Mao in the Land of Nehru:
State and Insurgent Space in India's Hinterlands

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the contemporary Maoist insurgency in the hills and forests of eastern and central India, situating it within longer-term processes of state interaction and expansion in the indigenous-populated region going back to the colonial period. It develops a framework of analysis from Henri Lefebvre's theories of space, the state and capitalism. The empirical examination of the insurgent zones is then grounded in a conceptualization of the insurgent zones which draws on James C. Scott and Willem van Schendel's work on Zomia.

Specifically, the insurgency in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region and the Chotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand are seen as a contemporary manifestation of hostility to state expansion in the region dating back to the defeat of the Moghul state by the British East India Company. By drawing attention to the changing interactions between local pre-state spatial practices and an expansionist state geography, we are able to more effectively identify the sources of differing conflict dynamics in two demographically and geographically similar places. State expansion in Chotanagpur has produced a fragmented space in which industrial spaces of hyper-modernity exist alongside special 'protected' spaces constituted around a simulacrum of pre-capitalist social and economic relations. In southern Chhattisgarh the state is notable in its absence. Both of these spaces are in the process of being destabilized as a consequence of neo-liberal capitalism and the expansion of natural resource extraction. In Chotanagpur, this has led to the breakdown of fragmented space and the emergence of overlapping networks of power bringing together a variety of local actors including the insurgents. In Bastar, what has emerged is a particularly virulent form of state-making driven by counter-insurgency and rooted in violence and displacement.

The dissertation contributes to studies on space, capitalism and conflict in peripheral areas existing on the fringes of historical and contemporary state projects. Specifically, it adds to the literature on India's Maoist conflict, making the case that we must recognize that contemporary events are, in part, the consequence of longer-term processes of state expansion into a peripheral 'frontier' zone.

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List of Abbreviations

ADG	Additional Director-General
AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
AICCR	All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRO	Border Roads Organization
CNT	Chotanagpur Tenancy Act
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI(Maoist)	Communist Party of India (Maoist)
CPM	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPML	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
CSPSA	Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act
CPSU	Communist Party of India
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CTA	Chotanagpur Tenures Act
DGP	Director-General Police
FCA	Forest Conservation Act
FIR	First Information Request
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INC	Indian National Congress
JD	Janata Dal
JMM	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha
JP	Jharkhand Party
MCC	Maoist Communist Centre
MLM	Marxism-Leninism-Maoism
NMDC	National Mineral Development Corporation
NRI	Non-Resident Indian
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
PESA	Panchayati (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act
PLFI	People's Liberation Front of India
PLGA	People's Liberation Guerrilla Army
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
PRC	People's Republic of China
PU	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Party Unity
PUCL	People's Union for Civil Liberties
PWG	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal

RPC	Revolutionary People's Committee
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SPO	Special Police Officer
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SWFA	South-West Frontier Agency
TPC	Tritiya Prastuti Committee
WPP	Workers and Peasants Party

Chapter 1- Introduction: A Peel of Spring Thunder

In July 1967, at the height of Mao Zedong's "Great Proletarian Cultural

Revolution," an editorial appeared in the Chinese Communist Party newspaper

the People's Daily heralding "a peel of spring thunder" sweeping across India.[1] In

Naxalbari, a poor and remote district in West Bengal's Darjeeling region, a

Maoist-led uprising of tea plantation workers had come to Beijing's attention.

Inspired by the Chinese revolution, the militants imagined Naxalbari as the

beginning of a popular revolt that would end with the red flag flying over New

Delhi. Such dreams were premature. Within months, the government had brutally

suppressed the uprising—its leaders either dead or in jail. Naxalbari seemed

destined to become little more than a footnote in India's long history of short-lived

rural revolts. But the story did not end there. Fifty years later the Naxalite rebels,

as they have come to be known, are waging a ferocious insurgency that has

spread across a vast arc of the country.[2]

Since 2001, the conflict has left more than 10,000 people dead and

hundreds of thousands displaced.[3] With the formation of the Communist Party of

India (Maoist) (CPI(Maoist)) in 2004, what had been, until the late 1990s, a

poorly equipped patchwork of tiny, mutually antagonistic rebel groups operating

in isolated pockets of the country, has grown into a formidable force of 15,000-

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1   *People's Daily,* "Spring Thunder Over India," (5 July 1967). Accessed 20 February 2012.
    https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/peoples-daily/1967/07/05.htm
2   Revised portions of this introduction come from my 2012 article: "India's Enduring Naxalite
    Insurgency," *World Politics Review* (22 February 2012). Accessed 7 March 2015.
    http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/authors/633/michael-spacek
3   Miklian, Jason and Scott Carney, "Fire in the Hole: How India's Economic Rise Turned an Obscure
    Communist Revolt into a Raging Resource War," *Foreign* Policy *(*September/October 2010):105.

20,000 well-trained and well-equipped combatants supported by 100,000 part-time militia members, active in at least 104 of India's 626 districts.[4]

Beginning in 2009, the government unleashed a massive counter-insurgency campaign to defeat the rebels, deploying over 100,000 paramilitary police personnel into five of the most insurgency-affected states.[5] Following the intensification of the conflict during the first decade of the 21st century, there are indications that the state's counter-insurgency has begun to bear fruit. The period from 2010-2016 witnessed a significant decline in the number of incidents and fatalities in India.[6] By all metrics, the conflict has entered a period of relative quiet. The previous few years has also seen a strengthening in the capacity of the state's intelligence apparatus as evidenced by the arrest of significant numbers of senior Maoist party members and military commanders.[7] Whether this represents the beginning of a longer term decline in India's Maoist movement or a temporary tactical withdrawal by the insurgents remains unclear. What the national numbers obscure, however, is that while the overall intensity of the conflict has declined, some states have experienced an increase in violence and changes in conflict dynamics. In states such as Jharkhand the CPI(Maoist) has begun to fragment and splinter groups whose targets are primarily civilians and other insurgent forces have emerged. Furthermore, the Maoists have proven

4   Bahree, Megha, "The Forever War: Inside India's Maoist Conflict." *World Policy Journal* 27.2 (Summer 2010):84. See Figure 1.
5   Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, *Annual Report 2013-2014:* 33.
6   There were 1184 deaths across India in 2010 as opposed to 433 in 2016. South Asia Terrorism Portal, *Maoist Data Sheets*. Accessed 15 June 2017. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/data_sheets/maoist_datasheet.html
7   Ibid.

themselves to be more operationally flexible than the police forces who, in India, operate along the lines of what Eitan Shamir calls a 'managerial approach', "characterized by centralization, detailed planning... and [which] aspires for maximum efficiency."[8] This rigid and highly hierarchical command structure is, arguably, inappropriate for counter-insurgency. The Maoists, on the other hand, have consistently demonstrated their ability to out-think and out-manoeuvre the security forces, achieving surprise and inflicting large numbers of causalities in spectacular attacks against state forces, such as the recent killing of 25 policeman in an ambush in Sukma, Chhattisgarh.[9]

This chapter first provides a brief background of the Maoist insurgency in India. While following chapters provide much more depth and analysis, it is helpful here to highlight key events in the insurgency, particularly for those unfamiliar with the conflict. The chapter then discusses the empirical focus of the dissertation, its theoretical framework, the core arguments made, the research value of the project and a summary of the chapters.

Background: Naxalbari

India's Maoist insurgency began in the late 1960s and was initially centred in West Bengal and Telangana, then a part of Andhra Pradesh. As mentioned above, the insurgency began in West Bengal in May 1967 after a group of Maoist

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8   Shamir, Eitan, "The Long and Winding Road: The US Army Managerial Approach to Command and the Adoption of Mission Command (*Auftragstaktiki*)," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33.5 (2010): 646.

9   *Indian Express*, "Chhattisgarh encounter: 25 CRPF jawans killed in Maoist attack, deadliest since 2010." Accessed 11 September 2017. http://indianexpress.com/article/india/chhattisgarh-sukma-encounter-crpf-jawans-killed-in-maoist-attack-deadliest-since-2010-raman-singh/

militants from the Communist Party of India(Marxist) (CPM) led an uprising of primarily indigenous tea plantation workers against their employers and the state. While the rebellion was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed, this short-lived localized uprising in an isolated pocket of the country would provide symbolic inspiration to the Maoists who are still referred to as Naxalites.

Telangana, the other stronghold of the early Maoists, was an impoverished area with a history of communist insurgency preceding the Maoists. In 1947 the Communist Party of India (CPI) led a guerrilla struggle against the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Muslim-head of a semi-suzerain, predominately Hindu, state which refused to join an independent India. Following a brief war the Indian state overthrew the Nizam and forcibly integrated the erstwhile Princely State into the newly independent country. However, the CPI and its guerrillas continued their war against what they considered a semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois state formed after a bogus revolution.[10] Within a few years, however, facing internal ideological conflict and imminent military defeat at the hands of the Indian army the CPI called off their struggle. Therefore, during the late 1960s, Telangana had a living historical memory of revolutionary insurgency that had, according to many, been betrayed by the 'right' communists in the CPI. Organizationally, the local communist unit in the region was more radical than the party's Central Committee and were early and enthusiastic converts to Maoism.[11]

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10 Noorani, AG., "Of Stalin, Telangana and Indian Revolution," *Frontline* 28.26 (December 2011).
11 Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, "The Story of an Abortive Revolution: Communist Insurgency in Post-Independence West Bengal, 1948-50," *Journal of South Asian Development* 3.1 (2008): 24

The other significant theatre of the conflict at the time was in West Bengal. While the insurgency began in a rural hinterland, and maintained its rural character in Telangana, in West Bengal the most visible centre of revolutionary activity became Calcutta, the former capital of the British Raj. By the late 1960s Calcutta, while still one of India's primary cities, was in the early stages of economic, political and industrial decline. It retained, however, its place as an intellectual hub and heartland of the radical left. In the late 1960s a section of disillusioned students, along with a lumpen proletariat of semi-urbanized street youth, were attracted to revolutionary Maoism. Not only did the radicals promise an egalitarian future, but the action-oriented ideology of the Naxalites appealed to a subset of the population disillusioned by the failures of independence and the gradualism of the parliamentary left. For the Naxalites revolution was not something to be patiently cultivated: it was a lived experience of spontaneous and violent direct action which would, inevitably, culminate in the toppling of the state.

Inspired by this vision, by 1969 large parts of Calcutta had become ungovernable, as students and radical youth seized control of their colleges and fought pitched, near daily, street battles with the police. The revolutionary leadership, composed mainly of dissidents from the CPM, a party which entered the government of West Bengal in 1967, sought to forge a common front out of the various Maoist groups and factions which had emerged across the country in the late 1960s. In 1969, the leaders of the Naxalbari movement announced in a

massive rally in the centre of Calcutta the formation of the Communist Party of India(Marxist-Leninist) (CPML). The party's platform claimed that the Indian state was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial comprador state and was, in its existing form, irredeemable. Violent seizure of power and a total transformation along Maoist lines was necessary for social, political and economic liberation.

1969 proved to be the height of the first period of revolutionary Maoism in India. The Andhra Pradesh Maoists did not join the new political formation and were soon being denounced as 'counter-revolutionaries' by the official organ of the CPML.[12] This was an early indication of the fragmentation that would plague the Maoists throughout much of their history. Furthermore, the Maoist's reliance on spontaneous and voluntarist action soon began to exhaust itself. The movement relied on permanent mobilization and individual initiative, something which proved impossible to sustain as cadre were depleted by arrests and disillusionment.

Furthermore, the CPML ideologically rejected mass organizations, relying on conspiratorial and clandestine party cells. The result was that the party was unable to develop revolutionary institutions able to broaden their support base, increase pressure on the state and provide a shield for underground activists. This combination of strategies would prove fatal to the fortunes of the early Naxalites. By the early 1970s the movement had been largely crushed—many leaders either dead or in jail. Its few remaining active militants were forced to

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12 Roy, Ashish Kumar, *Unfinished Revolution: The Spring Thunder and Beyond* (Kolkata: Minerva Associates, 2008): 149-150.

escape to isolated rural areas in the country's hinterlands where they formed myriad numbers of what could be described, in the language of the Situationists, groupuscules.[13]

In spite of these setbacks, India's Maoist insurgency survived. The Maoists of West Bengal and Telangana were not entirely eliminated by the state. While much of the cadre was demobilized and leadership in jail, small groups moved into isolated rural areas far from state power. The Maoists re-emerged in areas that had been largely unaffected by the initial revolutionary wave. For example, in the plains of Bihar, where caste warfare intensified in the late 1970s and 1980s, the Maoists found a fertile site for their politics. By forcibly redistributing land to lower castes and protecting them from the violence of upper-caste militias such as the *Ranvir Sena*, the Maoists were able to gain a foothold across Bihar's alluvial plains. By the late 1990s, the Maoists, along with the upper caste militias, had largely been largely pushed out of the state and the intense caste violence of the period had abated.

Furthermore, the insurgency in rural Telangana, southern Bihar (since 2000 the state of Jharkhand) and parts of West Bengal persisted in isolated hill and forest areas where the state had little presence. These small, fragmented groups, who were prone to spending as much time in internecine warfare as they did fighting the state, operated in isolated, indigenous pockets. In this period the

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13 There have been literally dozens of different Naxalite groups in India, many of them with only a handful of members. Bela Bhatia has detailed some of these in Bhatia, Bela, "The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40.5 (9-15 April 2015): 1539. To name a few: the CPML Somnath, CPML New Democracy, CPML New Proletarian, CPMLCentral Team, CPML Janashakti, CPI of the United States of India and the Marxist-Leninist Committee. Nearly all of these groups have since disbanded or been absorbed by the CPI(Maoist).

Maoists were seen as little more than a localized law and order problem, no different than the bandit groups who were rife across large parts of the country. As a result, the Maoists were able to operate largely unimpeded. Additionally, following the defeat of Indira Gandhi and the end of of the repression of the Emergency (1975-1977), surviving Maoist cadre and leaders that had been imprisoned were released as part of a general political amnesty. Some of them, such as Kondapalli Seetharamaiah the founder of the Andhra Pradesh-based People's War Group (PWG), returned to underground life.

Thus, the Maoist insurgency which had, in the early 1970s, suffered what seemed to be a decisive defeat, was able to slowly re-consolidate itself and spread across large parts of eastern and central India. Two of the states which have, since the 1980s, become hotbeds of Maoist insurgency, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, share characteristics that make them ideal sites for insurgency. First is terrain. Large parts of these states are sparsely populated, hilly and covered with dense forests, providing cover for rebels and making it difficult for security forces trained in conventional warfare to operate. This is not necessary for insurgency. As discussed above, the plains of Bihar were, for nearly three decades, a site of Maoist insurgency and, as has been shown in the literature on counter-insurgent warfare, there has been no shortage of civil conflict in urban and plains environments such as Israel/Palestine and Iraq.[14] I would, however, argue that that territory which the state finds difficult to operate in is more likely to

14 see Shamir, Eitan, "The Long and Winding Road: The US Army Managerial Approach to Command and the Adoption of Mission Command (*Auftragstaktiki*)," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33.5 (2010); Shamir, Eitan, "'Mowing the Grass: Israel's Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 37.1 (2014).

lead to insurgent resilience—the hills and forests of central and eastern India have experienced rebellion since the emergence of the state of far greater frequency and intensity than have the Plains areas of the region. Furthermore, many of those living in the contemporary conflict zone are Adivasi with long histories of rebellion to state-making projects centred in the plains areas, such as the Ho and Munda people.[15] This is similar to the dynamics evident in the region of Zomia, the name given by Willem van Schendel to the highland area stretching across South-East Asia into South Asia.[16] According to James Scott, Zomia's people are "best understood as runaway, fugitive, maroon communities who have, over the course of two millennia, been fleeing the oppressions of state-making projects in the valleys".[17] This is also true of central and eastern India. The region's people and culture have been constituted, at least in part, by an opposition to expanding state and bureaucratic projects, an opposition which was historically expressed in mass migration into interior areas outside of the reach of the state.

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15 The term Adivasi is Sanskrit for 'original people' and refers to groups dwelling on the margins of sedentary societies who practise non-agricultural modes of production and exist outside of the Hindu caste system. The term is not without its problems. Historically, South Asia did not experience the clear patterns of migration and conquest seen in the Americas. It is difficult to make a firm distinction in the region between indigenous and migrant populations. Conceptually, it subsumes a vast array of linguistic, social and cultural groups into one category. With these caveats in mind, I will use the term throughout. It is of historical, social and political value and been widely embraced as a category of self-identification. For an examination of the term and a defence of its use see (Shashank Kela, "Adivasi and Peasant: Reflections on Indian Social History", *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 33.3 (2006) pp. 502–525. For a contrary perspective see Sumit Guha, Environment and Ethnicity in India, 1200-1991 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1999)

16 Schendel, Willem van, *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2005).

17 Scott, James C., *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009): ix.

The region's terrain, the alienation and material deprivation of its population, a historical memory of resistance and a weak or non-existent state make eastern and central India a prime site of insurgency. The final piece to the puzzle is the nexus between the ideology and praxis of the Maoists. The interactions between insurgent ideas and behaviour is vital in analyzing conflict and understanding how insurgents have been able to expand and consolidate themselves in large areas of eastern and central India.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Maoists gradually expanded into Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand from their base areas in Telangana and Bihar. At the time the state was largely unconcerned with the insurgency's expansion into what were seen as peripheral areas. However, the fragmentation and internecine warfare which marked the movement in the 1970s receded as a handful of the most effective Maoist groups grew in strength, absorbing, and occasionally defeating, their rivals. The Bihar-based Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and the Telangana-based PWG emerged as the dominant forces in Jharkhand (then southern Bihar) and Chhattisgarh (then part of Madhya Pradesh). In 2004 these two groups merged, forming the CPI(Maoist)

India was now faced with a unified, territorially expansive revolutionary force operating in the geographic heartland of the country. The insurgency is now being waged in the mineral rich, indigenous populated, hills and forests in the centre of the country. Its epicentre lies in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand,

Odisha (formerly Orissa), parts of eastern Maharashtra, and the Santhal

Parganas and Midnapore in West Bengal.

Case Studies: Internal Frontier

Chhattisgarh, which was formed out of the 16 eastern districts of Madhya

Pradesh in 2000, is one of the heartlands of contemporary Maoist insurgency. It

is in the dense forests of Bastar which make up the southern third of the state

where the rebels have been able to mobilize Adivasi populations, long ignored by

the state. Bastar is where the Maoists have their headquarters and where Salwa

Judum, the vigilante force established by local elites in collaboration with

elements of the state government, unleashed their terror.[18] The chapter on

Chhattisgarh makes the argument that the current conflict represents the most

recent iteration of a historical struggle over processes of absorption by the

modern bureaucratic state, processes which have accelerated over the previous

three decades. These processes have created conditions ripe for insurgency and

are, ironically, being further deepened and accelerated by the Maoist insurgency

itself. Over the long-term the state, as a concrete abstraction with significant

military power, cannot tolerate zones of resistance and rebellion within its

territory. The logic of the state dictates that it ultimately must 'tame' its frontiers

and produce and reproduce itself across its *de jure* territory. In Chhattisgarh

expansion is occurring primarily through counter-insurgency. This particular form

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18   Miklian, Jason, "The purification hunt: The Salwa Judum counter-insurgency in Chhattisgarh, India,"
     Dialectical Anthropology 33.3 (2009).

of statecraft has created an 'architecture of force', a metaphor which describes an edifice of spatial transformation in which expansion is rooted in a logic of force and violence and materialized through angularity. Angularity is both an architectural metaphor and a representation of state spatial transformation. It is visible in the rigid lines of demarcation and specialization stemming from the militarization of state infrastructure, such as schools, and the establishment of camps that corral and control populations.

Furthermore, there are two factors which provide urgency to the state's drive to 'tame' and absorb Bastar. The first is military. The totalizing logic at the heart of the state cannot tolerate an armed group challenging its authority in its geographic centre. Such a challenge to its legitimacy and power must be crushed. Additionally, the emergence of neo-liberalism in India, the growth of demand for natural resources and the privatization of resources provides a further impetus and urgency to state strategy in southern Chhattisgarh. The state and capital desire what is buried beneath Bastar's soil. This desire can only be realized with the construction of transport and industrial infrastructure and the establishment of 'security'. Neither are possible as long as the Maoists are powerful.

