel command of the town sometime in 1982 or 1983. Once he committed to “supporting the terrorists,” his sister Otilia told the CVR, Pariona became an aggressive recruiter of first professors, then young students. He lived in hiding from the soldiers.48

In the middle of 1982, Sendero embarked on a pervasive effort to construct and populate the movement’s ranks with young Huallinos. The senderistas brought 14- and 15-year-olds to areas outside Hualla to train them to use weapons and indoctrinate them in Mao’s teachings. “It was a secret that we were not supposed to tell anyone,” Julia Ancasi said.49 She was thirteen at the time, and her father had been forced to join Sendero. She describes how the rebels took them to other places to kill people – “dar muerte a otras personas.” Samuel, Julia’s father, escaped from their ranks and fled Hualla. The young people, once trained, would be sent into attacks in neighboring districts and provinces:

48 CIMCDH, Interview 202782.
49 CIMCDH, Interview 1000547.
Huamanga, Sacsamarca, Huancasancos. Many of them died in these confrontations, Julia recalled.

The school in Hualla now educates both boys and girls. Decades earlier, it was only open to boys. In the last several years, the town’s authorities invested in rebuilding the school facility, with several modern buildings and considerable outdoor space for recreation. Meandering back and forth – school and home, home and school – with the occasional stop at the corner store, every young student is well-mannered, prepared with a “good morning” or “good afternoon” for neighbors and strangers alike. Sending children to school is integral to the daily dreams and struggles of families in Hualla, with clean clothes on their backs and sufficiently nourished to be able to learn. One teacher in Hualla emphasizes the persistent severity of this challenge: in cold classrooms, with little food to sustain them, students cannot focus on their lessons.50

Students three decades ago shared the same basic needs as they do today in Hualla, in addition to several different problems. It was common for Sendero cadre to absorb entire families into their numbers, frequently by force. Justina Pimentel Allcantara tells of the kidnapping in late September of her son Máximo, who was Pariona’s former student.51 The senderistas also took Máximo’s wife Victoria Palomino Choccña and their two-year-old daughter Anclae. Valentín Loayza Cuya, 17, was walking to school when senderistas picked him up, forcing him to accompany them. Valentín’s mother blames his teacher.52 A student in Hualla, teenager Divina Crisanti Tacsi traveled to Chincheros to represent her

50 “Documental Hualla.”
51 CIMCDH, Interview 204617.
52 CIMCDH, Interview 201747.
While she was there, Divina met the senderistas, who told her and her friends that if they join the Party, they will all be wealthy like the rich people. One day she came home to Hualla and let her mother know that she was with the senderistas, that her bosses were Comrades Arturo and Héctor. She would be killed if she did not go back to the movement. Divina’s father Aquilino once met Comrade Arturo on the road, who told him that his daughter was already a rebel commander. Flavio Pariona and Priscilio Tacsi took over after Arturo and Héctor left. Aquilino does not know whether his daughter is alive or dead.

It was not only through kidnapping and forced recruitment that Sendero invaded the education system in Hualla and throughout the region. In the classroom, rebel teachers incorporated the ideas and symbols of Pensamiento Gonzalo (Gonzalo Thought) into their lessons, in fact, rewriting the curriculum in the first years of the 1980s to focus wholly on Sendero’s program. “They taught us to sing and dance the terrorists’ songs,” Julia Ancasi recalled in her interview with the CVR.54

The “authoritarian pedagogy”55 developed by Sendero sustained a system based on repetitive, hierarchical principles and cultivated students who were inclined to support alternative means of making political change – young people from marginalized towns and poor families. As a teaching tool, the curriculum of Sendero was clear and coherent by design. The totalizing nature of the Party’s principles and definitions of belonging helped engender a reading of the world – not only of the country or the economy – that was

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53 CIMCDH, Interview 201743.
54 CIMCDH, Interview 1000547.
55 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo VIII, Cap. 1, 16.
consistent, simple, and amounted to what some have called a “scientific ideology.” Many of the children and teenagers were being asked to memorize quotations by Mao and Marx that they did not comprehend, but this was less salient for the cadres. It was more important that students mimic the world views being espoused as part of a process of organizing rebellion and populating the movement’s ranks. Ontologically, PCP-SL viewed the revolution and the world in undeniably clear terms: “all-powerful because it’s true.” Within a Stalinist ideological tradition in which “the party line decides everything,” well-organized cadres were trained in strict Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, and the movement formed a “dwarf star – the kind in which matter gets so compressed it acquires a great specific weight disproportionate to its size.” Sendero’s leaders sought to make reality fit its ideas, embracing a science-driven, progress-obsessed view of social and economic conditions in Peru, packaged in clear, analytical terms, and offered it to vulnerable and ambitious young people from small, distant towns. The CVR’s Final Report attributes Sendero’s advances to its use of the education system to carry out its plans: by capturing and indoctrinating “small nuclei of young people,” the party exploited those students to establish itself in the rural and urban margins, “areas which had been discriminated against or not represented by the political system.” In Hualla, teachers were respected figures of authority, and their influence in the absence of genuine opportunities for people to articulate their demands and make political choices was outsized and institutionalized.

56 For instance, see Degregori, “Return to the Past,” 51-62.
58 Degregori, “Return to the Past,” 53.
Starting in the 1970s, families in Hualla who could afford it started sending their children to the well-reputed secondary school Los Andes, which was founded in Huancasancos earlier in the decade. Teachers at Los Andes were educated primarily at the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga. Radical thinkers and activists who later led Sendero taught these teachers, who formed networks that carried out the indoctrination and politicization of rural Ayacuchanos over time, starting with the movement for education in Huanta in the late 1960s.

One student in Hualla recalled that her teachers came to class in the morning after they had walked all night through the mountain passes, “to Puquio.” The teacher-militants traveled up to a hundred miles to participate in a hidden meeting or an attack, and returned to Hualla by sunrise to teach classes. Former teacher Lucio Flores was threatened in the JCM School for refusing to support the rebels. “They almost killed me,” he said, shaking.60 The home of another teacher, Tulio Garcia Huallanca, who had recently moved to Hualla from a nearby town, was invaded by unknown assailants – likely senderistas – in August 1984, and he was killed with his wife and two-year-old son.61 The prominent roles of teachers in the community – and their outsized influence on students and their parents – played a significant role in the spread of Sendero ideas in Hualla.

“Scattering blood on the road”

When Sendero rebels first entered Tiquihua, an annex of Hualla, they made a scene at a sacred moment. As one resident tells it, as villagers processed through the plaza in honor of

60 Author interview with Lucio Flores*, March 2014.
61 CIMCDH, Interview 201204.
the Virgin of Monserrat, they noticed the strangers approaching, fifteen of them, hooded and armed. The residents sped the procession up, taking care to secure and guard the image they were carrying. The outsiders threw the sole village telephone to the ground, causing panic. Though many residents did not understand Spanish, the senderistas spoke to them at length, strung up their red flag in the Church’s lofty bell tower, and left. This was in August 1981. The cadre returned six months later.62

In late June, during the annual festival of San Pedro – the patron saint of Hualla – the community celebrates with sprawling days of revelry, including dancing pumpíń and drinking chicha, a locally brewed corn liquor. The traditional pumpíń – a musical genre native to the pueblos of Víctor Fajardo – captures, through the playing of the metal strings of a lute, the sound of a beating heart.63 It is a persistent beat, a kind of staccato rhythm that is often accompanied by women’s voices singing in Quechua. Drawing on the onomatopoeia of “pum” as the sound of a heartbeat, and the vibration of “pín,” which is the strum of the first string of the bandurria – they combine to form a harmony that expresses a devotion to the wild and beautiful earth, natural riches, native animals and plants. While men play lutes and sometimes harmonica, the women dance and sing, coyly lifting their layered skirts, turning and swaying as they tap their sandal-clad feet to the strings’ rhythm.

Pumpíń emerged from qachwa, which, as Huallinos tell it, came from a pre-Colombian dance performed at ancient agricultural festivals. The rhythms speak to pastoral themes, and the romances of young peasants. But the playing and dancing of qachwa was not limited to agricultural festivals at harvest time in Hualla, but played throughout the year.

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62 CIMCDH, Interview 201637.
transforming as it blended with the sounds and strings of other communities and traditions. During the June festival in 1982, just a couple weeks before the killing of Juan Inca, soldiers from the Peruvian Army arrested Roman Tacsi Uscata. His son told the Truth Commission that because there was a senderista leader in Hualla with a similar name, “Rodolfo Tacsi,” this led to confusion about his father’s identity. Demecia Quispe Inca, Roman’s wife, went to the military base at Canaria to look for him, and the soldiers raped her there. She died two years later from wounds that developed from the rape, and Roman was never found. Some people said his body had been buried close to the prison at the base, where detainees, suspected of belonging to or providing support to Sendero, were held.

Senderistas picked up 32-year-old Celso Vicente Vicente when he was on his way with his wife Lorgia Inca Huamani to their farmlands. The militants forced a group of men to gather and then drove them to neighboring Sacsamarca. In Pallqa, a tiny, steep annex of Sacsamarca, the Army intercepted the group, firing without making any distinction between senderistas and their recruits. Celso was killed.

At its meetings, held every Sunday, the senderistas told residents of their readiness to encounter their own sacrifice for the cause: “We scatter our blood on the road.”

Gathering 30 or 40 people at a time in an abandoned house, the cadre taught Huallinos the ideas that motivated the revolution, privileging the spilling of blood and the willingness to die – and kill. In the early years, they enforced the participation of residents, and organized separate meetings for women, teenagers, and men. Sacrifice of oneself was an element of

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64 Aroni, “Sentimiento de pumpín,” 67.
65 CIMCDH, Interview 201743.
66 CIMCDH, Interview 201744.
67 CIMCDH, Interview 100553.
commitment to the Party and its vision that the cadre emphasized in meetings, an aspect which conveyed to Huallinos an unprecedented and risky approach to participating in politics.

By early 1983, Huallinos had become accustomed to the investigations and patrols of soldiers and sinchis, who made regular rounds, searching homes, shops, and fields for suspected rebel supporters and sympathizers, and rebels themselves. The government’s overall intelligence and counterterrorism operations betrayed a lack of responsiveness and a misunderstanding of cultural and social norms in rural Andean towns. The need to make the population legible through state counterinsurgency meant, for Peru’s generals and the government in Lima, an aggressive, homogeneous response to violence. Having failed to detect and anticipate the occurrence and extent of Sendero operations before the ILA and in the early days of its attacks, the state gradually adapted its policing and investigative responses. Soldiers dispatched to bases in Ayacucho and other parts of the “emergency zone” were natives of areas far from the hamlets and moors they were sent to patrol. In addition to language and cultural barriers, geography and racism mounted serious difficulties in the face of mobile rebels who knew the towns and people. Soldiers and special police responded by assuming that indigenous peasants were active supporters of Sendero – “terrorists.” Their actions reflected the cold insensitivity of their superiors’ orders and the racism and discrimination against Quechua-speaking Peruvians of Indian origin. Frequently Huallinos recall being treated like “animals” by the security forces, watching their relatives and neighbors killed with stones, bullets, dragged around with

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68 In December 1982, President Fernando Belaúnde Terry declared a state of emergency in response to Sendero Luminoso’s increasingly bloody attacks.
ropes around their necks. The racist views held by young soldiers, mainly from the coast, catalyzed sexual violence against women, a common occurrence, particularly in Huallla. The soldiers’ physically damaging acts were mostly without consequences for the soldiers, veiled and coded within counterterrorist operations. The widows and women who survived these attacks, however, remained scarred, stigmatized, and sometimes left with fatherless children. Some women died from the injuries they received from sexual abuse. Some women “bartered sex” to save their loved ones, as soldiers themselves described in their conversations with anthropologist Kimberly Theidon.

“Militarkunam masta wañuchirqa qukninkunamantaqa.” “The soldiers killed, more than the senderistas.” Gumercinda Chavez Villagaray described the condition in which her husband returned from his detention at the Canaria base: “almost disabled.” He was beaten, she said, beyond recognition, his eyes looking like the devil’s, his wrists hanging and the whites of the bone showing. His ears looked green like tuna (prickly pear) leaves, and his entire body was black and blue.

Soldiers intercepted residents as they pursued pedestrian activities and relied on severe physical abuse to control the population. Like the senderistas, the soldiers – “los militares” would force Huallinos to gather in the plaza, dragging people from their houses – to be counted, identified, or detained based on a “black list” of names they had.

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69 EPAF, *De víctimas a ciudadanos*, 25-7.
72 CIMCDH, Interview 201513.
One day I went with my husband to change our electoral cards, when we arrived to the town the soldiers were punishing the people in the main plaza [of Cayara], the plaza was full. We came down the path and met the soldiers, they forced us into the plaza too, asking for our cards, they beat us all day and night, without eating, they beat me with the butts of their rifles until they broke a bone, they made me stop in front of various soldiers and they kept hitting me with their weapons. They said, “where is your husband, terruco?” I said that I didn’t know the terrucos, and they kicked me, punched me, more kicks, in whatever part of the body, without regard for my being a woman.\footnote{CIMCDH, Interview 201513. “Terruco/a” is a derogatory term for “terrorist” that specifically alludes to a person’s Indian origin.}

In August 1983, the soldiers killed 24 people in Hualla.\footnote{CIMCDH, Interview 201732.} The following month, Julia Salesiana Valenzuela, watched her husband Teofilo Alccaco Valenzuela be arrested from the plaza along with 23 others. As the soldiers drove away, out of town, Julia saw Teofilo raise his head inside the van; this was the last time she saw him.\footnote{Enforced disappearance (“desaparición”) was a routine military practice in Hualla.}

The armed forces imposed cruel and arbitrary authority, which damaged social relationships and intensified the instability brought by rebel violence. Sendero’s ruthless approach to building the Party’s ranks and fulfilling its destructive mission also broke apart families. There is some evidence that local senderistas killed their own relatives. On July 5, 1983, 70-year-old Filomena Saccatoma Maldonado was at home when Sendero broke in, hit her in the head, and took her away. One of the rebel perpetrators, who was named by Señora Saccatoma’s son in his testimony to the CVR shared the victim’s surname. The woman did not return to Hualla. In September, Raydi Luís Rivera, a seven-year-old boy, followed his father Luis Beltrán Rivera Valenzuela when the senderistas kidnapped him. The senderistas shot Raydi in the head. After he witnessed the killing of his son, Luis was forced to serve in rebel ranks. He escaped after three months and fled to the coast.\footnote{CIMCDH, Interview 204606.}
Sendero commander Flavio Pariona may have been involved in the killing of his parents, who were cattle traders, fairly successful business people in Hualla. Otilia, Flavio’s sister, claims that townspeople envied their family “because we had money.”\(^77\) Flavio’s position in Sendero changed all that: not only were his parents murdered by rebels in August 1984,\(^78\) but their house became a kind of dumping ground, a place where cadre left merchants’ and shopkeepers’ bodies after they killed them, abandoning their bodies to decompose and await discovery. Having wholly embraced Sendero’s class-centric ideas and the necessity of eliminating those who upheld and symbolized the status quo political and economic order, Flavio rejected his parents’ activities and aspirations. As an area commander, even if he had not participated in their killings, he would have known about and possibly ordered them.

When 20 hooded senderistas entered Ustaquio Pariona’s shop one evening, they demanded that he hand over the contents of the store. He insulted them in Quechua: “Work for something, thieves!” “Trabajen llapa suakuna.” The rebels tied his hands, and in the door of his house, they cut his neck. Before leaving, they left a sign: “Don’t bury this snitch.” That same night, according to Ustaquio’s daughter, 100 people died in Hualla.\(^79\)

Sendero targeted the most intimate places and activities of Huallinos, making their refusal to commit as costly as possible. By the middle of 1983, some residents began countering Sendero’s violence and agenda head-on, and the rondas campesinas – self-defense squads formed by neighborhood – were actively patrolling day and night. In Hualla, the men of the community explain that the military and police had a heavy hand in

\(^77\) CIMCDH, Interview 201749.
\(^78\) CIMCDH, Interview 200482.
\(^79\) CIMCDH, Interview 201749.
facilitating the formation of rondas and arming them. In other parts of Ayacucho and northern Peru, rondas formed independently of state involvement in their communities. In Hualla, it seems, the rondas shared information with security forces. In addition, the men of Hualla petitioned for the construction of a military base in the town as they turned increasingly against the rebels, and they participated in building the physical base at Chimpapampa, closer to Hualla than was the Canaria base. The militarization of the area added new dimensions to residents’ complicated situations, their actions and words being tracked by two opposing armed entities, who had eyes and ears everywhere. The intensifying resistance to Sendero led the rebels to become more vindictive, more brutal in their reprisals against those they suspected to be traitors and informants. On August 9, 1984, a date remembered by many Huallinos, Sendero killed 35 people. In the days before the attack, according to one testimony, the ronderos – the men carrying out civilian security patrols – captured a senderista, who later escaped. The incursion was presumably in retaliation for this capture. At 10 p.m., Juan de Díos Yupanqui Garcia, who was 69 years old, was celebrating a funeral ritual in a neighbor’s home, the tradition of luto muday. Once a year has passed after the death of a spouse, the living spouse changes mourning clothes

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80 Many scholars have focused on the formation and roles of the rondas campesinas throughout Peru. In many cases, their security functions became institutionalized, already existed in some areas, and have remained operational since the end of the internal armed conflict. See Orin Starn’s Nightwatch (1999), and Degregori, ed. Las rondas campesinas y la derrota del Sendero Luminoso (1996).
81 PCP-SL’s punishments for offenses routinely followed a “three-strikes-and you’re out” structure: after a first offense, such as missing a public assembly, an individual was warned, and if it happened again, they would be beaten in a public meeting. After a second serious offense, an individual might have his hair cut or suffer other physical punishments like whippings or beatings. If a third offense occurred – it would have to be very serious, like treachery or some other kind of betrayal of the Sendero cause – and warnings were issued to the individual, he or she would be publicly executed in a juicio popular – people’s trial. CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.2, 60-1.
82 CIMCDH, Interview 202780.
from black to another color, and may adorn the catafalque on which the deceased rests with personal belongings.

At the same time, 70 senderistas were entering Hualla and raising their flags in the plaza, shouting vivas. They began searching house-by-house for particular individuals, walking around with a black list in their hands, armed and aggressive. Their task was to capture the authorities and those who had collaborated with the armed forces. At 11 p.m., six senderistas entered Alejandro Huaman’s home, where they were holding the funeral rites, and asked whether there were any authorities in the house. The rebels encountered Don Juan de Díos, who reacted angrily to their disturbing the ceremony. Drunk and sad, he threw a stone at the senderistas, who took him outside and shot him; the bullet pierced the side of his body, and he died instantly. No one witnessed Don Juan de Díos’ death, his son-in-law mentioned in his oral testimony. During the night, in the span of a few hours, the senderistas killed as many as 30 people, including children.83

That night the rebels killed Pariona’s father Ustaquio. A week after his murder, the senderistas returned to kill Pariona’s mother Felcitias. She had returned from the city of Huamanga after her daughter told her of her husband’s death. Felicitas came back to Hualla and cursed all her paisanos, saying they had all killed her husband. When the rebels came for her, Felicitas gave them all the money she had and hid in a well. She and Otilia, her daughter, slept in their neighbors’ house for a while. On August 20, the senderistas found

83 CIMCDH, Interview 200131; 201649; 202780. The number of people killed on August 9, 1984 is an estimate; others who mention the massacre by Sendero say that as many as 35 people died.
her, took her back to her own house, and pounded her with stones. Otilia said her mother’s remains were buried there in the house.84

The violence of the war in Hualla shows the intensity of the “two fires” which caught community members: the surveillance conditions and unchecked brutality facilitated by both rebels’ and soldiers’ operations generated an existence for Huallinos characterized by deep fear, incentivizing escape and resistance to engagement with violent actors.

The counterinsurgent state in Hualla: torture and disappearances by the military

Many of the wartime narratives of victimization that emerge in the course of Huallinos’ testimonies conclude with the revelation that the victim, or her family, was not able to report the incident to the authorities or police. This happened for a number of reasons: the authority or local government official to whom incidents of disappearance, violent attacks, robbery, and other crimes were routinely reported had likely been removed from his post, leaving residents without recourse. People did not know to whom to report crimes or deaths, or request intervention for assistance. In addition, the senderistas had burned the actos comunales – the registry of births, marriages, deaths, and other events in Hualla that were maintained in the municipality. Conversely, Huallinos may have been intimidated and afraid of reprisals if they told anyone or made a formal complaint about an incident – their child going missing or their house being burglarized and animals stolen. Their admissions of helplessness are evident in almost every testimony: they knew that there could be reprisals from either Sendero or the military if they sought state redress. The

84 CIMCDH, Interview 201749.
basic absence of state function made the lives of Huallinos more tenuous, and they were forced to bear independently and privately the effects of violent actors’ campaigns on their bodies and houses.

