CHAPTER – III

REFORM – REVOLUTION DICHOTOMY:
THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION
The third important dimension around which the practice of the caste, class and gender movements in Andhra Pradesh remains bifurcated is that of the strategic dimension. The various strategies of transformation remain segregated across the movements. The Communist movement in Andhra Pradesh believes that it is a revolutionary movement because it is waging an armed struggle for state power, to bring about comprehensive social change. It also believes that autonomous caste and gender movements are 'reformistic' as they aim at only piece-meal social change, within the limits of the 'system'. Autonomous movements on the other hand, claim that they too are carrying out a social revolution and it is necessary neither to wage an armed struggle nor capture state power to become a revolutionary movement. The various strategies (using peaceful means to mobilise, use of (democratic) institutions of the state structure, etc) they adopt are appropriate for the kind of change they are envisaging. This strict bifurcation of strategies as 'systemic' and 'anti-systemic' raises important conceptual issues about the relation and difference between Revolution, Social Reforms, and Reformism. This chapter addresses the issue of subtle distinctions between these various categories and raises the question of whether strategies can be so strictly bifurcated in light of the various changes in the nature of contemporary social transformation. It argues for a reworking of various strategies, beyond a dichotomized mode, so that social movements can become multidimensional and thereby establish durable solidarity between them.

For this purpose, in the first section of this chapter we shall discuss the conventional concept of revolution as developed during late 19th and early 20th century. In the second section, we shall enumerate the reasons for redefining this conventional concept. In the third section, we shall elaborate on the central principles of an alternative concept of revolution. Based on these principles, in the fourth section, we shall elaborate the possible strategies of social transformation that could be considered as part of revolutionary praxis. In the fifth section we shall draw a contrast by elaborating on the concept of reformism. Finally, in the sixth section, we shall draw certain conclusions regarding the renewed concept of revolution.
I

The Conventional Concept of Revolution

The late 19th and the early part of the 20th century were dominated by politics of revolution and this period was often designated as the 'Age of Revolution'. The political imagery of this period was dominated by the idea of revolution and was constitutively contrasted to the ideas of reform or reformistic politics. We shall explore the central tenets of the idea of revolution and how it was contrasted with the politics of social reform in some contexts, and reformism in others.

Karl Kautsky was one of the earliest Marxists to engage with the idea of revolution. According to him, "The conquest of governmental power by an hitherto oppressed class, in other words, a political revolution, is accordingly the essential characteristic of social revolution in this narrow sense, in contrast with social reform. Those who repudiate political revolution as the principle means of social transformation or wish to confine this to such measures as have been granted by the ruling class, are social reformers, no matter how much their social ideas may antagonize existing social forms". According to Kautsky, the French Revolution was preceded by a series of efforts at reform, among which the best known were those of Turgot. These attempts in many cases aimed at the same thing, which the revolution carried out. "What distinguished the reform of Turgot from the corresponding measures of the revolution? Between the two lay the conquest of political power by a new class, and in this lies the essential difference between revolution and reform. The central ideas of the concept of revolution from the aforesaid definition are:

(a) Revolution should always proceed from state power i.e. from only the political realm.

---

2 Ibid.
(b) Revolution is the exclusive project of the dominant oppositional class - the proletariat or the working class in contemporary society.

The working class was always considered the 'Universal Class' of social transformation. It was assumed that given its structural location at the core of any social system, the working class would be compelled to emancipate the whole of society from all sorts of domination (oblivious of the fact that working class itself would be the oppressor in some forms of domination). Similarly, revolutionary transformation was centralized around State power because of its capacity to subsume various social relations (again oblivious of the fact that state power itself could be a hindrance to a substantive social transformation. Any centralized power without counter points to contend and disperse power is always prone to excesses and fossilization of dynamism in the transformative process).

Revolution, therefore, was and continues to be, referred to as a single historic event. Contemporary social theorists like Giddens continue to define revolution as the "seizure of state power through violent means by the leaders of a mass movement, when that power is subsequently used to initiate major processes of social reform".

All changes without or outside this single violent political event were referred to as superficial and formal gains known as reforms. It was assumed that no substantive or structural transformation of social relations was possible without the seizure of state power. All these changes were assumed to be granted by the ruling class to maintain the equilibrium of the 'system' or as the preparatory steps in mounting the attack on the state. The possibility of structural transformation within the existing macro structures - the state power and production relations - were either undermined or considered as a complete impossibility. It was therefore often argued "... in terms of socialist strategy although we should not reject intermediary reforms, it is with the strict proviso that they are to be regarded as a means and not an end, as dynamic phases in a progressive struggle, not as

---

stopping places. But this approach should be adopted not because it is viable or intrinsically preferable, but on the contrary, because the resistance it will encounter and the limitations or impossibilities it will bring to light are alone capable of demonstrating the necessities of a complete change over to socialism to those segments of the masses which are not yet prepared for such a consequence.\(^4\)

Thus revolution referred to a single historic event of seizure of political power by the single 'universal subject' of the working class. Though such formulations were valid to an extent for arguing that meta-institutions such as State and property or production relations need to be transformed in any substantive transformative process, they were, however, reductionist in their assumption that all transformation should begin with the transformation of the state structure and the production relations. Revolution, it was argued can be forged only by the 'unified' working class and no other 'subject' or social group in the society. In other words, such a notion of revolution is reductionist for its lack of recognition of the diversification of contemporary social system.

All substantive attempts to expand and broaden the notion of revolution were limited to the political realm. The social and cultural realm was completely undermined because it was assumed that the politico-economic realm subsumed them. For instance, Ralph Miliband argues against any radical discontinuity between reform\(^5\) and revolution, though this argument was limited to the political realm. According to Miliband, "...there has always existed a trend in working class movement, and for that matter outside it as well, towards social reforms and this is a trend which, in so far as it has no thought of achieving a different social order must be sharply distinguished from the 'reformist' strategy which has insisted that this was precisely its purpose."\(^6\) In other words, for Miliband reforms and revolution were not in radical discontinuity within the political

---

\(^5\) Ralph Miliband uses social reform in the sense in which reformism is used in this chapter.
\(^6\) Ralph Miliband, Marxism & Politics, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, P.155
realm but reinforced each other for a holistic social transformation. Miliband argues that 'Marxist' concepts of 'Permanent Revolution' clearly means striking for the advancement of these aims within the framework of capitalism and a bourgeoisie democratic order, and this striving includes pressure for reforms of every sort. "It is clearly the case that the struggle for reforms in a bourgeois democratic regime was never taken by classical Marxism to be incompatible with the advancement of revolutionary aims and purposes" 7. As an example, Miliband argues that constitutionalism, electoralism and representation are certainly crucial in the definition of social reform. However, they are not incompatible with industrial strikes, sit in demonstration, campaigns etc, "Legality and constitutionality do not in themselves, at least in non-revolutionary circumstances mean an abandonment of revolutionary purposes or need not necessarily do so" 8. Miliband within the limited context of the political realm, argued that Leninist method of insurrectionary politics failed in the advanced capitalist countries because of the complex differentiation of these systems. According to him, the extremely strong attraction which legality, constitutionalism, electoralism and representative institutions of the parliamentary type have had on the people of working class movements were completely undermined by the Leninist politics, Miliband, contrary to the Leninist method, within the political realm argued for a radical continuity between reforms and revolution. According to him, "the civic freedoms which, however inadequately and precariously form part of bourgeois democracy are the product of centuries of unremitting popular struggle. The task of Marxist politics is to defend these freedoms to make possible their extension and enlargement by the removal of their class boundaries" 9.

Within the Marxist framework, Miliband referred to the possibility of arguing for reforms as 'real' (though partial) and structural changes that are essentially 'relatively autonomous' from the macro structural formations. These changes cannot be

7 Ibid, p.160.
8 Ibid, p.162
9 Ibid, p.189.
comprehended in terms of the ruling class benevolence, false consciousness or welfare measures to dislocate revolutionary politics. Within a limited realm, Miliband has argued that micro structural transformations are complexly and differentiately related to the macro structures.

It is this line of argument that is relevant in problematising social transformation in contemporary societies (both capitalist and non-capitalist). These societies have undergone complex diversification, where numerous sites have been fraught with democratic struggles and relate in varied manner to each other. Dynamic struggles in associated structures reveal an uneven and non-synchronous process. Revolution as a theoretical concept and a political strategy should be capable of grappling with this dialectical and paradoxical situation.

II
Reasons for Redefining Revolution

The complexity and diversification of contemporary societies could be comprehended in terms of their inter-related phenomenon, and it forms the fundamental reason as to why conventional notion of revolution needs to be redefined.