The second case study is of Jharkhand, specifically that part of the state formed by the Chotanagpur Plateau. Many analysts and media accounts treat the insurgencies in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as an unproblematic singularity. They are territorially contiguous sites of Maoist insurgency with large Adivasi

populations who score extremely poorly on all major socio-economic indicators.[19] In spite of, or perhaps because of, the population's deep poverty, both states have booming resource sectors generating significant wealth for specific individuals and corporate interests. Viewing the two states as two parts of a single unit of analysis is, however, deeply problematic as their differences are empirically and analytically significant.

Jharkhand has a longer history of engagement with, and integration into, regional political and economic systems than does Chhattisgarh. Large-scale extractive industries were first established by the British in the late 19th century and the colonial encounter in Jharkhand was, in many ways, more complex.[20] Expansion into the region was conditioned by Britain's desire to control access to Chotanagpur's coal and iron ore deposits. Their attempts at conquest were, however, fiercely resisted. In Chhattisgarh the British ruled through a Princely state that mediated between the state and the local populations. In Jharkhand, on the other hand, the British implemented direct rule making the region part of the Bengal Presidency.[21] In the face of stiff resistance, coupled with the region's strategic importance as a source of resources for Empire, the colonial power was compelled to make compromises with the local populace. These compromises created special protected zones in Adivasi areas through legislation such as the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CTA) which entrenched customary laws and

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19 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, *Annual Report 2014-15: Tribal Welfare and Development*. Accessed 20 February 2015. http://www.tribal.nic.in/writereaddata/AnnualReport/AnnualReport2014-15.pdf
20 Corbridge, Stuart, "Industrialization, colonialism and ethnoregionalism: the Jharkhand, India, 1880-1980," *Journal of Historical Geography* 13.3 (1987): 254
21 Ekka, Alex, *Status of Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples Land: Jharkhand* (Delhi: Aakar, 2011): 44-45

communal land rights. While there was variation in the minutiae of these accommodations, all had shared characteristics illustrating the logic of British rule in Jharkhand. First, territory was demarcated and granted special administrative status. Demarcation effectively ended the mobility and fluidity which had historically been a feature of economic and political life in Chotanagpur. Second, the British codified customary law and practice. Outside of serious criminal activities and actions directly affecting the state, customary authorities were given legal responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Finally, land regimes formalized what were conceived of as 'traditional' practices. Most significantly land became inalienable communally held property over which local people enjoyed usufruct rights.

Thus, British colonial policy sought to accommodate traditionally mobile Adivasi populations in the region by creating special administrative systems derived from customary rule. However, the demarcation of space and the formalization of custom also directly served self-interest of the British. By limiting mobility, the colonial state was able to effectively sedentarize the population without risking the serious unrest that would have occurred had a serious and sustained effort been made to transform these regions into commercial, agricultural and industrial economies subsumed in the structures of a modern, bureaucratic state. In effect, the illusion of the traditional was maintained, but the very essence of 'tradition', mobility and fluidity, was neutralized. Fluidity was not simply territorial — it manifested itself in the everyday. By codifying custom the

British created a space which was frozen in time and stripped of dynamism. Consequently, Jharkhand has historically been constituted as a fragmented space. Areas which have been heavily integrated into broader political and economic systems through transportation infrastructure and industry exist alongside special 'protected' and 'excluded' areas where land is only semi-commodified and customary practice given legal weight.

An unintended consequence of the fragmentation of space and British policies of exclusion is that Jharkhand has demonstrated a degree of political mobilization largely absent in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Numerous cultural, economic and identity-based movements have emerged seeking to preserve the special dispensations of the autochthonous population. Consequently, the political institutions of Jharkhand are deeply divided and fragmented. There is no single social force strong enough to exercise hegemony. Furthermore, unlike Chhattisgarh, where much of the resource industry exists outside of the territorial ambit of the insurgents, extractive industries in Jharkhand are in areas where the Maoists are active. Much of the funding for waging insurgency across India is generated in Chotanagpur through the levy of taxes on industry and there is a degree of collusion between the rebels and elements of the state and industry not seen elsewhere. In recent years the Maoists have fragmented and a number of localized splinter groups have emerged.[22] Territorially, divisions between the state and insurgents is opaque.

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[22] Shrivastava, Kumar Sambhav, "The Jungle Gangs of Jharkhand," *Hindustan Times* (24 January 2016). Accessed 6 June 2017. http://www.hindustantimes.com/static/the-jungle-gangs-of-jharkhand/

In spite of the superficial similarities between Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, the two theatres of conflict have dramatically different dynamics. These differences are a consequence of their radically different histories as well as of internal differences within the CPI(Maoist) in spite of the merger. Before the merger, the MCC was strong in southern Bihar/Jharkhand and the PWG in Andhra Pradesh and eastern Madhya Pradesh/Chhattisgarh. The merger has not entirely eliminated differences of ideology and praxis between its precursors. Jharkhand's conflict is marked by intense fragmentation and can be conceptualized, in part, as a 'resource war' in which the insurgents consists of one set of actors fighting for access to lucrative sources of revenue. The state is weak and little more than a vessel used by competing interest groups. The war in Chhattisgarh, on the other hand, resembles a conventional ideological conflict marked by a struggle for control over populations and territory. Here, a unified sub-national government is at war with an insurgent group seeking state power.

The dissertation makes the argument that an analytically rich and fruitful approach with which to understand not only India's Maoist insurgency, but conflict in peripheral 'frontier' zones generally, is through a Lefebvrian spatial analysis. Space is a powerful conceptual and theoretical tool bridging debates over political, sociological, economic, material and ideological explanations of conflict. It helps identify the ways in which actors are constituted by, and themselves constitute, the material and symbolic environment and how this environment is itself a product of everyday practices and longer-term historical processes.

Research Value

There is significant research value in this project. While there has been an increase in interest paid to India's Maoist insurgency, the majority of work focuses either on broad abstractions at the national level or on the micro-politics of insurgency, such as the role of the Maoists in commodity chains and their interventions into state resource networks.[23] While the existing literature on Maoist insurgency and state formation in India is discussed thoroughly in Chapter Two, some broad observations are useful at this point. As Chapter Two argues, there is literature that studies the Maoists and there is literature that studies state formation in the region. It is, however, important to examine the two not only as mutually antagonistic forces and discrete phenomena, but also as parts of a larger system. Furthermore, the literature that does examine the relationship between the two often does so ahistorically. For example, a common argument is that the Maoists are strong in eastern and central India because the state is weak. Unable to deliver justice, security or material benefits, the Maoists have, opportunistically, exploited this governance vacuum, garnering support though the provisions of those social, political and economic goods that are the traditional purview of the state. This is mechanistic and assumes the ontological fact of the state. Where there is no state, there is disorder. Furthermore, it

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23 See Shah, Alpa, *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India* (Durham: Duke UP, 2010); Suykens, Bert, "Diffuse Authority in the Beedi Commodity Chain: Naxalite and State Governance in Tribal Telangana, India, " *Development and Change* 41.1 (2010).

neuters the Maoists and fails to grapple with them as political actors engaged in a revolutionary project. They are not social service providers acting in lieu of the state.

A certain degree of abstraction is necessary to understand the relationship between state and insurgents and provide a coherent account of the long-term historical conditions that have led to the conflict. The theoretical framework of space is, however, able to provide sufficient analytic scale and depth. Space, as it is used here, is more than an ontological given and more than simply territory. As Henri Lefebvre argues, space is neither an empty vessel that is only given existence by what fills it, nor does it have an independent, *a priori* transcendental existence. Rather, "Space is a social product".[24] What this conception of space does is allow one to understand how state and insurgent behaviour conditions, and is conditioned by, the ecosystem in which they operate. It lets us create an account of how the behaviour of conflict actors changes the conflict environment and 'reveals' the productivity of war. The state and rebels are densely enmeshed in a myriad of relationships and are engaged in a mutual project of creation in space.

This leads to the other valuable contribution of this work. While there have been a number of narrative and descriptive histories of the Maoists, there has been little work that has comprehensively situated both the exercise of statecraft and insurgency within a broader historical framework. This dissertation places the contemporary insurgency within a longer history of space-making and state

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24   Lefevbvre, Henri, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991): 26.

expansion in the region, arguing that eastern and central India has been constituted as an internal frontier zone, dating back to the colonial period. Furthermore, while there are commonalities across the Adivasi areas of the region, significant differences exist. These differences have arisen because of the particular historical experiences producing divergent forms of space with consequences for contemporary practices of both insurgency and counter-insurgency.

This dissertation historicizes the Maoist conflict through the use of a spatial analysis that demonstrates the connections between the two primary actors in the conflict—the state and the insurgents. By examining insurgencies across two geographic areas it provides a broad analysis of the conflict while also exploring the origins of contextual differences. This framework provides both a high and medium-level analysis that identifies how the general and the particular interact to produce space. By focusing on two places, it provides a historical account able to transcend binary accounts of state/insurgency. Both the state and the insurgency are complex actors continuously interacting within a broader system across various geographic areas in eastern and central India.

I now turn to the three 'elements' which form the basis of my analysis of India's Maoist conflict—the insurgents, the state and space.

Conceptual Triad

Insurgents: The dissertation provides a historical account of Maoist ideology and practice, providing an analysis of how revolutionary ideas and praxis interact and change over time and space. The relationship between the two can be best understood as part of a series of dialectical moments through, "a study of stabilities and structures which does not overlook the process of becoming, and of a study of the processes of becoming which dismantles them and which is already active within structuration per se."[25] This allows one to go beyond the discrete periodization marking much of the analysis of the Maoist insurgency.

State: An analytical account of the state's encounter with the 'non-state' spaces of central and eastern India situates contemporary state practice within a theoretical and empirical framework that conceptualizes the state and state practice in two geographically similar, but distinct peripheral regions. An analysis of the logic behind India's counter-insurgency strategies, filling a lacuna in the literature, is also provided. While there is a large body of academic work examining the Maoist insurgency and the political economy of the conflict there is little on counter-insurgency. What does exist is either uncritical and overly sympathetic towards the state or falls under the rubric of 'problem-solving' policy analysis identifying how the state ought to wage counter-insurgency to make it more effective.

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25 Lefebvre, Henri *Critique of Everyday Life Volume 2: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (New York: Verso, 2008): 252.

Historicity and Space: The final element of the triad is a framework to understand insurgency spatially and temporally. Space is a concept which has been used in various analysis of the state, capitalism and, more broadly, modernity as a total social phenomenon. It has, however, never been applied explicitly to insurgency. This represents a novel theoretical contribution that can serve as a framework with which to understand other, similar processes unfolding across the planet. As an armed conflict being waged in peripheral areas that are in the process of being absorbed by the state, the Maoist insurgency is not unique. While the proximate impetus for absorption varies across time and space, state expansion into peripheral regions is underlied by a similar rationale: the totalizing logic of the modern, territorial state which necessarily seeks to colonize all of the planet's area. While each insurgency functions in a unique context and has differing ideological, organizational and tactical/strategic forms, there is a symmetry across space.

The development and application of a spatial analysis to insurgency is useful as a tool to examine low intensity civil conflicts in peripheral 'frontier' zones. The expansion of the global system of states and capitalism into resource rich and historically hostile spaces and the consequent spatial transformations is not unique to India.

Chapter Summary

This final section details the structure of the dissertation and provides a brief description of the chapters. Chapter 2- Literature and Methodology, as the title suggests, discusses research and methodology and provides an overview of the relevant literature. This work exists at the intersection of a variety of disciplines and areas of study. The literature on the Indian state and, more generally, state expansion, frontiers and borderland in peripheral areas is examined. Of particular relevance is the work by van Schendel, Scott and others on Zomia, the highland areas of South-East Asia.

Secondly, the literature on complex political emergencies and the political economy of conflict is highly germane to this work. Furthermore, this section draws on some of Mark Duffield's observations and critiques of mechanistic 'problem solving' theories and their tendency to depoliticize armed opposition to the state.[26] It will then provide the rationale for returning politics to the heart of analysis of civil conflict, and what Duffield calls a systems analysis. It is an approach in which, "Systems are integrated wholes that cannot be reduced to its separate units... a shift from the study of objects to that of interconnections." Methodologically, it provides a rationale for the use of interviews, field observations and an attempt to synthesize a grand theoretical understanding of the logic of state expansion and the consequent responses to this logic.

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26   Cox, Robert W., "Social forces, states, and world orders: beyond international relations theory." In *Approaches to World Order*, eds. Robert W. Cox and Timothy J. Sinclair (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

Chapter 3- Violence, Consciousness and Revolution: The History of Indian Maoist Insurgency, focuses on the ideological and organization history of the Naxalites. It provides a narrative history of the Maoist insurgency and an account and analysis of the contemporary conflict. I argue that, contrary to deterministic and structural accounts of insurgency, the ideological evolution of the Maoists is crucial for understanding contemporary conflict. Ideology and political beliefs are a significant constitutive element of insurgent practice. The original form that Maoism took was predicated on an ideological/political frame that sought to engage with the lived realities of India's rural poor, synthesized with a modernist and revolutionary teleology. The early Naxalites practiced a syncretic form of Maoism emphasizing a voluntarist, almost anarchist, ethic that had an apocalyptic and millenarian vision of historical change. While the contemporary Maoist movement has rejected some of the more syncretic and singular aspects of the movement's earlier beliefs, elements of the earlier ideological praxis persist. Understanding this ideological evolution is crucial to understanding the conflict.

Chapter 4- State and Insurgent Space: Governance and Rebellion in India's Hinterland, examines the history of state formation and rebellion in the region. It also details the theoretical framework from which the dissertation's analysis emerges and situates a history of eastern and central India into this framework. Specifically, the concept of space is developed and its relevance to India's eastern and central conflict zone explained. The argument is that the

region has been constituted through a dialectical interplay between encroaching forces of the state and local resistance to this expansion conditioned through the logic of production and capitalism. The state in the region is simultaneously weak and repressive. It is an ideal terrain for the waging of a prolonged insurgency.

Chapter 5- Bastar: Bounded Spaces examines the southern part of Chhattisgarh, a stronghold of the Maoist insurgents. This chapter provides an empirical analysis of both Maoist practices and the state's counter-insurgency. It situates both of these within a narrative history of Bastar and an analysis of how this has shaped contemporary state and insurgent practice. Why has Bastar become a centre of Maoist insurgency? Why did Chhattisgarh become the site of a virulent counter-insurgency structured around population displacement and containment? The Maoist insurgency is spread across numerous states. It is only in Chhattisgarh that there was a sustained counter-insurgent campaign of strategic hamletting led by a semi-private militia. Beginning with the Mughals and continuing to the present day, the state in Bastar has been notable in its absence. While there have long existed state claims on territory, or *de jure* sovereignty, there has been little or no actual administrative or bureaucratic presence. This has been coupled with a reliance on policing and force to mediate between the state and the local populace. Until recently the forests of Bastar were a non-state space. The increasing importance of natural resources, the emergence of a form of neo-liberalism in India and the expansion and growing strength of the Maoists have functioned as factors accelerating state expansion.

These processes are rooted in counter-insurgency which is both colonizing and creating the state in Bastar. This virulent and brutal spatial production has led to the creation of highly differentiated spaces. There are the 'ideal' state spaces of the displacement camp, the police post, the fortified town, and there are the insurgent spaces of the Maoists. Thus, the two defining characteristics of space in Bastar are: a clear demarcation of state/non-state/insurgent space and a process of state expansion structured around counter-insurgency whose defining characteristics are violence and force.

Chapter 6- Chotanagpur: Fragmented Space, is the second case study. Focusing on the Chotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand, this region has similarities with Bastar. It has a large Adivasi population, 'difficult' (from the state's perspective) terrain and is another site of Maoist insurgency. However, the nature of the insurgency and space is substantively different than it is in Chhattisgarh. Beginning in the colonial period and accelerating under independence, Jharkhand has, since the latter half of the 19th century, been the site of a coal and steel industry with concomitant infrastructure such as roads, rails, ports and large towns and cities. The region has been integrated into the broader political economy and has experienced processes of 'modernity' to a degree unseen in Chhattisgarh.

Additionally, under the British, Bastar was a Princely State only indirectly integrated into the colonial state. The peripheral areas of Jharkhand, on the other hand, were firmly enmeshed into the state through a patchwork of 'special' legal

and land regimes that sought to preserve customary Adivasi rights. This differing encounter with modernity was due to a number of colonial exigencies such as the need to preserve access to a burgeoning coal and steel industry in the face of sustained unrest and local resistance. These special zones were spatial products that sought to freeze time through the instruments of modernity — they were a simulacrum of 'pre-modernity' fundamentally rooted in modernity.

The chapter then argues that the production of space in Jharkhand has historically been fragmented and these fragments are now in the process of collapsing. Insurgency in Chotanagpur is being waged less over territory and more over access to lucrative networks of industrial and state resources. The insurgents collude with numerous other political and economic actors. The collapse of the demarcation between Jharkhand's fragmented spaces is indicated by the fragmentation of the insurgency itself. Unlike Bastar, where the CPI(Maoist) is the only insurgent group of note, Jharkhand has, in recent years, seen the emergence of dozens of highly localized splinter groups. While all of these groups claim to be fighting for a Maoist revolution, evidence suggests that most are the product of local micro-political conflicts over resource access.

The purpose of these two studies is to illustrate how the history and the production of space is both constitutive of, and constituted by, insurgency and state expansion into 'restive' areas. It provides an account and explanation of why it is that the insurgency, in spite of the two states exhibiting similar demographic and geographic characteristics and having identical belligerents,

has unfolded so differently. This will be furthered discussed in Chapter 7-
Conclusion: Leviathan. The conclusion asks, why does space manifest itself so
fundamentally differently in these two geographically proximate areas that are
sociologically similar and experiencing the same insurgency? While similar
processes are unfolding across the region, the particular manifestation and state
of 'becoming' that is emerging in different sites is a consequence of the
interaction and the moment of intersection between a macro-logic and the
particular micro-logics of local systems which themselves are created by
historical movement and local agency. Thus, state expansion and insurgency
manifest themselves in similar, but also fundamentally unique, ways in the two
places examined. They are local sites of a much larger set of processes and
historical movements that have been unfolding over the previous three centuries.
These processes are the expansion of the state and capitalism across the globe
and the creation, and then destruction, of frontiers and liminal zones of non-state
space. These processes, however, are neither inevitable nor teleological. The
production of space is an ongoing, perpetual moment of becoming that can only
exist in a context of local agency whose possibilities are shaped, but not
determined, by history.

Chapter 2: Literature and Methodology

To understand the Maoist insurgency in India's eastern and central hinterland it is important to engage with not only the conflict, but the history and nature of state expansion and formation in the region. In order to help develop the theoretical framework used in the dissertation a diversity of literature has been examined. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad survey and review of the key literature relevant to this work. Specifically, it examines key texts related to India's Maoist insurgency, the Indian state and civil conflict.[27] This helps situate the arguments and claims made in this dissertation within larger debates surrounding South Asian state formation, insurgency/counter-insurgency and state functioning and expansion in hostile internal frontier zones such as the hills and forests of central and eastern India. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological approaches and techniques used in my work and a discussion on the limitations inherent to research conducted in isolated and active conflict zones.

The Indian State

A primary purpose and one of the major contributions of this dissertation is to situate the contemporary Maoist conflict within a broader account of the historical expansion and consolidation of both the colonial and post-colonial states in the non-state spaces of eastern and central India. Chapter Three provides the theoretical framework and makes the case for treating space as a social

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27 While the literature on space is crucial to the theoretical framework and analysis of the dissertation, this is examined in proceeding chapter and will only be superficially referred to here. The literature on Adivasi and indigenous India is also examined in a later chapter.

phenomena that enables one to more fully understand the state and insurgency. What is also necessary, however, is understanding the particularities of the Indian state and its particular relationship with its isolated peripheral regions.