While sexual abuse, burglary, and assassinations were common, Hualla faced another kind of violation: forced disappearance. The act of “disappearing” a person – a familiar concept in Latin American societies during periods of state repression or civil war – is a crime committed by agents of the state or by groups that act under state authorization.85 Following a disappearance – through an act of arrest, kidnapping, or abduction – state agents refuse to acknowledge “the deprivation of liberty” or conceal the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person. Acts of enforced disappearance constitute a violation of a combination of fundamental human rights.86

At the height of tensions and violent reprisals in mid-1983, 25 soldiers arrived in a truck on May 15. They arrested 15 people, a group which included teachers from the JCM School, the mayor, two pregnant women, students, and an 80-year-old man named Boris. The soldiers arrested each of them one by one, as a hooded informant – who was probably a Huallino – pointed to people, implicating them in involvement with Sendero. The fifteen were not seen again.87

A month later, on June 29, at the town’s celebration of its patrons Saints Peter and Paul, the police came in a transport van and detained 50 men in the plaza, as Julia Salesiana

85 This definition is gleaned from the United Nations International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Available here: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx
86 In the text of the UN Convention, it is noted that when enforced disappearance is a widespread or systematic practice, it constitutes a “crime against humanity.” International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Part I, Article 5.
87 CIMCDH, Interviews 100021; 200107.
recalls, who was 8 months pregnant at the time.\textsuperscript{88} Julia’s husband was arrested and presumably taken to the base at Canaria. When he was detained, her husband was wearing sports clothes – blue tracksuit pants, a blue sweater, and a new, white Seiko watch.\textsuperscript{89} He was not seen again.

Primitivo Allccaco Chocña, 36, was a carpenter and neighborhood foreman (\textit{capataz}), a post that put him in charge of distributing state-funded supplies to residents. One day in early July, at 5:30 a.m., Primitivo went out to repair a neighbor’s door, which had been broken down by the soldiers. When the police came, they took Primitivo to an abandoned house in the plaza. He was later killed by the special police.\textsuperscript{90}

Following the arrest and disappearance of their loved ones, women were abandoned to wonder about their husbands’ and sons’ whereabouts. They often went to great lengths, bartering cattle and meals to win their release from the prisons at the military bases. These searches sometimes continued for years, while soldiers and police dissembled, and rumors circulated about bodies being left in different corners of the base, thrown into a mass grave in the fields by a spring, or of a fellow detainee, upon his release, renewing hope that a \textit{desaparecido} – a disappeared person – is alive.

As early as July 1981, Julian Edgar Chocña Maldonado, who was the governor of Hualla, remembers the disappearance of his brother Vicente.\textsuperscript{91} Along with five other young

\textsuperscript{88} CIMCDH, Interview 200046.
\textsuperscript{89} Details like precise style and color of clothing may be helpful to forensic investigators and analysts if they locate a grave or burial site which contains the bodies of disappeared persons. Those who testified to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission often provided such details by drawing and listing the items of clothing worn by relatives when they were detained.
\textsuperscript{90} CIMCDH, Interview 100050.
\textsuperscript{91} This early disappearance, if Don Julian remembered the date correctly, puts the military in Hualla much earlier than they were dispatched as part of the state of emergency in Ayacucho. It may be that it happened much later, as the testimony of Vicente’s daughter and mother suggests. Their accounts of the disappearance of Vicente Chocña Maldonado differ in several ways. See CIMCDH, Interviews 100592; 100343.
people, Vicente was thrown into a truck at 9:30 one morning. His wife and relatives went to the Hualla military base to ask about him, but they always told them the same thing: “he’s not here.” She offered to give them a cow or a bull, but the soldiers rejected the offers. His wife was 7 months pregnant, but she made the 4-hour walk to Canaria every day. Finally, she could not make the journey any more, and she gave birth to the baby. Shortly after that, she resumed going each day to the prison. The soldiers told her that her husband had died, and she should go back home and take care of her children. If she came back to the base, they threatened her, they would not be responsible for her death.

After some time, one of the five arrested with Vicente returned to Hualla, carrying Vicente’s jacket. He told them that one day, the soldiers grabbed Vicente, and then they heard a shot. His body, the young man thought, could be found behind a retama plant near the cemetery in Canaria.92

The annex of Tiquihua witnessed a multitude of disappearances during 1983 and 1984. On August 20, 1983, Tiburcio Rojas Comba was arrested by soldiers and taken to the base at Canaria, where he was tortured. His wife narrates a poignant story, painful and long, of her journeys to the base to find him and inquire about his situation. While she was at the base, she survived a soldier’s attempt to rape her, while she was holding her baby in her arms. The baby started to cry, which alerted a superior, who came in to the room and interrupted the attack, comforted her, and punished the soldier. Eventually, she met her husband on the road, she kept hearing his distant voice. He was beaten badly by the

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92 The retama plant, with its yellow, cup-shaped flowers that grow on long, straight green stems, is often associated symbolically with the revolution of the people in the pueblos of Ayacucho in the late 1960s. A song called “The flower of the retama,” was written in 1970 following the mobilization in Huanta for universal access to education, and its mythos – of the sacrifice of peasants and students facing an unjust state prevails: “The blood of the people has a rich perfume.”
soldiers; they released him. Less than a year later, the senderistas picked up Tiburcio while he was carrying out a communal project. The rebels beat him until they thought he was dead, and left him there. He survived, traveled to a coastal city for medical treatment, and died in 1990.93

Sometimes, men who had been arrested – as well as women who sought answers at the base – were retained there to cook meals, clean the soldiers’ clothing, and perform other tasks. Benedicto Uscata Crisanti, 58, was arrested in Hualla in December 1984. He remembered the senderistas holding meetings in 1980 where “they explained poverty and how to finish off the millionaires.”94 Uscata told the CVR that his brother-in-law was the local Sendero commander. “They snatched the children, so I had to pay potatoes and corn so that they wouldn’t take my son.” When he was detained by the soldiers from the base at Chimpapampa, he and ten others spent a week there, without eating or drinking water, and without sitting down. One day, the soldiers took him from the cell, tied his hands, and hung him from the roof of the house. He was questioned continually. They made him wash their clothes, prepare their food, and take their stolen cows out to graze. He remembers seeing many detainees in the base, including his niece Felicitas. The soldiers raped her. Only four of the eleven detainees came out of the base. Uscata did not make a denuncia because he was afraid of the soldiers. He has scars on his head and neck, and he cannot lift anything heavy. He has headaches day and night, and pain around his waist.95

On June 29, 1984, Manuel Chipana Inca traveled several hours into town with his five-year-old son to say goodbye to his mother and bring her some meat. Things had

93 CIMCDH, Interview 202788.
94 CIMCDH, Interview 201723.
95 CIMCDH, Interview 201723.
become too dangerous with the incursions of the terrorists and the armed forces, even in their home in the distant heights of Hualla. There, in Huaccramacra, the family had 300 sheep and 16 cows and only went into town twice a year. Teodora Berrocal Oscata, Manuel’s wife, thought it was strange when they did not return that night, but she remembered the festival was going on. The next day, at 5:00 a.m., her son returned home after walking all night in the rain and told her: “mommy, my dad is not here anymore.”

Teodora left everything behind, as if in a dream, she recalled, and went to Hualla, where the authorities told her that the 30 men who had been detained were taken to the Canaria base. The sinchis had come and surrounded the town, gathered up the men “like a herd of hogs,” and brought them to the door of the church, putting them one on top of the other. Many of them had been drinking indulgently at the festival, and they were almost all sick. Teodora went to the mine in Canaria, searched in the hills and all around the town for her husband. She began chewing coca leaves and drinking chichi – she could not think about living or dying. When she was inebriated, a man took advantage of her, and she became pregnant. She went to Ica, on the coast, where her son was born. Of the thirty men arrested on June 29, none was found. 30 widows and many orphans remained in Hualla.⁹⁶

The majority of those who were detained in the 1980s in Hualla remain disappeared. The list of more than 15,000 missing and disappeared persons in Peru is incomplete, and in the more than twenty years since the end of the conflict, Peru’s government has not initiated a state policy of search for the victims. The legal and judicial processes of searching, filing complaints and narrating events, and forming associations of relatives of victims has constituted a strand of participatory politics for some in Hualla and other parts.

⁹⁶ CIMCDH, Interview 100563.
of Ayacucho. But survivors in Hualla have abandoned some hope – particularly that the government will assist in providing reparations or aid to the town. As a strategy, the process of remembering publicly their suffering and creating a movement to locate the “disappeared” has not produced results. As Maria Maldonado said of her father Amador’s disappearance: “We haven’t seen even one little piece of his bones.”

“They always take the best sheep!”: economic dimensions of rebel-dominated life

Daily living in the era of Sendero control brought many basic changes to Huallinos’ economic and social practices. The forms of agricultural production that Sendero encouraged were collective and oriented to subsistence. At the time of the 1982 harvest, residents began to resist the rebels’ expectations when they found out that collectively produced crops were to be handed over to the Party. In line with its objective of closing off agricultural supply lines to the cities, essentially starving urban areas, Sendero closed off peasant markets and fairs and regulated commerce across district and regional lines. They maintained strict control over entry into and exit from the community, including residents’ travels to and from their farm lands, which were at a considerable distance – a couple hours’ walk – from their homes in town.

“We cried when they took our sheep,” Francisca Allccaco, a cattle farmer, said in Quechua, speaking of a time when Sendero threatened Huallinos and imposed on their livelihoods. Grimaldo Inca emphasized that raising animals is a “permanent” task. “We

97 EPAF, De víctimas a ciudadanos, 31-33.
98 CIMCDH, Interview 200107.
cannot leave even for a day.” The rebels’ project starkly confronted peasants’ own practices of production, care for children and family, and networks of interaction and exchange, with antagonism. Senderistas’ demands on community members to be present at meetings, leave their lands and animals, and cease their market activity stood in sharp contrast to the needs of their families and traditional practices in the region.

“When the terrorists came to Hualla, we had to cook for them, we had to do it out of fear, we killed our baby goats to give them food to eat.” “If you told the police what Sendero did, they came and killed you.”

One of the most important actions that rebels undertook was the sacking and confiscation of goods and cattle from powerful families and individuals who owned the most animals. Accused of making money at the expense of the poor, these people were “expropriated” by Sendero and their animals – sometimes thousands of sheep and hundreds of camelids – were divided among the peasants who worked small communal lands. The senderistas did the same with local shops and businesses, including the vans that arrived to Sacsamarca with products from the coast, which had to pay a fee before entering the town and were later subject to sacking and redistribution by rebels. In the early months of the rebels’ presence in Hualla, these actions engendered support from residents, by demonstrating their commitment to equalizing social and economic standing according to principles.

100 “Documental Hualla.”
101 CIMCDH, Interview 1000547.
102 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.3, 63.
“The senderistas arrived to the campesinos’ houses, ate what they wanted, and killed the *carneros* [ram, sheep, llama, alpacas]. They said that they were fighting for our good…that there would not be rich people or poor people and that we would be equal.”

One day in September 1984, Claudia Ipurri Ucharima realized her grandparents’ sheep were missing from the corral at their house. She and her husband began searching for them early in the morning. When they stopped at a spring to get water, they found Claudia’s grandparents and uncle dead. Claudia said the only reason that her grandparents were killed is that “they complained to the terrorists” that they took the animals that had been raised “with so much care and sacrifice.”

“They always take the best sheep,” Ismael Ipurri and Sebastiana Garcia had said. The complaint was sufficient grounds for punishment. After killing Ismael and Sebastiana and their son Sabino, the rebels took their sheep.

The family buried the bodies at a place called Gentilchayocc.

The rebels were not alone in demanding animals that would be used for sustenance. Huallinos offered cattle to the soldiers at the base in exchange for freeing their husbands and sons; at other times, the soldiers took the animals they wanted from households and farms throughout the area. The looting and break-ins that Hualla residents describe are frequently attributed to the soldiers who raided homes on their patrols and searches for suspects, stealing basic household supplies, including food and cash.

103 CIMCDH, Interview 201740.
104 CIMCDH, Interview 100591.
105 CIMCDH, Interview 201740.
When the PCP-SL took control in an area, its first action was to confiscate arms and explosives. Since Víctor Fajardo province was a cattle-raising zone, the owners of cattle had arms in their homes to protect their animals from foxes, pumas, and thieves. Through its previous networking efforts and early recruitment of supporters, the senderistas gained information about who was who and who owned what in the town. They gradually instilled a vertical hierarchy in everyday life, including in family life and kinship. Young people who committed to the Sendero cause abandoned their families and plans for their lives.

Del Pino argues based on field study in several communities of northern Ayacucho that human needs undermined Sendero’s constructed order. At first, particularly in the southern provinces that were the rebels’ first targets, the population’s unmet economic needs permitted the political work of constructing ties in these communities. People who sympathized with the senderistas were attracted to its constructive responses to the population’s problems in ways that the state and capitalism had not achieved. But as rebels removed authorities and formed popular committees, peasants began to see that classist and revolutionary values prevailed over family ties, the demands of feeding and educating sons and daughters, and a culture of communal labor and value. Eventually, the militant recruits and the peasant masses who initially carried out violence on behalf of the PCP-SL resisted the mechanisms of social and productive control.

Another cleavage that Sendero’s ideas and actions provoked was generational. While Sendero elevated young, inexperienced local community members to positions of authority in the support bases, many adult residents, particularly those of advanced age, did

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106 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.2, 60.
not respect the young people’s judgment. Within families, there was a clash of younger people recruited to the rebels who were willing to defy their parents’ wishes and traditions, and the parents themselves, who remained at home with only the smallest children. The others lived with the Party. The older generation did not support Sendero, activist Percy Otero said, and its values were disregarded by militants and young recruits. For him, the deconstruction of the family as social institution was central to Sendero’s incongruity in the liberated zones. “The only command of Abimael Guzmán was a lack of respect for the family.”

“They were not fighting for us,” Otero said. “No estaban luchando por nosotros.”

The contradictions between the ideology and practice of the PCP-SL were an important factor in the population’s growing rejection of the Party in Hualla and surrounding districts. The obligation to attend meetings before going to the chacra – farm land – to take care of one’s animals became a serious problem. Eventually, peasants’ frustrations with their restricted movements and distorted economic processes catalyzed unrest and despair. Caring for their animals constituted their livelihoods, but the rebels prevented them from accessing these activities. The discourse of equality and justice that Sendero proclaimed was not evident in its actions, and as community members perceived it, the Party’s impositions were endangering their families and their ways of life. By late 1982 and early 1983, the frustrations and fears of Huallinos and residents of other Fajardo districts were growing. Sendero overruled the “basic and felt needs” of the population.

108 Author interview with Percy Otero*, 24 Jun. 2013. Otero is an activist from Huancasancos and an official of a national coordinating organization of groups affected by political violence.
109 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo V, Cap. 2.2, 65.
110 del Pino, “Family, Culture, and Revolution,” 159.
The participation of peasants was important throughout the first years of the war, as the revolution took shape and Sendero’s violent attacks gained a sustainable momentum. Defense of their communities and social fabric ultimately generated a different form of mobilization for resistance to rebels.

To the hills: fleeing as escape and obscurity

Before resistance to Sendero became explicit, Huallinos made attempts to flee, both within their town and its surroundings – and away from it. Their homes, fields, and schools were no longer safe. Residents made decisions to leave their hometown because they had few options; they were running from the persecution of the soldiers and the senderistas. Individual accounts of fleeing betray no concrete information about one’s involvement with rebels, but rather the urgency of being pursued, threatened, and in despair. For many, the precipitous uncertainties of having no livelihood or shelter in Lima or Ica – the two primary coastal destinations of displaced Huallinos – failed to outweigh a fearful and violent existence at home. Some recall a time during the mid-1980s when only elderly members and a few young children remained, and Hualla was an abandoned ghost town.

Not all residents departed Hualla, but rather found a way to take refuge close to home, outside of town, in the hills and caves that fanned out for miles around the pueblo. This was a form of flight from both rebels and soldiers, and it allowed community members to flee without fleeing – to resist as quietly as possible. Hiding could be a temporary or longer-term solution. This meant that some mothers took their children to live in caves for months

111 Many testimonies include the urgency of feelings of entrapment, deep fear, and personal targeting by both military and rebel forces.
at a time, living on foraged food and in little contact with other people. Some dug holes in their land and remained there for days. Children’s nutrition suffered, and relatives were separated and isolated. As local self-defense forces began to form, people started to come out of hiding in their farms and the hills.  

When the soldiers came, Julia Avalos said, villagers tried to outsmart and outrun the military: “like cats,” they went up, down, escaping, trying to hide.” When the soldiers would come into the houses, we were afraid, so we escaped, and we didn’t return to our houses. We had to protect ourselves, like the animals protect themselves from the fox.” Others drew not only on the movements but the stripping away of their human qualities to analogize their own actions in response to the anticipation of violence by armed actors. Huallinos felt as though they were treated like animals. Soldiers and senderistas acted on interpretations of peasants as inferior, malleable, and homogeneous, destroying and looting their property, and at the height of the violence in 1983 and 1984, capturing or killing those they perceived to be traitorous without asking questions. The perception of being treated as less than human was not limited to being alive, but also pertained to the way that people were dying. At the end of her testimony, one woman from Tiquihua said she hopes the violence will not return: “We don’t want to die that way, like animals.”

As late as 1985, when many said that the rebels left the area, Huallinos felt so insecure that they continued migrating to Lima and to their *hatus* – land possessions at higher altitudes outside of town. But Sendero and the Army followed them to the hatus, looted

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112 CIMCDH, Interview 100591.  
113 CIMCDH, Interview 100343.  
114 EPAF, *De víctimas a ciudadanos*, 29. Interview with Constantina, campesina, 50 years old, Hualla.  
115 CIMCDH, Interview 204100. The interviewee witnessed the brutal killings of her parents-in-law in August 1984 in Tiquihua.
their goods and animals, and killed those they suspected of colluding with the enemy. On February 28, 1985, relatives of Benita Paredes Llacsa told her that the military had gone out on patrol near her fields at Huacra Marca while she was gone in the afternoon. She returned to find her three daughters Maura (14 years old), Claudia (7), and Yovana (2) dead, two shot in the head, and one’s head destroyed with a rock. The soldiers then, allegedly, urged the family’s sheep along to the military base. They also killed Benita’s husband Moisés Gutierrez Garcia, whom she found the next day.116

The decision to migrate involved intrinsic risk, and the rebels prized information about civilians’ whereabouts and destinations. In 1984, Julia Ancasi Tinco said her mother received warnings that the senderistas were going to kill her and her family, so they left for Ica, leaving everything behind. “We walked a day and a night.”117 “The terrorists found out that you were escaping from town, they stopped the car, took you out to kill you. The locals themselves were the ones that gave information to the subversives.” Juan de Dios Valenzuela Inca, twenty years old in 1984, decided to flee to Pisco: the senderistas’ threats were intensifying. He repeatedly refused to join the organization. When Juan made plans to leave, his friends told the senderistas that he was fleeing to escape recruitment. Two rebel leaders, including Priscilio Tacsi, intercepted Juan on his way out of Hualla. His two sisters, who had accompanied him, witnessed the kidnapping. The senderistas threatened to kill them if they followed. Tacsi and the other senderista beat Juan up and drove him to a remote pass, where they killed him and threw his body into a spring. His sisters did not find Juan’s body.118

116 CIMCDH, Interview 202785.
117 CIMCDH, Interview 1000547.
118 CIMCDH, Interview 202782.
Florian Tinipuccla Cuya decided to leave Tiquihua after his neighbor was captured and killed by Sendero. Florian said he departed out of fear and “because he did not want to get into those politics.”

The idea of fleeing politics – staying away from a new form of power-holding – aligns with Huallinos’ expressed conception of “politics.” They view politics as a system of corrupt exchanges among the powerful, whose actions do not benefit the community, and in fact, deprive them of deserved basic rights and assistance. Despite that many may have accepted Sendero’s promise in the early 1980s to end an inequitable system by destroying it, some Huallinos came to see their methods as unacceptable. The process of revolution corroded their values, means of production, and ways of life. In an absence of governance – with authorities assassinated or otherwise removed from office – Huallinos were forced to decide whether to continue accepting or tolerating rebel rule. The violent contestation “between two fires” in which civilians actively participated created what appeared to be – and what some Huallinos years later depicted as – binary conditions. But after years of war, some decided to reject “getting into” the destructive reality that was unfolding. The decision to flee was one of survival; it was also political.

Many returned to Hualla after several years, and some made their homes in Lima permanent. Fleeing during the violence transformed relations over time between Hualla and the coast, expanding kinship and economic networks and spreading cultural traditions like pumpín to Lima. These connections have been maintained through the many returns that migrants make to their hometown. People’s decisions to escape continue to have political effects, as those who remained in Hualla have a changing relationship with the state.

119 CIMCDH, Interview 101634.
through the search for the disappeared, and migrants play a different role in this struggle as residents of the country’s capital and participants in distinct realms of the economy.