(a) The emergence or proliferation of new sites of antagonism and thereby new social actors has made the process of social transformation a paradoxical process, which is diverse yet inter-related. New social actors are revealing power relations in every sphere of social life; it is becoming increasingly obvious that each sphere has its own strong internal logic - both discursive and structural. Society's "micro-worlds include the multiplication of points of power and conflict- and thus exploitation, oppression and marginalisation. More and more of our everyday lives are caught up in these terms of power, and their lines of intersection. Far from there being no resistance to the system, there has been a proliferation of new points of antagonistic New
social Movements of resistance...and consequently a generalization of 'politics' to spheres which hitherto the left assumed to be apolitical: a politics of family, of health, of food, of sexuality, and of the body. Every associated structure revealed power dynamics guided not only by a generalized logic but also a 'specific' logic internal to itself.

As every site became a point of conflict, social actors drew their identity not from a centralized economic system but through dispersed relations that were closer and immediate to their every day 'experience'. These identities (though not beyond class boundaries as some post-Marxists would have us believe) cut across class differences and structure new forms of co-operative relations. Class is no longer a simple, given identity that would emerge above all these complex social identities. Pakulski identifies five major dimensions in characterizing these spontaneously formed social subjects: spatial/territorial (national, regional neighbourhood communities); sexual (feminist and women's rights groups); religious/ethnic/racial; occupational associations (unions, professional associations); and generational categories (youth, old age associations). Identity within the micro or associated structures has gained certain dynamism, fluidity and temporary presence making it rather arduous and nebulous for macro identities to articulate themselves. Articulating micro and macro structures and identities would be one of the pertinent challenges to the revolutionary praxis.

(b) Limitations (in the double sense) of the state power, limitations of achieving large-scale and wholistic transformation through state power and state power itself as a limitation to this process. The dichotomy between the state and

---

civil society has raised a serious challenge to any political imaginary, which proposes that all changes should be forged through state power. "Experience demonstrates that, contrary to the Marxist critique of 'utopian socialism', state power is not necessarily that necessary or even a sufficient intermediary step to promote, much less to guarantee a whole series of society's liberty, equality, fraternity/solidarity demands". In other words, while State power cannot guarantee the solidarity demand of civil society, participatory civil democracy itself should be an agenda of any substantive transformative process. Any transformation forged through a centralized state structure is inimical to a participatory ethos.

Similarly, the arena of state structure has its own power dynamics, which makes State as a centralized power structure- an ambiguous instrument of transformation. State structure cannot be understood as a given instrument that can be used for social transformation it is always prone to internal power dynamics. "Of course we have learnt in these last 100 years that the state has less power than it seems to have. One revolutionary Government after another have discovered the limitations of state power, has discovered all the things it could not do, even when it seemed to have their so called monopoly of legitimate violence.... There have been restraints from 'within' the fact that the cadres of any regime were persons with interest (personal interests, collective interests) and pursued them willy-nilly in terms of the logic and the possibilities of the world system of which they are part; the fact that even if one abolishes political factions 'within a state different (class) interests could always find a way to express themselves and to impose themselves on state policy". Thus, the limitations within the state structure and the imperative

for constructing a Participatory ethos plead for a strategy of diversification of power centres in civil society rather than a centralizing one. In other words, counter points of political and social power need to be encouraged within the civil society much before the act of seizure of political power to both enable the democratic use of state power and make social transformation substantive. The dichotomous relation between state power and civil society remains another central challenge to revolutionary praxis and therefore makes it imperative to broaden the politics of revolution beyond the centralized state power, into all sectors of the society.

(c) Finally, the third inter-related phenomenon is that of recognizing the dual positionality of any social group in the society. All social groups are while oppressed in a particular social relation, they turn out to be the oppressors in another social relation. This paradox of oppressed being the oppressor posits a dynamic challenge to the revolutionary politics. It can no longer be conceptualized in terms of clear-cut oppositional forces and linear emancipation of the oppressed. "In order to work out political strategies that actually match the situations we're in, I think we need a new recognition that power is 'omnipresent'. That is, it operates horizontally as much as vertically, internally as well as externally. It is not simply, as its been previously thought, a force coming from elsewhere, or above, or from a singly-directed source, and governed by one particular set of people, the ruling class"14.

Thus the three inter-related phenomenon - emergence of new and multiple sites of tagonism and new social actors; double limitation of state power; and the recognition vertical and horizontal dimensions of power relations - makes it imperative to broaden and redefine the politics of revolution beyond a singular historical moment. It should be

---

able to encompass and comprehend the process of diversification suggested in this inter-related phenomenon.

We, therefore, need to problematize the concept of revolution through alternative, principles of structural transformation and social actors, premises of interests and emancipation and conception of time scale. These broad, general and abstract principles of revolution would have to be concretized in terms of particular strategies of social transformation.

III
Problematising Revolution: Basic Principles

TABLE: 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVOLUTION</th>
<th>SPACE</th>
<th>ACTORS</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiatedly Wholistic Structural Transformation</td>
<td>'Family of social Movements'</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differentiatedly Wholistic Structural Transformation:

Revolutionary praxis has wholistic social reforms as its leitmotif. Revolutions of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century have attempted wholistic structural transformations based on radically new principles. However, wholistic structural transformation alone is only a partial articulation of revolutionary politics. Wholistic changes brought through state structure as the totalising force or with economic rationality (industrialization, for instance) as the driving principle cannot be considered either as emancipatory or as revolutionary. Revolutionary politics always emphasized only wholesome changes based on organic
links between various sectors within a region or various regions within a nation. Wholistic changes that undermine differentiated (sectoral or regional differentiation) development would always be totalitarian. On the contrary, revolutionary politics should propel highly differentiated wholistic structural transformation. It should encourage and recognize differentiation of societies on regional, sectoral and community lines. This principle could be elaborated through three different models of development. In Marx's 'Dialectics of Labour' Cohen elaborates a quasi-Hegelian model for understanding the character of various kinds of developmental sequences, which he terms as, 'undifferentiated unity', 'differentiated disunity' and 'differentiated unity'.

"'Unity' and 'disunity' can be understood as the absence and presence respectively of some form of perceived conflict or constraint in the relationship between A and B and differentiation and undifferentiation as the respective existence and non-existence of a perceived separateness of identity on the part of A and B.\textsuperscript{15} In the first stage, there is no sense of separate identity and absence of perceived conflict or incompatibility of interest, desires and so on. In the second stage, 'differentiated disunity', there is a sense of separate identity but relations are that of mutual obstacle and constraint. In the final stage, i.e. that of 'differentiated unity' there is a sense of separate identity but not in the mode of conflict and constraint but harmony and mutuality. We need to briefly develop each of these models to comprehend how revolutionary politics could be identified only with 'differentiated unity' where sectors/communities are allowed to retain their autonomy, yet in a moment of overdetermined existence.

Politics of 'undifferentiated unity' could refer to an overwhelming presence or domination of one of the sectors of society. For instance, state power would be considered as a legitimately totalising force or various sectors or activities of a society could be subjected to a single dominant logic of economic development-industrialization. "Once this process of differentiation has begun, any attempt to put the

clock back, to return to a highly integrative social-community order, re-establishing the unity of spheres of activity and spheres of life by subordinating them to the rationality of one of these spheres, will be of an inevitably totalitarian character"16.

In other words, no single sphere (economy or polity) can dominate all other activities of a society. Each activity has its own logic and internal dynamics. Relationship between spheres can exist neither in terms of domination nor in terms of linear unity. For instance, it was assumed as a part of the Left’s political strategy that "one could read off political attitudes and objective social interests and motivations from economic class positions. For a long time, their correspondence held the theoretical analysis and perspectives of the Left in place. However, any simple correspondence between the 'political' and the 'economic' is exactly what has now disintegrated practically and theoretically"17.

The second model of 'differentiated disunity' is a paradoxical process that opens up possibilities of liberation and partial structural transformation, yet within the constraints and disunity between various sectors leading to unhealthy and false development of society. Revolutionary politics cannot be posited at such a level, though most of the post-Marxist formulations articulate radical politics at this level.