As there has been a great deal written on state failure and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, one useful departure is drawing on the work of post-colonial states in the region. Jeffrey Herbst, for example, identifies a key problem which all rulers, including the rulers of the modern states of the region, have faced— how to, "project authority over inhospitable territories that contain relatively low densities of people".[28] As in large areas of sub-Saharan Africa, the hills and forests of central and eastern India have inhospitable (from the perspective of the state) terrain with low population densities and highly mobile societies reliant on rain fed agriculture and swidden.[29] Consequently, the historical patterns of state formation in the region reflect some of the same characteristics identified by Herbst: "The combination of large amounts of open land and rain-fed agriculture meant that, in precolonial Africa, control of territory was often not contested because it was often easier to escape from rulers than to fight them."[30] Subsequently:

> Central governments were often not concerned about what outlying areas did as long as tribute was paid... and there were no imminent security threats emerging to challenge the center. This particular view of what control meant was made possible by the ability to separate ownership and control of land. Thus, a ruler might view a distant territory as owing some

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28 Herbst, Jeffrey, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000): 11.

29 Kela, Shashank, *A Rogue and Peasant Slave: Adivasi Resistance, 1800-2000*, (Delhi: Navayana Publishing, 2012): 505.

30 Herbst, *State and Power:* 43

kind of tribute to him (leaders were all men) without any notion that he controlled the actions of the people in the outlying areas on a day-to-day basis.[31]

According to Herbst, this central problematic—low population density relative to land—led to a form of rule poorly compatible with a modern state system that emerged out of a European historical experience in which control over land was the key. There were few incentives for rulers to maintain absolute control over territory. Thus, the logic of state formation in sub-Saharan Africa did not lead to the formation of strong, centralized states as it did in Europe. Rather, what emerged was a system of rule in which, "power was (quite realistically) conceived of as a series of concentric circles radiating out from the core".[32] According to Herbst, the inability of sub-Saharan African states to broadcast their power across their territory, the cardinal function of the modern state, has led to institutional failure, political violence and, in some cases, civil war.[33]

Herbst's analysis of the trajectory of African state formation is a useful departure point for an examination of the Indian state's functioning in its rebellious and insurgent-prone eastern and central hinterlands. Low population ratios coupled with difficult terrain has also been a challenge for India's territorial consolidation in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. However, there is a fundamental difference between the post-colonial (and pre-colonial) contexts of the two regions—on the whole India does not resemble the extremely weak states of the African continent. Nor does India, however, resemble the

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31 Ibid.: 43
32 Ibid.: 45
33 Ibid.: 3

consolidated and strong European state which Herbst uses as a heuristic device and archetype of an ideal state. Is India then a weak or a strong state? I would suggest neither. For all of the strengths of Herbst's work, it suffers from some of the teleological assumptions which underlies much of the literature studying the phenomenon of the state at the macro level. While Herbst concedes that, "state consolidation is hardly linear, with setbacks common", the implication of his overall arguments is that a state can reach a moment of completion when it transcends the condition and ontological existence of being 'failed'.

Insurgency and insurgent space in eastern and central India has emerged because of the way in which state expansion across large parts of the country's hinterland has unfolded historically. The particular way that the Indian state's administrative, institutional and political presence has expanded across some of its territory has created both the possibility and impetus for insurgency. In order to develop this claim, it is first necessary to examine the literature on colonial and post-colonial state formation in South Asia, focusing on continuities and discontinuities of modes of governance across both time and space. Institutionally, India has established itself as a stable, liberal democracy providing representation for its citizens and sectional groups. Its depth and manifestation across its territory is, however, highly uneven and often thin. Large parts of the country are dominated by local elites who control the local state apparatus.

Much of the literature on the Indian state is rooted in a macro-level perspective that focuses on how its institutions have shaped, and been shaped

by, the politics of the country's core. Broadly, this literature can be divided into Marxist and liberal institutionalist approaches with the former drawing on a class analysis and the latter drawing on a Weberian conceptualization of state design and function.[34]

A common theme that emerges is situating India's liberal, democratic institutions within its diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic milieu. Specifically, this literature seeks to understand how democracy has been able to consolidate itself in a society riven with economic and social divisions. One approach to this problem has been to focus on the particularities of India's constitutional structures and institutions in relation to the country's historical experiences and sociological divisions. For example, according to Meghnad Desai, the Indian state's institutional form arose from competing historical traditions of social democracy (specifically Fabianism), liberalism, Gandhianism and what he refers to as the 'subaltern tradition': "These four traditions involve different views as to the centrality of the individual or the collective, be it class or caste, and on the agency responsible for overcoming disadvantage, be it the state, the society or the individual".[35] Subsequently, these traditions coalesced to create the architecture the Indian state:

> Many, though not all, such conflicts and differences were settled in the
> Constitution in a framework of law, and thus subject to legal disputes and

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34 Jayal, Niraja Gopal, *Democracy and the State: Welfare Secularism and Development in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999; Jenkins, Rob, *Democratic Politics and Economic Reform in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1999); Kohli, Atul, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

35 Desai, Meghand, "Equality or Inclusion: The Dilemma of India's Democracy." In *Democracy, Development and Decentralization in India*, eds. Chandan Sengupta and Stuart Corbridge (Delhi: Routledge, 2010): 9.

settlement. The Fundamental Rights are from the Liberal tradition, while the Directive Principles are from other traditions. The former treats all citizens as equal before the law and the latter enjoins the state to redress social inequalities in Indian society.[36]

For Desai the Indian state is, in effect, a hybrid that reflects the competing political traditions and social composition of the society from which emerged. Diversity and social inequality has generated institutional contradictions and tensions, "between the principle of equality before the law, and the need to make provisions for people who have yet to attain status inequality".[37] At times, these tensions and contradictions have led to incoherent policies and failed outcomes. For example, Desai argues that the social democratic model which rested on state-led industrialization and expansion of the public sector during the period immediately following independence failed to live up to its egalitarian promise as it, "remained the small and privileged home of no more than 10 percent of the labour force... The overall effect of the policy was one of excluding the most poor and backward groups from the benefits of development".[38]

While Desai's analysis of the tensions and contradictions of the Indian state are interesting, his arguments are not without their problems. First, the correspondence between class/caste and ideology, or 'tradition', inherent in his analysis of the foundational origins of India's constitutional and institutional structure is overly simplistic. While Desai claims that the basis of India's constitution stem from the urbane liberalism of the Congress elite, Stuart

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36 Ibid.: 9
37 Ibid.: 10
38 Ibid.: 11

Corbridge points out that the adoption of a liberal constitution premised on individual rights was fiercely advocated by representatives of some of India's most marginalized groups. Thus, for example, the Dalit intellectual and political leader Dr. BR Ambedkar, and author of India's constitution, spoke against, "village self-rule... [and] denounced Indian villages as 'dens of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism.'"[39] An important segment of Desai's 'subalterns' aggressively supported, "centralized parliamentary government".[40]

Furthermore, the claim by Desai that the development patterns of the Indian state and the pursuit of state-led industrialization, central planning and the massive expansion of the public sector in the Nehruvian period failed to benefit India's most poor is also questionable. While it is true that Nehru's vision of a 'modern' India failed to come to fruition, some have pointed to the fact that mass industrialization and infrastructure projects were less exclusionary than is conventionally believed. According to Corbridge, for example, in the early years of independence the tribal populations of Chotanagpur, "formed a majority of the workforce".[41] For at least one of the most marginalized and subaltern groups in the country, the Nehruvian industrial state succeeded in creating a nascent tribal middle and working class.[42] The problem was less one of group exclusion and more industrialization's failure to absorb sufficient numbers of the rural population. Desai's account of the institutional origins and social consequences

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39 Corbridge, Stuart, "Competing Inequalities: The Scheduled Tribes and the Reseravtions System in India's Jharkhand," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59.1 (2000): 67.
40 Id.
41 Corbridge, "Industrialization, internal colonialism": 258.
42 Corbridge, "Competing Inequalities": 70-75.

of the Indian state's post-colonial developmentalism illustrates the limitations of a macro-political analysis of the Indian state in the context of its diverse social, economic, political and geographies.

As mentioned above, the tremendous diversity, social deprivation and inequalities coupled with the persistence of liberal institutions and democracy has been the primary problematic of much of the macro-political literature on the India state. Maya Chadda, for example, argues that India's federal democratic system has been able to consolidate itself because of, not in spite of, its diversity. For her, democracy stems from the state's need to balance coercion with compromise in a polity that is as potentially ungovernable as India's: "In the postindependence period modern democratic institutions have served to reconcile India's vast heterogeneity".[43] Furthermore, the particular nature of the post-colonial state is seen to be rooted in the ideological commitments of the independence movement's dominant faction. These commitments included parliamentary democracy, civil liberties, secularism and, until the 1990s, a developmental socialism envisioning the state as an agent of 'modernization' and economic development.[44] This has, according to the macro-level perspective of Indian state formation, created a number of problems for the country's political evolution and has led to a failure to generate equitable economic growth.[45]

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43 Chadda, Maya, *Building Democracy in South Asia: India, Nepal, Pakistan* (London: Lynne Reiner, 2000): 10-11
44 Ibid.: 520-528.
45 Brass, Paul, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997).

Alfred Stepan et al. also grapple with the central 'problem' of Indian post-colonial state formation in the context of its exceptional ethno-lingustic and religious diversity.[46] In particular, they seek to understand how India was able to craft both a national identity in the context of this diversity, while also creating a functioning parliamentary system in the face of vast socio-economic disparities.[47] Arguing that the vast diversity of the country is not fertile ground for peaceful and democratic nation-state formation, Stepan et. al. argue that the founders of Indian democracy, "creatively reflected on this great diversity and conceived and crafted and inclusionary discourse".[48] The founders of India believed that it was a core function of the central government to assure the rights of all of its citizens as, "The polity would not be democratic unless throughout the polity individual rights are constitutionally protected."[49] However, this was balanced with the belief that, "Some territorially concentrated groups, even nations, may need some collective recognition for rights beyond classical liberal rights... for members of some groups to thrive culturally or even possibly to exercise fully their classic individual rights."[50] Ultimately, at the time of independence the Indian state, which had no inherent basis in linguistic or ethnic unity created a conception of nation that was rooted in difference.[51] Thus, for Stepan et al., India, and other post-colonial states, can be thought of as state-nations rather than nation-states:

46 Stepan, Alfred et al., *Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011).
47 Id.
48 Ibid.: xiii.
49 Ibid.: 18.
50 Id.
51 Ibid.: 50-53.

In a state-nation many cultural and especially ethno-national groups will be educated and self-governing in their own language. They will probably never be fully assimilated to the dominant culture in the polity. Indeed, any attempt to assimilate these groups would invite resentment, resistance, and perhaps rejection of the system. This is a reality of state-nations, which distinguishes them from nation-states where cultural assimilation is a possibility and very often a reality.[52]

However, as the authors point out, collective protections and a national ideal of diversity has, at times, proven inadequate for control over territory and maintenance of citizens' loyalty. While the Indian state has shown itself willing to negotiate constitutional and structural changes, such as Nehru's decision to form new states on linguistic grounds in the 1950s, it has often relied on force in order to enforce unity and suppress the numerous secessionist movements which have erupted.[53] This willingness to use force in order to ensure territorial integrity reflects what Willem van Schendel calls 'post-colonial anxiety': "a fear of national disunity and fragmentation."[54]

Another branch of macro-political analyses of the Indian state draw on Marxist and critical theories, conceptualizing it as either designed for, or having been captured by, elite groups. Pratul Ahuja and Rajat Ganguly argue that, "the fundamental nature of the Indian State... tends to represent the interests of caste and class elites and acts in favour of maintaining the status quo in the social realm".[55] The state's machinery at nearly every level, "from the bureaucracy to

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52 Ibid.: 23.
53 Ibid.: 48.
54 van Schendel, *The Bengal* Borderland: 13.
55 Ahuja, Pratul and Rajat Gangul, "The Fire Within: Naxalite Insurgency Violence in India," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18.2 (2007): 269.

the police forces, is dominated by the higher castes/classes".[56] According to this

analysis, the Indian state's primary purpose is maintaining and perpetuating the

dominance of those elite groups who have captured the levers of power and the

state is little more than a tool for capital and local elites.

In addition to its function as an instrument of class rule, many Marxist

analyses of the Indian state highlight the significant continuities which exist

between the colonial and the post-colonial periods. The colonial ruling class was

replaced by a domestic ruling class formed from a coalition that brought together

elements of the urban intelligentsia, industrial capitalists, rural elites and the

upper castes. The composition of the rulers changed, but the basic logic of the

state did not. Subsequently, not only is India a bourgeois state, but it is also a

heavily militarized state that functions as a colonial force within its own borders.

As Gautam Navlakha writes:

> India, for all its verbosity about non-violence, is also one of the most
> heavily armed states both in terms of accumulation of the destructive
> power of its arsenal as well as the size of its military force, which gets
> multiplied by draconian laws, and thus enables the ruling classes to
> practise 'slow genocide'. There are no less than 3.5 million military
> forces (army, Central paramilitary forces and the reservists). To this one
> has to add more than 2 million police.... This is a formidable military force
> at the service of the rulers. Note that at least 50-60 per cent of this huge
> government military machine is fighting our own people in different parts of
> India.[57]

Navlakha goes on to point out that over 50% of the country's government

employees belong to the military.[58] According to this view India's democracy is

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56 Ibid.: 270.
57 Navlakha, Gautam, *Days and Nights in the Heartland of Rebellion* (Delhi: Penguin, 2012): 194-195.
58 Ibid.: 197.

illusory—it is a highly militarized state that relies on coercion and force to maintain its territorial integrity and suppress restive populations.

That independence does not represent a complete rupture from the colonial period is an idea also explored by Ayesha Jalal. For Jalal, the maintenance of colonial institutions and practices was, at least in part, a consequence of what the Congress Party perceived as strategic necessity:

> The implicit, if not explicit, assumption of a shared sovereignty between the Hindu-majority and the Muslim-majority groups was unacceptable to a Congress advocating a composite nationalism based on an indivisible sovereign central authority. Inheriting the strong central apparatus of the colonial state was Congress's best insurance of quelling movements for autonomy in the Hindu-majority provinces and bringing the   princely states firmly into the Indian union.[59]

According to Jalal, India's diversity and political fragmentation at the time of independence is, therefore, not only a source of a national ideal of diversity and hybridity in institutional structure, but is also responsible for the persistence of colonial forms of rule in the newly independent state. There emerged:

> A functioning symbiosis between the Congress and the civilian bureaucracy and, in times of civil unrest, the police mitigated the need for an overt dependence on the military. The containment of the military proved to be a critical factor in the institutionalization of India's formal democracy, albeit one resting on the well-worn authoritarian stumps of the colonial state.[60]

The continuities from the colonial period that Jalal identifies are particularly notable in the state's relationship with eastern and central India where relations

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59 Jalal, Ayesha, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1995): 15-16.
60 Ibid.: 250.

with its citizenry is often mediated by a police force with very few organic connections to the communities they serve.

Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam take a more measured Marxist view of Indian state formation.[61] For Menon and Nigam, post-colonial history can be divided into two distinct periods: the Nehruvian state and the neo-liberal state. They are in broad agreement with Chadda's 'elite nationalist consensus' argument, claiming that the Nehruvian state was structured around the pillars of import substitution industrialization, secularism, liberal democracy and non-alignment.[62] Where Menon and Nigam differ with Chadda is in their conceptualization of state change, arguing that, "The political conjuncture in the years 1989-92 constitute a truly ruptural moment in contemporary Indian history... [that] saw the complete collapse of the 'Nehruvian consensus'".[63] The neo-liberal state, according to their analysis, is marked by caste and religious mobilization coupled with the aggressive dispossession of rural populations as a strategy to attract foreign and domestic capital.[64]

The idea of rupture is another key theme which emerges in the macro-political literature on the Indian state. In much of the literature, the period of liberalization undertaken after India's balance-of-payment crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s represents a moment of transformation for the post-colonial state. For Akhil Gupta and K Sivaramakrishnan, this period was so transformative

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61 Menon, Nivedita and Aditya Nigam, *Power and Contestation: India Since 1989* (London: Zed Books, 2007).
62 Ibid.: 3.
63 Id.
64 Ibid.: 15-19, 68-69.

that, "we need a new way to conceptualize the Indian state after liberalization."[65]

The Nehruvian state was based on an alliance between industrial capitalists, wealthy farmers, salaried professional and the semi-professional urban classes. Liberalization, "signaled the breakup of this precarious balance between dominant classes and the decisive movement of the state machinery in favor of industrial capitalists."[66] Drawing on Karl Marx and the work of David Harvey, they argue that the Indian state is currently engaged in primitive accumulation, a set of processes which is leading to widespread economic and social dislocation and impoverishment.[67] While neo-liberalism is conventionally understood to involve a reduction in social spending by the state, Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan argue that in India, "Faced with a growing population of workers who are separated from their means of production, and faced with populist pressures because of competitive electoral pressures, the state has resorted to increased expenditures to enable people to meet their basic needs."[68] The neo-liberal state is not a 'leaner' state. Rather, it is a state in which the balance of class forces has shifted and whose primary function is now to facilitate capital accumulation and manage

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65 Gupta, Akhil and K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Introduction: the state in India after liberalization." In *The State in India after Liberalization: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, eds. Akhil Gupta and K. Sivaramakrishnan (New York: Routledge, 2011): 5.

66 Gupta, Akhil and K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Introduction: the state in India after liberalization." In *The State in India after Liberalization: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, eds. Akhil Gupta and K. Sivaramakrishnan (New York: Routledge, 2011): 5; Harvey, David, "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation By Dispossession," *Socialist Register* 40 (2004); Marx, Karl, *Capital Volume* (1867). Accessed 11 September 2017. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf

67 Gupta, Akhil and K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Introduction: the state in India after liberalization." In *The State in India after Liberalization: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, eds. Akhil Gupta and K. Sivaramakrishnan (New York: Routledge, 2011): 5.

68 Id.

potential unrest and the periodic crisis of governability which threaten to arise as

a consequence of predatory capitalism.

Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan are not alone in conceptualizing the neo-

liberal state as an entity whose primary function is to facilitate capital

accumulation and manage the consequences of destabilization. For Kathy

LeMons Walker, the neo-liberal state:

> Has produced a pattern of predatory growth that has privileged urban
> India, entailed a withdrawal of state support for the agrarian sector, and
> increasingly involved the forcible expropriation of the land and resources
> of the rural poor. This pattern and the neoliberal policies underpinning it
> have precipitated an agrarian crisis, while domestic and international
> capital have been the principal beneficiaries of the 'internal colonization' of
> the poor through dispossession and suppression. At the same time, the
> shift to neoliberalism has formed the specific context for an intensification
> of agrarian class conflict that has included the mobilization of rural elites
> as well as the rural poor.[69]

 Walker, however, focuses on the state's use of force to manage unrest in the

face of neo-liberal capitalism rather than its use of palliative social welfare

measures:

> This playing out of neoliberalism on the ground in India shows that since
> both capitalists and the various administrative levels of the state refuse to
> recognize the genuine questions and concerns raised by those targeted
> for displacement about their livelihood... force—state or private/criminal—
> has become the only option.[70]

Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan and Walker's differing focuses are not

contradictory. If Chhattisgarh, a state which is in the forefront of both

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69 Walker, Kathy Le Mons, "Neoliberalism on the Ground in Rural India: Predatory Growth, Agrarian
     Crisis, Internal Colonization, and the Intensification of Class Struggle," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*
     35.4 (2008): 559.
70 Ibid.: 586.

accumulation through dispossession and violent resistance to the state and capitalism, is any indication, crisis management through force, coupled with social welfare provisions can and do function as a means of managing the social and economic dislocations of neo-liberalism. They are both tools used to insulate the state and its rulers from a superfluous and potentially dangerous surplus population created by capitalism. Social welfare spending and 'development' are, as Mark Duffield argues, alternatives to, "modernity's other solutions to the problem of surplus life: extermination or eugenics."[71]

Rather than focus on the changing class composition and balances of forces controlling the state, others point to what they see as the fundamental transformation in the political economy of India from Nehruvian socialism to neo-liberalism, situating it within broader currents in the global political economy. For Dip Kapoor, the prestige of the Soviet Union and central planning in the 1950s made Nehru's vision, ideology and policies viable:

> The policy of development at the time of independence ushered in industrialization through large-scale power projects, dams, oil and gas and mineral/natural resource exploitation, urbanization and infrastructure led by a state committed to democratic socialism through a process that was defined in successive five year plans.[72]

For Kapoor, however, the period of liberalization does not represent something entirely new. Rather, it has simply, "accelerated this process of development in the interests of providing for a growing middle class and a global marketplace

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71 Duffield, Mark, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007): 10.
72 Kapoor, Dip, "Subaltern Social Movement (SSM) Post-Mortems of Development in India: Locating Trans-Local Activism and Radicalism," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46.2 (2011): 135.

through an increasingly greater reliance on the corporate sector and transnational corporate investment".[73] Thus, it may be as Stuart Corbridge and John Harriss argue, the new 'image' of India, unlike the old Nehruvian one, is a creation of the middle-class and Non-Resident Indians (NRI). Ordinary Indians are no longer the objects of the imagined economy.[74] The way that neo-liberalism is experienced by those people in mineral rich areas of places such as Odisha is different than the centralized developmentalism of Nehruvian socialism with its mass displacement and temples of industry.