While some members of communities affected by wartime violence “voted with their feet,” by migrating they actually gave up their right to participate institutionally. Peruvian citizens can cast a ballot legally only in their hometowns; even though voting is mandated by law, one’s vote is valid only in his registered hometown. If and until they returned after the war, migrants were not able to exercise their right to participate in elections, though this was likely far from their minds. Electoral results from the 1980 presidential elections show that turnout in Hualla was extremely low in general; it was the first election in which illiterate Peruvians were permitted to vote. This meant that there were many new voters in Hualla, a place where campaigns and parties failed to seize residents’ political imaginations. If, as interviews suggested, Huallinos viewed politics as a series of power plays by the corrupt, albeit with important distributive consequences, migrants and even residents may have preferred the political agency they found in fleeing to that of institutional participation in a system that brought about few concrete changes. During the war, authorities and parties were not responsive to the most pressing problem in Hualla: restoring security.

The ambiguity of participation in politics and violence

In addition to internal and external flight, among the strategies that Huallinos adopted during the war was perpetuating ambiguity about their own participation in rebel violence. As they described their experiences twenty years later to the CVR, residents had
an incentive to reinterpret their own participation – a means of being able to live again with perpetrators and victims, and of preventing conflict, mistrust, and the possibility of a return to violence. This emerged as vague responses, evasion, and omission – not only in testimonies but also my interviews. Those who testify leave these motives unsaid, and there are many – perhaps the majority of those affected by violence – who did not testify to the CVR. We cannot access, based on narrative accounts, the “truth” of what occurred. We cannot present it as evidence with a monopoly on accuracy or legitimacy. As Nordstrom and Robben point out, “any rendition of the contradictory realities of violence imposes order and reason on what has been experienced as chaotic.”

Drawing on Huallinos’ oral testimonies means accepting that they are incomplete accounts of reality and belong to a particular context in which participants remembered, forgot, and belonged to a social system of networks, structures, and constraints.

In conversation and interviews, Huallinos spoke of the violence in “before” and “after” terms, preferring to be vague. They were frequently willing to narrate particular events as they happened to them or their families, incidents that were well-known by others in the community. Clearly, it is difficult and saddening to repeat stories and revisit moments of intense suffering. Because the despair of being caught “between two armies” pervades the content of Huallinos’ testimonies about their wartime experiences, it is difficult to comprehend exactly what they thought at the time about the senderista project and what it meant to belong to it. This discursive practice, purposefully emphasizing their helpless and passive positions in the war’s crossfire, reflected in their subsequent accounts of violence and security, obscures their participation. Their expressed remembrances may

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be influenced by a collective account dictated before the CVR mobile teams arrived in Hualla in 2001, or they may have interpreted their own painful memories of death, torture, and loss in revised terms in order to live and work in the same streets and shops with those who perpetrated violent acts and to whom they may have done wrong.\(^{121}\)

What evidence can we glean from residents’ purposeful obscuration and ambiguity? The emotions embedded in a testimony or interview exchange can speak to a researcher, perhaps because they respond to sensitive issues like guilt and shame. Having gained a comprehension of patterns of violence, history, language, and place, a researcher can sense an embellishment or lie and place it in context. Huallinos’ discursive strategies, like fostering silences and evasions within their testimonies “indicate how the current social and political landscape is shaping what people might say to a researcher.”\(^{122}\) Individual circumstances – like the desire to avoid a shameful stigma, which can bring physical abuse from a spouse or lasting negative repercussions for one’s children, can also help explain people’s motives for changing their memories.

Huallinos do not discuss how many people on their blocks were senderistas, or how many people in their family joined the rebels, but they do paint pictures of targeting and efforts to escape. In Ayacucho, women had a strong voice in retelling the stories of war:

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\(^{121}\) Theidon, *Intimate Enemies*. In every community, there were assemblies held before the CVR mobile teams arrived to take testimonies. At these meetings, the “communal narrative” was decided, primarily by men, and all members were urged to repeat their stories consistently with the narrative. Theidon cites the CVR transcripts of a focus group later conducted in an Ayacucho town comparable to Hualla in which women are systematically prevented from speaking. Their “agreed-upon,” communal narrative stressed the killings that soldiers committed, as opposed to those committed by Sendero – the fear being that the latter would suggest the strength of Sendero’s influence and people’s support for rebels. Men anticipated that women’s participation in the conversation and telling their experiences would jeopardize the consistency of the narrative. See Ch. 5, “Speaking of Silences.”

\(^{122}\) Fujii, “Shades of truth and lies.”
they provided 64 percent of the testimonies to the CVR. Cultural and social norms make women in Hualla willing to tell about their own victimization – particularly their experiences of sexual abuse – only when their husbands are not present. These strategies also reflect the social and political terrain on which oral testimonies were given – and the frameworks within which people anticipate they will be understood and received. Occurring about ten years after the war’s end, the CVR interview process constituted a long-anticipated step for Huallinos and other Peruvians who had suffered and lost so much. The approach of the state – which, despite appearing as the faces of the anthropologists, historians, and sociologists who conducted the interviews – that emerged through the CVR effort was the culmination of many years of waiting and wondering: “What are they going to do? How will the government make up for what happened? What are they going to do for us here?” Huallinos held these questions and expectations as they experienced real pain and loss and retold terrible stories. In exchange for suffering violence and disappearances a second, third, tenth time by relating them in oral testimonies, survivors would receive assistance. State-meted justice must involve a simple exchange such as this, they thought: if we tell what we know, they will understand what we went through and provide help, at least to rebuild after the destruction that the war brought. This economical understanding of memory’s uses reflects Huallinos’ (and Ayacuchanos’) ideas about politics, but this calculation is not specific to Peru’s truth and reconciliation efforts.

Theidon points out that the “moral economy of speech and silence,” evident especially among women who survived the violence, affected everyone for two reasons: In

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123 CVR, Informe Final, Tomo VIII, Cap. 2.1, 89.
124 Theidon, Intimate Enemies, 125-126.
Ayacucho, a Quechua-speaking cultural environment, indirectness is prized. Second, the “golden rule” of Sendero was silence. The emergence of silences may also reflect purposeful efforts to engender forgetfulness. Numerous testimonies conclude with the speaker revealing, as if to illustrate how powerful a person’s grief was, that the victim became an alcoholic, a wanderer, someone who cannot cope with the suffering he or she has lived and witnessed. This result is presented as both a logical outcome of the events told up to that moment, for instance, the gruesome killings of an elderly couple in August 1984. In this case, five of the seven children who witnessed their parents’ killings now have “mala borrachera” – bad drunkenness. In their narratives, residents convey that alcoholism, which begets in a person a kind of empty social presence, also explains why Hualla is a broken-down place, depressed, immobile.

Residents may perpetuate strategic silences through purposeful ambiguity. In Hualla, this emerges in retellings of how particular individuals responded to Sendero rebels’ instructions. As early as May 1982, Eusebia Contreras Uscata said the senderistas were threatening her, saying she was not committed enough to the struggle. “There you are! They’ve taken your husband, now you walk with us – don’t think you can support us only when you feel like it!” Contreras’ husband, Alejandro Saccatoma Allccaco, had been picked up by the Army, and she later decided to leave Hualla, at great risk to her children and herself. Throughout her testimony, Contreras, who was about 21 years old when Sendero arrived, includes details, perhaps exaggerations, of several incidents and her emotions as they occurred. Her own participation and the involvement of her husband –

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125 Theidon, Intimate Enemies, 116.
126 CIMCDH, Interview 204100.
127 CIMCDH, Interview 204091.
who is implicated as a senderista leader in other Huallinos’ testimonies – emerge as contested, misunderstood, compelled, and not clearly revealed. Her inclusion of the fact that an “anonymous letter” appeared on the door of the mayor Juan Inca, “which people said was so that he resign from his office” constituted one instance of citing rumors and externalization of information about rebel operations.

At harvest time, having returned to Hualla after hiding in the hills – “Cerro Tempo Ccollpa Huayco” – for six months because she was afraid, Eusebia Contreras Uscata said she heard a cry that she did not understand. “Los chanchos comen la maíz!”

“The hogs are eating the corn!” As Señora Eusebia tells it, the phrase “was a code of the compañeros [senderistas] to warn people that the soldiers were coming.” Other Huallinos recall it differently. Isaac Ipurri Garcia said townspeople formed a security patrol to watch for the approach of either the soldiers or the senderistas. In fact, the code may have been a technique encouraged and instituted by the rebels in Hualla. Eusebia continued, “Everybody started running, and the neighbors told my husband, Run! We have to escape, the troops are coming, they are going to kill us. So we escaped, and once we got to the hiding place, we felt as though the bullets were passing alongside of us.”

Eusebia said her husband was an ex-soldier, and that he went to a meeting called by Sendero out of fear, after the visit of a “masked man” to their home, who threatened her husband that he was on the rebels’ “black list.” So as not to “generate disgust” at the time, he told Eusebia that he would go to the meeting, even though he knew it was better that they “go somewhere else.” Another time, she said, he hid in the hills instead of

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128 CIMCDH, Interview 100553.
129 CIMCDH, Interview 204091.
attending a meeting. The strategy of suggesting ambivalence in daily actions and in being “bothered” and “pursued” by both military and rebels illustrates Eusebia’s desire to erase her participation or sympathy with Sendero from the record. Instead, she describes her and her husband’s choices as difficult and fraught with long hours of deciding “what would be best to do.” Unprompted, she includes details about how she and her family responded to the senderistas, questions that few other Huallinos address at all in their testimonies. When she recounts her difficult escape, at great cost, with her children, Eusebia states she was afraid that there were “compañeros” in their new town, Lurín. When she returned two years later to Hualla, the senderistas had “given her house to someone else.”

On the morning of May 15, 1983, 25 soldiers came to the plaza in Hualla and detained eighteen people. The soldiers surrounded the plaza and began firing into the air. They demanded that men form a line on one side, and women on the other. From there, they chose those who would be loaded, hooded, hands tied, and thrown into two small armored cars. The detainees comprised a motley crew: a mayor, various teachers including “Boris,” an 80-year-old man, and two young pregnant women. One hooded person, “probably from the pueblo,” was there, pointing people out to the soldiers. Among those arrested and transported to the base at Canarias was a 34-year-old teacher in the JCM School, Filomeno Cruzat Caroy. Like the others taken that day, Cruzat was disappeared and not heard from again. For reasons that are not completely clear – except that he had a vociferous brother who resided in Lima – the case of Cruzat’s disappearance gained traction in the national media. The publicity was unusual at this moment in the war, when

130 CIMCDH, Interview 204091.
131 CIMCDH, Interview 100021; 200107.
disappearance itself was a relatively unknown occurrence and even less widely reported and understood. The average Peruvian did not know Hualla existed or where it was located.

Cruzat, who was educated in a Lima university in biology and chemistry, returned to his hometown, Hualla, to teach in the mid-1970s. He may have come under suspicion as a teacher and member of SUTEP, the massive national teachers’ union. His brother Fermín Cruzat, in an interview with the national El Diario in November 1983, said: “I would not be able to say with certainty whether my brother was a senderista or not. What I can say is that he has been working for seven or eight years in the district of Hualla, which is our hometown.” Fermín described his brother’s efforts to procure donated textbooks for children in Hualla and states that he did not believe that Filomeno had anything to do with terrorism. The case was not resolved, and despite persistent attempts by Fermín and Cruzat’s wife Georgina Quispe to find him in a military base or a prison, they never did.

In the wake of an unforeseen military incursion, Huallinos may have been confused about the identity of the teachers and whether they were, in fact, rebels. Others may have had their suspicions confirmed. The act of disappearance involves the presumption of guilt by some, but the “black list” that the soldiers acted on consistently failed to reflect accurate information. Cruzat’s disappearance illustrates the ambiguity that a unionized teacher in the remote highlands embodied – and the willingness of the state to rely on his affiliation with SUTEP and an informant’s word. At the national level, the refusal of some Left parties to condemn Sendero for its violent actions – to continue claiming broad association with

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132 CIMCDH, Interview 100021. Among the documents included in this testimony, given by Mauro Tucta Crisante, is a mimeographed copy of Fermín Cruzat’s interview with El Diario, 11 Nov. 1983.
“revolutionary struggle” – led, indirectly, to the perpetuation of this ambiguity in an abstract sense, and on a local level, in a very specific way.

In contrast to the ambiguity of Huallinos’ involvement as sympathetic, supportive, or actively involved with Sendero, the role of a senderista recruit, as imagined by Guzmán and expressed in ideological terms, was clear and unambiguous. As a rebel militant, one’s identity was all-encompassing: one left behind her family, home, school, and even her name, joining a movement that sought to erase the meaning behind those ties and places. Each militant was assigned a pseudonym, a new name to follow “Comrade.” In a memoir of his experiences as a teenage senderista, Lurgio Gavilán described the new “family” of the Party that one encountered and was forced to accept.\textsuperscript{133}\footnote{Lurgio Gavilán Sanchez, \textit{Memorias de un soldado desconocido: Autobiografía y antropología de la violencia}. (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2012).} However, close ties to rural towns in Ayacucho were, in a sense, the rebels’ reason to incorporate and rely on young recruits for intelligence and local knowledge. While often cadres’ ties to their home communities were exploited in order to develop supportive relations with civilians, cadres were asked to abandon the values and emotions associated with belonging to them. When most senderistas came back to the places where they were born, it was to demand food and supplies, to punish or kill, and to select more recruits. As the case of Hualla Sendero leader Claudio Pariona showed, some insurgents participated in efforts to kill their own parents as class enemies.

Another element of the totalizing conception of membership held by Sendero – including a pledge to kill and be killed – was embodied in “the quota.” Sendero militants had to be convinced of: first, the need to kill in a systematic and dehumanized way; and
second, of the quota, the willingness and expectation of giving their own lives. Guzmán claimed Marx, Lenin, and Mao as the ideological fathers of the quota – “what it means to annihilate in order to preserve.” This perverse logic fueled Sendero’s devotion to creating and training small units of militants capable of ruthless violence.

Conclusion

Civilians’ strategies of simultaneously engaging and escaping participation with rebels amounted to a kind of “hidden transcript” of resistance. Instead of a dichotomy between public adherence to political power held by authorities and private subjugation of that power, I observed a distinct subversion – a set of everyday practices through which Huallinos fled, hid, and retreated to ritual and tradition as a means of coping with insecurity. Many residents backed Sendero in some way, and the rebels established a significant base of support in the town. Through survivors’ testimonies, several dichotomies emerged in this environment: first, the externalization of Sendero as foreign, unknown, and exceptional. When I asked Don Lucio Flores from where exactly the rebels came into Hualla, I was expecting in response the name of a cave or hill, or the nearby province of Huancavelica, all rumors I had heard. Instead, he said, “From Russia, from China.” The rebels were always making incursions, entering, and invading Hualla. Expressing puzzlement at ideological tenets and portraying them as foreign and locally incomprehensible helps residents protect their homes, their everyday practices, and allows

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137 Author interview with Lucio Flores.
their needs to survive and subsist to be a means of refuge. Women maintained the care and protection of children, animals, and lands during the war in ways that made their support less explicitly political – and critical to the rebel cause. Their experiences of participation in local social and economic networks and practices show that everyday struggles are “the very stuff of ordinary political experience.”

A second dichotomy that emerged in testimonies and interviews is the suspicion that Huallinos suffered due to the presumption of their guilt by both Sendero and the security forces. Soldiers acted as if all residents were terrorists, associating their Indian features and peasant lifestyle with Sendero. Hualla became known as a town overwhelmingly in support of the rebels, an actionable characterization for young soldiers with little experience in Andean villages. With local authorities absent during the war, people felt especially vulnerable to simultaneous targeting and persecution by rebels and soldiers for their alleged involvement with the enemy.

Third, the bifurcation of time – the specifying of a “before” and “after” the “socio-political violence,” as many Huallinos call the war period as they experienced it locally – constitutes a third dichotomous construction. While their lives were disrupted by terrorism, community members emphasize the gradual reconstruction of their pueblo after the war as evidence that they survived and can continue to live together with perpetrators and victims. This is the narrative that they safeguarded as interviewees of the CVR. These binary expressions regarding their own participation in politics and violence mask more complicated interactions among residents and rebels, and the effects of the state’s counterinsurgent presence. In general, the central state was far off and invisible, which left

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citizens without recourse to important forms of political agency and interaction with government.

The ambiguity of wartime participation persists in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission testimonies and in the ways that we read them. Peasants in Huallla and Ayacucho more broadly incurred risks and made difficult decisions to stay and fight, or to flee and lose everything. These decisions were influenced by their embeddedness in local networks and patterns of “doing politics” – historical forms of social expression and organization that shape how people see their roles in the governance and economy of their town. Huallinos lacked political opportunities for organized participation – a kind of articulation that would have linked them to other groups of indigenous, marginalized campesinos with similar demands in a broader geographical and institutional space. But neither national parties nor local authorities played this mobilizing role. This facilitated a space for Sendero to articulate grievances and gain the active support of many Huallinos in the first two to three years of armed conflict. Sendero created an identity and a conception of membership in a political movement as universalizing, self-evident, and omnipotent. Through its effect on social mores and networks, violence – the content of Sendero ideology – made its politics unsustainable in Hualla. Distinct forms of resistance emerged in Víctor Fajardo province and in Puno, for instance, as a reaction to the senderista revolutionary project: political agency in the destruction of society.

How does the situation of Huallinos during the war relate to the broader theme of ambiguous resistance to seemingly overpowering authority and oppression? The necessity of resisting more powerful actors pervades certain segments of the literature, including that of individual experience in civil war, literatures of memory, and interpretations of peasant
struggle: from Scott’s seminal accounts of peasants who wage cautious and everyday rebellion against powerful landowners, to Wedeen’s accounts of Syrians living in seeming complicity and cloaked resistance to a dictatorship. Guha describes a dialectical relationship of indigenous peasant insurgency to forms of domination as “the two voices in an adversarial conversation, composed of gestures, violence, symbolic claims, negations, etc.” In Hualla, while peasants participated in the Sendero movement, they gradually withdrew from its overbearing grip, strengthening their resistance against this new form of corrosive politics which derided and destroyed their social fabric. Even as participation with rebels catalyzed opportunities for “off-stage” resistance, the space for hidden transcripts, Sendero was stripping those spaces of their meaning.

At the same time, employing strategies of ambiguity, community members were resisting the security forces’ heavy hand. Scott’s argument that peasants are deferential to “the public transcript” as strategy implies that the emergence of lower-class revolution is unrelated to changes in ideology or consciousness. For Stokes, “a sense of shared oppression” can motivate and mobilize peasants to protest and act collectively against injustice. Sendero insurgents, however, determined the form of mobilization through which peasants would participate – as instruments of violence and victims of the chaos and insecurity it brought. Having set the ideological narrative, the movement invaded and exploited private space and social relationships.

The experiences of Huallinos show that rebel-civilian social relations constitute an interactive process which affects rebels’ support and, as a result, forms of participation for indigenous, marginalized citizens. These relationships are constructed as political and military efforts take place and as a consequence of rebels’ conceptions of membership. While Huallinos may depict themselves as lacking the knowledge and education to understand Marxist ideology, they did, in fact, comprehend the alternatives of active justice and eliminating obstacles to economic equality that the senderistas carried out. When rebel politics came to town, it did so in the form of ideas and violence, but it also elevated peasants’ struggle to be, in theory, worth fighting for. Ironically, in practice, the violence assigned to peasants obviated the gains they might make. Peasants were to be the executors of revolution; this was their role in the alliance of classes that comprised the forces of armed struggle. Sendero’s extreme ideological interpretations led to its ultimate separation from the thought and practice of much of the Left, and this had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered. It broke down local institutions and social ties, and left people with few alternatives to participating in the rebels’ destructive project. Years later, Huallinos’ regrets and aspirations remain, in their memories of violence and the stories that are “lived by.” At the same time, the memories offer a space for claiming a voice in a place where the mountains have names, where humans move like cats.

Chapter 5: Intersections of rebel ideology and peasant participation: class struggle, nationalism, and armed rebellion in Telangana, India

Participation in rebellion is frequently irreducible to practices of either “violence” or “nonviolence,” and varied forms of revolutionary militancy may engender new opportunities for dynamic political action by ordinary citizens. Ideology informs the ways in which people gather, collaborate, and organize, when rebels and activists seek to change the status quo. In India, Maoist thought has informed insurgency since the Telangana peasant uprising – a movement for independence from colonial rule and a struggle for class equality – through which communist rebels embraced varied ideological principles and programs, starting in 1946. The role of ideology in shaping rebels’ conceptions of membership, decisions about whether to form alliances with other organizations, and social relations with citizens is essential to the nature of mobilization during insurgency and civil war. Political organizations’ ideological interpretations and their resultant practice have implications for how we study rebellion, violence, and the participation of ordinary people in institutional and extra-institutional political processes.