The process of 'differentiated disunity' could be explored through the on-going process of separation of the 'economic' and 'political' spheres in advanced capitalist countries. "It means that the allocation of social labour and the distribution of resources are achieved through the 'economic' mechanism of commodity exchange; that the 'economic' forces of the commodity labour markets acquire a life of their own. Above all, it means that the appropriation of surplus labour takes place in the 'economic sphere' by

17 Stuart Hall, 1990, op.cit, p.121
'economic' means"\(^1\)\(^8\). In other words, the coercive power of the capitalists is not wielded directly by the appropriator, it looks as if 'political' and 'economic' spheres are completely 'differentiated' and exist in 'disunity'. Radical politics that fail to take note of this fail to mediate the macro and micro or associated structures. Instead they indulge in politics of 'fragmentation' and 'localization', which occur in a constitutive 'disunity' and not on the underlying unity of the social system. "As always, the disposition of surplus labour remains the central issue of class conflict, but now, that issue is no longer distinct from the organization of production. The struggle over appropriation appears not as a political struggle, but as a battle over the terms and conditions of work."\(^1\)\(^9\). The paradoxical effect of capitalist differentiation of the economic and political is that militant struggles and political consciousness become separate issues. Liberal democracy is posited on such a model of 'differentiated disunity'. It entails a separation of political rights and power from economic and social rights. Differentiation results in the maximum development of purely judicial and political freedom and equality without fundamentally endangering economic exploitation.

However, it should be noted that while 'disunity' posits politics of fragmentation and localization, 'differentiation' opens up new possibilities and vistas of 'real' structural transformation, in the political, cultural and social spheres. These transformations cannot be undermined as superficial changes. Differentiation always opens up the dynamics between micro and macro structures. As E.M.Wood (herself a traditional Marxist) accepts that transformation in associated structures need to be preserved and extended. "It can be argued that if liberalism is about anything worth preserving, it is about certain ways of dealing with political authority, rule of law, civil liberties, checks on arbitrary power"\(^2\)\(^0\).

\(^1\)\(^9\) ibid, P.42
It should be noted that various associated relations of domination have complexly varied and specific relations with the macro structural formations. Differentiation opens up 'real' possibilities of change and political arena becomes a complexly inter-related domain within the existing macro structures. 'Unlike previous modes of production capitalist exploitation is not inextricably linked with extra-economic, judicial or political identities, inequalities or differences. In fact, there is a positive tendency in capitalism to dilute identities like gender or race, as capital strives to absorb people into the labour market and to reduce them to interchangeable units of labour, abstracted from any specific identity,\textsuperscript{21} (Though such a possibility exists, it might not always be true. Arguments on this dichotomous relation would be developed in the later sections of this chapter). Thus, revolutionary politics, posited on 'differentiated unity', takes cognizance of the possibilities opened up for the associated forms of domination and their partial unity with the meta-institutions of a social system. Put simply, it means that each form of domination has its own history, patterns of development and ideal expressions yet each interacts with the others as part of a complex network of structural arrangements, which is unique to each setting. Thus, feminist and minority based movements encounter not only patriarchy and racism but the entire corporate structures and state spheres. While the 'differentiation' lies in the unique manner in which these meta-institutional mechanisms are 'experienced' by the associated structures, 'unity lies in the possibility of articulating these 'experiences' into a common, meta-structural transformation. Thus differentiated experiences, relations of networks need to be articulated with certain common structural antagonisms. For this, it is not only imperative to comprehend the relation between various sectors, and practices within them in terms of -overdetermination and 'mediation' and also in terms of a process of 'self-limiting'. Meta-institutions and their determination; associated structures and their potential; actors and their capacity to forge transformation need to be understood not only in terms of growth and expansion but a conscious and

\textsuperscript{21}E.M. Wood, 1975, op.cit. p.266.
deliberate process of self-limiting each of them within a specific arena. "The aim can only be to circumscribe, to restrict the field in which each type of rationality is permitted to express itself in an unfettered way". Revolutionary politics have to be sought on a terrain other than just rational-productivism, ideology of work of the wage-earning society, of social-statism and a 'collective utilitarianism'. Each associated arena should subvert its dominant principles and discover radically new principles of social arrangement.

This general principle of 'differentiated unity' would be in continuity with other central principles of revolutionary politics.

**Actors - 'Family of Social Movements':**

Revolutionary praxis has to be posited on the principle of 'differentiated unity' transforming simultaneously both the macro or meta institutional and micro or associated structures. Such spatially and qualitatively diverse structures have to be transformed with varied strategies and at differentiated historical temporalities. Which is the social force that could carry forward such a project of comprehensive social transformation?

Marxist theory, for over a century now, propagated the idea that working class is the 'universal subject' of history, capable of wholistic transformation owing to its structural location at the core of economic relations of production and its pauperized existence making it militant enough to violently grapple the state structure. It was argued that by transforming the macro structures working class would emancipate all other associated forms of domination- nationality and ethnic groups, women, black, etc -and a corollary to this argument was the assumption that macro structures (economic relations and the state structure) subsumed all other forms of domination and men and women in

---

A.Gorz, 1994, op.cit. p.25
the working class were presumed to think and act as complete class beings without a 'constitutive outside'. Renewed recognition that (a) macro structures are only significant 'nodal points' in a comprehensive transformative process, (b) actors due to their very structural location are both oppressors and oppressed and (c) finally significance has to be attached to the unique and specific 'experience' and participatory ethos. All this makes it imperative to broaden our vision of social actors or subjects of historical transformation.

As various forms of struggles are complexly related to the macro structures and all other associated structures, actors who are precariously part of these structures are also variedly and unevenly related to each other.

It is therefore one of the exigencies of revolutionary praxis to 'grapple with this paradoxical situation of a need to forge durable solidarity and to seek emancipation from these very forces which are part of this solidarity. The project of solidarity has to encompass uneven relations. A preliminary model could be developed on the following lines.

**FIG: 3.2**

Interests between social actors can be conceptualised as shown above, at these different levels. The project of solidarity will have to take all three of them into consideration to forge a durable solidarity and a comprehensive transformation.
Common interests between diverse actors refer to their diversified antagonism with common macro structures. Solidarity based on common interests has often been projected as organically overlapping and indelibly linked. However, it is important to comprehend that within the political arena common interests emerge in a 'mediated process'. In other words, structural location of the demands, nature of interests and their ideological orientation would always be different. Common interests have to emerge out of this vortex through a complexly mediated process. Common interests, so to say, do not exist on a separate 'level' (for instance, as Althusser's 'levels' of social formation) from the conflicting interests. Common interests paradoxically overlap with the conflicting interests. One cannot be negotiated without the other. Solidarity cannot be founded on common interests first and then conflicting interests sought outside this. Neither can it be assumed that larger solidarity would be forged around common interests and conflicting interests would be subsumed under it as 'friendly contradictions' or non-antagonistic contradictions ('non-antagonistic' does not make transformation any simple). Thus, it has to be recognised that solidarity around common interests has to spatially and temporally overlap with conflicting interests. Conflicting interests have similar passion, sense of immediacy and permanence as those of common interests. This process is somewhat akin to the manner in which Gramsci negotiates and articulates the political with the economic terrain. He argues "politics becomes permanent action and gives birth to permanent organisation precisely in so far as it identifies itself with economy. But it is also distinct from it, which is why one may speak separately of economics and politics, and speak of 'political passion' as of an immediate impulse to action, which is born on the 'permanent and organic' terrain of economic life but which transcends it, bringing into play emotions and aspirations, in whose incandescent atmosphere even calculations involving the individual human life itself obeys different laws from those of individual profit". The political moment is converted to the economic moment through a long chain of mediations. Among these mediations are evolving human nature, moral norms and values.

ideological system and language itself. In other words, conflicting interests would have a permanent presence and leave an indelible mark on the process or moment of solidarity.

Thus common interests have to be located and politically articulated within a conflict ridden labyrinthine terrain. Common interests do not exist as given or organically overlapping experiences, instead political equivalence has to be drawn between distinct 'experiences'. For instance, Gramsci suggests that outgrowth of nuclear family and monogamy helps to repress worker's sexuality and augment his energies at workplace. Worker's movement alone perhaps, cannot disclose this 'underlying' unity between orientation towards sex and morality, and exploitation at workplace. "It would not be surprising, therefore, to find that the most progressive opposition to sex and morality tend to come from those groups furthest removed from the production process; nor would it be surprising, Gramsci suggests, to discover that women's struggle against patriarchal oppression inevitably activates new patterns of thought and behaviour that help to undermine bourgeois hegemony within the workplace itself." 24 Thus, political orientation generated from a conflicting relation- patriarchal -between the worker and women, generates novel possibilities of larger commonality. Multidimensional transformation alone can make this process a possibility because common interests are mediated through the distinctness and specificity of associated institutions. Macro structures can be comprehended only through varied micro/associated structures; generality or universality is present only in and as particularity; or as Althusser would have it, 'structure is immanent only in its effects'.