Corbridge's discussion on the employment of Adivasi in Chotanagpur's industrial facilities highlights the key limitations to the macro-political perspectives that take the state as a singular unit of analysis which is stable and uniform at any particular historical moment. While such accounts are not necessarily 'incorrect', they tend to obscure nuance and fail to grapple with the state's unevenness and fragmentary materialization. This is particularly true in a state such as India where, as Ranajit Guha has written, the bourgeoisie has failed to speak for the nation and, "vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people were never integrated into their hegemony."[75] It is, according to his famous phrase, a state based on "dominance without hegemony'.[76]

With these limitations, the macro-political literature alone does not provide sufficient tools for developing a plausible explanatory framework theorizing the

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73 Ibid.: 136.
74 Corbridge, Stuart and John Harriss, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000): 40-41.
75 Guha, Ranajit, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999): xv.
76 Ibid.: xviii.

emergence and growth of the Maoist insurgency. Thus, for example, India's current 'problems' —institutional decay, wide spread corruption and political fragmentation—are understood as consequences of an erosion of a "national consensus... that has increased the level of violence and weakened the political system's ability to effectively manage conflict".[77] This misses a vital point: large areas of post-colonial India have always existed outside of the national consensus. Just as the national trauma over partition continues to effect Indian politics, it has likewise coloured the study of Indian politics. As Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal argue, "The spectre of the great communal divide, 'finally settled' or 'solved' through the partition of 1947, could conveniently obscure the centre-region contradictions in the rest of India."[78] Large areas in which the Maoist insurgents operate were never meaningfully integrated into the 'Nehruvian' state. As Gellner argues, much of the social science literature is rooted in an unthinking methodological nationalism, "that takes the nation-state as the natural context and container for all social and political processes".[79] This perspective obscures as much as it reveals and what is lost is not only how the state actually functions and is experienced by its populations, but also how it exists, both materially and ideationally, in divergent ways across its territory.

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77 Kochanek, Stanley A., "Political Governance in India: The Challenge of Stability and Diversity." In *The Post-Colonial States of South Asia: Democracy, Development and Identity*, eds. Amita Shastri *et al.* (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 35.

78 Bose, Sugata and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2011): 163.

79 Gellner, David N., "Introduction: Northern South Asia's Diverse Borders, from Kachchh to Mizoram." In *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia*, ed. David N. Gellner (Durham: Duke UP, 2013): 3.

Mirroring broader trends in the social sciences, many recent studies of states in South Asia have taken a turn that problematizes the state as a singular unit of analysis which is static at any given moment. For example, Partha Chatterjee writes:

> One problem I have with the existing literature, framed as it is largely within the confines of a modernization narrative, whether of a Weberian or a Marxian type, is that the conceptual domains of state and society have either had to be sharply distinguished, with the central institutions carrying the burden of an interventionist project of modernizing traditional social institutions and practices, or collapsed entirely so that state practices become completely moulded by the pulls and pressures of prevailing social institutions.[80]

The turn away from orthodox analyses of the state has been reflected in the literature on South Asia. Sirpura Roy argues that the Indian state is an ongoing project continuously created through a perpetual interplay between its citizens and authority. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, on the other hand, conceive British-rule as having achieved only partial penetration across the sub-continent.[81] The process of expansion and consolidation continued post-independence primarily through the project of creating a 'singular nationalism'.[82] Tariq Thachil's work also reflects the ambiguities of the state in contemporary India.[83] In his study of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a right-wing nationalist party traditionally associated with upper caste mobilization, Thachil examines how the BJP has managed to achieve electoral successes among Adivasi in

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80   Chatterjee, Partha, *Empire and Nation* (New York: Columbia UP, 2010): 182.
81   Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*.
82   Ibid.: 207
83   Thachil, Tariq, "The Saffron Wave Meets the Silent Revolution: Why the Poor Vote for Hindu Nationalism in India." PhD diss., Cornell University (2009).

states such as Chhattisgarh. He argues that the political and material neglect of the subaltern populace by the state and local elites (historically affiliated with the Congress Party) has created a political opening for the BJP. The party and its allies have established free private schools and health clinics in Adivasi areas as a strategy for ideological and electoral gain. Ultimately, the BJP's social service model has created, "a small, but important cadre of Adivasi politicians... [with] positions of prominence in the state BJP machinery".[84] In effect state failure and weakness in Chhattisgarh has generated not only insurgency, but also the space for a vision that remains wedded to the post-colonial state but seeks to challenge its micro-level practices and macro-level mythological imaginings. This literature shows how the hinterlands exist as geographic spaces that sit uneasily within the broader 'ideal' of what is understood as the Indian state's 'history' and how these ambiguities manifested themselves in insurgent zones.

As discussed above, a key feature of India is its diversity. This diversity has contributed to the formation of myriad localized configurations of power structured around particularistic social divisions. In order to effectively 'manage' diversity, both the colonial and the post-colonial state have practised mediated rule through alliances and bargains with local elite groups.[85] The reliance on rule through pre-existing systems of power has been particularly notable across much of eastern and central India.[86] During the colonial period, British rule across the region was either indirect, through princely states, direct, controlling territory through the notification of forests as 'protected' thereby subjecting them to the

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84 Ibid.: 174

administration of the Imperial Forest Service, or administered as *de facto*

distribution nodes for the region's coal and mineral wealth.[87] In the case of the

former princely states, as well as those areas that were only marginally

integrated into the Raj, the local elite were composed largely of 'outsiders' who

had migrated to Adivasi areas and had been granted title to cleared agricultural

land by the colonial state. Post-independence, these 'outsider' groups continued

to dominate both the formal and informal institutions of governance.[88]

Furthermore, the newly independent state continued to exist largely through

regimes of forest 'protection' enforced by the now re-named Indian Forest

Service.[89]

　　　As Alpa Shah argues, in the 1940s, the Indian state adopted Nehruvian

developmental ideology and a new basis for the maintenance of the rural elites'

social power emerged as they, "increasingly attempted to sustain their lifestyles

85　Vinayak Chaturvedi's *Peasant Pasts: History and Memory in Western India* (2007) provides an interesting example of this. His study examines the dynamics of the independence struggle in one part of rural Gujarat. In particular, he focuses on the relationship of the Dharla 'community' with the colonial and post-colonial state. After a rebellion against the British in 1918, the Dharlas were registered under the *Criminal Tribe Act* and subsequently subjected to land dispossession and a twice daily roll-call. Interestingly, another local caste group, the Patidar, were empowered to enforce the collective punishment of the Dharla. During the independence struggle the Patidar became the primary social group involved locally with the nationalist struggle. This further entrenched the exclusion of the Dharla and led to resistance against the post-colonial project manifested through sporadic outbreaks of violence against institutions of the newly independent state such as the police district collectorates. Chaturvedi, Vinayek, *Peasant Pasts: History and Memory in Western India* (Los Angeles: California UP, 2007).

86　Kohli, *State-Directed Development*: 226.

87　For an examination of the evolution of forest management policy during the colonial and post-colonial periods, see Véron, René and Garry Fehr, "State power and protected areas: Dynamics and contradictions of forest conservation in Madhya Pradesh, India," *Political Geography* 30.5 (2011). For the colonial state's resource extraction regime in eastern and central India see Guha, *Elementary Aspects* and Kennedy, Johnathan J. and Lawrence P. King, "Understanding the conviction of Binyak Sen: Neocolonialism, political violence and the political economy of health in the central Indian tribal belt," *Social Science and Medicine* 72.10 (2011).

88　Shah, Alpa, "Morality, Corruption and the State: Insights from Jharkhand, Eastern India," *Journal of Development Studies* 45.3 (2009): 305.

89　Véron and Fehr, "State Power".

through state-related resources.... They were entrepreneurs who maintained their financial position relative to the tribal peasantry in large part because of their ability to be brokers for the implementation of state development schemes, and concomitantly siphoning off money".[90] While the material basis of local rule in parts of central and eastern India has changed since independence, there remain significant continuities in the exercise of authority. Power continues to be non-democratic and exclusionary.[91]

The highly fragmented nature of Indian society has constrained the full penetration of the Indian state, thus compelling it to govern through complex networks of localized elites. A more fragmented reading of the Indian state, one which does not envision history as being marked by periods of complete rupture, complements my claim that there are historical continuities of governance structures across parts of India that have generated insurgent spaces which are, at present, being occupied and re-constituted by the Maoists through the establishment of alternative governance, joint regimes of extraction and the

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90 Shah, Alpa. "In search of certainty in revolutionary India," *Dialectical Anthropology* 33.3 (2009): *275-276*.

91 In addition to rebellion and insurgency, one of the strategies of dealing with attempts at state penetration has been avoidance, one of the strategies of 'everyday' peasant resistance described by James Scott. Scott, James, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985). On the refusal of state incorporation and the strategy of avoidance among many *Adivasi* groups see: Sundar, Nandini, *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2006); Shah, *In search of certainty*; Suykens, Burt, "The Gotte Koya IDP Mystery: Tribal Identity and the IDP-Migrant Continuum in the Chhattisgarh-Andhra Pradesh Borderland (India)," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24.1 (2011); Véron and Fehr, "State Power". For example, Suykens writes, "The respondents in another village were unwilling to send their children to the local school, even though education was provided free of charge. For them, this school was a symbol of the state, a symbol they were unwilling to let their children come into close contact with" (Suykens, "The Gotte-Koya IDP": 124).This is entirely rational as the state has historically interacted with the population nearly exclusively through its repressive apparatus and in the guise of local elites. This suggests that the idea of 'insurgent' space involves a negation beyond rebellion against *particular* policies or in the name of specific grievances. Rather, it is, at certain times and in certain places, a complete rejection of the state and the particular order it represents.

creation of what I refer to as hyper-state spaces in Chhattisgarh where counter-insurgency has been structured around the depopulation of vast tracts of 'ungovernable' areas, re-locating the populace to heavily controlled and policed Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.[92] In Dantewara the camps have become almost 'ideal' examples of the state marked by a near absolute control of the population through the regulation of displaced people's sustenance, sociality and movement. In other instances, such as in coastal Tamil Nadu in south India, relations between fisher communities and the state have been historically mediated through non-state institutions such as the Catholic Church.[93]

Another branch of literature on the Indian state seeks to understand it as it is produced, reproduced and experienced in everyday practice. This anthropological approach is described by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta:

> The state needs to be understood from the standpoint of everyday practices and the circulation of representations. There is now a substantial body of work that makes the case for why culture should matter to theories of the state.... States, like nations, are imagined through representations and through signifying practices; such representations are not incidental to institutions but are constitutive of them. Given this, the study of everyday practices and of the circulation of the representations that constitute particular states might tell us not just what they mean, but how they mean, to whom, and under what circumstances.[94]

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92 Dantewara's camps are more labour than refugee camps providing the wardens with compliant source of manpower for lucrative road building and other infrastructural state-funded contracts. The Salwa Judum use the IDPs as an indentured labour force for government sponsored building projects, paying their 'workers' in the food that is allocated to the administrators by the state (Miklian, "The Purification Hunt": 450).
93 Subramanian, Ajantha, *Shorelines: Space and Rights in South India* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009).
94 Sharma, Aradhana and Akhil Gupta "Introduction: Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization." In *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader,* eds. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): 28

In this vein, Peggy Froerer explores the interplay between the state, external sources of power (in her case the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or RSS) and traditional sources of authority and institutions in an Adivasi village in the state of Chhattisgarh.[95] For Froerer, there is both competition and hybridization between 'traditional' sources of village authority, political parties, local bureaucrats and 'modern' sources of authority such as the state-administered Gram Sabhas, or village councils.[96] State-based authority functions to reinforce, but can also destabilize and challenge, entrenched non-state elites.[97] Therefore, the state can be understood as something not above society, but an integral part of it. This is particularly true in parts of India where sources of authority which precede state formation continue to exert power and enjoy a measure of legitimacy.

Akhil Gupta and Aradhana Sharma draw on the Foucauldian idea of governmentality in order to examine the Indian state, particularly the neo-liberal transition, arguing that, "Governmentality offers a way of approaching how rule is consolidated and power is exercised in society through social relations, institutions, and bodies that do not automatically fit under the rubric of 'the state.'"[98] In order to understand how the techniques of power and governmentality function under neo-liberalism they engage in an ethnographic examination of bureaucrats, "considering everyday practices of bureaucracies

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95 Froerer, Peggy, "Challenging traditional authority: The role of the state, the divine and the RSS," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 39.1 (2005).
96 Ibid.: 55.
97 Ibid.: 67.
98 Sharma and Gupta, "Introduction": 277.

and representations of the state."[99] By studying two government social service/development programs that have been instituted since liberalization, Gupta and Sharma demonstrate how neo-liberalism is materialized in the everyday, and how this materialization and its particular form of governmentality manifests itself in the particularities of the Indian context. Therefore, they, "complicate overarching notions of state reform that are in fact based largely or exclusively on Western liberal democratic state policies"[100] making the point that broad conceptualizations of state transformation under the rubric of neo-liberalism can mislead. The transformation that has occurred in India is governed by different logics and political pressures on the ground, even if this transformation has been part of a larger set of changes visible across the global political economy.

The Insurgency

Another broad set of literature that this dissertation draws on is work on the Maoist insurgency and conflict literature more broadly. In recent years there has been a growing body of work on the Maoists, much of it policy-focused, data-thin and analytically weak. There has emerged an entire industry in India which has sprung up around the Maoists, with publications from private think tanks and former military and police officials. The basic premise of most of this work is that the region has suffered as a result of government inattention. The Maoists have

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99 Ibid.: 278.
100 Ibid.: 291.

entered into this governance vacuum and used a combination of terror and trickery to induce a credulous and simple population into supporting, or at least tolerating, them. This is, in a Coxian sense, the archetypal ahistorical 'problem-solving theory' that, "Takes the world as it finds it", and seeks to make existing, "relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble."[101] The language of this statist discourse is often presented in a Manichean vein, a tone captured by Girdhari Nayak, a former Director-General of Police in Chhattisgarh: "Naxalism is evil per se... Naxalism is a disease that is causing organ failure of the state."[102] Unfortunately, this form of statist literature, which simply repeats over and again that 'development' (which is rarely defined) and force are panaceas which can 'solve' India's Naxal 'problem'.[103] Quite aside from this literature's analytical limitations, its basic premise does not stand up to empirical scrutiny. In one of the few quantitative studies examining the conflict, Kristian Hoelscher *et al.* find that, "It is not a lack of development that triggers conflict, but the inverse—a ramping up of industrial development, without safeguards to prevent further exclusionary socio-economic policies towards citizens living in mining districts, may draw in conflict actors as they transit from

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101 Cox, "Social forces": 88.

102 Nayak, Girdhari, *Neo-Naxal Challenge: Issues and Options* (Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2012): 35, 39.

103 At times this literature often veers into farce. Rajat Kujur from the Delh-based Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, for example, links the CPI(Maoist) to the great bugbear of Pakistan: "Indian Intelligence Agencies in 2011 claimed to have concrete evidence to prove that Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) has established direct contact with Naxal outfits in India. The ISIS is using its Bangladesh-based operatives to establish contact with the top leadership" (Kujur, Rajat, *Contemporary Naxal Movement in India: New Trends, State Responses and Recommendations: IPCS Research Paper 27.* (May 2013) Publication of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Delhi). Kujur also seeks to link the CPI(Maoist) with Kashmiri separatists and Dawood Ibrahim, a powerful figure in the Mumbai underground who's location is currently unknown.

opportunity—to incentive-based decision-making."[104] There is both a conceptual

and an empirical hollowness in the statist literature. First, what is meant by

'development' is unstated. It is nebulous and meaningless term that means

whatever someone wants it to mean. Second, if development is understood as

industrial and economic growth, it is not at all empirically clear why this would

lead to conflict resolution. Even at its most well-meaning, this branch of work fails

to seriously engage with the Maoists as a political force and treats the local

population in Maoist areas as nothing more than mute spectators to the drama

unfolding around them. Saroj Giri writes:

> Not only Maoists who are treated as service-providers but ordinary people
> (who join the Maoists) who are portrayed as service-seekers. People who
> could be political subjects, active agents of social change and willing to
> "suffer" its consequences are here depicted as mere seekers of
> humanitarian aid. This is what Alain Badiou calls treating "Man as a
> victim," a "being-for-death," so that human rights become "rights of
> survival against misery.[105]

This literature is strongly embedded in a statist discourse, reflecting the division

within the state between a counter-insurgent approach that prioritizes 'security'

and one which prioritizes 'development'. It contributes little to understanding the

conflict.

Additionally, this work is not grounded in any substantive empirical or

theoretical analysis of counter-insurgent practice. There is a rich body of work

which examines how the state has responded to armed challenges to its

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104 Hoelscher, Kristin et al., "Hearts and mines: A district-level analysis of the Maoist conflict in India,"
    International Area Studies Review 15.2 (2012): 157.
105 Giri, Saroj, "The Maoist 'Problem' and the Democratic Left in India," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*
    39.3 (2009): 468.

authority, exploring the limitations and problems associated with previous prolonged threats to state power by subject populations and armed groups. For example, one of the core arguments made in this dissertation is that the waging of counter-insurgency in parts of central India has been particularly brutal in its treatment of civilians because it is, paradoxically, being waged under the auspices of the constitution. The problem with a lack of emergency legislation is identified in Huw Bennett's examination of the Malayan Emergency:

> There were two possible methods for clarifying the situation and ensuring the discriminate application of violence. First, codifying precise rules through the Emergency Regulations; and second, creating a form of military case law through disciplinary proceedings which constituted practical examples of what was acceptable. The government in Malaya discarded these restraint mechanisms by enacting highly permissive regulations, and exempting the security forces from prosecution.[106]

The literature on counter-insurgency in Maoist areas fails to grapple with the implications of state preference for waging the war through civil, albeit militarized, forces such as the police, not only for the efficacy of the war against the Maoists, but also for human rights. Where the possible involvement of military forces is considered, it is framed in terms of capabilities. Mainstream analysts and policy makers in India have, arguably, learned few lessons from even a superficial examination of past insurgencies such as the Malayan Emergency. The debate has focused nearly exclusively on the 'right mix' in the security/development tandem. Subsequently, as in Malaya, the Indian government has, "created a permissive environment by encouraging a hostile attitude towards an entire

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106 Bennett, Huw, "'A very salutary effect': The Counter-Terror Strategy in the Early Malayan Emergency, June 1948 to December 1949," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32.3 (2009): 427.

population, without initially setting out specific guidelines on the use of force."[107]

Additionally, it is both theoretically and empirically important to historicize analysis of India's counter-insurgency in eastern and central India. As argued in this dissertation, in both concept and practice, the government's war against the Maoists reflects earlier counter-insurgencies. Thus, the Salwa Judum campaign in Chhattisgarh, which saw the relocation of tens of thousands of villagers to police and militia controlled 'camps', mimics British practices of forced 'villagization' of the Kikuyu during Mau Mau conflict.[108] While there is no shortage of material for the analysts of the Maoist counter-insurgency to draw on in order to derive lessons, there has been little attempt to do so. The conflict, in much of this literature, exists in an ahistorical vacuum. This may explain, in part, why both government officials and policy analysts understand the conflict in terms which lend themselves to (relatively) simple solutions. If the problem is security and development, than the solution is more security and more development. Debates over counter-insurgency become questions over detail and sequencing rather than substance.