Mobilization of ordinary people during civil war takes many forms, and diverse political organizations – in addition to the competing forces of insurgent and state actors – seek to generate support and mobilize citizens. How do groups that form part of “political society”\(^1\) and armed rebels combine efforts to demand change and fulfill their political

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objectives when violence is employed as a fundamental means of contestation in democracies?

As civilian participation in the Andhra Mahasabha – a local cultural and civic organization – and in the Telangana armed struggle show, the blurred boundaries of political action are evident in people’s participation in various groups. People belong and contribute to the efforts of what are considered “legal” political organizations and parties, and this engagement is not mutually exclusive of participation in “illegal” organizations that employ violence. Contributing to the struggle affords the participant a kind of productive agency and solidarity that catalyzes the creation and continuity of other movements and parties, even if those organizations adopt different forms and methods. These continuous and contingent processes of multi-method mobilization may have something to tell us about the state and the citizen’s relationship to it.

In India, where the Maoist insurgency has operated for more than four decades, relations between civilian social and political organizations and armed rebels vary widely. In Andhra Pradesh, civil society groups, including low-caste and tribal associations, civil liberties organizations, and the Telangana movement for local territorial autonomy, have at times collaborated with Maoist groups. In Andhra’s former Telangana region (which became a state in 2014), insurgents adopted a range of Marxist ideological commitments as early as the 1940s, mobilizing Adivasi peasants both to combat unjust landholding and labor practices and promote nationalist, anti-colonial sentiment. In West Bengal, in
contrast, the ruling Communist Left government co-opted many civil society organizations, alliances which sought to destabilize and repress Naxalite insurgent operations during the 1970s and 1980s. In an effort to understand the nature of civilian political mobilization in the context of the Maoist insurgency, this paper analyzes how rebels draw on ideological interpretations in their interactions with citizens. The investigation relies on analysis of primary sources such as insurgents’ memoirs and political party documents, and secondary sources, to elaborate the political and military strategies of a range of non-state organizations. India’s state formation process exerts significant effects on mobilization by Maoists and other political organizations, as the central government responded to violent challengers and sought to gain and maintain the support of its new citizens after independence, particularly in Hyderabad state.²

Relationships between rebel groups and civilians, particularly tribal and low-caste citizens, sometimes occurred through the intermediation of mass movements and political parties during violent civil conflict. Ideological differences among Maoist groups play a role in shaping the kinds of mobilization that resulted from their efforts and the forms of collaborative alliances that they formed with mass movements. Leaders and militants’ interpretations of ideology, which vary over time, shape their relations with local populations and their strategic willingness to articulate cross-class and cross-sector interests through political organization. These choices, in turn, shape the local choices that individuals and communities face to participate in efforts to challenge the socio-economic and political status quo. Communist militants’ embrace of Maoist doctrine affected its

² Out of the princely state of Hyderabad, Andhra state was formed (along with Bombay state and Karnataka) in 1956 during the reorganization of Indian states along linguistic lines, and shortly afterward the Telugu-speaking region of Telangana and Andhra state merged to form the state of Andhra Pradesh.
mobilizing strategy in Telangana, while in the 1960s, Maoist ideologues selected an interpretation of revolutionary strategy guided by elimination of class enemies, which led to a strict policy of targeted assassination and failed to build a diverse, mass movement, particularly in West Bengal. Participation in rebellion is frequently irreducible to practices of either “violence” or “nonviolence,” and the tenuous spaces for mobilization and collaboration that various forms of militancy open up may also create opportunities for new, dynamic participation by ordinary citizens. An examination of the Telangana insurgency helps show the origins of contemporary movement-building and cross-class organization by Maoists in India.

State formation and rebellious politics: a national local war

I argue that the history of the Maoist movement in India is integral to the history of the country’s foundational – and often violent – struggles over identity and equality. A few brief words of introduction are necessary to position communist mobilization at the particular moment of independence from colonial rule and as part of a long, contingent history of radical politics in the country. In the mid-1940s, as Britain fought alongside the Allied Forces in World War II, politics in India reflected a monumental change in governance from imperial domination to self-rule. For many, since Gandhi’s Salt Satyagraha in 1930, it had been evident that British rule was to come to an end; the country’s political institutions and debate emerged, in fact, out of this struggle over the

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3 Ajay Gudavarthy, “Democracy against Maoism, Maoism against Itself,” Economic and Political Weekly 48, no. 7 (2013): 70-1. This phrasing is loosely adapted from Ajay Gudavarthy’s formulation of contemporary Maoism.
precise forms that the Indian constitution and governance structure would adopt. Decades of protest and noncooperation expressed the religious, social, caste-based, economic, ethnic, and linguistic conflicts that continue to characterize politics throughout India, including political conflicts over rights and citizenship. The brutal violence of Partition that tore apart religious communities had begun two years earlier, spreading from Calcutta in eastern India to the northern states and Punjab in the northwest, killed tens of thousands of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Nationalist violence, communal tensions, and popular revolts in the years prior to independence informed leaders’ decisions about the precise boundaries that the Partition into two nations, Pakistan and India, would create. All told, estimates of the inter-communal violence left between half a million and one million people dead. In the context of Partition’s destruction, India’s own federal, democratic system was taking shape, tensely and firmly.

At the moment of Independence in August 1947, most of the hundreds of princely states – territories not under direct British rule – agreed to accede to the Indian Union. A critical exception was Hyderabad state, where the Nizam – Muslim ruler Asif Jah Nizam Osman Ali Khan – refused to join the newly independent country. Following a Standstill Agreement with the Nizam to maintain affairs as they were for one year, and multiple violations of this accord on both sides, the ruling Indian National Congress dispatched the Indian Army to wrest control of the landlocked territory of Hyderabad from the Nizam’s police and paramilitary forces, the Razakars, in 1948.

The links between the practice of democracy and violence from the days leading up to and following India’s independence in August 1947 were multiple and complex. During the mid-1940s, in the context of nascent challenges to local rule and the growing strength of nationalism, the country’s first Maoist insurgency was developing in a region of Hyderabad state known as Telangana. Partition carnage, the ultimate expression of the violence of state formation, had consequences all over the country for tensions between Hindus and Muslims. In the first year of independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Sardar Patel held off employing violence to quell the struggle over Hyderabad state against the Nizam’s forces until the conflictive and volatile situation in Kashmir was temporarily resolved. Congress leaders were not opposed to establishing and protecting India’s new, delicate democracy with the military force of the state, as they demonstrated in many areas, including Kashmir and Hyderabad. The Nizam’s forces were defeated in five days, surrendered, and a transition to India’s rule over Hyderabad state began. Local political organizations, including communist activists and Hyderabad State Congress officials (some of whom identified as socialists) perceived this contingent, uncertain period as a series of opportunities emerging in a tenuous, new system. They sensed the momentum for pursuing revolution and consolidating power through a potential shift in the way that the political and economic system operated. As the Nizam’s forces suffered defeat in the central government’s Police Action, peasants in Telangana strengthened local sanghams (committees) that had been organized to counter the abuses of local landlords and corrupt authorities.

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5 Operation Polo was referred to as a “police action,” a euphemistic term for the military invasion of Hyderabad.
Contextualizing political mobilization in Telangana: ideology, insurgency, and collaboration

The development of India’s Maoist insurgency is evident in communist rebels’ embrace of particular ideological principles as early as 1946 in Telangana. The role of ideology in shaping rebels’ conceptions of membership, decisions about whether to form alliances with other organizations, and their social relations with citizens is essential to the nature of mobilization during insurgency. Scholars who study civil war mostly fail to treat ideology as a significant force shaping rebel group institutions and processes of mobilization.\(^6\) In particular, the effects of rebel ideology on civilian politics and institutions merit considerably more attention from researchers. While Maoist groups have not identified a single unified set of ideological principles – vibrant and at times divisive debate has long characterized the groups’ interactions – over time, some argue, they have converged on “people’s democratic revolution” as the primary character of India’s revolution, following Mao Zedong.\(^7\) Beyond the Indian Maoists’ characterization of the Indian economy as “semi-feudal” and semi-colonial,\(^8\) in practice, the analysis of agrarian problems and structural issues such as citizens’ rights to land and resources have long been their focus.

In the Maoist movement’s early days, insurgents mobilized peasants to oppose and resist corrupt landlords in an attempt to bring down the system that permits oppression by

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corrupt authorities to continue, backed by state military and economic forces. A lack of ideological consensus among India’s Maoists has led to controversy over whether the movement considers armed struggle as the only vehicle for class warfare or whether participation in electoral politics may advance the cause of the oppressed through radical reforms. The blurry boundaries of the Maoist rebels’ actions in relation to democratic elections – including boycotts, bans, clandestine support to legal candidates and parties, and contestation by Maoists themselves – have directly shaped the ways in which people mobilize, suggesting that the politics of insurgency offers murky opportunities and strategies for influencing who holds power. How rebels interpret specific ideological principles and how they visualize and enact these elements – for instance, the Marxist “alliance of classes” – is of critical importance to understanding political mobilization during insurgency. We can understand rebel ideology as both a “metaphysic”9 and an interpretation that prescribes particular actions in local political environments.

_Adivasi_ (“forest-dwelling,” or commonly, tribal) citizens have consistently – but not exclusively – supported the Maoist movement’s revolutionary efforts in India over six or seven decades. While the state’s expanding economic and governance practices have overtaken and subordinated _Adivasi_ populations who in the past have had considerable political and economic autonomy, insurgent activity has persisted in tribal regions in some parts of central and eastern India because of communities’ grievances related to state and market activities.10 But these varied forms of mobilization change over time and draw on shifts in ideology and strategy, generating different opportunities for citizens to engage

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with the rebel project. The ways in which insurgents exploit or bypass existing social and political networks is critical to the kinds of mobilization that result; these possibilities for interaction originate in local political histories and the ways in which civilians draw on institutions to solve problems.\textsuperscript{11} The participation of tribal and low-caste citizens in Maoist insurgency must be analyzed, then, as a matter of power relations and politics – and not solely as a function of grievance, greed, or assumed identity.

In Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh, guerrilla squads and people’s committees emerged from participation in the Andhra Mahasabha, a massive nationalist and cultural organization. It was not initially the Communist party that was mobilizing peasants in Telangana to form armed squads; peasants’ participation in a mass political organization shaped how they viewed governance, politics, and their own position in the economic and social system. Citizens’ experience of participation in local village committees, indeed the “pleasure of agency”\textsuperscript{12} of being a part of a struggle for change and social justice, shaped their willingness to take risks and sacrifice for the movement.

While the analysis examines, in part, the consequences of the Maoists’ recruitment and operations for levels of violence, the primary focus is on process – understanding how people participated in rebel mobilization and how this participation emerged from and interacted with existing political struggles. Emphasis on variation in forms of civilian participation facilitates understanding how rebels’ “ideas in action” intersected with extant political struggles and grievances in the communities in which they sought to mobilize peasants and workers. Maoists’ operations, guided by both ideology and political

\textsuperscript{11} Arjona, “Civilian Resistance to Rebel Governance,” 186-8.
\textsuperscript{12} Wood, \textit{Insurgent Collective Action}, 18.
conditions, at times involved varied forms of collaboration with other movements and parties along caste-based, nationalist, and pro-reform lines. Strategic partnerships and shared activities catalyze the participation of tribal and low-caste citizens in ways that sometimes diverge from and at other times complement their engagement with status quo electoral politics.

Maoist insurgency has changed over the decades since its pre-Independence roots in local anti-corruption struggles. While many analysts of Maoist revolution ignore the initial phase of peasant struggle in Telangana, farmers and laborers mobilized there in great numbers, with the objective of eradicating the injustice perpetrated by crooked jagardirs – landowners whose holdings and status were based on inheritance and whose authority was dependent on the ruling Nizam. Most studies of the Naxalite insurgency – as the Maoist movement has become commonly known – begin with the 1967 uprising in northern West Bengal, where Naxalbari peasants mobilized against landowners on tea plantations, sparking an armed struggle that lasted several years.\(^{13}\) Naxalbari has served as a cultural and intellectual touchstone since then, and it has had important consequences for organizational and ideological dynamics. However, the Maoist movement’s early days in Telangana exerted long-standing effects on multiple forms of contemporary mobilization.

The Maoist movement has not historically constituted a single, united organization or coalition, and its roots in Telangana\(^ {14}\) help illustrate its connections to India’s formation as a modern state, a process fraught with violent contestation and the imposition of central

\(^{13}\) Kennedy and Purushotham, “Beyond Naxalbari,” 833.

\(^{14}\) I adopt Kennedy and Purushotham’s construction of the history of the Maoist movement in three phases; the authors posit the Telangana Peasant Struggle as the first phase, a claim they make based on their analysis of archival materials in India and the United Kingdom.
authority on tenuous, local political struggles. Evidence from Andhra Pradesh and
Telangana shows how ideology is critical to understanding variation in forms of ordinary
people’s political participation since India began governing itself in the middle of the
twentieth century. I examine primary sources, including memoirs of communists and
Telangana militants; documents and publications of the Communist Party of India; and oral
histories of tribal women who participated in the Telangana Peasant Struggle (1946-1951).
I also study secondary accounts and analyses written primarily by historians. In February
2014, the Telangana region that had fought for autonomy for decades became India’s 29th
state, and the political significance of this long-standing movement’s success emerged in
many conversations in Hyderabad. The intersections of a long arc of radical – and not so
radical – politics, including alliances among parties, hunger strikes, rural land invasions,
and backdoor negotiations that made Telangana’s statehood possible were bound up with
the history of the student movement and the Maoist rebellion.

The paper’s first section examines political conflicts and unrest in Hyderabad and
India at the time of independence, dynamics that help contextualize an extended
exploration of the Telangana insurgency in the second section. Next, the latter two
historical phases of Maoist insurgency are examined, drawing on the relationship between
ideology and civilian mobilization. The Telangana uprising was the birthplace of Maoism
in action, a nationalist, agrarian revolution that countered “feudal atrocities”\(^15\) with
organized peasant struggles. In the second phase of the movement during the late 1960s and
early 1970s, the Maoists’ “annihilation line” strategy undermined the movement’s ability to
develop mass bases in several states in which it was active. Ideologically, the insurgents –

drawing on a diverse battery of non-unified, radical groups – sharpened their ideological precision and widened their alliances and membership in the third phase, which began with a surge in rebel activity in the 1980s and continues today. The conclusion explores how differences in ideas and practices changed the rebels’ engagement with civilians, other political organizations, and electoral politics more broadly. India’s violent and contested politics of state formation affected the kinds of mobilization that emerged before and after independence, and the foundational philosophies embedded in the constitution are reflected in both insurgents’ and state counterinsurgents’ notions of citizenship and governance.

Political conflict in Hyderabad State at India’s independence: nationalists, communists, and peasants

The early 1940s constituted a period of agitation among Adivasi peasants and preparation among the state’s Congress Party officials for their roles in the future governance of Hyderabad. Collaborating with both these groups – poor, landless tribals and elected politicians – were the Hyderabad communists, who sought to foment not only class-based struggle for land and economic equality, but the politics of nationalism that, they all hoped, would bring down the Nizam. To analyze the nature of these intersecting struggles requires an understanding of rule under the last Nizam of Hyderabad, the state’s political and economic system, and how this affected ordinary people on the plains, specifically the Adivasi and low-caste peasants whose livelihoods were threatened by the Nizam’s regime. As one of the “native princes” granted a considerable degree of autonomy in rule over territories in India – there were 565 princely states at the time of independence – the Nizam
governed his dominion over internal matters in a “paramountcy” arrangement with the British, who maintained control of external affairs, including defense and trade.\textsuperscript{16}

The urgency of defeating the Nizam lay in the corruption and injustice of the political and socio-economic system over which he presided. The Nizam ruled through a small elite of \textit{jagirdars} (large landowners) and \textit{deshmukhs} (landlords who served as middlemen) who enjoyed political and economic dominance over Telangana and other regions of Hyderabad state.\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{jagirdari} system of landholding, which governed 43 percent of land in the state, entailed forced labor and leveraged high rates against peasants who held little land.\textsuperscript{18} Both Muslims and Hindus who were loyal to the Nizam received \textit{jagirs} and became revenue officials and generals in his army. The \textit{jagirs} acquired the status of hereditary property, and \textit{jagirdars} enjoyed the revenue produced by their holdings; in these areas, \textit{jagirdars} also exercised police and judicial functions and controlled forests and fisheries.\textsuperscript{19} The remainder of the territory, an estimated 60 percent of the land, was administered by the state government. \textit{Deshmukhs} collected land revenues in both \textit{jagir} and \textit{khalsa} (state-administered) areas, sometimes owning tens and hundreds of thousands of acres of land. In \textit{jagir} lands, conditions were far more oppressive for peasants, who were

\textsuperscript{16} In 1853, Karl Marx called the native princes “the strongholds of the present abominable English system and the greatest obstacles to Indian progress.” R.B. Gour et al, “Hyderabad People’s Revolt against Nizam’s Autocracy,” in \textit{Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle} (New Delhi: Communist Party of India, 1973), 1-2. The Nizam’s dominion emerged out of the disarray of the Mughal Empire in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century; by 1801, it had become a landlocked, princely state surrounded by British India. For a discussion, see Gour et al, “Hyderabad People’s Revolt.”
\textsuperscript{17} The Telangana region consisted of the Telugu-speaking districts, located primarily in the north and east of the princely state of Hyderabad.
\textsuperscript{19} Lalita K. et al, \textit{‘We Were Making History...’ Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People’s Struggle} (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 4-6.
denied rights to land tenure, forced to pay taxes even when there were no crops, and enslaved when they could not pay the small loans granted by landlords.

In Telangana, moreover, the practice of *vetti* (unpaid labor) resulted in generations of exploitation of the peasantry. People of different castes – primarily from the lower and “untouchable” (*Dalit*) castes of *malas* and *madigas* – were forced to provide free services to the landlord and to revenue and forest officials and police when they visited the villages. The peasants also came from *Adivasi* groups, including the *konda reddys, koyas,* and *chenchus.*20 The peasants suffered landlessness, bonded labor, and indebtedness on the rural plains of Telangana, while women were sexually molested as a right of the landlord. There were no elected bodies in the Nizam’s Hyderabad, and he ruled essentially by decree, issuing *firmans,* which had the combined force of legislation and executive order. Rights to assembly and civil liberties were nonexistent.21

In addition to the systematic oppression of the peasantry in Hyderabad, during World War II, the state imposed a compulsory grain levy, which required cultivators to pay more than half of their harvest or wages to the state.22 In practice, landlords extracted grain from peasants at exorbitant rates, selling it on the black market and facilitating non-payment of the levy by other landholders. This open, unchecked corruption had devastating effects on the peasants, and the police in Telangana villages were complicit with the landlords’ actions. In this context of political and economic repression, the peasants organized to oppose local and state injustice and exploitation.

The nationalist and class-based struggle in Telangana raged in the wake of the “Quit India” movement’s efforts, led by Mohandas Gandhi, who agitated for and anticipated the departure of the British and the establishment of swaraj, or self-rule. Amid profound disagreement on how this should occur and what role Indians should play in bringing about independence, the struggle in Telangana sought as its first objective the overthrow of the Nizam. With the passing of the Government of India Act in 1935, multiple Congress governments came to power in India, though it was still ruled by the British. The late 1930s in Hyderabad was a period of increasing political consciousness and dialogue, including the proliferation of progressive nationalist literature and newspapers and the formation of numerous new organizations like the socialist Comrades’ Association and the All-Hyderabad Students’ Union (ASHU), which included Muslims and women. International political conflict also affected domestic battles over authority and rights in Hyderabad and India. At the height of World War II, the British committed Indian troops to the war effort without consulting the Indian leadership. In response, Gandhi supported the British war effort against the Nazis, while Nehru favored making Indian support for the war against Germany conditional on Britain’s agreement to full independence.

Struggles over authority – and over the precise modes of contestation employed to challenge them at various levels of governance – formed the backdrop for the political movements that operated at the time of independence. In an effort to maintain control of massive shifts in rule, the Congress Party in Hyderabad opposed grassroots social and political movements and instead ushered in a “passive revolution.”

compromise with the Nizam, the British, and the national Congress leadership, effecting a managed political transition, which ensured the preservation of India’s class inequality after the British rulers were removed. In the years leading to independence, the Congress was against the Communist party’s promotion of class struggle as a “disruption of the unity of the nationalist forces prior to achievement of Independence.”

In the face of the reformist and incrementalist mentality among many politicians, the Telangana peasant movement became the largest and most enduring revolt of twentieth-century India.

Communists and Congressmen found common cause in nationalism, though their precise goals and methods, it soon became clear, differed sharply. The enslavement of the tribal and low-caste peasants and oppression by the Nizam’s corrupt landowners made peasants’ support for the communist movement a “matter of life and death.”

In 1950, the communists adopted a Maoist ideological line, intensifying the armed struggle. By 1951, communist leaders decided to withdraw from armed struggle and continue mobilizing people through local-level organization and electoral contestation.