Such an involutedly and complexly 'overdetermined' (conflicting interests overdetermine common interests) process can generate politics of durable solidarity only through what Habermas refers to as 'inter-subjective communication'. Revolutionary praxis should therefore strive to establish a 'public sphere', which is a social and political expression of the rules of communicative action towards an interest in increasing inter-

subjective understanding. Solidarity founded on inter-subjective communication requires "institutionalisation of discourse in which the claims to validity involving practical questions and political decisions are intended to be continually questioned and tested"\textsuperscript{25}.

This concept of solidarity based on inter-subjective communication still leaves certain pertinent issues unanswered. How would such a democratic solidarity emerge between actors, notwithstanding their common interests, with varied capacities to act and varied scope of historical efficacy? How would social movements avoid hierarchy in relations, given the fact that micro/associated forms of domination precariously maintain their specificity and autonomy on the one hand and depend on macro structural transformations for substantive changes? For instance, labour movement would lay claim to hegemony due to its location at the core of macro structures, notwithstanding the fact that it is incapable of transforming various associated forms of domination. This precarious gap between the need to transform macro structures and the scope or distance available for microstructures, to transform within the existing macro-structures leaves the issue of hierarchy between social actors open-ended. The dislocating presence of the temporal gap in realising that existing macro structures do provide opportunities for real/structural changes of various associated forms of domination, yet substantive change requires that macro structural transformation leave the issue of hierarchy between social actors suspended.

Most of the contemporary post-Marxist writers have offered an alternative vision for resolving this predicament. They would argue that as long as conflicting interests or 'differences' are not allowed to completely grow and manifest themselves under the nagging presence of 'common interests', hierarchy between social actors is inevitable. To avoid and overcome politics of hierarchy between social actors, they suggest 'localisation' of struggles and politics of 'fragmentation'. In other words, politics centred

\textsuperscript{25} Habermas, 'The Public Sphere' in New German Critique, vol.3, fall, 1973, p.26
around the idea of 'difference' itself and 'difference' as not one of the issues among many. This radical alternative based on politics of 'difference' goes hand-in-glove with the idea of the denial of macro structures in some cases and in others the idea that each struggle would autonomously grapple macro structures, which would over a period of time dislocate existing macro structures. In the latter alternative, 'specificity' of struggle is maintained along with the idea of substantive transformation.

The leitmotif is therefore, continuous generation and maintenance of 'difference' between social actors, so that not only are new forms of domination discovered but also existing identities can realise themselves to the fullest extent, without subsuming themselves under any other social group or identity. Through such 'localised' struggles, Post-Marxist's suggest, not only are vertical forms of domination negotiated but also horizontal forms of domination are effectively challenged.

For instance, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari suggest that revolutionary liberation is based on a difference-creating desire. Revolutionary politics should be guided by three principles. Firstly, 'Desiring-Production' i.e. desiring to desire or desire is to be productive in the sense of creating differences or something new. Secondly, "Desiring-machines", i.e. there is no given, natural or spontaneous desire, on contrary they are only a series of creative functions that make up an assemblage. Finally, 'Body without-organ' (BWO), it is where assemblages are creatively created because there is an unlimited and unblocked productivity of desire.

Deleuze & Guattari, then cite the Autonomia movement of early 1970s in Italy, which seemed on the verge of tearing the Italian political organism to pieces and replace substituting the productivity and multiplicity of a desire for autonomy on all social levels.

Autonomy could accordingly be Autonomia's point of departure by being its desire. 'Desiring-production' then invested autonomy through the gradual construction of the assemblage that could realise a desire for autonomy, the Autonomia-assemblage.

---

Autonomous space here emerges as the BWO of Autonomia because autonomy, the desire, can be realised in autonomous space. In other words, the three 'revolutionary' principles suggest that desire for 'autonomy' or 'difference' at every level of the society including the very (political) process of creating the demand for autonomy. This is a continuous process without ever being structured or patterned, so that new 'differences' and further 'autonomy is continuously created to liberate all social groups from all forms of existing structural arrangements. Aspiring for something different from others or from existing social arrangements has the potential of revolutionary liberation. This process therefore has to be continuous and is designated as the 'lines of flight'. By constructing these lines segmentarity can be escaped and a pure flow of productivity created. Lines of flight are ultimate forms of revolutionary praxis for Deleuze & Guattari.

Deleuze & Guattari’s model based on only creation of 'differences' and no other political value leads them to certain precarious political conclusions. They end up supporting globalisation, because it creates continuous movement for both capital and labour. According to them, "on the one hand, the flow of labour must no longer be determined as slavery or serfdom but must become naked and free labour; on the other hand, wealth must no longer be determined as money dealing merchants or landed wealth, but must become pure homogeneous and independent capital" 27.

Capitalist deterritorialisation creates two lines of flight of labour and money. "If being revolutionary is defined by the ability to create lines of flight, then only that ability is fundamentally politically relevant. Paradoxically Deleuze & Guattari develop a politics unconcerned with difference between political movements except in relation to their ability to produce difference. Difference in Daleuze & Guattari leads to political indifference" 28.

27 Ibid, p.452
If desiring-production cannot clearly mark capitalism as oppressive because capital is itself inherently creative, then how oppositional or transformative is Deleuze & Guattari's work?

Jean-François Lyotard also argues that to play 'language games' is the only general political right, capable of emancipating all social groups. The labour movement must be disrupted to allow other differences. But then these movements must be dislocated to create further differences: black women, lesbians, and deep ecologists or others yet unknown.

How then can durable solidarity be established if 'multiplication of differences can appear endless'? Laclau & Mouffe suggest an alternative in their idea of 'rainbow coalition'. According to them class can no longer be conceived as capable of creating a common social & political identity. Therefore as an alternative they believe that autonomy and solidarity can be articulated through 'radical democratic citizenship'. In other words, such a citizenship is not a legal status or set of political rights, but a deep-rooted belief in autonomy of all social groups. When different social groups or actors take up 'radical democratic citizenship' and strive to establish 'radical democracy' they would not only achieve solidarity as 'radical democratic citizens' but also maintain their own autonomy. Thus, "to affirm that citizenship should be accorded a certain pre-eminence among our different identities, and that it is the democratic political identity par excellence, does not imply that we should either-deny the importance of our other forms of membership or defend a state-centred conception of politics. While being only one among our several commitments, one of the many associations to which we belong, nevertheless has a crucial role to play because it enables us to mediate among the others and act across them". In other words, all social movements would struggle against their specific forms of oppression but forge solidarity on a common understanding and consensus on the need for autonomy. While 'radical democratic principles' based on

---

29 Ibid; p.58
autonomy would protect the ideal of multiplication of new forms of struggle, this ideal would also preserve the unity among various social struggles.

However, this model of 'rainbow coalition' does not encompass the complexity of micro-macro structural network. They are right in saying that micro or associated forms of domination need autonomous struggles and therefore social actors need to maintain their autonomy and specificity of 'experience'. However, they do not have a conception of macro structures, which are not only dispersed in their effects, in terms of overdetermining various micro forms of domination but also are relatively centralised structures. In other words, macro structures like that of a state structure with a monopoly of political violence and with repressive state apparatus (like the police, army, prisons, judiciary, etc) and economic relations of production or property relations, cannot be 'gradually' transformed through 'localised' and 'autonomous' struggle. These structures would need centralised struggle to transform them. However, this centralised struggle itself has to be democratic if its social consequences have to remain so. Similarly it should also be recognised that centralised struggle against macro forms such as global capitalism (or imperialism) or state structure does not exhaust or guarantee emancipation from various associated forms of domination. It is this carefully balanced dynamic between relatively centralised macro structures and dispersed micro structure that makes democratic struggles (and struggle for democracy) a highly paradoxical process, requiring ingenious political principles, organisational forms and multiplication of struggles.

Thus most of the post-Marxist writings, while are extremely sensitive to the issue of maintaining autonomy and overcoming hierarchy between social actors, are weak and nebulous in their conceptualisation of micro-macro dynamics and the political values necessary for such a struggle. Revolutionary praxis, founded on the principle of 'differentiated unity' has to strive for a radically new subjectivity for and by its social actors. For emancipation to occur both vertically and horizontally social actors have to discover new forms of subjectivity and political values. Perhaps, the roots to such radical subjectivity lies in Paulo Freire's idea that "in order for this struggle to have meaning, the
oppressed must not in seeking to regain their humanity become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both"\(^3\)\(^1\). As Freire declares, "this then is the great historical and humanist task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well"\(^3\)\(^2\).

