EPILOGUE

INTERNAL-EXTERNAL CONTINUUM: A TENTATIVE THEORY OF SOLIDARITY
Caste, class and gender movements in Andhra Pradesh witnessed a complex dynamics of fragmentation, autonomy and solidarity. This work was an attempt to study these processes, both at the theoretical and empirical levels. The primary concern of enquiry was to comprehend whether the social movements were, in the process of forging social transformation, relating to each other as possible allies to forge solidarity or as potential contenders or movements that replicate one or the other dominant structure in the society. We could draw the conclusion that, in the initial stages of the growth of each of these movements, in the early eighties, they demanded autonomy from each other, in a manner that strictly bifurcated or fragmented them. This process of potential fragmentation could be observed at three different but inter-connected levels—material, discursive and strategic. However, with the decade of nineties, there was a reversal to this process of bifurcation, as ‘internal’ movements demanding autonomy emerged in each of these three movements. These ‘internal’ movements raised all those issues, neglected by each of the caste, class and gender movements in their attempt to establish autonomy and bifurcate the practices. Towards the end of the decade of nineties each movement, in order to negotiate with the newly emerging ‘internal’ movements began to address all those issues that traditionally belonged to the other ‘external’ movements. It is this process of addressing all the issues—political, economic and cultural—by each of the movement, drew all the three movements together and opened radically new and substantive possibilities of durable solidarity between them. Thus, the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ dynamics are therefore the basis of an emerging theory and practice of solidarity between the social movements in Andhra Pradesh. While part I section elaborated the theory of solidarity, part II, traced the history of the Dalit, Naxalite and Women’s movements and the emerging practice of solidarity.

During the decade of 1980’s, caste and gender movements demanded autonomy from the class based Communist movement and gradually emerged as autonomous social movements. However, the demand for autonomy initially bifurcated or fragmented the practice of all the three movements. Women’s movement had its roots and began as part
of the Telangana armed struggle in Andhra Pradesh. They raised all those issues within
the movement that affected the women cadre and were neglected by the party, either as
‘personal’ or ‘moral’ issues. They questioned women being relegated to secondary and
supportive roles; demanded a ‘political’ view of issues such as, childbirth, reproduction,
issue of unmarried women, division of labour, etc. By 1970s, when separate women’s
organisations, such as POW emerged, demanding autonomy from the radical left politics,
young similar cultural issues such as work culture, sexual harassment within the ML
organisations, etc. Even during the anti-liquor movement in the early nineties, women’s
groups mobilised women exclusively around the issues of family, domestic violence, etc.
Thus the women’s movement demarcated and got restricted to struggling for issues
within the ‘socio-cultural’ domain. Similarly, the dalit movement further bifurcated the
process of social transformation by exclusively addressing the issues within the ‘cultural-
political’ domain. Dalit Mahasabha was born struggling for issues such as self-dignity,
political power to the dalits, and characterising caste within the base-superstructure
model as both base and superstructure. They neglected various (economic) class related
demands for the upliftment of the dalits. These demarcations were a reaction to the
Communist movement’s exclusive focus on land reforms, struggles for minimum wages,
armed struggle for capture of State power, etc. Communist movement also did not grant
any meaningful autonomy to its mass organisations, which were also limited to the
‘political-economic’ domain. The demands for autonomy, during the initial stages of the
rise of all the three movements, bifurcated and fragmented the movements, within the
material domain. However, with decade of 1990’s, a new phenomenon of movements for
autonomy within the caste, class and gender movements emerged. Within the women’s
movement a separate rural dalit women’s movement emerged; within the dalit politics a
separate sub-caste movement emerged and as part of the Communist movement civil
liberties movement demanded autonomy from the traditional radical left perspective of
social transformation. Each of these ‘internal’ autonomy movements raised issues
neglected by the caste, class and gender movements. The rural dalit women’s movement,
during the anti-liquor movement and later Madduru dalit women’s struggle, went beyond
the lifestyle issues of the socio-cultural domain and raised issues of minimum wages,
land reforms, community sexual violence, etc. Similarly the sub-caste movement, led by the Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti, within the dalit politics raised the issue of 'classes within caste groups', which dominated and excluded others. Finally the civil liberties movement 'internal' to the Communist movement demanded both autonomy and equal primacy to dalit and women's movements and the issues raised by them. It, for instance, questioned dalits being killed as informers by the ML groups. This phenomenon of 'internal' autonomy movements was a consequence of bifurcating practices and compelled each of these movements to address issues in all the three domains-political, economic and cultural. This expansion of each of the three movements drew them closer to the agenda of the other social movements. Thus setting of the phenomenon of internal-external dynamics. In other words, in negotiating the 'internal' movements and the issues raised by them, each movement grew closer to the 'external' movements. Social-material conditions manifested the 'integrated material life' as opposed to the regionally separated and enclosed demarcation (as presented in the base-super structure model of the society) by each of the three movements. “The economic sphere has to be seen as re-embedded (or continuously embedded) in non-economic social processes; wider outlook requires us to conceptualise aspects of force and violence, ideological hegemony, community and culture-and sexuality- as central to economic process... (thus) in the wider system of accumulation 'non-class' community, nation, ethnicity, gender, caste, etc., play crucial roles in defining exploited groups and making exploitation possible”.