**Telangana Peasant Struggle, the first phase of Maoist rebellion: 1946-1951**

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

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The experiences of Chityala Ailamma, whose words describe years of fighting against a prominent local landlord’s exploitation, was an important “spark” for the Telangana agrarian rebellion, in particular its entry into armed struggle.\textsuperscript{27} In late 1945, Ailamma, a washerwoman, rented nine acres of wetland in a village in Nalgonda, near her own village. The landlord Visnur Ramachandra Reddy demanded that Ailamma pay a tax for the right to continue cultivating this land, despite the fact that he did not own it. With Ailamma’s husband and son in jail for their involvement in a previous dispute with Reddy, her recourse was to a government official, a taluqdar, in protest of the tax, which she was not willing to pay. The Andhra Mahasabha defended her fields from the landlord’s men who were sent to seize the harvest.\textsuperscript{28}

Five of the Andhra Mahasabha activists were arrested and tortured; they harvested Ailamma’s crop, transported it to her house, and guarded it there for four months. Ailamma describes how she housed and fed the Sangham members for that period; her home became the center of the movement. The women, she recalled, were united in their efforts in the organization, defending and supporting one another in the face of the authorities. The struggle brought loss and tragedy to the Telangana communities that organized in support of their lands and crops: people were thrown in jail and tortured, houses and villages

\textsuperscript{27} Sundarayya, \textit{Telangana People’s Struggle}, 35.
\textsuperscript{28} Roosa, “Passive revolution,” 66.
\textsuperscript{29} Lalita K. et al, \textit{We Were Making History}, 37. The quote is from an oral interview with Ailamma, a member of the sangham.
burned, and peasants’ crops and homes were looted by thugs hired by landlords and by the police. “When all this was happening, how could we think, ‘why this struggle?’ It was in our hands already – how could we give it up?”

The political organization that catalyzed the armed Telangana struggle had begun in the sanghams and the Andhra Mahasabha. Activists and intellectuals had begun mobilizing to counter the political status quo for decades before the armed uprising began in 1946. With the formation of the Andhra Mahasabha in 1928, activists built an organization that would promote the discussion of problems that Telangana residents voiced and propose resolutions to demand reforms of education and civil rights policies under the Nizam’s rule. Founded as a broad organization defending the social and cultural rights of Telugu-speaking people, the Mahasabha attracted diverse participation, including that of middle-class residents of the city of Hyderabad, peasants, and students. For instance, young Hyderabadi activists who had joined the noncooperation movements of 1930-32 and were arrested for their participation in these actions and the Salt Satyagraha took part in the Mahasabha. Once released from prison, the activists emphasized political consciousness and change through their efforts in the organization, which became “a focal point for the rising democratic aspirations of the people.”

Over the 1930s, as leading activists, including many who identified as Congress Party members and leaders, joined the Communist movement, the Mahasabha became an anti-Nizam coalition of mass organizations, including youth, peasants, traders, manufacturers, and middle classes.

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30 Ibid.
31 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 12.
Drawing on the strength of the *sanghams* and the Andhra Mahasabha as a hub, by 1945, the communists had waged a large-scale movement against the state. Initially, their tactics included boycotting local revenue collectors and government officials, and they later established their own *panchayats* (village councils) and courts. The efforts of the Mahasabha – in conjunction with parallel organizations in two other regions of Hyderabad state, the Maharashtra Parishad and the Karnataka Parishad – led to the construction of village *sanghams* – committees that took up specific local issues and organized residents to oppose, for instance, *vetti* and unfair taxes. Starting in 1939, the communists helped organize *sanghams* to counter landlords, at first through nonviolent and non-cooperative action. The communists’ resistance to the government’s corrupt levy practices was an important factor in their ability to generate support among rural residents. Roosa found that the communists supported the levy as an anti-fascism measure in the war effort and a means of stabilizing prices, but insisted that revenue officials collect the grain according to the regulations and end their corrupt practices.

As the communists gained influence among peasants in Telangana, some Congress Party activists objected to the growing and precipitous power of mobilization that communists exerted in the Mahasabha. Veteran Congress leader M.N. Rao argued that the Mahasabha was not an extension of the communist party, but rather a “public gathering for representatives of all parties and schools of thought among all social classes and all Andhra people involved in public life.” The two factions agreed on principles and goals, but disagreed on how to achieve them: while the communists called for mobilizing peasants to

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34 Ibid., 64.
engage in direct action against landowners and levy collectors, the Congressmen favored lobbying the government on behalf of the peasants. The Andhra Mahasabha split along communist and Congress lines, and the Communists attracted 15,000-20,000 people to their annual conference in April 1945. The Congress leaders’ unwillingness to take action on economic and agrarian issues at a structural level prevented them from building a mass base. They relied on the promise of the democratic system that would emerge when India became independent to address the long-standing agrarian problem. The consequences of the state Congress Party’s commitment to institutional politics as the vehicle for social reform would have long-term effects on politics, not only in Telangana.

By 1945, peasants’ struggles with landlords and the retaliatory police actions intensified, and the sanghams began preparing for armed confrontation with authorities. At first, the communists advised peasants to defend themselves with slingshots and homemade weapons when the police approached. The transition from nonviolent refusal to pay unjust taxes to “active defense” led to violent clashes with the Hyderabad state military and police. The sanghams continued mobilizing in villages and demanding an end to zamindari, or landlordism. The linkage of unpaid labor and corrupt levy extraction to the system of landholding empowered the villagers and pushed out the officials and deshmukhs who carried it out.

35 Ibid., 65.
People of one village armed with sticks and slings would march to the neighboring village and rouse them. They would jointly hold public meetings before the gadi (brick-built strong house of the desmukh or the landlord), hoist the red flag and declare: “Sangham is organized here. No more vetti, no more illegal exactions, no evictions.” If the landlord or the deshmukh did not carry out these orders, he was socially boycotted. None should work for him in the fields, no barber, no washerman, no house-maid, no domestic servant.37

By early 1946, the CPI Central Committee had revised the “reformist” policies that it had pursued during the Second World War, and decided to adopt a militant approach to developing mass struggle of both the peasantry and the working class. This decision was based on intensified popular mobilization and the post-war surge in people’s desire for the British to make good on their promise of independence. As this upsurge occurred, rising tensions and ideological debate also heightened polarization between the Congress Party and the Communists.38 The CPI and the Andhra Mahasabha began training small volunteer squads in wielding lathis (long bamboo poles used as weapons) for encounters with the thugs employed by both landlords. But the CPI tread carefully in bringing firearms, even country-guns to the fight; they feared that step would transform the struggle into a new phase and have consequences for all of India. A particularly creative form of militant struggle, Sundarayya recalls, developed when the peasants, the Party cadre, and Andhra Mahasabha militants faced arrest by the Nizam’s government. They were instructed to resist arrest, jump bail, and retreat facing a large police force. The kinds of mobilization that resulted were “spontaneous” and innovative.39 At this point, large proportions of the rural population had organized to support the CPI, and the national-level Party remained divided over the question of offensive armed struggle.

37 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 26. Sundarayya was a CPI leader and member of the Andhra Provincial Committee of the party, which organized in the villages of Telangana.
38 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 28.
39 Ibid.
In 1947, the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union and declared the independence of Hyderabad state in an effort to perpetuate the rule of the “1000 jagirdars and a handful of big capitalists over the 17 million people of Hyderabad.” As a result, the rural insurgents of the Telangana CPI were strengthened by remaining in the villages as Congress activists departed in anticipation of intense fighting. As the Telangana movement grew in numbers and spread geographically, the sanghams played a critical role in fulfilling state functions. In about two thousand villages and an area which included half the population of the state, “the government simply ceased to exist.” At the movement’s high point in mid-1948, sanghams operated in two to three thousand villages; while their reach and reforms varied, the space they created for “local agency” was significant. Peasants experienced the tangible effects of landowners’ absence and access to communal fields and forest resources. “A nationalist revolt over land and grain” had become a successful peasant movement in the heart of India.

In September 1948, the Indian Army’s invasion of Hyderabad brought about the fall of the Nizam within five days, the accession of the state to the Union, and the establishment of central military rule. As Kennedy and Purushotham point out, the support base of the Telangana insurgency shifted given that the Congress Party then controlled not only India but also the state of Hyderabad. “Middle” and “rich” peasants and liberal landowners who had supported the cadre in the villages and the forests, many of whom were literate and valuable communicators among CPI leaders and local villagers, defected from the movement’s ranks. They informed on the identities of communist sympathizers and the

41 Ibid., 102.
whereabouts of the *dalams* (guerrilla squads), and weakened the movement. Having defeated the Nizam, the Indian army conducted a counterinsurgency campaign against the Telangana cadre, resulting in the arrests of nearly ten thousand people in the first two years.44 The insurgents, having suffered serious setbacks, reorganized on the Telangana plains in 1949 and continued to mobilize peasants for land reforms and to counter police abuses.

The Congress government failed to eliminate the guerrillas or establish effective governance in Telangana. In October 1951, however, the CPI called off armed struggle as a result of internal debate, at times divisive, over the ideological direction and shape of the movement in Telangana. A change in the CPI leadership which brought C. Rajeswara Rao to power as General Secretary generated strong internal opposition, and following consultations with Stalin and officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Party decided to withdraw from the armed struggle in Telangana. While leaders extolled the gains that the Telangana struggle had achieved, some CPI leaders wanted to contest elections in 1952. The CPI-led People’s Democratic Front won most of Telangana’s seats, demonstrating continued support for the movement and the persistence of peasants’ grievances.

**Ideology and mobilization**

In 1939, the Communist Party was banned in British India with the outbreak of World War II. However, it was at this moment that the Communist Party was founded in

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Hyderabad. The party operated within the Andhra Mahasabha due to the ban and also the opportunities for politicization in the organization. Socialist literature made its way into Hyderabad and surrounding districts during the late 1930s, as the nationalist struggle gained fervor throughout India. Nationalism informed communist mobilization, as it did in many colonized states: in India, the target was large, abusive landlords who were connected to the Nizam through the jagirdari system and the Nizam himself, whose autocratic rule permitted the persistent absence of political rights. The peasant struggle in Telangana became the expression of this dual enemy, and its operation and limited success reflected the ideological disagreement and confusion among Communist leaders about the direction of the movement. Through ideological questions, the nationalist dimension of this struggle affected both the process and outcome of the Telangana movement.

First, the politics of international communism shaped the early decisions of India’s communists, who had embraced Stalin’s Soviet Union, to withhold support for the British war movement: as long as Hitler and Stalin were allied, the Second World War was an “imperialist” war. Once the Soviets allied with the West against Hitler in 1941, however, the Indian communists ceased their ideological opposition to the British war effort. As a result, India’s communists did not support the 1942 Quit India movement, led by the pro-independence Congress Party, because doing so would have weakened the British government in its historic battle against fascism. India’s nationalists, in turn, regarded this ideological position of the communists as a betrayal of the movement for self-rule. The Indian communists subsequently realized that by supporting the colonial government they had alienated the masses.45 The misguided relationships of India’s communists with foreign

45 Chakrabarty, Communism in India, 132-33.
communist leaders, namely Stalin and Mao, heavily shaped the communists’ abilities to make decisions about ideology and practice during the movement’s history. The effects on the nature of mobilization and violence were considerable.

The political environment in which India’s state formation process was unfolding affected the communists’ ideas in another way. For the ideologues, the in-process nature of Indian governance before, during, and after Independence – years which capture the Telangana struggle’s occurrence – made it difficult for the Communists to develop a theory of the state. Was toppling the government the main purpose and prize of armed struggle? Was mobilizing the masses in a broad political front and working through institutional channels the preferred revolutionary path? Profound uncertainty and differences of perspective marked the Communist leadership on these critical points during the 1940s. Moreover, debate and disagreement among Congress members and Communists in Hyderabad, who shared some political spaces for mobilizing citizens, had effects on the kinds of participation that peasants and workers encountered. Questions regarding the state, the characterization of the economy, and the role of the peasantry in the struggle were critical to designing and implementing revolution in the villages.

As full-scale violent agitation was unfolding in Telangana, local Telangana Congressmen denounced the communists’ armed struggle, calling it “anti-national” and reiterating the Congress Party’s commitment to an end to feudalism, and government by the people. To the CPI, however, according to a Party report from 1950, the Congress ideology represented “Gandhism” and “bourgeois nationalism.” But the communists consistently collaborated with Congress members in the Andhra Mahasabha. The CPI made the distinction between targeting the bourgeois ideology of Congress and “fighting them as
individual feudals.” In the fight for the accession of the Nizam to the Indian Union, the communists and Congress had cooperated closely, with the CPI’s leaflets calling for unity between the two parties and praising Nehru and Gandhi. This cooperation occurred while internally Congress members were divided on the party’s relationship with the Communists, and while socialist members of the Congress Party had begun clandestinely arming squads against the Nizam’s forces.

The cooperative political arrangement changed drastically in early 1948, when B.T. Ranadive assumed the leadership of the national Communist Party. He declared war on the Indian state and organized a general strike that would allow an “urban vanguard” to direct the revolution. Ranadive’s line was explicitly opposed to Congress, but in practice, the communists who were mobilizing villagers in Telangana did not actively spread and promote anti-Congress militancy among the cadre. The result on the ground was what one historian calls the “porosity” of local guerrilla squads and communist supporters. In practice, strict ideological training did not take place among local recruits and those who pledged their support to the movement. People joined for a number of reasons, including wanting to play a role in defeating the Nizam’s government, and local supporters included some wealthy landowners and Congress supporters. This multiplicity of support led to a coalition that crossed classes and castes, both a strength and a vulnerability, which later generated conflict among communist leaders.

While the Telangana insurgency gained ground in the villages, in the summer of 1948, the Andhra Provincial Committee of the CPI, which was coordinating the insurgency,

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46 Two internal CPI documents are cited in Roosa, “Passive revolution,” 77. See Ibid., 92, fn. 81.
47 Roosa, “Passive revolution,” 74-75.
48 Ibid., 78.
issued the Maoist Andhra Thesis. The Committee’s statement claimed that the Indian revolution had much in common with the Chinese Revolution, and pushed it toward consolidating the mobilization gains the movement had made in various parts of Andhra, Kerala, and Bengal to promote agrarian revolt. The move away from Ranadive’s approach – urban struggle based on “general strike and armed uprising” meant that the Communists would embrace the Chinese guerrilla method and “prolonged civil war” through an agrarian revolution. The Committee also pronounced support for a united democratic front which would include rich peasants and the middle bourgeoisie as allies of the proletariat, a front that the Communist Party could bring about through armed struggle in the countryside.49

While the party suffered setbacks as a result of the Indian state’s counterinsurgency, by mid-1949 the movement had reorganized in line with the principles of Maoist guerrilla warfare. At this time, it spread to new areas, in part to escape military pressure, and found success in mobilizing Adivasis whose lands and resources in the forests had been exploited for decades by state and market forces.

How did the implementation of ideology shape how rebels mobilized people in villages and cities? Ideas about the composition of the alliance of classes that would carry out revolutionary action are critical to the kinds of mobilization and participation that materialized. A particularly divisive issue was whether the communist movement should include parts of the bourgeoisie in its mass organizations – or whether these landed elites are the enemy, to be countered and attacked. As the Telangana armed movement showed, once Congress seized state power, some middle and rich peasants left the movement they

49 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 294-95.
had helped strengthen as guerrilla squad leaders. Their defection contributed to the exposure of militant cadre and their arrests and trials.

How broad-based the movement – and precisely who should be the political agents of change – are ideological questions that have long populated Marxist-Leninist theory and ignited controversy among those who seek to carry out revolutionary struggle. A second tension between the decision to participate in the Indian state’s fledgling parliamentary institutions or pursue mass struggle outside the state was emerging as the Telangana struggle came to an end. CPI leaders, troubled by the losses that the state was inflicting on its cadre and uncertain about the future of the movement, in a new statement, celebrated the salience of peasant struggles as a critical component of the revolution, given the demographic composition of India and its primarily agrarian economy. The previous embrace of Russia’s method of urban workers’ struggle and later Mao’s approach to generating peasant-led war in the countryside and encircling the cities informed the debate over the way forward in the CPI. In a statement in April 1951, the CPI espoused a view of the revolution in India as specific and responsive to the country’s own particular character. Eschewing a path that adheres either to the Russian or Chinese struggles, the Party emphasized India’s unique social conditions and endorsed a path of Leninist revolution. The alliance of the working class and the peasantry was central to its strategy and tactics, and the move toward electoral contestation meant that the Party was engaging the state by embracing a parliamentary path.
Articulation through cross-class and cross-caste mobilization: Communists’ collaborations with civilians and social movements

During the early stages of the Telangana insurgency, the centrality of the sanghams for politicizing peasants was clear: at their high point in mid-1948, there were two to three thousand sanghams in Telangana. Generating a considerable degree of “local agency” in deciding the course of the movement, the committees constituted an effective means of mobilizing people by providing a structure for participation in social change. They also became a new way of looking at politics, as participants describe in their oral testimonies. The solidarity of being a sangham member, providing one’s home, food, and resources to others, combined with the expressive act of challenging the status quo, connected participants and provided a foundation on which taking part in other struggles came to involve an extension of existing networks.

The Congress Party set up the Andhra Mahasabha in 1930 as a kind of “substitute organization” that could promote social reforms and provide a legal space within which members and leaders could discuss nationalist politics. Even then, perhaps, Congress and communists envisioned the possibility of the strategic use of armed mobilization against the Nizam. But in the late 1940s, the guerrilla squads and village organizations were not explicitly units of the communist party. Instead, they had “grown out of the Andhra Mahasabha, a primarily nationalist body, and were known simply as part of the Sangham, ‘the Organization.’”

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52 Ibid., 77. In making this claim, Roosa cites an anonymous CPI report on the Telangana struggle. See Ibid., 92, fn. 81.
While their relationship was contentious, Congress Party and Communist leaders collaborated within the Andhra Mahasabha in the 1940s. The Mahasabha constituted a public space for people from different classes and backgrounds, an interactive hub, a site in which collaboration and debate took place. The organization facilitated “articulation”—a concept that aims to capture how individuals and groups are organized, cohesive, and expressive. The extent to which participation is articulated—which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups—influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the insurgency, and the state interact. In employing the term, I intend for articulated to signify both “articulate,” being able to speak effectively for a cause and a group, and “articulated” to imply a sense of being “jointed.” In combination, these two components—political expression and integration—define articulation.53

Critical to articulation is the role of social organizations in connecting and expressing the shared political interests and values of diverse constituencies, for instance, class-based groups, like peasants, urban workers, and miners. As an ideal-type implemented based on ideological principles, a fully-realized Marxist insurgency would mobilize a highly articulated movement. Articulation, though, may be conceived as an organic and adaptive combination, with the possibility of changing the scope and nature of

53 In elaborating the concept of articulation, I seek to emphasize a range rather than a dichotomy of articulation. This descriptive range is intended to capture both the quality of expression and integration of political actors. Stuart Hall’s concept of an “articulated lorry” conveys a combined structure with flexible components, like a truck’s cab and trailer, connected and functional, but able to link with other vehicles at different moments. Hall’s re-reading of Gramsci’s “war of position” between “dominant” and “subaltern” class alliances emphasizes “continued struggles across a terrain, portions of which are captured by changing alliances, hooking and unhooking particular elements. There’s a lot of middle ground; and crucial cultural and political positions are not firmly anchored on one side or the other but are contested and up for grabs.” See James Clifford, “Indigenous Articulations,” in The post-colonial studies reader, 2nd ed., ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. (New York: Routledge), 180-183.
connection to other entities or organizations. The degree and kind of articulation in a particular geographical area depends on pre-existing political processes and relationships, and the ways that ideas about how to “do politics” have been interpreted and received locally.

In the context of some insurgencies, like the Shining Path in Peru, the nature and level of articulation help explain whether ordinary people support the insurgents in a particular geographical area. In India, in contrast, some of the spaces in which people were engaged in cross-cutting mobilization for peasants’ rights, the equality struggles of minorities and women, and the nationalist cause were concentrated and connected. The Mahasabha served as a site of articulation through which people discussed and organized to make particular political demands and take action to pursue them. Later, when the communists adopted a more militant ideology, some of the same networks that organized against the Nizam produced ready recruits for armed mobilization, in a fluid process. To understand variation in how articulation may catalyze different kinds of participation requires that we investigate experiences of participation at the individual and collective level, and how they enable new or reinforced conceptions of politics and people’s relationships to power.