According to Freire, during the initial stages of all struggles, the oppressed tends to become oppressors or 'sub-oppressors'. They unconsciously strive to identify with the opposite pole. For instance, it is not free human beings that the oppressed want agrarian reforms but to themselves become landowners. This could be true of all forms of struggles. Part of reason is ascribed by Freire to 'fear of freedom'. Oppressed have only the image of oppressor in their mind to emulate, they often have no radical alternative subjectivity or morality. The latter could require internalisation of freedom in its fullest sense. Freire also suggests that act of liberation and act of domination might occur historically as qualitatively different processes. 'Liberating action necessarily involves a moment of perception and volition. This action both precedes and follows that moment, to which it first acts as a prologue and which it subsequently serves to affect and contain within history. The action of domination, however, does not necessarily imply this dimension, for the structure of domination is maintained by its own mechanical and unconscious functionality"\(^3\)\(^3\). In other words, radical subjectivity has to consider the interests of the oppressed also to emancipate humanity of various forms of domination. Revolutionary praxis would have to be redefined on these lines to make it possible for both unified struggles and autonomous struggles to co-exist.

Lastly, social groups relate to each other not only in terms of common and conflicting interests but also certain interests that could fall in neither of these categories. Such forms of domination or interests reside in those realms of human existence or interaction that do not fall, even in a refracted way within the contours of macro structure and have no particular group as their oppressors. For instances various communities that

---


\(^{32}\) Ibid.

\(^{33}\) Ibid, p.28
suffer due to natural disasters or within the social realm problems of ageing, or certain deep rooted psychological maladies or insecurities (with might have biology and not 'psychology' as a social construct, as their source). Such social, natural and biological problems would continue exist among various social groups and other social groups might have no direct relation either in terms of being common or conflicting. Perhaps, in terms of in such cases broader human values residing in the moral realm will have to act to forge solidarity with the 'deprived' social groups. Relations of 'indifference' would also have to be considered, to comprehend them socially.

**Time - Permanent:**

The renewed idea that revolutionary change can be carried out by many different and even contradictory struggles makes it on time scale, a more permanent feature of society, rather than a specific event or series of events. Revolutionary transformation refers to not a specific event or transformation of specific structures but to the method or practice of articulating a series of changes. In other words, articulating a series of changes in their necessary unity and inter-connection and autonomy. Thus, revolutionary praxis is, temporally, spatially and praxeologically a more permanent feature of society.

Spatially, revolution would extend across sectors, regions, nations and finally on a world scale. "The Socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on the entire planet". In other words, the permanent character of the revolution thus becomes a law placing itself above history, independent of the policy of the leadership and of the material development of revolutionary events.

Temporally, revolution would imply subsuming various historical times spread across an uneven spatial dimension. Various micro and macro structures would transform

---


106
themselves in differentiated historical times. Some in gradual and spiral time dimensions, and others in quantum leap. However these differentiated historical times can make sense in the 'last instance' only in linear notion of time. Permanency temporally would imply that "the movement of revolution goes on from one phase or stage to the next with no lasting interruption, in a continuous process, without halting for a historical period in which one stage stabilises itself. The second stage is seen as emerging more or less organically out of the first"\(^{35}\).

Finally, revolution would refer to permanence in terms of the praxeological dimension. "Praxis implies no dichotomy by which this praxis could be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action. Action and reflection occur simultaneously"\(^{36}\). Human collectives would have to internalise 'praxis' in order to reflect on all possible dimensions of human interaction, to purge it, in a continuous process, of all forms of dominant relations.

Thus, revolution not in abstraction, but with reference to all the three inter-related dimensions would be a permanent feature of society. Revolution when not referred to as a cataclysmic event does not lose its particularity but on contrary the particularity becomes generalised.

The dichotomy between revolution and reforms explicated through the above mentioned general principles would have to be further concretised. Various strategies, that coalesces to form the revolutionary praxis, have to be explicated. These diverse strategies would have to be differentiated on the basis of specific institutions they negotiate with, specific means they adopt to transform and the temporal dimension of such practices. It should be noted that these diversified strategies are historically contingent, they can be articulated separately and hierarchically, however only when they are articulated in a continuity in order to reinforce each other, only then can we refer to this process as revolutionary. Neither of the strategies, we shall explain in the following

\(^{36}\) P. Freire, 1972, op. cit. P.99
section, are revolutions by themselves but only when they are articulated together, do they become part of it.

IV

Introducing the Micro - Macro Continuum

FIG: 3.3

Social formations are complex combinations of various structures. Structures themselves in turn are complex combinations of various principles/discourses and practices. None of these entities or (analytical) 'levels' is completely closed and internally cohesive. "Structures... do not constitute a closed system, but are raven with antagonism, threatened by a constitutive outside and merely have a weak or relative form of integration"\(^\text{37}\). *Structures (be they 'economic or political' or cultural) always include practices of other structures*. Each structure for that matter each practice continuously collides and combines with other practices and structures. This combination of contradictions and integration has only a relative logic or pattern. They are often, though

not absolutely, open to varied combinations. Gramsci suggests such an idea through his concepts of 'hegemony' and 'historical bloc'. "By stressing the integration of all the economic, political or cultural expressions of a particular society, the concepts of hegemony and historical bloc suggested not how some of these spheres are reflected in others but rather how they are partial totalities of potentially equal significance which are knit together or drift apart in accordance with the political actions that people carry out in concrete historical circumstances"38. In other words, structures and their practices have the capacity to combine and recombine in various patterns. In such a floatingly complex process certain structural imperatives gain the momentum (for various social/historical and 'natural' reasons) and the power to coalesce various other practices into their own exigencies. It is not that distinctness of other practices is lost but the logic of these practices is moulded into or moulded for the purpose of these structural imperatives. This process of collision and integration is relatively open to new configurations.

Marx argued that production is one such structural imperative or nodal point around which various practices got pulled into. Production is therefore a 'social' practice that structures various other practices according to its own dominant logic. There is no such thing as a 'mode of production' in opposition to the social factors (legal-political and cultural). In fact it is a specific combination of various social factors. "The sphere of production is dominant not in the sense that it stands apart from or precedes these judicial-political forms but rather in the sense that these forms are precisely forms of production. The attributes of a particular production system"39. Production system, therefore, emerges as a nodal point or a macro structure in a given society. It gains the power to relatively centralise various practices into its own logic of accumulating surplus value. Macro structure however does not refer to total subsuming of political and cultural structures (as a set of distinct practices). Various practices within these structures confront the domination of economic structure and there are always 'practices' that lie outside the logic of macro structures. We need to "distinguish between juridical-political

forms that are the constituents of productive relations and those that are more distant from or external to these relations even if there are no sharp discontinuities between them.\footnote{E.M. Wood, "Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism" New Left Review, 127, 1981, p.79.} To put it in the base-superstructure language, we need to distinguish the 'basic' and 'superstructural' juridical-political and cultural attributes of the productive system (as we have already argued in the first chapter of this study).

Similarly, state power is another macro structure that centralises and regulates various practices either for its domination or in the service of dominant economic relations. Not only is the relation between state and economic relations contradictory but also so is its relation with various micro or associated structures in the society. Various other political and cultural practices are precariously related to state power. Thus, micro structures are always in perpetual relation of inclusion-exclusion dynamic.

Various practices within the associated structures are part of macro structural logic, while various others are excluded-outside. 'Gramsci’s strategy was to make the distinction on a functional basis related to a particular society at a particular time. Institutions which supported the state's claim to monopolise the means of violence and through which it exercised force would be conceived as parts of political society. Some of these institutions the army, bureaucracy, penal system- were almost by necessity parts of political society in all states. But the same certainly, would not be true for the institutions of civil society. The church for instance, had been part of political society in one era, civil society in another.\footnote{Adamson, 1980, op.cit. p.219} Thus, the micro-macro dichotomy is structured by the inclusion-exclusion dynamic. While on the other hand micro institutions and practices are part of the logic of macro structure, on the other they generate their own dynamic.

Micro dynamics generate their own forms of domination and interaction. Within relations of domination social groups on the one end of the pole in macro structures could be on the other end in the associated institutions. Within associated institutions position
of social groups can radically differ, while in some practices they are oppressed in others they could be the oppressors. While it is imperative to recognise the multidimensionality of various associated practices vis-à-vis one another, it is equally significant to differentiate between micro and macro dynamics, however difficult it might be to locate the process of causation. Revolutionary praxis has to negotiate not only with the various autonomous logics and dynamics of all associated practices but also the specific relation, in each society, between each associated practice and the macro structures. "We could discover the precise relation between the various spheres of social life only if changes in each sphere were to occur discretely, with a long enough interval between each change for the observers to note the temporal sequence involved. Historically, changes in both base and superstructure have occurred. Simultaneously and continuously making it hard to isolate distinct orders of succession .........Let us avoid the empirical fallacy of assuming that what cannot be properly observed and measured does not exist"42.