The reductive analysis of conflict is not, of course, limited to India. Séverine Autesserre explores how the narrative frame, which portrays the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as being caused by the illegal trade in resources, serves a number of purposes for policy makers, journalists and charity groups. This simplification makes the complex war in the eastern Congo more

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107 Ibid.: 431.
108 Bennett, Huw, "The Other Side of the COIN: Minimum and Exemplary Force in British Army Counterinsurgency in Kenya," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18.4 (2007).

fathomable, digestible and 'relevant' for a variety of publics.[109] The problem is not

only, however, that this serves to obscure other key factors in conflict dynamics:

simplification can lead to policies that actually exacerbate conditions that help

fuel war. In the case of the Congo, its framing as a resource war has led to a

push by the international community to strengthen the Congolese state.

However, as Auttesserre writes:

> The main problem with this strategy is that the Congolese state remains a predatory structure, as it has been during most of the Congo's history.... [in] the eastern Congo, people often experience the state as an oppressive, exploitative, and threatening machine, instead of seeing it as a structure set up for their benefit. Overall, large parts of the population survive in spite of the state rather than with its help.[110]

Therefore, simplification can serve as a means of, perversely, strengthening

those institutions and forces that are most harmful for the populace. Arguably,

much of the literature on the counter-insurgency against the Maoists in India falls

into this trap. Eric Wolf, in his sprawling examination of 20th century peasant

rebellions rightly points out that the advance of 'modernity' and the state, "Takes

the form of an unequal encounter between the societies which first incubated it

and societies which were engulfed by its spread."[111] Rebellion and insurgency

are, in large part, reactions against the 'cold monster' of the state which is, for

rural populations of frontier zones often seen as a, "negative quantity, an evil, to

be replaced in short shrift by their own 'homemade' social order."[112] By calling for

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109 Autesserre, Séverine, "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and their Unintended Consequences," *African Affairs* 111.443 (2012).
110 Ibid.: 219.
111 Wolf, Eric, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969): 278.
112 Ibid.: 295.

an increase in police presence as well as an acceleration of 'development' (usually meaning roads and basic state infrastructure), the analysts are demanding more of precisely that which has contributed to the region's alienation and violence.

Fortunately there is more substantive work that has been done on the Maoist insurgency. Much of the best literature is dominated by anthropological, approaches likely due to the conflict's location in an isolated part of the country largely inhabited by indigenous people.[113] The broad purpose of this work has been to provide a voice to the conflict participants themselves and situate the politics of insurgency into the everyday micro-politics of communities within the conflict zone. The mainstream discourse on the insurgency has often been rooted in a binary representation of the Maoists as either romantic, heroic rebels or as brutal, criminal opportunists. These two representations have been challenged by a number of micro-level village studies in insurgent areas. For example, Chitralehka's ethnography of low-ranking Maoist fighters in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand claims that they were, "not selfless heroes willing to lay down arms for a noble cause. Not very many were mercenaries either".[114] Instead, she sees three 'ideal' (and qualified) types of Maoist fighters: the

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113 While the region has been largely ignored by outsiders, going back to the colonial period the adivasi population has interested anthropologists. This interest is perhaps best expressed by Verrier Elwin, a British anthropologist who began his career studying the Gonds of Bastar. Elwin became an Indian citizen after independence an advisor to Nehru on the 'tribals' of North-East India. This tradition of engagement between anthropologists and India's eastern and central tribal regions has continued with more contemporary anthropologists such as Nandini Sundar.

114 Chitralekha, "'Committed, Opportunists and Drifters': Revisiting the Naxalite narrative in Jharkhand and Bihar," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 44.3 (2010): 301.

ideologically committed, the opportunists and the 'drifters'.[115] Similarly Alpa Shah's study of specific Maoist activists highlights the ideological ambiguity of the insurgents, situating them within the uncertain and fluid social relations created by conflict.[116]

On the other hand, there has been little scholarship on the Maoist insurgency explicitly rooted in the discipline of political science. Much of the work that has been done is from the perspective of the political economy of conflict, often focusing on Chhattisgarh, a state that is rich in natural and mineral resources and has experienced a form of warlordism reminiscent of places such as Sierra Leone in the 1990s. For Jason Miklian this theatre of insurgency is structured around the politics of loot and resource capture, with quasi-state forces, "redirecting funding provided by the state for IDP camps into personal coffers and by funding personal armies with the money received from mining companies".[117] Similarly, Burt Suykens examines the role of the rebels in various commodity chains in the region and how lootable resources have both strengthened the financial capacity of the insurgents and contributed to the intensification of the war.[118]

I am sympathetic to the approach taken by the above authors. They bring a welcome addition to the political science work on Maoist insurgency in contemporary India. Elements of the insights from their work are useful. Implicit is their recognition that the Indian state is fragmentary. For example, one of the key

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115 Id.
116 Shah, "In Search of Certainty".
117 Mikilian, "The purification hunt": 442.
118 Suykens, "Diffuse Authority".

claims made by Miklian is that the warlordization in Chhattisgarh happened because the state's presence in the area is so weak that an insurgent challenge easily morphed into privatized violence.[119] This maps onto my claims of insurgent space being rooted in places with either poor or absent state governance. This literature does not, however, closely mirror this work. The political economy of conflict approach is ahistorical and territorially specific. It seeks to explain the emergence and evolution of insurgency in specific places at specific times. The conflict is also occurring in areas where there are no lootable resources. Furthermore, this work does not seek to explain why there is an historical pattern of rebellion across much of India's Maoist-affected hinterland. This is neither this literature's focus or its intent.

There is also more conventional political science literature on the Maoist insurgency. Ahuja and Ganguly, for example, situate the conflict within a longer history of peasant unrest in India, "caused by grinding poverty, exploitation and inequality that have prevailed in rural areas for centuries."[120] This exploitation has been further accelerated by the increased support to industrial capital at the expense of agriculture in the neo-liberal Indian state and therefore, "The Naxalite movement's popularity among impoverished, exploited and marginalized peasants, tribals and dalits comes from the fact that it has been able to provide them what the State has been promising since independence".[121]

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119 Miklian, "The purification hunt".
120 Ahuja and Ganguly, "The Fire Within": 249.
121 Ibid.: 270.

Much of the remaining political science work shares my interest in providing broader explanatory accounts of the emergence and intensification of the Maoist insurgency. Nandini Sundar, whose work on the state and Adivasi politics in Bastar is discussed further in Chapter Five has written on the mimetic nature of the relationship between the state and the Maoists.[122] Sundar explores how in the conflict both the state and the insurgents increasingly begin to resemble each other: "The Indian state impersonates guerrilla tactics in order to fight the Maoists, while the Maoists mimic state practices of governmentality."[123] Of particular interest is Sundar's attempt to conceptualize Maoist space as a 'state' and examine its claim to legitimacy. For Sundar, this stems not only from its Weberian characteristics, such as the taxation of contractors and industry and the establishment of village-level governing bodies, but also its ability to rule over people: "At one level, the Maoist state is a virtual phenomenon, an idea, an emotional identification... At another level the boundaries of the Maoist state can be mapped by the absence of the Indian state, of visible markers like roads, schools, or health services".[124] However, the longer the conflict continues, the more the Maoist 'state' and the Indian state begin to mirror themselves. In a state of uncertainty and exception, "People can be jailed or killed when expedient (as government informers or Maoist sympathizers) without the guarantees that a law-ruled state would provide.[125]

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122 Sundar, Nandini, "Mimetic sovereignties, precarious citizenship: state effects in a looking-glass world," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 41.4 (2014).
123 Ibid., 470.
124 Ibid., 472.
125 Ibid., 487.

The mimetic relationship between the Maoists and the state is a common theme and one which is also taken up by Ipshita Basu.[126] While both the state and the Maoists claim to be in complete opposition, as Basu points out:

> On the ground the political identities of the state and the Naxalite often collude.... In forging undercover links with the enemy, in order to win elections and to push development contracts for their constituencies, state officials put at risk the legitimacy of the state. And in courting the state, the Naxalites suggest that there is hypocrisy between their ant-state rhetoric and their actions.[127]

The symbiotic relationship between the insurgents and the state is an important one and something which is explored in greater detail proceeding chapters. Insurgency and counter-insurgency continually interact and shape and structure each other and the line between the two is not as clear as it might seem. Without the insurgency, the state in eastern India would look very different.

Methodological Considerations and Approaches

My project seeks to bridge the divide between the existing anthropological and political work on the insurgency. I draw on the micro-level and agent-centric approach of the anthropologists while also seeking to make more generalizable claims about insurgency and the state. Theoretically, this bridge is made through the use of insurgent space. The concept of insurgent spaces admits both a broader set of historical conditions that provide a political context for rebellion, while also recognizing that the decisions and choices made by both formal and

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126 Basu, Ipshita, "Security and Development- are they two sides of the same coin? Investigating India's two-pronged policy towards left-wing extremism," *Contemporary South Asia* 19.4 (2011).
127 Basu, "Security and Development": 387.

informal participants in the conflict play a significant role in insurgency. What is

also of vital importance, and something which has been neglected by the

literature on the Maoist insurgency, is how history has unfolded in the region and

helped create the present. The goal is to develop a historically rooted systems

analysis that explores the interaction between the local population, insurgents

and the state within a space that has been produced over time. It does not treat

the insurgency as a discrete phenomenon, but seeks to conceptualize how

insurgent actions are both conditioned by the past and how their actions alter the

present and thus the future. It is a holistic, systems approach that seeks to

understand the conflict and situate it within long-term patterns of state expansion

into eastern and central India's indigenous 'frontier'.

  Thus, a primary purposes of this dissertation is to situate the

contemporary conflict within a longer historical context of state expansion and

resistance in eastern and central India. There has been very little work done on

this and most of the literature tends to treat the Maoist insurgency as a wholly

discrete, contemporary phenomenon. Authors such as Ahuja and Ganguly,

discussed above, have recognized the connection that the Maoist insurgency has

with preceding moments and movements of rural unrest. However, their

approach to the conflict is conceptually and analytically flawed. First, it is not at

all clear whether the Adivasi populations of the region can be subsumed under a

broader rubric of 'peasantry'. There has been a great deal of discussion on

'peasantization' in the literature on South Asia and peasant rebellions in both the

colonial and post-colonial periods.[128] It is, I feel unnecessary to engage with this debate as it is not terribly germane to my argument. However, what can be said is that it is deeply problematic to connect what is historically a highly mobile population reliant on rain fed agriculture and swidden with the traditionally sedentary and caste organized populations of the plains. The economic, sociological and spatial dynamics are dissimilar enough that to there must be a case made to conceptually link the phenomenon of peasant unrest and insurgency in Adivasi areas. This is a case that the authors fail to make. Second, the simple mechanisms of grievance leading to insurgency is one which has been demonstrated to be flawed by other studies. It is, for example, not at all clear why other, equally impoverished areas of India have not experienced unrest and in areas with unrest, this unrest has not taken the form of insurgency.

Yet one of the common features shared by *all* rural uprisings during the previous two centuries has been their limited geographic scale. Rural rebellions have been confined to areas sharing common social, cultural and economic characteristics. The literature suggests that this a consequence of India's complex and highly fragmented nature. Two primary factors limit the possibility of waging territorially expansive insurgencies in India: 1) grievances are highly localized as a consequence of the radically divergent modes of governance and

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128 See Bandyopadhyay, "Abortive Revolution"; Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata, "An Examination of Leadership Entry in Bengal Peasant Revolts, 1937-1947," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37.4 (1978); Duyker, Edward, *Tribal Guerrillas: the Santals of West Bengal and the Naxalite Movement* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987); Mittal, SK and Kapil Kumar, "Baba Ram Chandra and Peasant Upsurge in Oudh: 1920-21," *Political Science Review* 97.1 (2003); Roosa, John, "Passive Revolution Meets Peasant Revolution: Indian Nationalism and the Telangana Revolt," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 28.4 (2001).

social relations that exist across the country, and; 2) cross-regional mobilization

is difficult because of linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. A common

explanation for the growing scope and scale of the Maoist insurgency is that it is

a result of economic liberalization undertaken by the state during the 1990s.[129] I

find this argument to be flawed. First, liberalization has had a limited effect on the

political economy of the impoverished rural hinterland where Maoists are most

active. In one of the few quantitative, district-level studies of the conflict zone,

Hoelscher et al. have found that, "the relationship between mining and violence...

is positive, but weak."[130] The economy of much of the area remains outside of

India's burgeoning system of capitalism. Where private capital has entered into

the region it has been largely through the establishment of large resource

extraction facilities.[131] The expansion of mines and mineral processing plants has

generated social conflicts that have been exploited by the Maoists. Yet state

mining firms, operating under the rubric of 'development', have long operated in

India's isolated eastern and central districts. Conflicts over displacement and

environmental degradation are not new. Secondly, the 'insurgency from

liberalization' argument does not explain why the region has a history of rebellion.

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129 For the 'insurgency from liberalization' argument see Bahree, "Forever War"; Da Costa, Dia, "Tensions of Neo-Liberal Development: State Discourse and Dramatic Opposition in West Bengal," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 41.3 (2007); Kapoor, "Subaltern Social Movement"; Meher, Rajkishor, "Globalization, Displacement and the Livelihood Issues of Tribal and Agriculture Dependent Poor People: The Case of Mineral-based Industries in India," *Journal of Developing Societies* 25.4 (2009); Thornton, William H. and Songok Han Thornton, "The Price of Alignment: India in the New Asian Drama," *Journal of Developing Societies* 22.4 (2006).
130 Hoelscher, Kristin et al., "Hearts and mines: A district-level analysis of the Maoist conflict in India," *International Area Studies Review* 15.2 (2012): 156.
131 see Meher, Rajkishor, "Globalization, Displacement and the Livelihood Issues of Tribal and Agriculture Dependent Poor People: The Case of Mineral-based Industries in India," *Journal of Developing Societies* 25.4 (2009).

The decisive change has not been the result of transformations in the nature of the state or its political economy. Both explanations, while identifying one of factor which shapes conflict dynamics, is ahistorical and insufficient. It is the specific *nature* of the Maoist movement and their intervention in insurgent space at this *particular historical moment* which has enabled them to wage a guerrilla war that encompasses approximately a third of the country.

While the initial impetus for the production of insurgent space lies in negation—a rejection of state authority—it is also productive. Social, material and symbolic life across time and space is created in opposition to the state and becomes a space of refusal, or to use James Scott's term, 'everyday resistance'.[132] Refusal and passive 'everyday resistance' is, I argue, rooted in the same logic of armed rebellion.[133] They are not different categories but are, rather, different possible responses to state expansion and consolidation.

The turn towards the anthropological and the problematization of the state as an analytic category has greatly enriched the study of South Asia, challenging both methodological nationalism and the problematic assumption that institutional structure determines how power functions across time and space. These approaches are not, however, entirely without risk—focusing on the minutia of the everyday and dismantling the conceptual distinction between state and society creates new problems. On the one hand, seeing the state as little more

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132 Scott, "Weapons of the Weak".

133 Everyday resistance, however, is a crucial element of the production of insurgent space. For example, one of the tactics of resistance against state authority has been 'avoidance': moving deeper into the forests or hills in order to avoid the police, local bureaucrat and tax collector. Movement creates space as new material activities and relationships emerge around new territories, generating (and in turn being generated by) new understandings and expressions of belonging and being.

than something which conditions, or even intervenes, in existing social relations serves as a way of losing sight of state power. The state is a slippery concept as it appears to be both nowhere and everywhere. However, by dismantling rigid distinctions between state and society, I would argue that the anthropological literature has, in turn, placed too much of an emphasis on local agency and dynamics, losing sight of its historically unparalleled power. In the few centuries that the modern state has been in existence it has become a planetary phenomenon which has fundamentally transformed the world. This socio-political fact should not be understated. The state is not simply another actor in a complex web of local power relations.

While it is discussed in greater depth in the proceeding chapter on space and theory, a brief mention needs to be made of one way that the impasse between the macro-political and micro-political literature on the Indian state, and the state more generally, can be made. This is an approach which recognizes that the state is the most powerful and decisive social fact in the contemporary period. However, rather than taking the institutions of the state and its formal practices as an analytical departure point, or drawing on an orthodox Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state, the state can be theorized as a system which functions within a set of internal logics in space. It is a logic that seeks to obliterate time and assimilate space. But as the state is not a unitary thing, it never fully achieves what it desires and necessarily must function within other sub-systems of contingent logics conditioned, limited and shaped by existing

sociological, political, economic and historical characteristics. Thus, it is not so much that there is a state/society distinction, but both the state and society function in both created and creative space. Space thus becomes both an explanatory device and a thing in itself which can be used to understand the state as both everyday practice and universal concept.

Ultimately, I aim to fill in some of the gaps in the literature on both the state and insurgency in India and develop a framework with which to understand the contemporary Maoist conflict in the region. I engage in a mid-level analysis that situates local and regional political particularities within a much larger account of the historical encounter between modernity and the semi-mobile societies of eastern and central India. This is accomplished through both a temporal and spatial exploration that identifies both continuities and discontinuities between periods of state expansion and consolidation as well as across territory in the region. Thus, both the Maoist conflict and state formation in eastern and central India are situated within an expansive analysis capable of grasping how the present emerged from the past.

Data Collection

My methodological approach triangulates between three sources of data: primary documents from the state and the insurgents, secondary historical literature and semi-structured field interviews. All three sources were drawn from in order to

provide an interpretative account of the conflict, situating it within a long-term analysis of state formation and expansion in eastern and central India.

India has, in recent years, made a significant effort to publish official documentation online. This has proven to be an extremely valuable source of data for my research. I have examined legislation, as well as documents related to government priorities, funding allocations and the program rationales. In particular, my analysis of the counter-insurgent developmentalism pursued by the Indian state across the region has been greatly assisted by the availability of these documents. They form a rich source of information that, when read critically, reveals a great deal about the strategy adopted by the government to 'develop' the conflict zone and bring it into the 'mainstream'. This analysis involves hermeneutic interpretation- what is really being said and what is the logic that underlies these state communications? While often written in dry, bureaucratic and seemingly neutral language, the actual purpose and ground-level outcome of these policies and programs is anything but. They provide valuable insights into how the state understands, and desires to alter, space.

Additionally, the availability of documents, such as Supreme Court rulings on the Salwa Judum counter-insurgency campaign and the use of schools by paramilitary forces in Chhattisgarh, has provided me with valuable material with which to compare the institutional frameworks of the Indian state with how it actually functions on the ground in eastern and central India. One of the primary explorations of this dissertation is understanding how India, a state rooted in

strong constitutional institutions and progressive legislation, wages war in its own territory. The disconnect between its various parts has allowed me to understand how the state is materialized differently across its territory.

Additionally, there is significant English language primary documentation from the Maoists available online. While the Indian state has, in recent years, sought to erode their online presence, shutting down some of their newspapers and magazines, fortunately, at least from the perspective of the researcher, this data remains widely available on sites outside of the reach of the Indian police. The Maoists have always been prolific writers and the attraction that the movement has always held for a strata of intellectuals in the country, has resulted in copious quantities of theoretical and polemical work, providing a window into their ideological and political worldview. The theoretical journals and early tracts of the 1960s Naxalites, as well as the institutional documents of the political formations which arose from this milieu, are available online. The ideas of key figures, such as Charu Mazumdar, one of the founders and the key ideologue of the early Maoists, is easily accessible. Most of these documents were either written in English or translated by the Maoists themselves. Therefore, they do not suffer from the potential misinterpretations and misrepresentations that can occur when documents are translated from their original source.