The blurry nature of collaboration between what may be categorized as “violent” and “nonviolent” organizations demands that we examine how civilian social organizations provide human capital, a space for interaction, and integration of networks – for both civilian and rebel participants. While the Andhra Mahasabha’s focus on Telugu cultural rights was the founding reason for the organization, the influence of leftist leadership – which included Congress and Communist party members – on the organization made it a
mass movement with a political goal of defeating the feudal system and the Nizam. When the Mahasabha began to pass resolutions to address peasant issues, rich peasants supported the revolutionary movement, and their active backing continued during the peasant uprising.\textsuperscript{54} When the “moderates and militants” of the Andhra Mahasabha split in 1944, the communists continued to work within it, and it became a mass organization. Membership in the \textit{Chitti} (receipt) \textit{sangham} – what some called it – meant that a participant was given a receipt, a piece of paper that ensured that one had “the right to oppose vetti, to refuse to pay taxes, to punish those who collected them and those who opposed the Sangham.”\textsuperscript{55}

While it was not initially the Communist party that was mobilizing peasants in Telangana, but a joint nationalist coalition led by the Congress Party, participation in the ecumenical Mahasabha and \textit{sanghams} shaped how peasants viewed governance and politics, and their own position in the system. The process of contributing to a movement, relying on other members – as Chityala Ailamma’s testimony reveals, and making sacrifices without expectation of reciprocity – but instead in the name of a committed cause – took on a significance that infused the \textit{sangham} movement with active momentum and solidarity. Peasants’ participation in the uprising gave meaning to their communities’ struggles, and the benefits transcended the number of acres of land they recovered.

The early Maoists’ articulation of radical political change among peasants extended to tribal citizens’ aspirations for self-determination, demonstrating the multiple connecting sites of mobilization. While organizing in tribal areas, Communists supported Telangana \textit{Adivasi} groups’ ongoing struggles for self-rule, including the Koyas in Warangal, in

\textsuperscript{54} Lalita K. et al, \textit{We Were Making History}, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
January 1948. The Koyas and other tribal groups had been engaged in armed rebellion against the state since the early nineteenth century. From the early 1940s, the Koyas’ own struggle against the Nizam was ongoing before the CPI militants arrived in 1948. The Koya tribe members provided support to the communists, who facilitated some changes in structural conditions by redistributing land and negotiating higher prices for forest products. The communists created an organizational structure for the expression of Adivasi political demands and mobilization to carry out actions to pursue them. The Communist Party pledged support for a politically self-governing Koya area. In 1940, the communists had supported the Gonds and Kolams, as well as the Visalandhra struggle for linguistically determined autonomy, a critical third dimension of the anti-Nizam and anti-feudalism struggle of the 1940s that remained salient for many decades until Telangana became an independent state in 2014. Maoist rebels, students, and politicians who struggled for Telangana statehood collaborated over several decades to pursue these objectives.

As civilian participation in the Andhra Mahasabha and Telangana armed struggle shows, the blurred boundaries of political action are evident in people’s participation in various groups. People belong to and contribute to the efforts of what are considered “legal” political organizations, and this engagement is not mutually exclusive of participation in “illegal” organizations that employ violence. In fact, sangham members participated seamlessly in the armed communist movement. Joining a political struggle affords the participant agency and solidarity that may catalyze the creation and continuity

56 Kennedy and Purushotham cite government evidence from the National Archive of India to substantiate this claim. See “Beyond Naxalbari,” 841.
57 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 66-7.
of other movements, even if those organizations adopt different forms and methods.

Connections between violent revolution and democratic politics: idea and practice

Political connections between Congress members and communists in the early 1940s set the stage for both productive collaboration and later, lethal conflict. Their initial collaboration catalyzed the Congressmen’s split into liberal and socialist camps, since some were ideologically opposed to continued partnership with the communists. Many Congress members openly preferred to achieve Independence before taking on class inequities and structural issues. “If a democratic form of government can be formed, then social justice can be achieved through a constitutional, parliamentary system.”⁵⁸ Anticipating their own heavy influence on governance once the Nizam fell, the Congressmen were in favor of relying on institutional democracy as a means to social change. This critical difference with the radical communists was, in some ways, an ideological one, but for the Congress members, it was also a pragmatic choice. The country’s nationalist momentum in the mid-1940s in a climate of popular revolt inspired restraint among Congressmen, who sought to ensure a transition to democracy and then address structural problems. In the process, as it prepared to take the reins of state power, Congress became a status quo force. While the communists were building a nationalist, class-based, and cultural rights movement, Congress prioritized the establishment of institutions that could achieve the goals of those struggles institutionally. This difference in interpretation of the economic and political system has left its marks on the debate within the Indian Left on the appropriate channels

⁵⁸ M.N. Rao, quoted in Roosa, “Passive revolution,” 64.
for effecting political change – in broad strokes, by working for reform within the
democratic system or resisting the system by seeking its redesign.

Still, given the absence of a tradition of democratic politics in Hyderabad state, the
struggle against the Nizam carried great significance as a concerted attempt by citizens
from many backgrounds, social classes, and belief systems, to reset relations of power. The
channels and networks through which nationalist mobilization operated in the mid-1940s
created a path that signified a broader, class-based struggle for agrarian rights and equality
in Telangana. Communists drew on many of the same networks to challenge the state
through armed guerrilla warfare in Telangana. The uprising shows the ways in which
mobilizing people based on their political grievances can, by engaging the state – violently
or not – create space for other forms of mobilization. The methods of activists from
different parties and movements meshed and merged in ways that made their ideological
differences inseparable in practice; in communities, these efforts generated enduring
participation and consciousness that would later serve to advance causes through both
radical and institutional methods. Before their split, the Communists organized for
Congress, and in 1947, Congress organized civil disobedience actions against the Nizam,
resulting in over 7000 arrests, including of prominent Congress leaders.59 Who holds state
power is a considerable factor: when Congress took over and held the legitimate reins of
authority nationally and locally, the party’s relation to the Telangana Communists changed
dramatically. The split of the Andhra Mahasabha into communist and Congress sects
presaged the subsequent persecution of communist militants in rural areas once Congress
had seized power.

The broader political environment of national state formation played a critical role in determining not only the substance but also the sequence of the political struggle for Independence from the British, mobilization to take down the Nizam, and class warfare. The urgency of the dual nationalist and agrarian struggle provided an impetus for action that united most constituencies in Hyderabad in the 1940s. Communists perceived the scope of necessary political action to be much broader than simply gaining self-governance and focused its efforts on building a mass movement for armed struggle against the economic and political system. Even within the set of revolutionary efforts, there was ample variation as the struggle progressed: some CPI leaders wanted to contest elections in 1952, a decision which terminated the armed insurgency in Telangana. It also set the Party’s interpretation of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theory on a path toward institutional engagement for the moment, a decision that was deeply contested among different sects of the party. The consequences of this decision in subsequent decades included a continuation of hybrid, fluid forms of civilian mobilization and participation in Left politics – organizations of cross-class struggle that involved different kinds of violence and a range of ideas about the state, citizenship, and how to acquire power.

The experiences of Telangana communist militants in generating cross-class mobilization and the resultant, if temporary, articulation of peasant interests with other groups’ autonomy, economic, and cultural struggles differed from the ways in which political organization transpired in other states where communism took hold over the long-term, primarily West Bengal and Kerala. In West Bengal, where political communism has often involved violent contestation, governance by the elected communist Left Front coalition starting in 1977 has disappointed many radicals; the Left Front’s lack of effective
social reforms, particularly with regard to land ownership, over its thirty-year tenure. Like the Congress Party leaders in Hyderabad in the 1940s, the decision to pursue leftist reforms through the parliamentary path led to the communists in West Bengal becoming an enabler of the status quo. Violent sects of the CPI split and warred during the 1960s, leading to bloody intra-movement conflict and the absence of a mass movement.

While *sanghams* existed in Kerala since the 1930s, particularly in Malabar, the development of communism in the state emerged out of indoctrination efforts by Hyderabadi activist leaders like P. Sundarayya and S.V. Ghate. During the mid-1930s, these leaders aimed to develop communist party organizing in Kerala, which first occurred within the Congress Party there. Activists committed to establishing rule by peasants and workers in an effort to end the suffering of peasants, amid, eventually, the formation of both the state of Kerala in 1956 and the state’s Communist Party. In Kerala, the path to communist state governance involved the strategic use of elections and building political coalitions with other Left parties. These strategies succeeded at the expense of ideological coherence, but instituted effective social programs through pragmatic governance. While West Bengal’s leftists have not consistently partnered with social movements due in part to an ideological focus on assassination campaigns and an underground strategy, in Kerala the role of “the social left” has been to criticize the Left’s instituted reform program, which over time has involved compromises with both opposition parties and the Congress Party.

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Latter phases of insurgency: debate over forms of struggle, institutions, and alliances

The 1950s and 1960s saw continued debates in the CPI over the method and scope of revolutionary struggle. In 1964, following movements in international communism and conflict, including the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-Indian border war in 1962, the Communist Party of India fissured, and a pro-Chinese sect broke off to form the CPI (Marxist). During the 1960s, electoral participation was deepening in the country, facilitating the entry of new political parties and weakening the clientelist networks that had operated during the colonial period and early Congress years. The CPI (Marxist) party contested elections in 1967 and formed, in part, West Bengal’s first non-Congress government. This generated intensified debates within the CPI (Marxist) organization; many in the party supported armed militancy and criticized the use of governmental means to pursue radical reforms. In March 1967, in northern West Bengal state, the repression of tea laborers by landowners resulted in a violent uprising in the village of Naxalbari, in Darjeeling district. The state government defeated the insurgency by July, but the Maoist sect of the CPI (Marxist) which had organized in Naxalbari and fomented peasant struggle continued its actions in urban and rural areas of West Bengal. The insurgency confronted heightened state pressure, as the pro-election wing of the CPI (Marxist) increased its support at the polls, becoming the largest party in the state. The pro-Naxalbari sect splintered to become the CPI (Marxist-Leninist), led by ideologue Charu Mazumdar, who championed the Maoist line and sought to implement a strategy of annihilation of enemies of the people – landlords and politicians who represented and legitimized the extreme inequities of the system. But Mazumdar failed to develop the insurgency into a mass

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movement, privileging underground planning and assassination campaigns by a select
group of militants, rather than a broad-based popular movement. This led to strategic errors
and a lack of overall support, as the violence in the cities alienated the organization’s
potential middle-class and intellectual backers.

Two major lines of contestation characterized the second phase of insurgency,
which took place from 1967 to 1971. First, a tension arose between cultivating mass
movements and the violent, targeted elimination of class enemies, the strategy embraced by
Mazumdar. The importance of what a 1951 CPI document called “the daily humdrum of
running mass organizations”62 has long constituted a point of debate within Marxist
organizations – how much effort to invest in building a “democratic front” – a wide-ranging
alliance that includes industrial workers, peasants, students, women, members of the middle
classes – in which each group plays its own role in supporting the mass movement. The
question of how to employ violence in this schema is also critical – at which moment, by
which sect of the movement, and to what end – and these questions filled the debate over
tactics and strategy. In the 1960s and 1970s, contestation over the rebels’ ideas-in-action
led to weakened political strategy and the retreat of more militant sects to targeted violence
and underground activity.

The controversy over how broad and deep the people’s movement that the
insurgents construct should be emerges in ideological debates over the alliance of classes –
and whether elements of the bourgeoisie can be counted on to support the classist struggle,
given their structural position in the political economy. The importance of analyzing the
agrarian problem and addressing it through sustained peasant struggle in rural areas

62 Sundarayya, Telangana People’s Struggle, 305.
constitutes another element that filled out ideological debates. The “principal contradiction” of the period was between “feudalism and the broad masses of the Indian people,” the CPI (M-L) decided at its Congress in 1970, and the stage of the revolution was “democratic revolution,” which essentially meant “agrarian revolution.” This demanded building a “democratic front of the working class” and “worker-peasant unity.”63 Maoists’ uncertainty and conflict over these principles generated a diverse range of opportunities for participation by civilians in the movement, as different insurgent sects carried out their favored lines and strategies. This disunity had the effect of weakening the insurgency during the second phase.

The second point of contention that the rebels struggled with during this period was whether to embrace participation in electoral politics – reformism – and how joint, or parallel tracks of participation in elections and underground insurgent activity can undermine the movement’s ability to generate support from certain classes and from its allied and affiliated partner organizations. The fraught history of Communism in India emerges in the divergent paths down which institutionalized politics led some proponents of the ideology. Given the government’s ability to suppress armed revolutionary Communist movements, many movement partisans decided to operate within the country’s constitutional framework – a controversial decision among ideologues. In West Bengal, one of the few states in which communists rose to power through elections, the movement’s revolutionary drive and content suffered as it gained support at the polls and tenure in office. The nature of this support – and the communist supporters themselves, many of

whom were landed elites and “rich peasants” – changed the party’s interests over time.\textsuperscript{64} A failure to represent the people and pursue the structural changes on which the CPI was founded led, some argue, to a weak or negligent pursuit of reforms, and in fact, the legitimization of the status quo control of the state.

In the 1970s, Communist parties contested elections in West Bengal and other states, and the more militant sects, including CPI (M-L) guerrillas, attacked their political rivals in this tense scenario, particularly in Calcutta. This had the effect of increasing support for the Congress Party and discrediting the rebels in West Bengal. In 1977, the CPI (Marxist)-led Left Front coalition won elections in the state and remained in power for three decades. They achieved some land reforms for sharecroppers, but not much changed for landless peasants, and many reforms fell short due to failures of implementation.

Twenty years prior to the election of communists in West Bengal, the CPI won 38 percent of the popular vote in Kerala, making it the first Indian state to elect a communist government. This meant a new mode of enacting socialism was no longer “a conceptual category” but became a form of social democratic governance.\textsuperscript{65} The parliamentary path to socialism, initiated with the government of E.M.S. Namboodiripad in 1957, continued for another twenty years, with the communist Left acting as a significant partner in the Kerala government. The party pushed radical land and education reforms by partnering with a cadre of left parties that more or less shared its ideological commitments. Unlike in West Bengal, the CPI in Kerala had roots in the socialist wing of the Congress Party (the Congress Socialist Party, or CSP), and the CPI and CSP merged in 1940. The CPI’s “party

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{64} Ross Mallick, \textit{Indian Communism} (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 183.
\textsuperscript{65} Chakrabarty, \textit{Communism in India}, 33.
\end{footnotesize}
formation” in Kerala also drew on the deep roots it had developed in civil society, which over time contributed to a more procedural and substantive form of democratic governance. The communists also learned to form coalitions strategically, even if it meant compromising on ideology, and framing their electoral appeal in caste and communal language in order to secure votes.

The contemporary Maoist movement: violence, varying modes of articulation, and ideological diversity

In the third phase of the insurgency, following the Emergency – a period during which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a unilateral state of emergency throughout the country, from 1975-77 – new sects of the Maoist movement formed, strengthening their ideological commitments and identities. During the Emergency, as many as 27 Marxist-Leninist groups were banned and an estimated 40,000 people were imprisoned throughout India. When this period ended, revolutionary leaders who had been imprisoned reemerged and mobilized supporters in many parts of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa. New formations included the People’s War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in Bihar, which merged in 2004 to form the country’s primary Maoist organization. From 1990 onward, the Maoist movement spread from Andhra and Bihar to tribal areas, including in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. Adivasi supporters remain the critical constituency for the contemporary Maoist organization, whose mobilization strategy centers on constructing

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67 Chakrabarty, Communism in India, 2014.
bases in rural areas and transforming them first into guerrilla zones and then into liberated zones, seizing portions of territory, with the goal of encircling the cities and seizing political power.

A number of sects have selected varying roads to revolutionary action. The CPI (ML) People’s War Group (PWG), founded in April 1980, is the underground organization that emerged out of the Telangana movement. PWG is considered the thread of the movement that continued some of Charu Mazumdar’s political strategies, including rejecting participation in parliamentary politics. It has a wide base of support among peasants and tribals in many states, including parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Bihar. The PWG’s merger with the MCC in 2004 – including the fusion of the two groups’ armed wings – yielded a unified CPI (Maoist) party and a fighting force of about 3500. A second Naxalite thread, the CPI (ML) Liberation, privileges mass organization and participates in elections. Its mass groups include trade unions, women’s, student’s, and peasants’ associations, and they organize throughout the country. CPI (ML) Liberation, based in Bihar, plays a role in state politics; it considers itself an open political party, seeking to pursue mass politics through parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means. A third thread, the new CPI (ML) headed by Kanu Sanyal, participates actively in electoral politics and relies on the mass actions of its allied organizations in Andhra Pradesh, such as the Raitu Coolie Sangham (Peasant Labor Organization), the AP Federation of Trade Unions, the People’s Democratic Students’ Union, and the Shtree Vimukti Sanghatana (Women’s Liberation Organization). The CPI

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(ML) New Democracy, part of the ML thread, combines underground organizing with open social and political programs.

Overall, relations between social movements – including low-caste, agrarian, and tribal rights organizations – and the Maoist rebels have varied widely. The periods following both the Emergency and the neoliberal reforms initiated in the early 1990s generated favorable conditions for the Naxalites to engage in party building and expand their mobilization. Beyond being able to respond to tribal and low-caste citizens’ grievances, the rebels have in some areas offered concrete social programs and helped to ensure improved livelihoods for tribals, for instance, reducing contractors’ exploitation of tendu leaf laborers. Such campaigns for civil liberties, human rights, and economic justice are efforts that rebels share with some civil society and social movements, particularly in recent years. The Telangana movement for statehood evoked this kind of collaboration at certain moments during the last fifty years, as student movements, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), and tribal and Dalit advocates framed the autonomy struggle as a vehicle for articulation of peasants’ and workers’ interests. The economic distribution of wealth and welfare in Andhra Pradesh favored the coastal regions and Hyderabad, while Telangana’s communities remained disadvantaged in terms of economic opportunities and social investment.

The ideological orientation of Andhra Maoists, which has in recent years enabled more collaborative political mobilization of tribals, has drawn less on a guerrilla warfare mentality and more on the openings for political change in a system dominated by state capitalism and foreign investment in mining in rural areas. Political organization over time by the Maoists has helped enable mobilization for a separate state. This may, in fact, be a
strategic choice, in addition to a commitment to ideological flexibility. Gudavurthy argues that the Maoist movement should “privilege other forms of struggle, not just accept them.”

The “social left” in Kerala – a collection of groups and individuals not formally tied to any political party – has played a prominent role in the history of debate over social reforms and radical politics. In the 1970s, local scholars argue, a rich environment for political debate pervaded Kerala, driven by the social Left in its search for “a better ideological alternative” to the institutionalized Left. These groups’ cultural critiques centered on developing an alternative space for the political participation and advancement of workers and peasants. The Naxalites in Kerala joined hands with the social Left, evidently in an effort to pursue a sort of left politics that would be distinct from the compromising and revisionist leftists in state government.

In West Bengal, Maoists have at times allied with social movements and with political parties. But the mutual persecution of one another’s forces by the Maoist and more centrist strands of the communist Left produced a corrosive legacy. The Left Front government penetrated and co-opted many civil society organizations, alliances which sought to destabilize and repress Naxalite insurgent operations during the 1970s and 1980s. In contrast to Andhra Pradesh, where many leaders of Dalit and low-caste struggles and human rights groups have in the past been part of the Maoist movement, social organizations in West Bengal since the 1970s have been persecuted by the state government and police. Still, peasant activism and mobilization by Naxalites in West

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69 Gudavurthy, “Democracy Against Maoism,” 73.
Bengal share targeted constituents and modes of organizing for land reform and redistribution, but in an often hostile context in which a CPI-M government has had incentives to compete with rebels for the support of tribals and rural residents, and the repressive capacity to institute hegemonic control and polarization. The culture of protest and social mobilization that prevailed in the 1960s, in particular in Kolkata, was transformed by the influence of the Left Front, through police action, corruption, and brutal violence against Naxalites in 1971. While connections among Andhra and Telangana social organizations and Maoists have historically been more fluid, Gudavurthy makes a distinction between “mass organizations,” which may have some ties to Maoists, and “direct fronts.” Mass groups do not have real autonomy and instead act as “cover organizations.” They harbor ideological differences with the Maoist approach, but these are frequently silenced; the strategic ambiguity of these individuals and groups and their links with the rebels may be weakening the rebels’ overall ability to communicate and embody a vision of political struggle, whether it involves the use of arms or not.

When Maoist rebels embrace ideological interpretation that facilitates mass movement building and articulation across sectors, classes, and castes, as they did in Telangana and in the post-reform period of the 1990s and early 2000s when expanding state and market forces generated structural conditions amenable to mobilization of tribal peasants, then we observe greater collaboration with civil society and a more open approach to organizing. These patterns suggest that the role of ideology as a base, unifying element of the Maoist project is significant. The causal role that ideology plays merits more

72 Gudavurthy, “Democracy Against Maoism,” 73. Interviews I conducted in Andhra Pradesh support this claim.
intricate attention in sub-national comparative studies of the Maoist movement. While in general their broad ideological program of addressing inequality, injustice, and the systematized suffering of peasants attracts support from tribal and low-caste Indians in many areas of the country, Maoists in different sects and organizations interpret their mission differently – particularly on the questions of whether to engage in violence and parliamentary politics. Their responses are evident in the forms of civilian mobilization that emerge, but the movement has failed, so far, to respond wholly to the question of compatibility, coexistence, or mutual exclusivity of violence and status quo politics. However, in practice, their answer is that the ‘people’s democratic struggle’ may take hybrid forms and require a range of alliances with social organizations, mass movements, and political parties – particularly when structural factors like land encroachment and extractive industry undermine peasants’ struggles for protection of rights and equality.