Thus revolution cannot refer to any singular event. It has to negotiate, as aforesaid, with the autonomous dynamics of various associated practices and their specific relation to the macro structures. It has to also recognise the need for different and specific strategies, means and temporality in transforming macro and micro structures. Relatively centralised, cohesive macro structures might require different strategies from that of more dispersed and hidden forms of associated practices. "In opposition to revolution as the cataclysmic ushering in of a liberated society ......... emancipatory collectives construct a wide variety of actions to transform their oppression. Of course, such a construction might include cataclysmic events like riots or insurrections; but these are events in the construction of an on-going revolution, they are not revolution in themselves"43.

43 T.Jordan, 1994, op.cit, p.121
Refolution – Transforming Macro Structures:

Macro structures due to their relatively cohesive and centralising tendencies requires a specific strategy of transformation, as against the various dispersed associated practices. Due to the 'conjectural' nature of this transformation, it could be referred to as (revolutionary- reform) 'refolution'. "Refolutionary" strategy has to recognise the paradoxical mode of transforming macro structures, which are not all powerful or all encompassing yet they are more cohesive and centralised than the associated structures. In other word's, refolution could be a more cataclysmic or conjectural event, yet it is only a partial component of the on going revolution.

The relation between capitalism (macro structure) and patriarchy (an associated practice) is one such dynamic relation. Most Marxist analysis of women's position take as their reference point the relation between women and the economic system, rather than women to men, it is assumed that the latter will be explained in the discussion of the former.

Most of the Marxist analysis obscures that fact that men and women have difference of interests, goals and strategies by their analysis of how capitalism exploits all social groups. It has to be recognised that patriarchal relations far from being rapidly outmoded by capital, as the earlier Marxists suggested, have survived and thrived alongside it. And since capital and private property do not cause the oppression of women as women, their end alone will not result in the end of women's oppression. The material base of patriarchy is men's control over women's labour power. Male workers resisted the wholesale entrance of women and children into the labour force and fought to exclude them from union membership. Hartmann argues that, instead of fighting for equal wage for men and women, male workers sought 'family wages', wanting to retain their wives services at home. Thus, macro structural transformation from capitalism to

---

socialism could occur without transforming associated practices like, patriarchy. It is the specificity of the micro-macro dynamic across space and time, which determines the nature of transformation. "The ability of the capital to shape the workforce depends both on the particular imperatives of accumulation in a narrow sense (for example, is production organised in a way that requires communication among large number of workers? If so, they had all better speak the same language) and on social forces within a society which may encourage/force capital to adopt (the maintenance of separate washroom facilities in South Africa for whites and blacks can only be understood as an economic cost to capitalists, but one –less than the social cost of trying to force South African whites to wash up with blacks)". In other words, if for purpose of social control and capital accumulation Capitalists organised a work in a particular way, nothing about capital itself determines who (men/women, blacks/whites) shall occupy the higher and who the lower rungs of the wage labour force.

Similar would be the relation between the State and gender relations. Its scale and coherence contrast with the dispersed, cellular character of power relations institutionalised in family. Therefore, as the central institutionalisation of power, the state has considerable, though not unlimited capacity to regulate gender relation in the society as a whole. State regulates gender relation in various ways, through wage boards it controls women’s wages; through legislations it regulates marital violence and sexuality; various family policies etc. However, state’s control over gender relation is limited due to two primary reasons. Firstly, “only a small part of this oppressive reality can be found explicitly stated in our legal system. No Law says a woman must cook the meals, or dust the house...there are other elements of oppression which are extra-legal and cannot be tackled by a legal assault”. Secondly, State itself acts under contradictory pressures which often result in ambivalent and open-ended policies. The state’s position on gender is not fixed. It is therefore important to realise a subtle difference that state is not

---

‘essentially patriarchal’ or ‘male’; rather the state is historically patriarchal; patriarchal as a matter of concrete social practices\textsuperscript{47}.

‘Revolutionary’ strategy has to be posited on this precarious and ever changing relation between various associated practices and social groups and the centralised structures. Each associated practice and thereby each social group would relate itself differently and variedly to the macro structures based on their specific ‘experience’. Differentiated experiences have only the macro structures as their common reference point. It is this dualistic presence of centralising and porous tendencies in macro structures that makes their radical transformation a formidable task.

Revolutionary strategy has to be, accordingly, multidimensional, yet cohesive to transform the macro structures. It has to be multidimensional to the extent of including differentiated experience of various social groups and cohesive as to formidably transform these meta-institutions.

Finally, it should also be noted that cohesiveness of macro structures is accrued due to their monopoly over the use of physical violence. Repressive apparatus, such as the army, police, prisons, penal system etc make state structures additionally different from the associated structures. This is perhaps an ‘essential’ feature of the state structure and therefore cannot be expected to change except through counter-violent attacks on state power. Most of the Marxists have rightly realised this feature of any state and it comes into play when its dominant logic is under any sort of threat. Gramsci, for instance argued that “... it was in the nature of the bourgeois state that, in any final confirmation, the armed apparatus of repression would inevitably supplant the ideological apparatus to occupy that position in the structure of class power. In such a scenario, a typically reformist posture is not likely to prove effective and Gramsci never even considered it”\textsuperscript{48}.

Any transformative process has to conceptualise the role of physical violence. The

\textsuperscript{48} Femina, 1981, op.cit. p.207
miner's strike (1984-85) in Britain amply demonstrated that in so-called liberal democracies, a state would resort to violence, whenever its cohesive power is radically challenged.

Revolutionary strategy, owing to the cohesiveness of macro structures, not only has to be more or less violent but also sudden and occur in a quantum leap. State structures and economic relations cannot be transformed gradually. Their central feature of monopoly of physical violence and relatively centralised drive for capital accumulation of profit motive would have to undergo cataclysmic changes. Cohesiveness makes macro structural transformation a decisive act, though a partial part of revolution. Be it various organs of the State—state as a whole needs to undergo rapid transformations, gradual transformation cannot counter the centralising logic of these external structures. Thus, "...all the functions of the railroad must be simultaneously revolutionized at one stroke, for they are all most closely bound together. They cannot be gradually and successively socialised, one after the other, as if for example, we would transform today the function of the engineer and fireman. Later the accountants and bookkeepers.......successive socialization of the different functions of a railroad is no less absurd than that of the ministry of a centralised state. The function of one of these organs cannot be modified without equally modifying all the others" ⁴⁹.

This then is the paradox of a Revolution. It is a partial act yet comprises the consent of all social groups; negotiates macro structures, yet they are not all powerful and all encompassing; it is violent and occurs as a quantum leap, yet completes only a revolution and not a revolution.

Social Reform: Negotiating Associated Practices

Social reform refers to the strategy of negotiating various associated practices that subsume under them various forms of domination. These practices are not only

dispersedly institutionalised but also originate from multiple sources, partly known and partly hidden.

This realm of practices could be referred to and identified through manifold methods. It could be broadly referred to as those institutions/practices that are at a distance from the macro structural logic of economy and state power. They are practices and institutions that are autonomous and not driven by the logic of external structures. They operate as associated practices and sub-structures with an internal logic that originates in prior practices that solidify as psychological imperatives or biological instincts and dispersed institutional practices. In other words, social reform would refer to an “increasing sensitivity to the more complex levels of unity, to the syncretism, heterogeneity and the common taken-for-granted ‘seen but unnoticed’ aspects of everyday life”\(^5\). Associated structures, are the forms of domination located in practically every aspect of life—common routines, reproduction, socialisation, knowledge/education, psychiatric and other health related practices, sexual practices, etc. They are part of every institution of the society and part of every form of human interaction. This could be referred to as a realm outside formal institutions— or formalised practices or as a pre-institutionalised zone.