In other words, addressing economic relations will in itself prompt movements to address 'non-economic' issues as well and vice versa. They are all inextricably linked material processes. As E.P.Thompson suggests (elaborated in the first chapter of this study), 'productive base itself exists in the shape of social juridical and political forms'. It is imperative to note that Marx always emphasised the term 'material base' over 'economic base'. All these processes, of an integrated material life are 'joined at a certain point in common human experience which itself exerts its pressure on the sum'. It is therefore that economic upliftment of dalits in Karamchedu leads to cultural assertion for self-

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respect and dignity. All cultural issues of women’s movement such as domestic violence, culture of sharing domestic work, have an (hidden) economic component beneath them. Similarly, the communist movement in course of its mobilisation of Adivasi women and building a revolutionary women’s movement began by addressing cultural issues of tribal women to reject traditions and conventions so that they could struggle for right to property and minimum wages. Social movements in Andhra Pradesh were confronted by the ‘integrated material life’ as against the artificial discontinuities they sought to construct. Social movements need to therefore constitute their practice around a more integrated model of totality. Thus, in the first chapter, we developed the critique of the base-superstructure model, which bifurcates the material practices into segregated domains and was the model through which the social movements, in Andhra Pradesh comprehended the social reality around them. Through an alternative and integrated reading of social-material conditions—present in E.P Thompson’s ‘organic totality’ and Habermas’ ‘inter-subjective totality’—we attempted to present a more comprehensive notion of totality (presented in the figure at the end of the first section of the chapter).

However, these integrated social and material conditions are always mediated through various processes. They are not ‘given’ to translate naturally into solidarity between movements in course of struggles, they need to be ‘discursively articulated’ to ‘construct’ and ‘recognise’ the possibilities within the social-material conditions. Discursive structures are again not reflections of given material conditions but are indispensable part of the same material conditions (as elaborately argued in the second chapter of this study). They in fact possess a materiality of their own. As Althusser argues, language does not reflect an already existing social reality but constitutes social reality for us. In other words, theory has always been regarded as an intellectual domain, while practice has been seen to be rooted in a concrete terrain. Thus, the ML movement relegates theory to a second order reality and when it makes changes in its practice by constituting separate women’s organisations (such as the APCMS) it does not realise/recover the concomitant discursive articulations. It thereby dichotomises the relations between theory and practice. Caste, class and gender movements do not construct a new
‘language’ that can construct new subjects of social transformation. “By making all practices discursive, Laclau and Mouffe make room for intelligible articulation in every moment of practice. This overcomes the dichotomy between theory and practice i.e. non-discursive blind practice on one side and a theory trying to make it intelligible from outside”