The extensive theoretical and polemical documentation has enabled me to develop an analysis of Maoist ideology in India and situate it within the organizational history of the various political formations that emerged out of the

splits within Indian communism during the late 1960s. This has proven invaluable to help understand not only Maoist history, but also contemporary practice. Furthermore, the CPI(Maoist) continues to be prolific in its communication. Extensive documentation of the party's theoretical, tactical, strategic and ideological positions are widely available online. This is a rich source of data which provides insights into the logic behind insurgent practice.

While I had initially hoped to undertake archival research in the colonial archives in London, unfortunately, due to resource limitations, this was not possible. Thankfully, however, there is a vast array of historical and secondary material available. The British colonial period in India, and to a lesser extent in the eastern and central parts of the country, has been of great interest to scholars. Much has been written shedding light on the processes of state expansion and consolidation in Chotanagpur and Bastar. This work, as well as the work of anthropologists working in the region, has enabled me to help 'map' the spatial production of the region from the period immediately preceding the colonial period to the present.

The third pillar of my research is fieldwork. I spent approximately five months, from late December 2012 to early May 2013, in the country conducting semi-structured interviews with a variety of elite-level 'conflict participants', including government and police officials, political activists, journalists, academics and Maoist intellectuals. These interviews were done in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The chance to work in the field

provided me with rich insights, not only into the nature of the conflict, but, more specifically, into the perceptions and perspectives of people who are, in different ways, connected to or have been affected by the war. It is, however, useful to identify some of the benefits and limitations of this work. First, a focus on 'elite' interviews does not necessarily provide insights into how the conflict is experienced by 'ordinary' people in the villages which have been most affected by the insurgency. It provides no indication, for example, of how those whose support the state and Maoists view the conflict actors. It is far from an anthropological, everyday account of the lived experience of insurgency. Furthermore, even 'elite' level interviews in a conflict zone are limited by the atmosphere and threats of violence and repression. One may, for example, notice while reading my dissertation that the case study of Bastar is more analytical and less 'impressionistic' than the case study of Chotanagpur. This is, at least in part, the result of differences in the political climate between the two states. While I was in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, political activists as well as those sympathetic to the Maoists were open and willing to speak with me. While Jharkhand is an extremely violent place, there remains space for politics, particularly in urban areas. The political climate in Chhattisgarh, on the other hand, is one of fear and repression, encapsulated by the *Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005* (CSPSA).[134] As critics have pointed out, the CSPSA eliminates the necessity to have 'intent' to commit a crime, thereby undermining

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134 A translation of the CSPSA is available: https://cpjc.files.wordpress.com/2007/07/cspsa_english.pdf

established norms of jurisprudence in a democratic and constitutional state.[135]

Here, the state uses all of the tools available in a constitutional democracy to limit and suppress dissent. This was reflected in my work in Chhattisgarh. It was, understandably, difficult to meet people who were willing to speak with me 'on the record'. Subsequently, there was a disproportionate reliance on interviews with the police.

This, however, also illustrates one of the strengths of field research. There is information in absence. The challenges which I faced in my interviews with people in Chhattisgarh, especially when contrasted with my experience in Jharkhand, reveals a great deal of how the state functions in eastern and central India. Not only does it reveal a great deal about the contemporary practices of the state in both places, it also acts as a springboard for an exploration of why two places with superficially similar demographic and geographic characteristics, have developed very differently. It serves as a valuable departure point for a historically grounded examination of the production of space in two peripheral zones experiencing contemporary insurgency.

Ultimately, my methodological approach triangulates primary documents from the state and the insurgents, secondary historical research and semi-structured interviews with 'elite' actors connected to the conflict as well as my impressions of the conflict zone. The result has been a historically situated

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135 The People's Union for Democratic Rights, a civil liberties group, response to the CSPSA is available: https://cpjc.files.wordpress.com/2007/07/memo_on_chattisgarh_bill.pdf

analysis that places the state, the insurgents within the long-term production of

space in India's eastern and central 'frontiers'.

Chapter 3- Violence, Consciousness and Revolution: The History of Indian Maoist Insurgency

This chapter provides both a narrative account of the history of India's Maoist insurgency and an analysis of their ideology and practice. The Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI(Maoist)), created by a 2004 merger between the Maoist Communist Centre and People's War Group, is the largest and most powerful of the insurgent Maoist groups in India. Additionally, there are a few extremely small groups operating in the country who have either split from the Party (primarily in Jharkhand) or who have always existed outside of its structure. Unless explicitly stated, it will be assumed that 'insurgency' and 'Maoist movement' refers to the CPI(Maoist).

First, the chapter examines the communist milieu from which the Maoist movement emerged in the late 1960s. The contemporary Maoists developed organically, and institutionally, within the unified Communist Party of India (CPI). While until the 1950s, they did not consciously identify themselves as a separate ideological faction within the broader revolutionary socialist movement, many of the ideas and positions which were taken up by the pro-Chinese Naxalites were present in the CPI from its formation in the 1920s.

Second, the chapter provides a broad narrative account of the emergence of an explicitly Maoist movement in India during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition to providing background situating the contemporary insurgency within its longer history, it also identifies continuities and discontinuities in both ideology

and practice. While many observers judge the early Naxalite movement to be a failure, the argument is made that innovations and the ideas of the 1960s continue to benefit the insurgents.

Third, the chapter examines the ideological evolution and historical antecedents of insurgent Maoism in India. A central contention of this dissertation is that ideology not only matters, but is fundamental to understanding both insurgent and state practice in civil conflicts. The world-view and vision of both the state and insurgents condition how they understand the past, see the future and seek to transform the present. Ideology is fluid and evolving and contextual constraints condition the limits of the possible. It exists in a continuous dialectical relationship with practice, which, in turn, exists in a perpetual interplay with its context. However, ideology is not primarily instrumental nor is it wholly a product of the external environment—it is a core element which shapes the unfolding of insurgent and state practice in contexts of insurgency.

This leads to the fourth section examining insurgent practice. The ideas of Mazumdar, the chief ideologue of Indian Maoism during the 1960s, had a profound effect on the practice of revolt. The near destruction of the movement in the 1970s was, in large part, a consequence of the praxis which emerged from his ideas. However, while the contemporary Maoist movement has rejected many of his ideas, particularly his rejection of mass politics[136] and emphasis on the

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136 The CPI(Maoist) has repudiated Mazumdar's suspicion of mass organizations and has cultivated a plethora of allied organizations that formally exist outside of the Party. As Ganapathy, the Chairman of the CPI(Maoist) said in a 2010 interview: "Previously, under Com. Charu Mazumdar the line had been to disregard mass organizations. Later we rethought and after going through an intense self-critical review, we acknowledged that there were some mistakes in the earlier years and on that basis, in order to advance, we rebuilt the movement. The Self-Critical Review was made in 1974, it was by 1977

individual 'annihilation of class enemies[137], other elements of his thinking continue to inform contemporary insurgency in India.

The chapter concludes with an examination of the CPI(Maoist)'s attempts to create an embryonic state. *Lal sarkar*, or red government, as it is commonly known, is rooted in both mimicry and a radical re-configuration of space. Spatial production in the region has created an internal frontier zone defined by a thin, yet repressive, state presence. This has allowed the Maoists to create an insurgent space as part of their broader project of an 'alternative modernity' whose telos is the destruction of the existing order and its replacement by a socialist state centred in the creation of a new socialist human being.[138] These two spaces, that of a frontier/state space and a Maoist insurgent space, are in continuous opposition. This opposition is fundamentally transforming the nature of space in India's central and eastern hinterlands.

The Problem of Nationalism: Early Communism in India

Since its inception, the organized revolutionary communist left has had an ambiguous relationship with the state and, consequently, has pursued

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August that forces within the party were convinced. And in practice it was reaffirmed by Party AP State Conference in September 1980 that marks the beginning of a new practice. It was since then, that we saw the development of a perspective, taking into account the concrete Indian specificity." Accessed 3 September 2015. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Interviews/Ganapathy-Myrdal-100100.pdf

137 In numerous statements and documents the Party has stated that the annihilation policy developed by Mazumdar was a mistake: "The annihilation policy of old and what we do today are not the same. Along with individual assassinations, there are also other forms of actions that we undertake – different kinds of mass movements, social boycotts of culprits, and various developmental works." (Chattopadhyay, Suhrid Sankar, "To Establish a Liberated Area," *Frontline* 26.22 (October/November 2009).

138 The term 'alternative modernity' comes from Alpa Shah and Judith Pettigrew, "Windows into a revolution: ethnographies of Maoism in South Asia," *Dialectical Anthropology* 33.3 (2009): 237. The term effectively captures the essence of Indian Maoism and their imaginings of the future that inform their actions in the present.

contradictory tactics and strategies. In particular, there have been deep divisions

over the role of armed struggle. One of the first explicitly socialist organizations to

call for violence against British colonial rule and the state was the Ghadr Party,

formed in 1913 by Sikh exiles living in North America.[139] Previously, socialist

opposition to British colonialism had taken the form of Fabian gradualism,

eschewing armed struggle and revolution. While the Ghadr Party was the first

socialist organization to integrate armed struggle into its ideological praxis, their

influence was relatively brief, limited to Punjab and unconnected with the broader

international revolutionary left. By 1918, the majority of its members had either

been arrested or fled India.[140] India's first sustained revolutionary socialist

organization emerged in 1920-21 with the formation of the CPI, the ancestor of

the contemporary Naxalite movement.[141] Following the suspension of Gandhi's

non-cooperation movement in 1922 after violence erupted in Bengal, many

involved in the anti-British struggle were disillusioned. Coupled with the

tremendous prestige that communism gained following the Russian revolution, a

segment of Indian nationalists began to see Marxism and revolutionary politics as

incompatible with, and superior to, Gandhian non-violence.[142]

Within the Indian revolutionary communist movement there was, from its

inception, disagreement over the nature of the mainstream independence

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139 Chowdhuri, Satyabrata Rai, *Leftism in India, 1917-1947* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 6.
140 Ibid.: 42-44.
141 There is uncertainty and debate over the actual year that the CPI was founded. During this period, a
    number of communist intellectuals and activists travelled to Tashkent attending an Indian school which
    was established by the Soviets and, after its closure, the Communist University of Toilers of the East.
    In either case, the CPI was founded in Tashkent in the period 1920-1921 (Ibid.: 56-58).
142 Ibid.: 33.

movement. As Satyabrata Chowdhury writes, "The most crucial question that...

confronted [the left] since the formation of the communist groups in the early

1920s was how to fit the precepts of proletarian internationalism into the ethos of

Indian nationalism." [143] Communists were deeply divided in their analysis of the

class nature of the Congress Party and the mainstream nationalists, a debate

which would continue well past independence. Even before the founding of the

CPI, there was a debate over whether the party ought to call itself the Communist

Party of India, signalling its membership in the broader worldwide socialist

movement led by the USSR, or whether it should be, "a party of the Indian

pattern, that is a nationalist party, and hence the name would be the Indian

Communist Party."[144] While ultimately the debate was settled in favour of those

who saw the Party as a branch of the International communist movement, these

tensions persisted throughout the history of the party. These disagreements

would ultimately lead to the emergence of insurgent Maoism.

A broad section of the Party initially opposed Gandhi and the Indian

National Congress (INC) because they believed that they represented feudal

interests in the country and were an obstacle to even a bourgeois revolution.

Another view, taken by MN Roy, a founder of the CPI and delegate to the

Comintern, was that the INC represented an emergent indigenous bourgeoisie

and its struggle, "stiffened the national struggle and intensified the class cleavage

by creating a proletariat class".[145] That this bourgeoisie emerged in the context of

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143 Ibid.: 27.
144 Ibid.: 65-66.
145 Ibid.: 36.

colonialism made its role more complex than it was in the West. In order to,

"augment its own class interests... the bourgeoisie was well aware of the fact that

its bargaining strength vis-à-vis the imperialists ultimately depended on its ability

to make a common cause with the revolutionary mass movement."[146] According

to Roy, in order to strengthen their position relative to British industry and capital

they had to align themselves, at least in part, with radical, and even revolutionary,

movements. However, they were also, "haunted by the fear that the emergence

of the working class as a formidable revolutionary force might eventually destroy

its own existence."[147] Ultimately, the national bourgeoisie's fears of the working

class coupled with Britain's fear of cross-class collaboration against imperialism

led to concessions and subsequent demobilization, as made evident by Gandhi's

suspension of the non-cooperation movement.[148] In spite of this, however, MN

Roy, and ultimately the CPI, argued that, "a bourgeois national movement in the

colonial countries is objectively revolutionary, therefore it should be given

support".[149] This debate illustrates that many of the tensions that would plague

the CPI well in the 1960s were evident from the beginning. What should the

relationship between communists, the INC and the broader nationalist movement

be? How were the specificities of India to be reconciled with the policies, often

dictated by the exigencies of the Soviet Union, of the Comintern and demands of

international communism? What was the role of armed struggle and violence in

the context of a colonial state challenged by a popular movement whose

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146 Id.
147 Id.
148 Id.
149 Id.

leadership was wedded to principles of non-violence? Often these competing imperatives would clash, leading to incoherence and division.

These questions forced the Party into complex, and often convoluted, positions. MN Roy's 'line' was able, for a time, to reconcile contradictory ideological and practical considerations. It provided a justification for the CPI's participation in the larger nationalist movement, a necessity if the Party was to avoid isolation and irrelevance. Regardless of the CPI's views, the INC led an extremely large and popular mobilization that could not easily be ignored or opposed. However, while remaining critical of the INC, the CPI carved out space within the nationalist movement to function as its radical wing. This gave it the potential to influence the mainstream nationalists while also maintaining ideological and organizational autonomy, retaining the freedom to act independently. Specifically, and in accordance with the Comintern's call to form an alliance with all 'progressive' nationalists, the CPI created the Workers and Peasants Party (WPP) in 1925 which functioned above ground and worked directly with Congress. The CPI-proper became a space for underground work and remained committed to armed struggle, a practice still followed by some of the smaller Maoist parties in India such as the Communist Party of India(Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, who continue to function as a legal political party with an underground wing.

The Party's pragmatism, however, would not survive the chaos and numerous policy shifts of the international communist movement in the 1930s—

tensions and divisions that would ultimately lead to the splintering of the Party

and the emergence of the Naxalites. In 1928 the Comintern veered left,

condemning non-communist nationalist movements in the colonial world as

reactionary. Ultimately, this led to a repudiation of MN Roy's policies by the CPI,

his expulsion from the Party, the liquidation of the WPP and the Party's

withdrawal from co-operation with the INC and other nationalist organizations.[150]

The CPI attacked Congress and declared it the largest obstacle to

independence: the INC misled the revolutionary masses into supporting the

bourgeoisie in their battle for concessions from the imperialists.[151] The ambiguity

with which the CPI had viewed the INC turned to hostility. Following the

resumption of the nationalist's struggle against the British in 1930, this led to the

isolation of the CPI, a party that seemed incapable of providing a coherent

ideological vision, strategy or alternative to the existing movement against British

colonial rule.

Following yet another shift in Comintern policy in 1934 the CPI resumed

working with the mainstream nationalists. They took up key positions in the

Congress Socialist Party, a group which split from the INC in 1934. This was a

period of growth for the CPI and the Indian left more broadly. With Gandhi's initial

support for Britain after the outbreak of the war, the CPI capitalized on the

widespread opposition to the war which existed in the country, leading a number

of strikes and calling for violent revolution to overthrow colonialism.[152] This

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150 Ibid.: 77.
151 Ibid.: 84-86
152 Ibid.: 108.

goodwill and influence would not last because of yet another shift in Comintern policy. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany in 1942, the Comintern re-conceptualized the war as an anti-fascist struggle in which the British had a vital role to play. Suddenly, the CPI found itself in the position of supporting a war which was not only deeply unpopular, but which it had spent the preceding three years vehemently, and militantly, opposing.[153] Subsequently, the CPI opposed Gandhi's 'Quit India' resolution and all Party members were expelled from Congress.[154]

Thus, at the twilight of imperium, the CPI was again isolated from the mass nationalist movement sweeping the country. With the Soviet Union focused on rebuilding and consolidating its power in eastern Europe, a party that had become accustomed to taking direction from the Comintern was in the position of having to navigate the complexities of postwar Indian politics without guidance.[155] Faced with the most momentous change that the sub-continent had seen since the advent of colonial rule, the CPI provided no demands or coherent vision beyond calling for British withdrawal.[156] Additionally, tension between the radicals, who sought immediate armed socialist revolution and the moderates, who wished to co-operate with the nationalist movement, was allowed to erupt into the open.

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153 Ibid.: 118.
154 Ibid.: 130.
155 At the outset of independence, the CPI's ambiguity towards independence also manifested itself in demands which reflected its isolation from popular opinion. Thus, while the party was opposed to partition on the basis that Stalin's call for national self-determination was rooted in ethnicity and not religion, the CPI called for the creation of 16 independent states to be formed on ethno-linguistic grounds, claiming their was no basis for Indian unity (Ibid.: 212-213).
156 Ibid.: 130.

In 1948 the CPI declared independence to be a sham and argued that the transition to Congress rule represented the replacement of colonialism by a bourgeois and feudal alliance.[157] Therefore, revolution and armed struggle remained necessary in spite of the departure of the British, a position which was reflected in the CPI's guerrilla war against the Indian army in the Telangana region. While this is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, it is important to note that Telangana began as rebellion against the Nizam of Hyderabad, leader of one of the most powerful Princely states in British India. The Nizam, in spite of the wishes of the population, refused to join the newly independent state. The early stages of the insurgency could be understood as the actions of a militant faction from within the broader independence movement. Following India's invasion an annexation of the state in September 1948, however, the left factions of the CPI insisted on continuing their struggle against the forces of the newly independent state, seeing it as a war against feudalism and the beginnings of a socialist revolution that would sweep across the subcontinent.[158] Internally, however, the Party was deeply divided and a number of factors intervened, weakening the hold of the left and the advocates of armed struggle. In the face of repression and violence, the CPI was forced to call off their rebellion. Even more disastrously from the perspective of the Party, in the 1955 elections in Andhra Pradesh the CPI, contrary to expectations, performed poorly, winning only 15

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157 Sen, Mohit, *The Journey of an Indian Communist* (Delhi: Rupa, 2003): 117.
158 Roosa, "Passive Revolution".

seats out of the 169 that they had contested.[159] The CPI seemed incapable of challenging the state through either armed struggle or electoral politics.

The Party's internal divisions were further exacerbated by international events. Following the Bandung Conference in 1954, which brought together the leaders of the non-aligned world, *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) praised Nehru and the Congress government for its leadership of the 'Third World'. The lauding of Nehru and, by implication, Congress rule, was an embarrassment to a party that claimed independence had simply brought a continuation of colonial rule under new masters. These events continued to deepen the factionalism and deep divisions between the advocates of cooperation with the state and those who advocated armed struggle. These deep divisions were reflected in the acrimonious debates over the dismissal in 1959 of Kerala's government, India's first elected communist government.[160] The left of the party saw the election as a chance for destabilization and to demonstrate the limits of India's democracy. Its dismissal confirmed their claims about the sham of independence.[161] The centrists in the party learned another lesson, seeing the events as the consequences of a refusal to collaborate and compromise with the realities of the Indian political

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159 Sen, *Indian Communist*: 147.
160 In 1957, the southern state of Kerala elected a majority CPI government, India (and the world's) first democratic communist government. While initially the Nehru government decided to tolerate an opposition party running a major state in the country, the Kerala Congress Party was less interested in compromise and, along with the Catholic Church, whose interested were threatened by a bill targeting educational facilities, many of which were controlled by the Church, began a series of increasingly violent agitations against the government. These agitations, along with Nehru's increasing rejection of communism, led to the dismissal of the CPI ministry and the imposition of President's Rule in the state. (Ibid.: 173-178).
161 Ibid.: 174.

system. For them, the debacle in Kerala represented the failure of the CPI and the left to develop and strengthen its ties with the progressive forces that existed within the Indian state.[162] Thus, the CPI entered into the 1960s, a decade in which the Sino-Soviet split would have profound implications for the worldwide communist movement, deeply divided. Many of these tensions and divisions had been present since the CPI's earliest days and simply reflected new iterations of old debates. These debates were both ideological and strategic. On the one hand, there were those who saw the Indian independence movement and the Congress Party as little more than a tool representing the landed interests and the country's bourgeoisie. For this group, the INC was a reactionary movement and little had changed substantively since independence. Therefore, the only appropriate stance was total opposition, armed struggle and revolution. For others, in spite of all of its limitations, the INC contained both progressive and reactionary elements. Indian independence had brought about real change. While a socialist revolution was the ultimate aim, it was the immediate task of communists to encourage other progressive forces in the Indian state and in the ruling party. The CPI was too weak to engage in an armed confrontation with the state. Armed struggle was not only futile, but counter-productive as it would strengthen the hands of the reactionary classes who formed a powerful element of the INC's coalition.