Thus revolutionary praxis has to internally subvert these practices – forms of domination. It needs to comprehend their internal logic, mode of presence and reproduction and finally their relation— both points of collision and integration—with other associated practices. In other words, all the micro forms of reproduction of domination need to be subverted. For instance, as Ann Swidler observes, these practices often reproduce themselves as cultural practices that are in turn internally arranged as ‘semiotic codes’. It refers to deeply held inescapable relations of meaning that define the possibilities of utterance in a cultural universe. Altering these deep, unspoken and pervasive cultural codes is one of the powerful ways in which social transformation can

be forged. For instance, recent gender politics exhibit redefinition of cultural codes that signal masculinity and femininity. Increasingly in films toughness and ambition are coded as part of earthy, scary femininity. While classical feminine weakness, lace and fluffy pillows are identified with a manipulative, dishonest anti-femininity. In the same spirit, the very word macho makes the traditional hallmarks of masculinity seem suspect-signs of insecurity or weakness. Such cultural remaking may sometimes change people's values and practices. Such cultural re-coding changes the understanding of how behaviour will be interpreted by others.

These cultural or discursive practices exist within formal institutions such as those of education, workplace, medicine, religion, law, science etc. For any substantive change transformation of institutions would in effect-refer to subversion of various internal discursive practices. “Discourse subsumes the written as well as the verbal, formal as well as the informal, the gestural or ritual as well as the conceptual. Language and the discourses of science, and medicine among others are central to the ideological practices that maintain domination”.

Another instance of approaches to micro power dynamics is that of the post-partum depression self-help movement in the USA, which crystallised in the mid-1980s out of the experience of women who underwent major depression or psychiatric illness following the birth of a child. Women who sought treatment for their conditions found established health and mental health providers unwilling to acknowledge a link between their problems and the organic and social event associated with child birth and mothering. However, self-help movement gathered steam by calling attention to the hormonal basis of postpartum depression as a means of neutralising the stigma associated with maternal mental illness. Such practices cannot be subsumed under the transformation of the economic and political basis of the institutions they occur in.

---

52 Ibid, p.210
Social reform would have to negotiate with the 'relative autonomy' of these practices from the institutional structure—family, school etc—they reside in.

Similarly, Foucault refers to such practices in the construction of legitimate systems of knowledge, education, psychiatric practices in asylums and formal relations within political organisations. About the last above mentioned form of domination, Foucault writes, "The intellectuals role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth to the collectivity; rather it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the spheres of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness' and 'discourse'\(^5\) more.

These micro practices in the associated institutions are no less real or no less 'material'. They do not exist as 'ideas', principles or traditional beliefs or values; they comprise the matrix of everyday 'material' (in the sense of being) practices. These practices determine the position, dignity of various subjects vis-à-vis each other. They in fact, reproduce, though in autonomous ways, the access to various resources. Micro-practices have dynamic, and not stultified, relation with the macro structures. Various practices within the micro structures reinforce and enter the logic of macro structures, for instance how housework reinforces the overarching drive for capital accumulation. It reproduces labour power at a cheap cost. Some practices that lie outside hitherto might enter the macro structural logic. For instance, monogamy and regulated sexual practice, enables storage of energies to be dispersed at the workplace—factory. Thus, associated practices have both autonomous—internal logic and ability to negotiate macro structures on their own terms.

This complex mosaic of dispersed practices is the site of transformation for the strategy of social reform. Social reform negotiates various associated institutions and practices that exist on their own terms. Such a complexly dispersed strategy would,

inevitably give rise to new modes of protest, forms of social mobilisation, new social actors and forms of social articulation.

The dispersed institutionalisation along with the dynamic and refracted relation with the macro structures, are at the root of various new forms of transformation. Social reform has to not only recognise these various forms and their potential sources, but also recombine them into the ongoing process of revolution. Both these acts together make social reform a potentially revolutionary praxis. In contemporary societies, for instance, the new social actors could be found in the middle-class initiative on various issues such as the nuclear arms, ecology, human rights and civil liberties, etc. These actions and their potentiality to transform need to be both comprehended and incorporated into the complexly and closely connected process of transforming macro structures. "The significance of predominantly middle class leadership or membership of the new movements and campaigns is not to be found in some reductive analysis of the determined agencies of change. It is, first, in the fact that of some available social distance, an area for affordable dissent. It is, second, in the fact that many of the most important elements of the new movements and campaigns are radically dependent on access to independent information, typically though not exclusively through higher education and that some of the most decisive facts cannot be generated from immediate experience but only from conscious analysis."54. It is the consequence of the social order – micro-macro dynamic – itself that various issues get refracted in these ways and taken up by new social actors. Revolutionary praxis is in recognising the complexity of the process and not reducing them to 'either middle-class issues' or as irrelevant to larger-macro transformations. Carriers of the new and positive issues, small-group initiatives should move in on the more formal institutions, but in their own still autonomous ways.

Thus, the strategy of social reform refers to the process of comprehending and negotiating disperse associated practices; internally subverting these practices from being

relations of domination to non-coercive relations; finally get incorporated, in their own autonomous ways, into the larger process of transformation.

As the logic of spatial/institutional location is different, the strategy—time and means—of transformation of micro structures has also got to be different. Social reform, unlike a revolution, due to the complexity and diversity of associated practices have to be a more gradual or spiral process on the one hand and more ‘peaceful’ process innovating various novel modes of protest on the other. Gradualist approach and peaceful means does not make social reform a non-revolutionary or reformist strategy. On the contrary, it moves close to a strategy of ‘war of position’ in Gramsci. “What is needed in such a circumstances is a ‘war of position’on the cultural front. This strategy requires a steady penetration and subversion of the complex and multiple mechanisms of ideological diffusion. The point of the struggle is to conquer one after another all the agencies of civil society.” In other words, various internal practices of the associated structures need to be continuously and steadily purged of their different modes of domination. The necessity of ‘internally subverting’ these structures makes it a gradual and a spiral process, where a set of practices have to be dislocated to discover new hidden forms of domination. This organic process of dislocating existing practices makes it a spiral process. Not only the complex diversity of these practices, but also the mode of reproduction of the associated practices makes their transformation more gradual and spiral. “Broadly shared cultural templates tend to be indelible because they are merged with information about core identity. Ethnic and racial dispositions, religious faith, orientations towards marriage, sex, gender work and leisure are often incorporated into thinking about who one is in ways that, even for those who seek to— the bonds of tradition, make cultural innovation socially and psychologically difficult.” In other words, associated practices provide general matrix or prism through which various other larger practices are made sense of. In subverting the ‘core’ persuasion, consent, free expression and popular participation of various social groups becomes indispensable and

55 J. Femia, 1981, op.cit. p.52
56 B.Klandermans The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements; (ed), 1995, op.cit. p.17
thereby requires a more differentiated strategy of transformation, which does not occur in the manner of a ‘conjectural’ collapse.

The revolutionary and social reform strategies together constitute the revolutionary praxis. Revolution, in other words, is a specific method of combination of autonomy and integration between various types of reforms. Revolution is a superimposed practice over various concrete reforms. Revolution and reform are neither different nor can they be bracketed in an either/or relation. Various practices, that forge structural transformation based on radically new principles depending on the scope; internality–externality; cohesiveness and differentiation; they would emerge in their complex inter-connectedness as revolutionary praxis. It is posited on the understanding that each form of oppression is the site of revolutionary struggle and each movement/struggle is potentially part of the revolution. Resolution and social reform strategies in their overdetermined existence are revolutionary. This complexly interconnected process cannot be generalised but could be part of only a concrete experiment in the time and space (however, we shall briefly elaborate on the possible direction of such an inter-connection in the concluding section of this chapter).

The opposition of reform and revolution has no place in the ontology of emancipatory collectives but the critique of reformism is relevant. Reformism necessarily means leaving the structure of oppression untouched, which is often confused with reforms. Thus revolution can only be juxtaposed against reformism.

**REFORMISM VS REVOLUTION**

**Table: 3.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFORMISM</th>
<th>TIME/MEANS</th>
<th>ACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPACE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATING FALSE</td>
<td>MISPLACED</td>
<td>FRAGMENTATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALSE ANTINOMIES</td>
<td>STRATEGIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

121
Reformism would refer to any strategy of transformation that leaves the structure of oppression untouched. Reforms, unlike reformism, not only transforms specific practices within a structure or sector, but through gradual changes they aim at larger social transformation. Reformism has not only exclusively localised or 'molecular' notion of change, without any organic links with changes in other sections, but deals with specific practices in such a dichotomised manner that they undergo no palpable change. Put more concretely, reformism refers to the practice of creating 'false antinomies' in dealing with (both micro and macro) structural transformation. They create such antinomies or alternative poles in the transformative process that such separation makes it impossible to transform the dominant structure. Complete bifurcation of 'subject' and 'object' is part of a reformist strategy. Such-bifurcation often leads to arguments such as the 'subject' (human nature, immediate moral and ethical principles) needs to purge himself of various practices internal to him so that external objective structural transformation would occur as a consequence. Other way round it can also be argued that structures have immutable and will objectively transform themselves without subjective interaction. In practice such bifurcation leads to distorted strategy and often fails to transform the structure it is negotiating.