Thus, material struggles are simultaneously struggles for hegemonic articulations. However, discursive articulations do not go beyond or are not delinked from all ‘situational logic’ but are inextricably embedded in them. However, in most of the attempts to conceptualise the effectivity of discursive articulations they delink them from the rest of social-material processes. For instance, in Laclau and Mouffe ‘social’ refers to an articulation existing at an imaginary level. They work with the notion of totality but by granting unified subject an ‘imaginary existence’. In their concept of a rainbow coalition, subjects forge solidarity due to alternative discursive articulations without being located in any social-material conditions (as already delineated in the second section of the first chapter). However, we wish to argue that, in the context of Andhra Pradesh discursive articulations by the caste, class and gender movements have to be located as part of the emerging ‘internal-external dynamics’. It is these social-material conditions that provide (and not guarantee, as Habermas argues) for articulations of solidarity. Caste class and gender movements need to articulate the integrated material conditions and the subjects located at the inter-connection of various nodal points. Discursive articulations such as ‘dalit communist’, or ‘Hindu Feudal Order’ and ‘dalit democratic revolution’ by the dalit movement are attempts that integrate the social processes. Novel articulations such as ‘Democratic space’ by the civil liberties groups (such as HRF and CCC) reflect equal importance being granted to caste, class and gender movements (as cited in the second part of this study).

At the political or strategic level, theory of solidarity has to rework the bifurcated strategies and conceptualise the emerging combination of strategies of social transformation. Caste, class and gender movements in Andhra Pradesh initially

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bifurcated the strategies of social transformation. While the ML movement stressed exclusively the strategy of armed, militant violent struggles, formation of squads, centralised vanguard type organisational structure to deal with the transformation of economic structure and capture of state power, during the days of Srikakulam struggle and later. In contrast to this women's movement negotiates the cultural sphere, privileging micro dynamics of everyday life, politics of the possible, symbolic methods of protest and a leaderless, sporadic and spontaneous mass movement, during the initial days of an emerging autonomous movement (Stree Shakti Sanghatana, Feminist Study Circle) and also during the days of the anti-liquor movement. However, in course of the unfolding 'internal-external' dynamics, the rural dalit women during the Madduru land struggle adopted militant methods along with legal battles and peaceful demonstration in the camps they set up. Similarly, the Communist movement adopted methods of establishing co-operatives, policies of welfarism in mobilising the adivasis of Dandakaranya and argued that these are 'also a form of class struggle'. Similarly, the separate caste organisation (Kula Nirmulana Porata Samiti) set up by the PWG mobilised dalits to demand for legal reforms of implementing reservations in the private sector and simultaneously fought against privatisation. The emerging 'internal-external continuum' between the caste, class and gender movements manifests novel combination of strategies. It would thus be helpful to argue that social transformation is forged through various types of reforms; broadly they can be identified as 'revolution' and 'social reform' (as detailed in the third chapter of this study). While the revolutionary strategies negotiate political and economic structures (state and its armed machinery, feudal landlords and their private armies, etc), the social reform strategies negotiate various social and cultural structures (identity related problems, conventions, traditions, etc). Revolution refers to the synthesising strategy, which combines the strategies of resolution and social reforms. In other words, revolution itself does not refer to any specific practice or event but is internal to every practice of social/structural transformation. When resolutions occur independent of social reforms, they might lead to various distorted social arrangements- establishing totalitarian regimes, overwhelming presence of state over civil society, undermining horizontal forms of dominations leading to
marginalisation of various social groups, localisation of struggles, etc. It is the strategy of ‘reformism’ (not reform) that fails to forge structural transformation.

The internal-external dynamics between the caste, class and gender movements in Andhra Pradesh, present a radically new situation. Social movements, in course of struggles are realising the commonalities between them and are beginning to convert the dichotomised practices- at the material, discursive and strategic domains- into continuums. The integrated material conditions, radically new hegemonic/discursive articulations and novel combination of strategies of transformation, all signify the emerging substantive solidarity between the movements. The ‘internal-external continuum’, as a tentative theory of solidarity, remains specific to the emerging trends in Andhra Pradesh and its more generalised relevance needs to be further probed.