Amid the expansion of political rights and participation of tribal and low-caste citizens enacted in the 1980s and 1990s through parliamentary seat reservations and special positions for Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) citizens in local governments, consistent support among tribals for the Maoist movement demonstrates the coexistence of violent and nonviolent forms of political mobilization – and, indeed, both the open and “clandestine connections” between these kinds of participation. The continued relevance of the Maoists shows that the economic and political opportunities of the poorest and most marginalized Indians remain meager due to structural and systematic inequalities, corruption, and illegal encroachment on their lands. In some areas, the Maoists

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have established parallel states in some parts of the “tribal belt.”

In the context of expanded democratic opportunities for lower-caste citizens, Adivasis are not mobilized by parties in the ways that other minorities are, and their interests are not articulated by conventional political actors. As a result, some argue, tribals’ support for Maoists permits at least some way of claiming rights, resources, and autonomy. But the absence of the Indian state is not complete in tribal zones, even in environments where the Maoists have generated considerable support. Tribal and low-caste participation in elections is high, reaching nearly seventy percent turnout in some districts, and the state mobilizes people in tribal areas through development projects, security measures, and social welfare programs.

The confluence of opportunities for tribals to engage with the state and anti-state forces – the local Maoist movement and civil society organizations – demonstrates the fluid nature of mobilization in some areas in which insurgents are active. While a few Maoist organizations currently contest elections, ideologically most sects have centered on rejection of the parliamentary system. However, at this stage, the Maoists call for the boycott of elections as a kind of ritual – even though they know the boycott will not fulfill its purpose. One analyst argues that the Maoist movement has opened up political space in India “by keeping the state and capital at bay.” In this way, the Maoists are preventing “the statisation of democracy.” The processes by which rebels mobilize – and the solidarity, agency, and consciousness that participants generate through their actions in

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77 Gudavarthy, “Democracy Against Maoism,” 70.
support of the movement – should inform our theories of civilian mobilization in war, which call for greater attention to the role of ideology in shaping political struggles, which have their own local histories.

**Conclusion**

Differences in revolutionary ideas and practices over time changed rebels’ engagement with civilians and other political organizations over time – and their involvement in electoral politics. Collaboration among different kinds of organizations – violent, nonviolent, local, national, separatist and classist, legal and illegal – aids our understanding of people’s participation in politics. India’s violent and contested politics of state formation in the 1940s and 1950s affected the kinds of mobilization that emerged before and after independence, and the foundational philosophies embedded in the constitution – including state protection of disadvantaged minorities – are reflected in both insurgents’ and state counterinsurgents’ notions of citizenship and governance. The current confluence of participatory opportunities, particularly in tribal areas, points to the fluidity of political participation and its connections to the practice of democratic politics. While many tribals do not reject participation in elections and state institutions, some sympathize with the Maoists’ articulation of mass movements and defense of land and resources in the forests of central and eastern India.

The diverse forms of cooperation among mass social and political organizations and Communist rebels that fueled the Telangana struggle and the insurgency’s subsequent engagement with nascent democratic politics illustrate the historically uncharted path of
communist politics in a new Indian state. Gudavurthy notes that “memory and political consciousness” link the struggles that occurred in Telangana in the past with today’s mobilization. In Andhra Pradesh, this resulted in the achievement of Telangana’s statehood after a prolonged battle which began in the 1940s and ended in 2014, in which many organizations and constituencies collaborated and drew on various violent and nonviolent methods. Many leaders of human rights groups, Dalit and low-caste struggles, and pro-Telangana groups have collaborated with the Maoist movement in Andhra Pradesh. As civilian participation in the Andhra Mahasabha and Telangana armed struggle showed, the blurred boundaries of political action are evident in people’s participation in various groups. People belong to and contribute to the efforts of what are considered “legal” political organizations and parties, and this engagement is not mutually exclusive of participation in “illegal” organizations that employ violence. Contributing to the struggle affords the participant a kind of productive agency and solidarity that catalyzes the creation and continuity of other movements and parties, even if those organizations adopt different forms and methods. Understanding how interstitial modes of participation develop through the collaboration of mass movements in “less-structured and politically tenuous spaces”\(^78\) may help researchers understand how violence and non-violence engages the state and its relations of power.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 68.
Chapter 6: Juxtaposing mobilization for violence and rebellion over time and space: civilian resistance and reclamation of politics

“Compañeras y compañeros, colleagues, comrades, who have come from different provinces, from different campesino communities, from different unions…. In difficult circumstances, we need leaders, with commitment, with the ability to exercise their power, who can bring change, who can allow everyone to have a voice.”

Inviting the leaders of all the organizations who were represented at the meeting to walk to the stage, the announcer articulated the presence of each group: the Agrarian Federation of Rumimaki, the provincial federations of Sandia, Azángaro, Huancané, and San Román, the Departmental Association of Peasant Women…

As the announcer paused, the lights in the auditorium went out.

This gathering of the Departmental Peasant Federation of Puno (FDCP) brought out from their farms and shops hundreds of Puñenos – the enormous banner heralding the meeting’s theme, “Causes and consequences of the agrarian reform – debate and analysis” beckoned attendees, the recognizable scholarly profile of José Carlos Mariátegui overseeing the proceedings from the banner’s corner. During the conference, which took place in July 2013, the farmers and activists in attendance were thinking about the details and demands of the process of land reform begun over forty years before by the military government.
The darkness, for its part, seemed like a hiccup more or less expected by the attendees. Rosa Cachi, “our sister from the women’s peasant organization,” ascended to the stage. The light returned to the room after a few minutes and the sounds of flipping switches had passed. Different organizations’ leaders made brief introductory statements. “The CGTP demands unity with the workers and those in the rural sector.” “We are going to bring the struggle to the national level,” Cachi urged.

A local lawyer and politician, Alberto Quintanilla, chronicled briefly the history of agrarian reform in Peru, mentioning other countries that have undertaken restructuring programs, like Bolivia in the early 1950s, and Lenin’s efforts, which were of a different kind altogether.

The colonial roots of concentration of resources, including land, lay in the exploitation of the Spaniards and the formation of haciendas, Quintanilla explained. It was a narrative with which the farmers were familiar. This system ensured that “the best lands” were concentrated in the hands of the estate owners – the hacendados – and the land overall belonged to very few people. Those who worked the land did not own it.

General Velasco’s government expropriated the big estates and handed them over to peasant communities. The government paid the landowners in the form of bonds.

“Qué cosa es un bono? What is a bond?”

It’s like a check, a title of value, Quintanilla continued, and it has different stages of maturity. By now, in 2013, all the bonds have been executed. But the landowners have not received payment.
Quintanilla’s explanation of the reform bonds owed to the ex-landowners was even, fair-handed, his words suggesting that a comprehensive history was needed if the analytical exchange anticipated by the meeting’s planners were to come to fruition. Quintanilla experienced the sharp political edges of the land reform issue over many years as a United Left (IU) councilman in Puno. The thirty years are up, he states flatly – and now the funds that the government essentially loaned to the peasant communities to buy out the landowners’ estates have come due.

A rooster crows somewhere near the front of the auditorium – it’s the voluble and persistent ring of someone’s mobile phone.

As a matter of principle, many campesinos rejected the obligation to repay the landowners the monetary value of the reform bonds.

Moises Sosa, the FDCP Secretary-General appears young, a small, agile man with a dark hat and black leather jacket, stepping up and speaking clearly into the microphone. He is accustomed to being listened to. Citing the exploitation of the colonial land tenure system and the tradition of resistance embodied by Incan warrior Tupac Amaru, he urges that the bonds not be repaid. He intends for the defiance in his words to infect others. Revolution is now on the table.

“For me, the landowners never had a just claim to ownership.” “Título justo.”

Former head of the FDCP Héctor Cruz reminds his colleagues and the audience members that governance was not democratic in those days when landowners gained their power. Not only were farm workers oppressed, but the droughts, the lack of food to feed mouths…

“The agrarian debt is unpayable,” Cruz asserts.
Rosa Cachi pointed to an urgent moral need to intensify the peasants’ articulation of demands – given the high stakes of their struggle – to elevate their statements to the national level. “Our parents and grandparents have been sacrificed.”

The conversation moved beyond the roundtable voices to include those in the audience, where nursing babies and mothers in woolen sweaters populated the seats alongside older men struggling to hear the words emanating from the stage. A participant who identifies himself as from Azángaro refers to the unfulfilled conditions of the government loans on which the reform debt was propagated. “We’ve not received training on how to improve the agriculture, the animal husbandry. We have a right to water ownership.”

He translates his appeals to Quechua, so that all can understand. “We have to be alert, attentive.”

A representative from Ilave province, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, in the Aymara zone, raises his voice. “For 500 years we have suffered. The government has to listen to the voice of our protest.” The Aymara and the Quechua people must work together now more than ever, he added, urging national strikes, work stoppages, and legal appeals in response to the debt issue.

He reminds everyone in the room that dignity is at stake.

Amanda, a round woman dressed in black, a leader who traveled from the jungle of northern Puno, brushed dirt, perhaps a few crumbs, from the table on the stage where she sat, staring undaunted out at the auditorium. Her face was framed symmetrically by dark braids and a hat. Her eyes pierced the lens of my camera, peering out from the back rows of a warm, shifting crowd.
Resistance amid violence: reclaiming participation in community politics

Thirty years after Shining Path began its incursions into parts of Puno, peasant associations continue to catalyze political support for legal reform and the political and social rights of indigenous citizen-farmers. Today, Puno’s departmental peasant federation, the FDCP, helps people solve disputes over land ownership and use, organizes trainings and events, and connects leaders with laborers. The handful of FDCP employees in the city of Puno shares a modest office with indigenous congresswoman Claudia Coari. In Sandia, a tropical province in northern Puno where legal struggles over drug cultivation, mining, land use, environmental destruction, and corruption persist, an FDCP lawyer advises landowners and businesspeople about their disputes and options. The debate over the bonds owed to landowners is emblematic of the kinds of struggles in which Puno’s peasants and the FDCP are engaged today. The federation constitutes the legacy of a well-articulated, mobilized civil society and Left party activists who demanded and implemented several land reforms. Since the late 1980s, an emphasis on governance through regionalization – a kind of devolution of power to the provinces – sought to hand more power to ordinary people. This has created incentives for both expanded institutionalized participation of local governments and civil society organizations in decision-making and the handling of swollen coffers by corrupt local authorities.

Articulated participation in Puno has remained steady over time, continuing to give political voice to varied groups and facilitating shared struggles among different citizens – rural peasants, urban workers, students, and merchants. The political axes on which mobilization turned during the war – indigeneity, agrarian and labor rights, and inequality – continued to be salient during future decades. But the conjuncture of those causes in the
1970s and 1980s – and a range of nonviolent Left activists’ ability to articulate the shared political identities of Puneños from different regions – led to a fortified response to the senderistas who tried to generate support from peasants and urban dwellers in the department. The response demonstrated the existence of a built-in resistance, which involved integrated political actions that showed how cross-cutting mobilization could reject violence.

In many regions during the war, Sendero rebels’ relationships with local organizations and political parties affected the kinds of participation that were available to ordinary people. The nature of rebels’ ideas about the exclusive identity of an insurgent and the movement’s dire conception of militancy were reflected in their antagonistic relations with other leftist organizations. Framed as repudiation of status quo bourgeois institutions, Sendero sought to break down governance entities like communal assemblies and repurposed local voluntary associations. While it had formed an integral part of the fertile, if divided, Left for a decade, Sendero closed its networks during the 1970s and early 1980s as it prepared to launch armed struggle, separating itself from political society in deliberate and significant ways. This alienation of other Left actors by Sendero extended to civilians in some urban and rural communities. In Puno, resistance to rebel activities emerged early as an integrated response on the part of civil society and the Church, in contrast to Ayacucho, where a lack of cross-cutting social movements and mobilizing institutions facilitated rebels’ cooptation of social space. While participation in Sendero’s violent order reflects a lack of articulated mobilization in local and regional civil society – and the absence of the state in remote communities – resistance to the insurgency shows how people claim – and reclaim – agency in ways that illuminate how local politics works.
As peasants in Ayacucho experienced the effects of Sendero’s involvement in their towns and their own participation in rebel activities, some communities gradually began rejecting its influence on their lives and families. As the experience of Hualla shows, even as residents participated in the Sendero movement, they gradually withdrew from its overbearing grip and strengthened their resistance against this new form of corrosive politics, which derided and destroyed their social fabric. Even as participation with rebels catalyzed opportunities for hidden transcripts of resistance, Sendero was stripping those spaces of their meaning. Even as they supported the movement, Huallinos employed strategies of ambiguity and community members were resisting the security forces’ and rebels’ repressive presence and actions. While armed opposition to rebels in Hualla emerged in the form of rondas campesinas – peasant patrols that Peruvian soldiers sometimes helped facilitate, this communal decision to enact self-protection did not occur until contestation over local authority had engendered punitive violence and insecurity. Rebels’ universalizing notions about belonging to the insurgency and their relentless focus on a violent breakdown of society led Huallinos, eventually, to oppose its logic and actions. Residents of Hualla and other communities in the neighboring provinces of Víctor Fajardo and Huancasancos developed different communal strategies in the face of Sendero violence and governance.

The way Juan Palomino tells it, the story of Sacsamarca’s resistance was a coordinated response to an institutionalized upending of traditional hierarchy and communal modes of decision-making.¹ The town of Sacsamarca lies at an altitude of over 11,000 feet, east across the valley from Hualla; mountains and moors occupy the gulf.

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¹ Author interview with Juan Palomino*, Sacsamarca, Ayacucho, Mar. 2014.
between the towns. The rebels arrived, armed, calling the community to a meeting, in May 1982. By October, Sendero cadre had established a new political order in the town, which meant the appointment of new authorities and monitoring of everyday life. Early that month, a secondary school opened, with thirty students. Don Juan was thirteen years old. Parents found the hammer and sickle drawn on chalkboards and in students’ notebooks: rebel cadre were teaching political ideas to students.²

Sendero closed off commercial routes and access to markets in the zone, forcing residents to produce for self-sufficiency. Rebels seized cattle from both traditional landowners and communal farms and distributed it to those people who had been driven out of valley towns like Sarhua, Huamanquiquia, and Hualla.³ Rebels exacerbated conflicts among landholding families and peasant communities, and within communities their presence and objectives fueled resentment and confusion. From perches on the mountains that surround the town, rebels forced the men to keep watch day and night for the arrival of soldiers. Initially, some Sacsamarquinos joined Sendero to pursue their own interests and settle local scores. People who did not belong to the PCP-SL received threats for not joining, and their names filled the black lists that the rebel leaders maintained. Sendero’s selection of young rebel recruits as the heads of the newly-formed comité popular engendered dissatisfaction among members of the community.

“Our authorities became a little isolated,” Palomino recalled, ejected from positions they were holding legitimately, having been selected by communal assembly. Describing the increasingly menacing rule imposed by Sendero in the town, he said, Sacsamarquinos

² Ibid.
³ EPAF, De víctimas a ciudadanos, 67-8.
complied because they had no choice in the face of threats of execution – the punishment for not supporting the Party or for asking questions.

“We didn’t say anything because what would become of politics?”

They put up with it for almost a year, Don Juan said. Until that moment members of the community had not said anything, out of fear. “Then we began to organize. Things couldn’t go on like that, you know?”

In Don Juan’s home, with his small daughter playing on the floor nearby, a fly buzzed persistently as he spoke. Someone in another room was whistling. Events that occurred thirty years earlier seemed to occupy his mind as I asked about them. He spoke quickly, breathlessly at times, adding details but not dwelling on the emotions they brought with them. After the killing of Señor Fernandez in front of the church for complaining about a basic right, Sacsamarquinos started organizing. “Nobody said anything.” But everybody knew that was the moment when things changed. “‘We are not going to allow this,’ we said.”

About thirty Sacsamarquinos organized, mostly in the puna – the moorlands on the plains surrounding the village – at night. When the senderista cadre returned, the residents killed two of the leaders and captured the others. It was February 14, 1983 – el día de los enamorados – St. Valentine’s Day. “They killed them [the rebel leaders],” Don Juan said, “and the village rose up.”

“When politics came to town,” he said, we rebelled. “We did not subscribe to that politics,” he said, distinguishing Sacsamarca’s way of governing itself and making

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4 Ibid.
decisions communally from rebel-imposed order. The story is a much longer one, and it does not end peacefully for Sacsamarca or residents of neighboring communities, including Hualla. Sacsamarquinos’ efforts had immediate effects on rebel control and people’s political participation in Víctor Fajardo, the wider valley, and in Ayacucho. As part of the first wave of resistance against Sendero, Sacsamarca’s resistance engendered an angry response from rebel commanders at local and national levels. They planned attacks to avenge the rebellion of Sacsamarca, which resulted in a massacre at Lucanamarca in April 1983, in which 69 civilians were killed by Sendero cadre. Still, Sacsamarca holds onto its place in Peruvian history as the first town to take up arms against Sendero Luminoso.

Resistance against Sendero in the Pampas River valley shows the deeply political nature of civilians’ actions – whether active or passive, pronounced or ambiguous – in the presence of a rebel force. The decision to reject Sendero’s rule is rooted in local politics – and twin reclamations of local agency and justice. After two years of sustaining the rebels, Hualla’s less concrete resistance occurred through the actions of rondas campesinas and within the sphere of influence of the counterinsurgent forces – whose repressive tactics and use of forced disappearance may have sent some Huallinos back into the arms of violent rebels. Still, the rebels’ project clashed with peasants’ own practices of production, care for children and family, and networks of interaction and exchange. Senderistas’ demands on community members to be present at meetings, leave their lands and animals, and cease their market activity stood in sharp contrast to the needs and traditional practices of people in the region.
Arguments in context

The dissertation aims to make several claims about political violence, participation in it, and how we study these phenomena. These arguments emerge from immersion in the remembered and documented experiences of citizens of Peruvian towns, and the recorded memories of activists and militants who organized rebellion in southern India. In the remainder of the chapter, I summarize the arguments and their implications, and reflect on several elements which spark curiosity and demand deeper investigation in both contexts: the role of place, counterinsurgency, and forensic politics in studying violence and war.

My principal argument is that pre-war social and political dynamics, specifically the integration of peasants into expressive political networks and the level of coordination among leftist organizations, affected the responses of communities to, and participation in, wartime violence and politics. Primarily indigenous and tribal citizens, living geographically and institutionally distant from the state, made decisions about participating in, fleeing, or resisting violent changes to their local political environments, decisions which derived from their perceptions of power and community. Strategic choices by rebels, which depend on their interpretations of ideology and willingness to build a broad-based or an exclusive movement, significantly shape the political conditions and opportunities that civilians face.

I argue that patterns of civilians’ responses differed in Ayacucho, Puno, and Telangana, and that understanding this variation is critical to explaining political mobilization in both violent and nonviolent contexts. In Ayacucho, local political actors, marginalized and disarticulated by divisive pre-war mobilization by the Left, collapsed in the face of Sendero pressure, and the rebels constructed support for their violent campaign
in many districts of the department through both persuasion and intimidation. In generating and enforcing local participation, Sendero insurgents drew on their previous connections to civil society, but also enervated those ties through its ideological commitment to violence. In contrast, Puno’s political and social organizations demonstrated resilience as they encountered Sendero cadre, which resulted in exclusion of the rebels from the local political scene. How do we understand the divergent responses to rebels’ arrival? Integrated networks of activists and reformers helped catalyze peasants to express their political demands in ways that cut across identities, including indigeneity and class, in Puno. In the 1970s and 1980s, Ayacucho, on the other hand, lacked cross-cutting approaches to building a leftist front that articulated the needs of citizens.

Third, in Telangana during the mid-1940s, local activists, including members of the Communist Party, mobilized tribals and peasants in a massive cultural and social organization, the Andhra Mahasabha. Subsequently, communist organizers drew on this organization to build local networks that could be repurposed for armed struggle against local landowners and the ruling Nizam of Hyderabad. The varied responses of local actors and their approaches to revolution generated fluidity in the mode of mobilization – between committed nonviolent action to behind-the-scenes support and outright armed struggle. From the perspective of civilians, the aggregated, iterative effects of providing support to a pro-independence and cultural autonomy movement, which constituted the original and parallel motives of the Telangana armed rebellion, facilitated their participation in violent militancy as the movement evolved. Mobilization in Telangana, in contrast to both Ayacucho and Puno, exhibited a dynamism and ambiguity that originated in the multiplicity of motives for resistance and was sustained by the momentum of peasants’
agency in building a movement, even as it crossed the boundary lines of violence. Drawing on Kalyvas’ emphasis on the interaction between macro-level factors and “peripheral” and local factors in producing violence, I stress the significance of India’s post-World War II state formation process in shaping a kind of moving target: contestation over the form and nature of government affected both the object of the Telangana political struggle as well as the composition of alliances that the nascent communist movement was constructing.