Similarly, the bifurcation between idea/discourse and the 'material' social relations or between attitudes/beliefs and behaviour. For instance, James Scott makes such a distinction in the strategy of everyday 'forms of resistance'. He argues that such a strategy “focuses on the intentions rather than consequences, recognizes that many acts of resistance may fail to achieve their intended result”. The implicit assumption in such a formulation is 'power' operates at the level of ideas and also as a material force. Peasants not only confront power directly in public through behaviour/action but also through counter ideas, symbols in a realm of private (largely mental) autonomy. Protest/struggle against dominant symbols—without social practice in the given institution—is also transformation. These ‘hidden transcripts’ may differ in form from

revolutionary praxis, but are in their objectives and content always revolutionary. "Objectives sought by any revolutionary movement are usually limited and even reformist in tone, although the means adopted to achieve them may be revolutionary"\(^{58}\). Not only is revolution reduced to the choice of specific means but also all 'symbolic' struggles are themselves made part of a revolutionary praxis. Physical/material realm in fact is inseparable from the realm of consciousness. Modern forms of domination are effective through the creation of what appears to us as the larger binary order of meaning versus reality. Modern forms of power are increasingly removed from the world of the peasants. Power relations continue to acquire their hold over peasants' lives as something local and immediate but articulation of these local powers into larger networks creates the effect that power exists something external to ordinary life. The larger macro-networks could include the state, large-scale commercial syndicates' etc. It is these material practices that become 'invisible' and power seems more ideal or symbolic. "The new modes of power, by their permanence, their apparent origin outside local life, their intangibility, their impersonal nature, seem to take on an aspect of difference, to stand outside actuality, outside events, outside-time, outside community, outside personhood...Although it is constituted like the rest of the social world, out of particular practices, this framework appears as somehow non-particular, nonmaterial, that is something idea..."\(^{59}\). For instance the old rents were carefully related to what was grown in the rented fields, hence the name 'live rents'. The new rents are fixed in advance, are dead, no longer a part of what grows and fluctuates. However, many 'symbolic' struggles are waged against the 'dead' rents, the structure through which it operates does not alter.

Struggles against symbolic/semiotic or cultural codes have to be invested against specific institution, practices and concrete social relations. They should 'venture to contest the formal definition of hierarchy and power'. Practices will have to be delineated in their institutional context. 'Everyday forms of resistance' have to (depending on the structures they are negotiating) subvert the structural logic.

\(^{58}\) Ibid. P.312  
Reformism as for the actors refers to their increasing 'fragmentation' instead of forging 'solidarity' between and within various subjects. Again as Scott writes, 'they require little or no co-ordination or planning'\textsuperscript{60}. Similarly Deleuze and Guattari's and Lyotard's models refer only to the 'conflicting relations' or 'difference' and problematise only the need for dislocating various 'subject positions' and do not feel the need or possibility of broader co-operative relations and inter-subjective communication. They believe in constitutive fragmentation of the actors and posit transformation on their narrow specificity.

Finally, reformism also refers to the absence of differentiation between micro and macro structures in the strategy of transformation; strategic imperatives brought into play due to the dynamic difference in the constitution of micro and macro structures should always be observed and acknowledged. To grasp transformation as either a single cataclysmic event or to reduce it to dispersed localized struggles is to deny the necessary differentiation. 'Misplaced strategies' are often counter-productive; they either force cataclysmic changes on core cultural templates like religious beliefs or attempt gradual transformation of the state. Whenever complex differentiation of micro-macro structures is undermined, social transformation fails at structural transformation and therefore ends up being reformistic.

\textbf{VI}

\textbf{Concluding Remarks}

The concepts of Revolution, Reform and Reformism have been the focus of this chapter. It was argued that social transformation is forged through various types of reforms; broadly they are identified as 'Refolution' and 'Social Reform'. These reforms are differentiated on the basis of the difference in their strategies in negotiating the macro and micro structures. While Refolutionary Strategy negotiates macro structures, social

\textsuperscript{60} J. Scott, 1985, op. cit, p.29
reform strategy negotiates micro or associated structures. Revolution refers to the synthesizing strategy, which combines the strategies of resolution and social reform through a specific balance between integration and collision between them. In other words, revolution in itself does not refer to any specific practice but it is internal to every practice of social transformation. *It is a practice, which overdetermines resolution and social reform.* When resolution and social reform are underdetermined and remain as separate strategies of transformation, they are not part of any revolutionary praxis. When resolutions - as cataclysmic events - occur independent of social reforms - as specific and localized practices - they might forge structural transformation but it would be neither 'differentiatedly wholistic' nor a 'permanent' feature of the society. It would also fail to forge 'solidarity' between various social actors (it refers to the three fundamental principles of revolution enumerated in the second section of this chapter).

Notwithstanding the structural transformation, such changes might lead to various distorted social arrangements: establishing totalitarian regimes, overwhelming presence of state over civil society, undermining horizontal forms of domination leading to marginalisation of various social groups, localization of struggles failing to negotiate global economic crisis or transnational capital flow. Revolution, therefore, does not refer to just novel structural changes but implanting such changes within specific social (wholistic) arrangements.

On the other extreme, on the scale of strategies of social transformation, are those of reformism. They not only fail to forge structural transformation (however partial) but in fact reinforce the dominant structural imperatives. Through the creation of 'false antinomies' in identifying the dynamics of the social system, they establish 'misplaced strategies' which are often counter-productive. Further strategies of reformism fail to recognize the need for organization and planning between individuals of a single subject-position or between different social actors. There are only sporadic individual acts and not organized social movements, or disjunctured social movements negotiating specific practices outside their social context. Revolution as a synthesizing practice therefore remains the most plausible means of social transformation. However, more concretized
meaning of such a practice is possible only in the context of concrete societies at a give
time. The mode of combination depends on various spatial, temporal and strategic
factors. It is only possible to delineate the external contours of such a process. Not only is
it grounded in the complexities and micro foundations of concrete practices but have to
perpetually transform itself according to the societal dynamics. The attempt to
differentiatedly combine various types of reforms however remains the general principle
of revolution.

Novel principles, subsumed under the three general principles of revolution
should be constructed to establish the necessary combination between various types of
reforms. For instance, it is perhaps plausible to argue, in the light of the experience of
contemporary social movements, that identity immediate to all social actors, could be
made a mediating or generalized category/principle around which various social actors or
social strategies could be democratically combined. In other words, the imperatives
created by the need for identity could give us insights into how politics can be
collectively rearranged. "Learning the lessons of these (identity based gender/ethnic - my
addition) movements, we can begin applying notion of identity and identities to a
political agenda for all. Politics whose starting point is about recognizing the degree to
which political activity and effort involves a continuous process of making and re-making
ourselves." We need to have adequate recognition of the ways identity works in
propelling people in not only momentous events but also every day social arrangement.
How do collectives balance between various 'human needs'? Politics needs to recognize,
as Gramsci says people's 'common sense' understanding of the world, which is never
simply wrong or ignorant but also contains a rational kernel of 'good sense'. Politics
needs to recognise such imperatives in not only forging change, in associated practices -
which are more immediate - but also macro structural transformation. It is the recognition
of such common nodal points that opens new vistas for 'differentiatedly wholistic'

126
transformation. "If any ideology is to be effective in instituting an image of social relations, if it is to achieve the effect of generating a collective project of social transformation then it must correspond to the manner in which people experience their everyday life. Hence, the effectiveness of socialist ideology with regard to workers depends upon characteristics of their life situation that are secondary from the point of view of class membership, namely size of revenue, life-style, position within the relations of authority, work conditions, character of work, 'misery' etc.... Socialist movements are forced to appeal to these Characteristics by virtue of the immediate knowledge generated by the capitalist relations of production" 62.

Contemporary, social movements in negotiating not only with vertical but also horizontal power relations have to negotiate with each other. In deliberating and accessing one another concepts of reform and revolution have prime significance. Mutual relations are often based on either misunderstanding or attempts to assimilate. The foundation of both these practices is the assumption that while its own project is one of revolution, others are attempting mere reforms or still worst reformism. Solidarity between social movements is possible only when they redefine their concepts in the light of contemporary experience. It is important to recognize that each movement and every site is potentially revolutionary. It is the specific mode of transformation, and not this or that movement, that is revolutionary.