Bubbling beneath the surface of the divisions within the CPI was an even more profound debate, one which had first surfaced over the name of India's

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162 Ibid.: 177.

communist party in 1921. This was an existential question of the communists' role and relationship with the wider international socialist movement. The prestige and political power of the Soviet Union and the power of the Comintern throughout the pre-war period had effectively sidelined this question, but it remained unanswered. How were the ideological terms of reference of 'proletarian internationalism' valid in the Indian context with its history, class formation and social relations which significantly diverged from that of Europe and Russia? Since its inception, the CPI had unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile these problems leading to political marginalization and isolation. Arguably, it was not until the emergence of the Naxalites that an indigenous ideology and revolutionary practice that was explicitly rooted in Marxism and communism emerged, an ideology that drew inspiration and its terms of reference from China, while rooting its practice in a subaltern Indian reality.

China's Chairman is Our Chairman: The Emergence of Maoism
The Chinese revolution, which saw the installation of a communist government after a prolonged guerrilla war in a primarily agrarian country, had a significant effect upon global revolutionary politics. The Soviet Union, whose base in the industrial proletariat, was no longer the only model for socialist revolution in newly independent, post-colonial countries.

The influence of Maoism on the CPI can be traced back to the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1948 the CPI adopted what was in substance, if not in actual

name, a Maoist ideological line that called for the unification of all 'progressive'

forces in opposition to feudalism and imperialism, rejecting an earlier focus on a

rapid and sudden transformation of power by an urban confrontation between the

working class and the bourgeoisie.[163] This was an early indication that Maoist

ideas had begun to have an influence on sections of the CPI. Ultimately,

however, it would be the changing ideological and geopolitical currents of global

communism, coupled with the actual experience of revolution and guerrilla

warfare in independent India that led to the embrace of revolutionary Maoism by

a section of the CPI and broader left movements in India. In 1948 a Maoist group

from Andhra Pradesh publicly attacked elements of the CPI's Central Committee

for their 'conservatism'. The 'Andhra thesis' demanded that the CPI follow the

'Chinese Path' and unite all 'progressive' and anti-imperialist forces in the country

along the lines of Mao's New Democratic revolution.[164] The 'thesis' was briefly

accepted in 1950 by the CPI leadership after the Cominform, the successor to

the Comintern, declared the Communist Party of China (CPC) to be an

appropriate revolutionary model for the post-colonial world, only to be rejected

after less than a year as the CPI decided on, "the withdrawal of the Telangana

struggle and a decision to participate in the forthcoming elections."[165]

The internal differences between the newly emergent 'left' factions inspired

by the Chinese revolution grew in intensity throughout the 1950s. Specifically, the

'rightists' of the CPI viewed Nehru and his government as a progressive ally and

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163 Bannerjee, Sumanta, "Mao and the Indian Communist Movement," *China Report* 31.37 (1995): 47.
164 Bandyopahya, "Abortive Revolution": 24.
165 CPML, "Revolution Takes Root," *Thirty Years of Naxalbari* (undated). Accessed 6 November 2016.
http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/publications/30%20years/part4.htm

a representative force of an Indian patriotic of national bourgeoisie. The implication was that, from the 'right', the post-independence Indian state was a legitimate entity representing a particular historical stage of capitalist development. The 'leftist' faction, on the other hand, saw Nehru and the newly independent state as fundamentally 'reactionary'. The leftists' view stemmed, in large part, from the Nehru government's failure to enact effective land reforms.[166] The increasing division between the various factions on the nature of Indian state and the debate over whether it was a legitimate representative of a progressive national bourgeoisie or whether it was a reactionary semi-colonial feudal state deepened into irreconcilable difference after the government of Kerala's dismissal. For those within the more radical camp of the CPI this revealed the 'true' nature of the Nehruvian post-colonial state.[167]

The tensions between the factions within the CPI were further exacerbated by global politics. After Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' in 1956, denouncing the crimes of Stalin, tensions between the PRC and the Soviet Union grew. Of relevance to India was the dispute between Khrushchev and Mao on the role of international revolution. While the Soviet Union had settled into a role of status quo power in the wake of the post-war international settlement, Maoist ideology and the PRC's state policy encouraged permanent revolution, particularly in the post-colonial world. The PRC was providing both ideological and, in some cases, material support for groups destabilizing states such as India.[168] Regional tension

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166 Bannerjee, "Mao": 55.
167 Ibid.: 55.
168 Brzezinski, Zbigniew K., *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967): 398-402

was further deepened when the Congress government of Nehru granted the Dalai Lama sanctuary in 1958 after he fled the Chinese occupation of Tibet.[169]

This did not, however, make an overt split within the CPI inevitable. The CPI, while dominated by orthodox communists, had, since the 1940s, contained pro-Maoist factions. Furthermore, the CPI remained united on key geopolitical issues and was the only party in India that opposed granting the Dalai Lama sanctuary.[170] Tensions were to deepen, however, as the hostility between China and India grew and it soon became impossible for both the Maoists and orthodox communists to remain in the same party.

First, the Chinese government began to publish maps showing large parts of India as part of China, claiming that this territory had belonged to them and had been annexed by the British.[171] Second, in 1959 *People's Daily*, the official organ of the CPC, accused Nehru of acting as, "the representative of the reactionary bourgeoisie and landlords in India collaborating with imperialism."[172] This was at variance with the then official CPI doctrine that saw the Congress Party as representing the progressive and patriotic sectors of the bourgeoisie.

These developments challenged two core elements of the CPI. First, it challenged the CPI's nationalist credential. Moderate sections of the Party had sought to portray as a progressive and revolutionary force within the broader project of colonial nation-building.[173] Second, it challenged the Party's ideological

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169 Ibid.: 375.
170 Sen, *Indian Commnunist*: 194-195.
171 Ibid.: 195.
172 Ibid.: 196.
173 Callaghan, John, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the communist party," *Journal of Communist Studies* 7.3 (1991).

practice. While still a revolutionary party, the CPI had embraced the 'parliamentary' path specifically because it saw in the Congress Party a vessel with which to realize a post-colonial revolution as part of a long-term transition to socialism. If, as the CPC claimed, the Congress Party and the state that they had built was rooted in the most reactionary classes of the country, this strategy could no longer be ideologically or practically justified. In effect, to remain wedded to parliamentarianism would be a betrayal of socialism.

As tension increased between China and India, the left of the CPI circulated a document at a Central Executive Committee meeting in late 1959:

> Upholding the Chinese case entirely and claiming that the dispute was linked both with a shift in Indian foreign policy and Nehru's reactionary domestic tendency recently shown in Kerala. This document said that the government was using the dispute to distract the Indian people from the real issues and to create a situation where the CPI could be isolated and outlawed.[174]

The semi-feudal Indian state was at war with a socialist state, a state that was a model for the rest of the post-colonial world. The tensions between the pro-Chinese, radical factions sympathetic to Maoism and the CPI, dominated by pro-Soviet forces sympathetic to the neutralism and developmentalism of the Nehruvian state, could no longer be internally contained.

The CPI's internal crisis openly erupted in 1962. In the context of deepening tensions between the CPC and the CPSU as well as between India and the PRC, the ideological factionalism in the Party became untenable. In

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174 Office of Current Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, *The Indian Communist Party and the Sino-Soviet Dispute*. Declassified Report. Accessed 4 June 2015. https://archive.org/stream/ESAU-CIA/The%20Indian%20Communist%20Party%20and%20Sino-Soviet%20Dispute_djvu.txt

October 1962, Chinese troops moved into Assam in North-East India, beginning a brief border war between the two countries. While pro-Chinese factions within the party pushed for neutrality in the conflict, SA Dange, the General Secretary and head of the Parliamentary section made public a fierce critique of the Chinese invasion, a stand later supported in a *Pravda* editorial praising, "Nehru as a progressive anti-imperialist, friend of the Soviet Union and champion of world peace".[175] Over the next few years this tension would erupt as the CPI was riven by fractious debates between the majority, who supported Dange and a, "vociferous and influential minority" who opposed the anti-Chinese position taken by the leadership.[176] The latter faction was particularly strong in the Party's West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh sections.

These internal developments occurred at the same time that the CPC's international campaign against what they termed 'neo-revisionism' within the global communist movement called for, "'true and revolutionary' Communists to split from the 'revisionists' and set up 'genuine' Communist Parties so that these could lead armed struggle to set up people's democracies".[177] In 1964 a minority section of the CPI, and a majority of its West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh sections, broke off from the party and formed the Communist Party of India(Marxist). It was an explicitly pro-Chinese party that, at least on paper, supported armed struggle. However, "the CPI(M) leadership... kept talking about armed struggle but did not go beyond talking"[178] The split within India's

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175 Sen, *Indian Communist*: 217.
176 Ibid.: 217.
177 Ibid.: 242.
178 Ibid.: 251.

communist movement, and one which would ultimately lead to the emergence of the Naxalite movement, was, as Rabindra Ray argues, "not effective as a direct cause... [but] provided the terms of reference for contending points of view in post-Indian independence Indian communism".[179]

The divisions between those advocating armed revolution along Maoist lines and those advocating a gradual parliamentary approach were, if anything, deepened after the split. In particular, CPM delegates from the historically revolutionary hotbeds of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh were quickly disappointed by the policies of the CPM's central leadership. The decision by the CPM to join West Bengal's United Front government in 1967, alongside Congress and other smaller parties, was a betrayal for the radicals. Charu Mazumdar, a prominent leader in the new party and key ideologue published his 'Historic Eight Documents', a series of Maoist monographs that became the basis for Naxalite analysis and practice. In them, he argued that:

> In the post-election period our apprehensions are being proved correct by the actions of the party (CPI-M) leadership itself. The Polit Bureau has directed us to "carry on the struggle to defend the non-Congress ministries against reaction". This suggests that the main task of Marxists is not to intensify the class struggle, but to plead on behalf of the Cabinet. So a convention of party members was convened to firmly establish economism within the working class. Immediately thereafter, an agreement for a truce in industry was signed at the Cabinet's initiative. Workers were asked not to resort to gheraos. What could be a more naked expression of class collaboration? The Chinese leaders predicted long ago that those who had remained neutral in the international debate would very soon take to the path of opportunism. Now, the Chinese leaders are saying that these advocates of a neutral

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179 Ray, Rabindra, *The Naxalites and their Ideology* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1988): 123.

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stand are in reality revisionists and they would soon cross over to the reactionary camp. In our country we are experiencing how true this prediction is. We have witnessed the betrayal of the working class.[180]

Almost immediately divisions arose over armed struggle and the extent to which the party ought to 'collaborate' with the Indian state.[181] At the CPM's first Party Congress, delegates on the left pushed for a program of violence against the 'neo-colonial' Indian state, and denounced India's 'fake' non-alignment policy which the radicals believed was merely a front for subservience to US imperialism.[182] These measures were defeated, indicating to the Maoists that the CPM would not be the radical revolutionary force that they had hoped it was.[183] According to the *People's March*, a publication with ties to the contemporary CPI(Maoist):

> The new party CPI(M) retained the basic roots of revisionism that the Rightist CPI leaders vociferously preached and practiced over the years. After the split the 'leftist and centrist leaders held a convention at Tenali in Andhra Pradesh in July 1964. The debate on the parliamentary path to socialism was set at rest, without clinching the crucial question...The ideological patch-up expresses itself in the CPI(M) programme passed in its first Congress. On the one hand it stated that, "the present Indian State is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlord, led by the big bourgeoisie who are increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital." This is then contradicted in order to keep room for an alliance by stating that, "contradiction and conflict exist between the Indian bourgeoisie including the big bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists." And "this stratum of the bourgeoisie will be compelled to come into opposition with state power and can find a place in the people's democratic front."

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180 Mazumdar, Charu, *Our Tasks in the Present Situation: First Historic Document* (28 January 1965). Accessed 6 September 2017. https://ajadhind.wordpress.com/historic-documents-charu-mazumdar/
181 Bannerjee, "Mao": 60.
182 Ibid.: 58.
183 Ibid.: 58-59.

Thus, like the openly revisionist position of the CPI, this CPI(M) left open the back door for making alliances with the class representative parties of the bourgeoisie and landlords like the Congress. It is also significant that this new party in the leftist garb left open all opportunities of following the Kerala model of forming ministries in the existing setup. The programme stated "The Party will utilize all the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence government pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people.."

Thus the new party, the CPI(M), did not show any fundamental difference with the Rightist CPI.[184]

In a polemic attacking the CPM-led United Front government of West Bengal published in *Liberation*, the official organ of the early Naxalites, Charu Mazumdar wrote:

In Naxalbari when the heroic peasants took up arms to defend themselves and overthrow the regime of oppression and plunder, these impostors as the biggest partner of the U.F. [United Front] Government in West Bengal did not hesitate to use the reactionary state machinery in its attempt to suppress the brave peasantry. At the same time they came down upon revolutionary comrades who led the peasants with disciplinary measures and violent slanders. So, like the Gandhites, they are waging the class struggle with a vengeance — as henchmen of the reactionary classes and as enemies of the toiling people. The brave peasants and the revolutionary comrades of Telangana and Srikakulam have to fight on two fronts — the landlords' gangs and the police as well as reaction's agents masquerading as Marxists — in order to achieve victory.[185]

The radicals in the party began to organize militant, armed, peasant resistance to landlords and the state in isolated parts of the country.[186] Ideologically, they

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184 CPML, "Coversion of Parliamentarism to Social Fascism: An Indian Experience," *Thirty Years of Naxalbari* (undated). Accessed 6 November 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/publications/social-fascism/cpi%20split.htm#n

185 CPML, "Are They Marxist's or Reaction's Henchmen!" *Liberation* 1.10 (August 1968). Accessed 15 September 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Liberation/1968-Aug/MarxistsOrHenchmen-680800.pdf

186 Bannerjee, "Mao": 59.

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coalesced around a vision drawing on Marx, Lenin, Mao and theoretical

innovations developed by Charu Mazumdar:

> Besides, there is amongst us a group of revolutionary comrades who accept the Chinese Party and the Thought of the great Mao Tsetung and also accept that as the only path. The only Marxist road to self-cultivation taught by Lenin and Chairman Mao is the path of class struggle. Only through tempering in the fire of class struggle can a Communist become pure gold. Class struggle is the real school of Communists and the experience of class struggle has to be verified in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and lessons have to be taken. So the main point of Party education is application of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism in class struggle, arriving at general principles on the basis of that experience and taking back to the people the principles summed up from experience. This is what is called 'from the people to the people'. This is the basic point of Party education. As a result they commit idealist deviations in regard to Party education. Chairman Mao Tsetung has taught us that there cannot be any education apart from practice. In his words, 'doing is learning'. Self-cultivation is possible only in the process of changing the existing conditions through revolutionary practice.[187]

This historical moment marked the emergence of 'Naxalism' as a self-conscious

ideological program seeking to overthrow the 'semi-colonial' Indian state through

armed struggle and replacing it with a Maoist state. While the Naxalites did

organize and lead peasant uprisings, Mazumdar's vision deviated from orthodox

Maoism. Rather than the patient seizure and consolidation of liberated zones,

Mazumdar imagined that revolution in India would be a sudden conflagration—an

accelerated form of guerrilla warfare in which an insurgent peasantry would

engulf and capture the countryside, rapidly leading to the collapse of the edifice

of the state. The revolutionary vanguard that would trigger this sudden uprising

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187 Mazumdar, *First Document*.

would be composed of dedicated and selfless cadre steeled in the violent fires of

revolutionary action:

> The meaning of the Party Activist Groups today is that they will be "combat units". Their main duty will be political propaganda campaign and to strike against counter-revolutionary forces. We should always keep in mind Mao Tsetung's teaching–"Attacks are not for the sake of attacking merely, attacks are for annihilating only". Those who should be attacked are mainly: (1) the representatives of the state machinery like police, military officers; (2) the hated bureaucracy; (3) class enemies. The aim of these attacks should also be the collection of arms. In the present age these attacks can be launched everywhere, in cities and in the countryside. Our special attention should be paid especially to peasant areas.

> In the post-election period, when the counter revolutionary offensive will assume a massive character, our main base will have to be established in the peasant areas. So immediately now, we shall have to clearly put up before our organisation this view that with the development of sense of responsibility among working class and revolutionary petite-bourgeois cadres, they will have to go to the villages immediately. So with the development of the sense of responsibility among the working class and petty bourgeois cadres, they will have to be sent to the villages. In the period of counter-revolutionary offensive, our main tactics of struggle will be that of Great China, the tactics of encircling the cities with villages. How fast we can silence the counter-revolutionary offensive depends on how soon we can build up the people's armed forces.[188]

> The agents of the revolution were to be composed of conspiratorial, self-

contained clandestine groups engaged in terrorist violence:

> What is the main basis for building up a revolutionary organisation? Comrade Stalin has said: "The main basis for building up a revolutionary organization is the revolutionary cadre." Who is a revolutionary cadre? A revolutionary cadre is he who can analyse the situation at his own initiative and can adopt policies according to that. He does not wait for anyone's help.

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188 Mazumdar, *First Document*.

Our Organisational Slogans –

1. Every party member must form at least one Activist Group of five. He will educate the cadres of this Activist Group in political education.

2. Every party member must see to it that no one from this group is exposed to the police.

3. There should be an underground place for meetings of every Activist Group. If necessary, shelters for keeping one or two underground will have to be arranged.

4. Every Activist Group must have a definite person for contacts.

5. A place should be arranged for hiding secret documents.

6. A member of the Activist Group should be made a member of the Party as soon as he becomes an expert in political education and work.

7. After he becomes a Party member, the Activist Group must not have any contact with him.

This organisational style should be firmly adhered to. This organisation itself will take up the responsibility of revolutionary organisation in the future.[189]

In addition to the internal politics of India, two international events played a key role in the emergence of an explicitly Maoist revolutionary movement in the country- the first was the reassertion of a vigorous defence of peoples' war by the Chinese Defence Minister, Lin Pao, and the second was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which rocked the international communist movement.[190]

The first large revolutionary action undertaken by the Maoists occurred in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal in the spring of 1967. Here, in a village called Naxalbari, the local CPM branch, which was dominated by Maoists, led an uprising of Adivasi sharecroppers from the area's tea plantation.[191] While the

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189 Mazumdar, *First Document*.
190 Roy, *Unfinished Revolution*: 49-50; Lin, Biao, *Long Live the Victory of People's War! In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japan* (Beijing, Foreign Languages Press, 1966). Accessed 4 July 2016. https://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/books/LongLiveVictoryPeoplesWar.pdf
191 Ahuja and Gangul, "Fire Within": 257.

revolt was quickly suppressed by the government it became a watershed

moment for India's Maoists. First, the revolt garnered symbolic importance

because of the rhetorical intervention of the Communist Party of China who

hailed Naxalbari as a 'peel of spring thunder'.[192] The tremendous prestige that the

Cultural Revolution-era government of China had with the global and Indian

radical left was thrown behind what might have otherwise been little more than a

local action against landlordism. China's rhetorical intervention gave Naxalbari a

semi-mythological status and ideological weight to India's emergent Maoist

movement, becoming the symbolic beginning of peoples' war against the semi-

colonial, semi-feudal Indian state. At the founding of the Communist Party of

India(Maoist) in 2004, the party explicitly drew a connection between itself and

the events of the late 1960s:

> The clarion call of the great Naxalbari movement led by Com. CM [Charu Mazumdar] proved to be a "Spring Thunder over India" as graphically described by CPC. It greatly unmasked the ugly face of the revisionist leadership of the CPI, CPI (M) brand. The powerful slogans like "China's Path is Our Path" and "Mao Tsetung Thought is Our Thought" spread to the four corners of India and even other parts of the Sub-Continent. Naxalbari thus marked a qualitative rupture with age-old revisionism in the Indian communist movement and firmly established the universal truth of MLM Thought in India. From then on, MLM-Thought had become a demarcating line between revisionists and genuine revolutionaries in India. Thus "Naxalbari path, the only path" became an ever-resounding slogan. This movement further inspired and attracted a completely new generation of revolutionary communist forces from among the masses of workers, peasants, students, youth, women and intellectuals towards the ideology of MLM Thought.[193]

192 *People's Daily.*
193 CPI(Maoist), Central Committee, *Hold High the Bright Banner of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism* (2004). Accessed 3 October 2016. https://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/12/01/cpi-m-hold-high-the-red-banner-

For the Maoists, the ideology and praxis which emerged from Naxalbari represented a pivotal moment in India's revolutionary history. Arguably, its theoretical innovations were as relevant for the radical left as were the ideas of Lenin and Mao in Russia and China. Naxalism was a template for prolonged conflict with the Indian state.