People participated in distinct ways as rebels sought to establish violent movements in varied contexts, and these dynamics led to divergent trajectories and outcomes. Where communities drew on certain kinds of political resources – for instance, political networks that expressed peasants’ demands for reform and representation, and which emphasized commitment to democratic contestation over armed struggle – they could choose to resist rebel efforts to mobilize and enforce support. The existing structure of integrated Left networks in Puno prevented extensive penetration by rebels; in Ayacucho, on the other hand, social organization and order eroded in the face of strategic Sendero pressure, and people chose to support the rebel project. Militants in Telangana constructed a movement based on partnerships with tribal peasants who perceived meaning, simultaneously, in both their own continued participation in the communist movement and in powerful social and political organizations that maintained distance from violence. The fluidity of this active, simultaneous support, which originated in nonviolence but developed into a guerrilla movement through family and rural networks, was critical to the gains made by the Telangana rebels against landowners and the state. Rebels relied on practices and social

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5 Kalyvas, “The Ontology of “Political Violence.”
roles that had been molded by peasants’ participation in local networks, to steer the struggle into armed contestation.

**Implications and reflections**

First, the study mounts a critique of the dichotomous separation of politics and violence in social science scholarship and suggests that our ontologies of participation suffer from bifurcation. Studies of violence treat it as an aberration, rather than a manifestation of political action, ideas, and impulse. We frequently interpret violence as a deviation from the practice of “normal” functioning politics and a result of the failure of political institutions and processes.

In fact, participation constitutes a continuum of acts that may emerge as violent, illicit, licit, and non-violent at differing moments and in different social and cultural contexts. “Pluralist” democratic societies in particular – given the ability of citizens and activists to choose from a multiplicity of political behaviors, preferences, and allies – create conditions for violent challenges to inequality of rights, citizenship, and opportunity. I take up this underexplored aspect of violent pluralism by focusing on the changing roles of civil society as connecting ordinary citizens not only with state-administered politics, but with a diverse set of political groups that may represent them. At the moment of its return to electoral democracy after seventeen years, Peruvians experienced a violent insurgency with a history of intricate ties to the same Left actors that sought to contest politics at the polls. Ideological differences were consequential for explaining the different paths of the PCP-SL.
and the “legal Left” – but “clandestine connections”⁶ among mass movements and rebel actors greased the wheels of rebel organization and network-building. Broadening our concepts of political action means including different forms of mobilization that a range of agents undertake strategically, drawing on their roles in networks and their commitment to ideas as resources.

Another way in which politics and violence are inextricably connected emerges from an Independence-era uprising on the plains of southern India. The Telangana Peasant Rebellion demonstrates how violent mobilization and nonviolent action may, in fact, reinforce one another over time. During the mid-1940s, the networks through which people in Hyderabad state were engaged in cross-cutting mobilization for peasants’ rights, the equality struggles of minorities and women, and the nationalist cause were dense. The Andhra Mahasabha, founded in 1930 by the Congress Party, constituted a public space for people from different classes and backgrounds, an interactive hub, a site in which collaboration and debate took place. The organization facilitated “articulation” – a concept that aims to capture how individuals and groups are organized, cohesive, and expressive. The extent to which participation is articulated—which implies coordinated, communicative, and connected action among political groups—influences the ways in which opposition parties, civil society, the insurgency, and the state interact.

The Andhra Mahasabha collective constituted a site of articulation through which people organized to make particular political demands and take action. Later, when the Andhra communists adopted a more militant ideology, some of the same networks that organized against the Nizam produced ready recruits for armed mobilization in Telangana.

⁶ Auyero, Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina.
By participating in the Mahasabha and local *sanghams*, peasants encountered solidarity and agency in building a movement and making individual contributions. Critical to articulation is the role of social organizations in connecting and expressing the shared political interests and values of diverse constituencies, for instance, class-based groups, like peasants, urban workers, and miners. In Telangana, the “pleasure of agency” felt by participants and the sustained articulation among various sectors and classes catalyzed activists and peasants to shift their mode of mobilization from nonviolent to violent after the defeat of the Nizam. The “mixed-method” mobilization of the contemporary Maoist insurgents in Andhra Pradesh and its varied collaboration with rights, reform, and cultural organizations over time may be traced to the diverse articulation of the Telangana uprising and the consciousness it generated in tribal peasants.

Second, the study makes the case that ordinary people engaging in everyday politics form the ontological context that make violence and war compelling and puzzling. How people understand their roles and their participation – in labor networks, land cultivation, and community kitchens – helps the researcher comprehend how political violence upends these routine processes and how it operates through them. A disproportionate focus on rebel organizations and governance populates scholarship on civil wars; civilians are often conceived to be passive, pawns, and blank slates. But in both local communities and national institutions, the nature of political organization – and people’s very conceptualization of what politics signifies – help determine whether rebels will succeed in generating support and advancing their political project.

Historical processes of mobilization are expressed in cultural practices and rituals, but also in how people “do politics” – select or elect local authorities, solve collective
action problems, and enforce rules and order. Participation in violent rebellion may change over time; when communal values clash with rebel action and its consequences, civilians may withdraw their support or seek escape from political turmoil. Local histories of political organization and participation help contextualize people’s participation in rebel governance and violence: when politics came to town, how did ordinary people make sense of protecting and promoting their families and livelihoods in these changing contexts? It is not necessarily how much people participate in politics—but how they do—that helps explain the nature of social and political relations between rebels and civilians during wars. In particular, peasant politics has implications for indigenous groups in conflict and tension with the state. The study of peasants’ role in revolution faded, perhaps in line with the decline in rebels waging war against governments to establish socialist states – primarily with the end of the Cold War, with a few important exceptions. In both India and Peru, peasants’ roles as political actors and their struggles for full citizenship fuel their participation in supporting revolutionary groups.

Third, ideology and its manifestations in practice form part of the broader intellectual historical context during civil war and help determine how people participate in politics and violence. Insurgency frequently takes place against a backdrop of prolonged contestation over political ideas – intense struggle over the content of Left philosophies, mobilizing actions, and the use of violence colored this framework among activists and theorists in both contexts. An insurgency’s particular ideological interpretations and ideas about membership shape people’s participation in violence by influencing everyday social relations between rebels and civilians. Rebels’ “ideas in action” shape the kind of participation that results from their efforts to mobilize citizens. Sendero leader Abimael
Guzmán envisioned an instrumental role as executor of violence for “the peasantry,” an understanding that had direct results in communities where the rebels operated. The Party’s conception of membership was rigid and totalizing, requiring its recruits to abandon their families permanently. This ideological commitment emerged in the violence that highlands residents and young people carried out and suffered. Guzmán’s interpretations of dogma led to the Party’s separation from the thought and practice of much of the Left, and this, in turn, had searing effects on the kinds of political participation that civilians encountered during the war. It broke down local institutions and social ties, and left people with few alternatives to taking part in violence.

How broad-based the movement – and who should be the political agents of revolutionary change – are ideological questions that have long colored Marxist-Leninist theory, and they generated divisive controversy among rebels in Telangana who sought to carry out revolutionary struggle. A second tension between the decision to participate in the Indian state’s fledgling parliamentary institutions or pursue mass struggle outside the state was emerging as the Telangana struggle came to an end. Over the course of a few years, leaders’ contested decisions to shift the contours of the peasant campaign in the field, from a Soviet urban workers’ movement model to a Maoist embrace of guerrilla warfare, then to a Leninist approach adapted to India’s conditions ended the armed peasant struggle. In the context of local and national state formation, these decisions by party leaders set Indian communism – and the Maoist movement in particular – on a particular path, in which the tension between reformism and violent radicalism remains resolved. While Maoists’ ideological interpretations have varied over time and different sects, the peasant struggle in Telangana framed the participation of tribal and low-caste citizens in ways that have
sometimes diverged from and at other times complemented their mobilization for electoral politics and civil society. The result is a persistent radical movement that lacks unity and consistent support except in a few strongholds, and operates within the interstitial spaces where different kinds of political participation blend.

**Place, counterinsurgency, and forensic politics**

The site where the former military base Canaria once held detainees picked up from neighboring villages is now a green, pastoral field. A few foundational corner stones of a decayed building are the only remnants of a structure that housed soldiers and prisoners of war. When we enter the grounds, crossing over a threshold guarded by a large iron gate, which a local government official unlocks to let us in, we notice the trappings of Carnaval, which residents celebrated there a week or so before: pink, yellow, purple, orange ribbons linger on the trodden grass, comingled with plastic bottles and trash. The Carnaval festival is celebrated in Ayacucho before Holy Week with an elaborate tradition: people dance around a forty-foot tree (*la yunza*) that has been decorated with balloons, ribbons, and gifts, and chop it down, little by little, over the course of a night, taking turns in couples swinging an ax at the trunk as the dancing proceeds. Thirty years after the soldiers occupied the land, it is strewn with color, the remnants of celebration.

The official, and our guide, Señor Alvino, points to the soccer and basketball courts that share the expansive enclosure with the remnants of the base. Children played there, alongside grazing cows and sheep, since before the base was built in 1982.
Stepping unevenly on mounds of grass and mud, I am conscious of the bodies that were buried beneath our feet thirty years ago. Alvino was a student at the heavily politicized Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga in the eighties, when the pressure to join the Senderista project was strong.

He points beyond the frame of the grounds, gesturing toward the heights. The fields are located at 3,054 meters above sea level, about miles. He tells us that Sendero was focused on its access to the local mine, a rich source of dynamite, gasoline, and other provisions for manufacturing munitions. Senderista cadres negotiated access with the mine owners, threatening workers and recruiting them from Raccaya, the village surrounding the mine.

The road from Hualla south to the pueblo of Canaria winds along the edges of steep slopes, switchbacks bearing broad vistas of farm land. As we drove to the site of the base, rain began falling, and the sky darkened. *La lluvia macho* falls only at night, a travel companion tells me, rumbling, persistent, accompanied by thunder. During the day, the feminine rain – *la lluvia de embre* – falls quietly, a drizzle, mostly a bother.

The Comisaría looms confidently over the plaza in Canaria. Someone recently painted it a dark green-turquoise. Its mission is outlined in three words, painted in black letters: “God, Fatherland, Law.” The rain and the dark afternoon had driven most people from the plaza.

Hualla, a town which has had no comisaría – and no police presence for decades – experienced the law when members of the security forces arrived to investigate and arrest suspected “subversives.” Soldiers picked up fathers, schoolteachers, and young boys, and drove them in trucks across the roads that we had taken that morning. Their wives ran behind the trucks, following, screaming, outraged. Where would they be taken? When would they return?
Alvino remembers the patio that one encountered at the entrance of the base. He was brought in for an hour of questioning during the war. The soldiers – perhaps forty to fifty were there at a time – came from northern Peru, from the coast, he recalled. “They were not from this area.”

The detainees, for their part, came from Hualla, Tiquihua, Cayara, Chincheros…

The importance of place stands out in the study of political violence, as a marker of physicality and a placeholder for memory. Beyond rough, mountainous terrain, which may favor rebels’ odds of hiding and outsmarting state security forces, as the argument goes, place matters. It has implications for how everyday events happen, as it shapes movement, ritual, and exchange among people and communities. Words and language mark places, memories of places, and what happened in these places. Deep dislocation occurs during war – including physical and geographical movement and social alienation, taking people from “their” places, homes, loved one. Still, the everyday wounds, fears, and escapes that violence brings – occur in intimate spaces. Sendero entered homes, communities, farmlands as strangers – as if they were their own, confiscating cattle and goods and forcing civilians to feed and house them, a kind of secret that everybody knew. These encounters happened by the hearth, the town square, in a classroom. Ailamma, who joined the Telangana sangham and lost several family members to the violent backlash from local landlords, opened her home for months to host the movement – she fed and sheltered the local fighters and activists, at great risk to her relatives. She lost her land when they fought too hard

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against the authorities. These events, violence, violations, remain in these places.

**Counterinsurgency as everyday politics**

Counterinsurgency, too, demands greater attention than the scope of this study permitted. The role of the state in war, more broadly, as both a political and military force, requires deeper examination. If we conceive of the state, in one sense, as a “provider” of politics, it failed in this role in Peru, particularly in Ayacucho, where its negligent absence helped create a vacuum of governance and development. Burt argues that in addition to Sendero Luminoso, the Peruvian government was invested in a violent state-building project that intensified considerably with the election of Alberto Fujimori as president in 1990 and the crimes and graft that the ensuing dictatorship facilitated. Counterterrorism, in this case, reflected not only the “politics of abandon” evident in the Andean highlands, but the lack of strong institutions and accountability in national politics which made it possible and acceptable. Fujimori dissolved state institutions and controlled the media while engaging in large-scale corruption and extrajudicial killings. The practice of counterinsurgency makes plain the relationship between the state and citizens, bringing to the surface the issues that paved the road to war – racism, absence of rights, unfulfilled citizenship – and the ways in which war took place.

Peru’s self-defense forces, which varied in form from town to town, played a specific counterinsurgent role during the war, asserting the centrality of extant local politics in the face of efforts to coopt or destroy it. The patrols varied in their alignment with the state, and some of these bodies existed before the war began. In some districts, these patrols – *rondas campesinas* – drew on their roots as institutional responses to crime, injustice, and
corruption to mount different kinds of wartime responses to violence. In others, they abused their organic, indigenous authority. Their actions toward achieving a wartime order constituted an opportunity for political participation for civilians. Scholars have begun to take up the question of how the rondas’ efforts relate to histories of local politics in different areas of Peru,\textsuperscript{8} but much remains to be explored.

\textit{Forensic politics as a research agenda}

While quantifying or defining people’s support for rebel movements may be difficult, the study of war and politics demands that we contextualize people’s participation historically and spatially, and allow people’s remembrances to tell us something about their political behavior. In a post-war social environment in which stigma, shame, and “remembering to forget”\textsuperscript{9} pervade people’s motives, understanding the events and emotions they recount and the ways in which they deploy their memories is critical. Searches for mass graves and human remains from decades-old crimes catalyze activism and new forms of political participation in the aftermath of atrocities. How do victims and citizens demand information when the state is the ultimate legal arbiter of the crimes for which it was responsible? This is a political process with many challenges for justice and accountability, and one that has drawn fault lines in Peru’s and other societies where disappearances and killings have occurred without completed investigations.


\textsuperscript{9} González, \textit{Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes}.  

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Studying forensic politics means answering questions not only of state culpability for crimes, but the ongoing negotiation of the political consequences of the violence of war. How bodies are counted, named, and used as a focal point for long-standing struggles and debates over citizenship and defense of individual rights are fundamentally political questions. In May 2016, one month before the second-round presidential runoff election, campaign workers from Fuerza Popular, the party of candidate Keiko Fujimori, spray-painted in bright orange the letters of her name on a lofty wall of rocks that overlooks a highway just outside the edges of Lima. Victims’ groups reacted immediately to the affront to their dignity and memory: the bright orange paint was sprayed at the site where the bodies of nine university students and a professor were deposited in July 1992. The massacre involved the abduction of these ten people from La Cantuta university in Lima, and their torture and killing by the Grupo Colina, a death squad created and empowered by the government of Alberto Fujimori, in an effort to rid Peru of “terrorists.” In the current context, twenty years after La Cantuta happened, the ambiguity of the propaganda action by Fujimori’s party, whether or not it was purposeful, constitutes a direct insult to the relatives of victims of the massacre. It was a reminder of what is possible and what may once again take place in Peru – unmitigated state violence with no answers ever given or responsibility ever proven. When the signs were visible, the members of the La Cantuta memory association protested immediately, holding the familiar photographs of their loved ones and signs: “We do not forget La Cantuta.” “No to Impunity – the Family members will not be silenced!” Wounds are inscribed repeatedly through the practice of politics, each time taking on a different meaning. The family members filed a complaint and whitewashed the campaign signs.
As a research agenda, forensic politics poses several questions. First, how do bodies tell us about people’s participation during the war? Second, how do the processes of unearthing bodies and identifying them help us understand what happened during the war? How do they create, stifle, or mediate opportunities for civilians’ political participation and agency after the war? The availability or obscurity of evidence is a political outcome, and relies on protection of certain actors by the state, military, and other organizations. The argument behind transitional justice policies is simply that generating evidence and prosecuting perpetrators will allow not only for fulfillment of the basic right to know what happened, but that the more we see of these processes in which killers are held legally responsible, it will have a deterrent effect and prevent future atrocities. It is too early to evaluate this claim. But the processes may have more to tell us about the political failures and workings of power in society. After war, searching, finding, naming, and enumerating bodies constitute processes that are not divorced from the origin and manifestation of the killing – in fact, they remain inseparable from the political process in which violence occurred. For this reason, finding clandestine graves, remote burial grounds, and remains scattered in open fields forms part of the work of understanding the political dimensions of war. What do bodies show about the politics of participation in killing?

Physical remains and the searches to uncover them may illustrate the politics of state-citizen relationships in several ways. Found and observed in context, bodies and traces of individual persons – clothing, shoes, papers they carried – may show what happened. They offer marks and moldings that may include physical evidence, proof, and rarely, explanations. Bodies may defy the categorical distinctions on which we rely in telling political stories, providing evidence that the identities ascribed to victims and perpetrators
may be misleading or wrong. Finding bodies, too, may show that events took place in particular settings – by a stream, so many kilometers away from an empty corral, or in this village, and not another. We pay attention to how sites of killings relate to one another, bringing social and political context to bear on the events in specific, distinct ways: how far were they found from other sites of violence and other graves? How far was an individual from her home, her town? Did the geographical location of the event contribute to a pattern of violence during a given period of time? A year after the La Cantuta killings, a reporter found a set of keys at the suspected site where the students’ bodies were allegedly dumped on the outskirts of Lima, which provided investigators information on the identities of the bodies, though they were mostly destroyed.¹⁰ Soon after, the mother of the student, Armando Amaro Cóndor, watched a prosecutor turn the key in the door to her home. The door opened.

In April 2009, Alberto Fujimori was convicted in a Peruvian court of ordering the massacre of the students and their professor at La Cantuta, and is now imprisoned for this and other crimes. In many other states, citizens are searching for the bodies of those they have lost during wars, occupations, and atrocities. Studying forensic politics helps researchers understand how violence shapes people’s participation by creating political entities, alliances, and discourses that do not exist outside of the experience and memory of violence. A wartime military base in the mountains may hold a crematorium within it, as did the base in Accomarca, Vilcáshuaman, Ayacucho. The former base is now the planned site for a lugar de memoria, to enshrine the building’s remains as a memorial to the

community members killed there. Violeta Berríos, a woman in Chile visits the Atacama Desert daily, sifting among sands and stones for the bones of her brother, missing since the 1970s.\(^\text{11}\) How people remember and commemorate violence as it occurred in their families and communities has real implications for how they view and participate in politics and comprehend the state’s role in their lives. Sometimes their experience with war confirms their comprehension of the state, and other times it upends this conception.

In addition to constituting evidence in the pursuit of justice for crimes carried out by state and non-state actors, bodies serve as a basis for government policies of reparations and remembrance. The state participates in naming bodies and handing them over to families who have been waiting, and saying these remains belong to this person, this was what he was wearing on this day. He left for school and did not return on September 6, 1983. The name that belonged to a living body adopts a position in a documented chronology of violence. Some families, however, do not receive this information or compensation for damages, and many do not receive state acknowledgment that the violence took place, that the person who died lived.

In Sri Lanka, memorializing the LTTE rebels – and civilians disappeared by the military after surrendering – remains illegal. The majority of the electorate opposes accountability efforts for mass atrocities, and political polarization prevents minority Tamils, who comprise less than 15 percent of the population, from demanding that crimes be investigated and former government perpetrators held accountable.\(^\text{12}\) On the grounds of


a prison in Bialystok, Poland, investigators are unearthing the bodies not only of victims of 
Nazi and Soviet actions during World War II, but of the Soviet-backed communist 
government after the war ended. Many Poles would prefer to leave the secrets in the 
ground.\textsuperscript{13} In 2013, a Guatemalan court convicted former general Efraín Rios Montt of 
genocide for ordering the killings of 1,711 people of the Ixil Maya ethnic group from 1982-
1983. Two weeks later, the genocide sentence was voided and the proceedings declared 
illegal.\textsuperscript{14} How the occurrence of violence – precisely how it happened and how it is 
remembered and told – shapes the politics of post-war life and society deserves the 
attention of researchers. It can tell us much about how the practice of politics makes 
violence possible and how the state wields violence – and its occurrence in the past – to 
pursue political ends.

\textsuperscript{14} “Guatemala annuls Rios Montt’s genocide conviction,” BBC News, May 21, 2013, 
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