Naxalbari also irrevocably split the revolutionary Maoists ideologically and organizationally from the broader Indian communist movement. What was seen as a 'people's revolt' led by a vanguard of the Party was ruthlessly and quickly suppressed by West Bengal's United Front government, a government whose largest constituent party was the CPM. Naxalbari became an internecine conflict between Maoist and orthodox factions within the CPM. In the eyes of the Maoists, the CPM's use of the repressive apparatus of the state to crush what was the start of a revolutionary uprising starkly validated their belief in the inherent revisionism of the existing communist parties, the political bankruptcy of parliamentarianism and the necessity of armed struggle:

> In the concrete conditions of semi-colonial, semi-feudal India where bourgeois democratic revolution too has not been completed and uneven social, economic and political conditions exist, the objective conditions permit the proletarian party to initiate and sustain armed struggle in the vast countryside. In the name of preparation for armed struggle, participation in election will only sabotage the revolutionary movement. No peaceful period of preparation for revolution is required in India, unlike in the capitalist countries where the bourgeois democratic revolutions were completed and armed insurrection is the path of revolution.... Historical experience in India until now has only proved that most of those who participated in election either became revisionist or diverted

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of-mlm/cpi-m-hold-high-the-red-banner-of-mlm.pdf

revolutionary armed struggle into legal and peaceful channels. The various Marxist-Leninist groups in our country that pursue the tactic of participation in parliamentary elections are getting bogged down more and more in the right opportunist mire, while some have already abandoned armed struggle and become revisionists.[194]

The rift within the CPM was further deepened in August of 1967 when the Central Committee passed a series of resolutions rejecting the CPC's calls for peoples' war, taking the position that the transition to socialism in India could only occur through peaceful means, formalizing the CPM's ideological and practical support for India's parliamentary democracy.[195] For the radicals, however, there could be no compromise with India's reactionary parliamentary democracy. As Charu Mazumdar wrote, China's path was also India's path:

A People's Democratic India is no longer a distant objective. The first rays of the red sun have already lit up the coasts of Andhra and will tinge the other states before long. A radiant India bathed in the rays of this red sun will continue to shine brightly for ever. Every communist must exert his entire effort and energy to bring about this glorious future. Victory certainly belongs to us because China's Chairman is our Chairman and China's path is our path.[196]

While the revolt in Naxalbari was the most symbolically significant armed uprising by Maoists during this period, it was only one of many which erupted. A series of other armed revolts occurred in the period in 1967-1969 across impoverished and isolated parts of the country.[197] After Naxalbari, the most

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194 CPI(Maoist), Central Committee, *Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution*. Pamphlet: p. 47-48 Accessed 6 October 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Founding/StrategyTactics-pamphlet.pdf
195 Bannerjee, "Mao": 60.
196 Mazumdar, Charu, "China's Chairman is Our Chairman: China's Path is Our Path," *Liberation* 3.1 (November 1969). Accessed 4 November 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Mazumdar/ChinaChairmanOurChairman-CM-691106.pdf
197 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess": 342-343.

significant guerrilla uprising erupted in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh in late 1968, where the Maoist-controlled district committee of the CPM launched a guerrilla struggle, "waged on a larger scale and with greater intensity than the earlier Naxalbari struggle, and one which established Maoist control of at least a few areas in this northern part of Andhra Pradesh".[198] Srikakulam had experienced intense guerrilla warfare during the 1950s as part of the broader Telangana struggle and would, during the 1980s and 1990s, become the main area of insurgent strength in the country. While the Maoists are no longer militarily strong in northern Andhra Pradesh, it remains their ideological home and the source of much of their senior leadership. The region has a rich revolutionary tradition of radical intellectualism intersecting with popular mobilization. As N. Venugopal, a writer and former activist with the Maoist Revolutionary Writer's Association states:

> Here [in Telangana] the ideology of defiance has entered the popular memory, in song, dance, ballad, folklore. To take anything, it starts from 11th century, 12th century. This is our legacy. In other plains areas this [legacy] is not there in popular consciousness. This popular memory aspect is what differentiates Telangana. Not only about the very long distant past. I can say from 2009, this movement [for a separate state] is not a very revolutionary movement. Even then, in the last three years, we have seen at least two, three thousand songs coming out. Two hundred new singers coming out. At least 50, 60 popular speakers coming out. So this land has not only defiance, but an ability to communicate that defiance. Express that defiance. And this expression does not go waste immediately. This expression is getting accumulated. It becomes popular memory. And because of this popular memory, and this has a very

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198 Ibid.: 343.

cumulative effect also, because of that memory you continue and you continue and you add to that.[199]

While the late 1960s was a period of Maoist ascendancy in the country, the successes of the movement were relatively short lived. On the first anniversary of the Naxalbari revolt the numerous scattered Maoist groups, many of whom had defected from the CPM, met in Calcutta and formed the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCR), primarily composed of the CPM's West Bengal section, led by Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal, and the numerically larger Andhra section, led by Nagi Reddi.[200] The AICCR was the first attempt to bring together the geographically dispersed Maoist groups into a unified organization whose goal was to lead a revolution toppling the Indian state. However, within six months the Andhra Pradesh group, the largest and most militarily powerful faction within the AICCR, was purged, presaging the extreme fragmentation that would be the fundamental hallmark of the insurgency over the next two decades. While numerous justifications for the purge were given, including their failure to sufficiently 'glorify' guerrilla war and their reluctance to resign their legislative seats, the decision was the result of an internal power struggle over control of the movement between the West Bengal and the Andhra Maoists.[201] By March 1969 the official newspaper of the AICCR, *Liberation*, was denouncing the Andhra Maoists as 'counter-revolutionaries'.[202]

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199 N. Venugopal. Author interview, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh: 2 February 2013.
200 Roy, *Unfinished Revolution*: 149.
201 Ibid.: 149-150.
202 CPML, "Red Area of Revolutionary Struggle Expands in Andhra Despite Campaign of Suppression," *Liberation* 2.9 (July 1969). Accessed 5 June 2017. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Liberation/1969-Jul/Liberation-v2n9-69Jul.pdf

In the spring of 1969 at a large May Day rally in Calcutta, the leaders of

the now West Bengal-dominated AICCR declared the formation of the

Communist Party of India(Marxist-Leninist) (CPML), hailed as India's first

'genuinely' Communist Party inspired by Chairman Mao's thought.[203] In his call

for the transformation of the AICCR into a revolutionary party, Mazumdar wrote in

Liberation:

> The All India Co-ordination Committee played an important role in uniting
> communist revolutionaries and in building up revolutionary struggles. But if
> there is any vacillation to form the Party after that stage is over, the source
> of it must be traced to idealist thinking. Under the influence of idealism we
> want, consciously or unconsciously, to wage a struggle against
> opportunism and to form a Party that has already rid itself of
> revisionism. This outlook is wholly idealistic and has nothing to do with
> dialectical materialism. The Party will develop through constant struggles,
> both against the enemy outside and against alien trends within. Through
> these struggles the Party will grow in strength, act as the vanguard of the
> revolution in order to serve the people, transform itself and transform the
> whole society.[204]

However, this would prove premature. A primary reason for the formation of the

CPML given by its founders was the necessity of establishing and maintaining

revolutionary discipline to counteract the ineffective, spontaneous and highly

localized actions of the numerous Maoist groups.[205] Ironically, however, the

CPML was organizationally and ideologically structured by local action, with the

central apparatus of the party providing only overall ideological guidance.[206]

Consequently local cadre engaged in counter-productive actions of annihilation—

203 Roy, *Unfinished Revolution*: 151-152.
204 Mazumdar, Charu, "Why Must We Form the Party Now?" *Liberation* 2.5 (March 1969). Accessed 4
    May 2016.   https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mazumdar/1969/04/x02.html
205 Roy, *Unfinished Revolution*: 150.
206 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess".

Charu Mazumdar's term for 'revolutionary' killings—unconnected to any larger strategic plan for establishing base areas. Furthermore, the lack of central party discipline and control allowed local groups to be infiltrated by ideologically suspect individuals who saw the Maoists as little more than a vehicle with which to capture power and gain status.[207] Ultimately, the formation of the CPML actually undermined the Maoist movement in India. While there were numerous small, local groups operating in the country, mounting a coordinated strategy of suppression by the state was difficult. First, small bands of armed revolutionaries were seen as discrete problems to be managed by local police forces, forces who were poorly trained and lightly armed. Second, as long as the insurgency was composed of clandestine, loosely connected groups, it was difficult for the state to cripple or eradicate the movement. There were no key individuals or bodies whose arrest or killing would cause organizational paralysis and confusion. The formation of the CPML changed this. The existence of a national organization dedicated to the overthrow of the Indian state made it clear, from the perspective of the state, that the 'threat' was not simply local. The uprisings were local manifestations of a broader challenge to the Indian state. Additionally, the formation of the CPML provided a visible leadership and organizational apparatus to target.

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207 See, for example Dasgupta, Biplab, "The Naxalite Movement: An Indian Experiment in Maoist Revolution," *China Report* 10.25 (1974); Donner, Henrike, "Locating Activist Spaces: The Neighbourhood as a Source and Site of Urban Activism in 1970s Calcutta," *Cultural Dynamics* 23.21(2011); and Ray, *The Naxalites,* for an examination of the changing source of recruitment for the Naxalites during the period of urban insurgency and the increasing role played by unemployed youth and members of gangs willing to undertake spectacular actions with little ideological commitment or training.

The Maoist rebellions across the country began to wane due in large part

to a failure to build a defensible base in those areas where the Party was strong.

There was a naive belief among the leadership that the country was ripe for

revolution and all that was needed was a spark.[208] That spark was the heroic

action of a few dedicated revolutionaries. In a view akin to the late 19th and early

20th centuries' anarchists' belief in propaganda of the deed, small dedicated

bands of guerrilla fighters would stage dramatic and violent actions to inspire the

local populace, beginning an inexorable tide that would sweep away the power of

both the state and the landlords. Specifically, there was a belief that 'annihilation'

would inspire the peasantry and elevate their consciousness:

> If guerrilla fighters start the battle of annihilation with their conventional
> weapons, the common landless and poor peasants will come forward with
> bare hands and join the battle of annihilation. A common landless peasant,
> ground down by age old oppression, will see the light and avenge himself
> on the class enemy. His initiative will be released. In this way the peasant
> masses will join the guerrilla fighters, their revolutionary enthusiasm will
> know no bounds and a mighty wave of peoples upsurge will sweep the
> country. After the initiative of the peasant masses, to annihilate the class
> enemy with bare hands or home-made weapons, has been released and
> the peasants' revolutionary power has been established, they should take
> up the gun and face the world. The peasant with the rifle will be the
> guarantee of the continuation of the peasants' revolutionary power.[209]

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208 "This is the era of Chairman Mao Tsetung when imperialism is on the eve of its final collapse and
socialism is marching towards its 3 ultimate, worldwide victory. The victory of the Indian people, a
contingent of the great antiimperialist army of the world's people, over imperialism and its accomplices
and lackeys is certain." (AICCR, "Declaration of the All-India Co-ordination Committee of Communist
Revolutionaries," *Liberation* 1.8 (June1968). Accessed 15 July 2015.
http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Liberation/1968-Jun/DeclarationAICCCR-
680514.pdf).
209 Mazumdar, Charu, "Hate, Stamp, and Smash Centrism". Accessed 7 August 2016.
https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mazumdar/1970/05/x01.htm

This vision failed to materialize. Local guerrilla squads spearheaded intense mobilizations against individuals, leading to dramatic 'annihilations'. These spectacular actions and moments of intensity would be followed by ennui among the populace and isolation of the Maoist cadre. This pattern was the consequence of the Maoists rejection of mass organizations and their focus on clandestine, small group action. Rejection of mass organization meant that the revolutionaries failed to mobilize large numbers of people, leaving them exposed to police repression.[210] In Srikakulam, arguably the site where the Maoists of the late 1960s had the best chance at creating a viable and sustained base area, the pattern was repeated and by 1969 the movement had begun to rapidly weaken. By 1970 the movement had all but collapsed in the face of a sustained counter-insurgency that had killed most of the local leadership.[211]

Due to the weakening of the Maoists rural presence in 1970-1971 the main theatre of the CPML's activity shifted to Calcutta.[212] In retrospect, this period can be seen as the end of the early Naxalite period: the Maoists' had been pushed out of most rural areas largely as a result of their rejection of mass organizations and they had failed to garner support among the rural population. Thus, they retreated to a space where they had enjoyed a measure of sympathy and support among radical students, professors and the city's urban underclass. They were, however, woefully unprepared to challenge the state directly. Calcutta was India's economic heart and it is unsurprising, given the concentration of state

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210 Roy, *The Naxalites:* 202-204.
211 Ibid.: 200.
212 Dasgupta, *The Naxalite Movement:* 26.

power in the city, that the CPML and the Maoist movement was rapidly crushed.

By 1972 the majority of the leadership were either dead or in jail and it seemed

that India's revolutionary Maoist movement was destined to become a historical

footnote. Throughout the 1970s, largely unnoticed by the state, small bands of

armed guerrillas continued to operate in isolated parts of the country.[213] The

small, fragmented movement spent much of its energy in fierce internecine

clashes. These myriad small groups were treated as local bandits presenting little

more than a law and order problem for the police. In spite of appearances,

however, India's Maoist movement was not dead and during the late 1970s and

through the 1980s, guerrilla warfare re-emerged across the country. In Bihar and

parts of present-day Jharkhand the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) became a

potent force among Dalits and other lower castes in the plains, while also

gathering a foothold in forested areas populated by Adivasi.[214] Nicolas Jaoul

describes how Naxalite squads began operating in Bihar during the 1970s.

These squads conducted assassinations of particularly oppressive landlords in

the region, thus seeking to link themselves with the longer struggles over land

being waged in the area.[215] By the late 1970s, their tactics began to shift as:

> The party soon realized that its local recruitment capacity was dependent
> on its ability to address popular concerns such as land redistribution, wage
> increases, and the protection of Dalit women from sexual exploitation by
> the upper castes. The armed squads were rapidly brought by their social

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213 Shah and Pettigrew, "Windows into a revolution": 231.

214 The 1980s and 1990s caste-based mobilizations and violence involving the Maoists in Bihar is beyond the scope of this paper which focuses on the more isolated hills and forests of central and eastern India. For more on the MCC and inter-caste struggles. See Jaoul, Nicolas, "Naxalism in Bihar: From Bullet to Ballot." In *Armed Militias of South Asia: Fundamentalists, Maoists and Separatists* eds. Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jafferlot (Delhi: Foundation Books, 2009).

215 Jaoul, "Naxalism in Bihar": 24.

base into protecting agrarian struggles and repressing local tyrants... Such acceptance by the party of the local population's demands, mentalities and modes of functioning proved its effectiveness.[216]

At the same time, the Andhra Pradesh-based People War Group (PWG) gradually expanded from their base in Telangana into what is now Chhattisgarh and Odisha. Founded in 1980, this group emerged from the remnants of the Andhra Pradesh Maoists who had been expelled from the AICCR. Operating primarily in Telangana, where there was a living memory of the communist insurgency in the 1940s, and parts of Bihar, it was the PWG that would ultimately expand Maoism into the Adivasi areas of Chhattisgarh. Both of these groups merged in 2004, forming the CPI(Maoist).[217]

Antecedents and Ideological Formation: The Maoist Movement in Historical Perspective

This section highlights key 20th century movements and revolts which are antecedents to the contemporary Maoist insurgency in India. What is considered here to be an 'antecedent' to the Maoist insurgency are sustained and violent confrontation with the state over territorial control that aimed to fundamentally transform the Indian state. This excludes other forms of political violence such as urban communal violence and ethnic, religious and regional separatists insurgencies in places such as Kashmir and the North-East. The Maoist movement did not simply arise in the latter half of the 20th century sui generis—

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216 Ibid.: 25.

217 The chapters on Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh will deal more extensively with this period. Expansion in both of these states followed a contextual and ideological dynamic which are germane to the arguments about the particular nature of space.

the contemporary insurgency is being waged in areas with a history of anti-state violence in the period following independence. The section then traces the ideological evolution of revolutionary insurgency in India, identifying continuities and discontinuities. The Maoist movement does not exist in a vacuum and it is a product of state formation, local agency and historical memory. As Nandini Sundar argues in her anthropological history of southern Chhattisgarh, each rebellion creates its own significance by drawing on shared memories of previous rebellions.[218] The Maoist insurgency is not a discrete phenomenon. It is both a product and producer of historical, sociological, political and economic forces— forces which have shaped, and been shaped by, the present. Therefore, it is important to situate the current conflict into a longer history of rebellions and violent political agitations that confronted and sought to transform local, regional and national politics.

In the immediate aftermath of India's independence, both West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, states significant to the contemporary Maoist insurgency, experienced violent rural uprisings led by the CPI. In Bengal, the Tebhaga movement emerged in 1946. Led by militants from the Kisan Sabha, the CPI's peasant organization, the Tebhaga movement mobilized local tenant farmers and sharecroppers opposed to the practice of handing over half of each crop to local landowners.[219] The movement, which at its height affected nearly all of the districts of eastern, central and western Bengal, accomplished little.[220] Aside from

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218 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 17.
219 Bandyopadhyay, "Abortive Revolution": 5.
220 Id.

a single proposed bill (later withdrawn) which sought to meet some of the demands of the sharecroppers, the Tebhaga movement fizzled in the face of political repression, and the communal chaos and violence of independence and partition.[221] The Tebhaga movement does not readily fit into the parameters of antecedent: the demands of the peasants were non-revolutionary and sought a modification of the terms of existing relations rather than challenging the very legitimacy of those relations. Nor was the mobilization violent—it was a mass movement that challenged the system without challenging the legitimacy of the system itself. Its failure led, however, to the emergence of a violent insurgency in West Bengal led by leftists in the CPI, seeking to overthrow the newly independent state and replace it with a revolutionary regime.[222]

The more commonly cited example of a precursor to India's contemporary Maoist insurgency is the Telangana revolt which lasted from 1946 until approximately 1951.[223] Beginning in the twilight of British rule in India, as mentioned earlier, the uprising was initially a CPI-led mobilization against the regime of the Nizam of Hyderabad, a princely state under British suzerainty. The Nizam's refusal to join newly independent India meant that the initial revolt had the support of nationalists and was seen by the newly independent state as a legitimate struggle for liberation. From the beginning, however, the Telangana revolutionaries demanded more than absorption into India: their discontent was rooted in opposition to the system of feudalism which dominated the region. At

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221 Id..
222 Guha, *Elementary Aspects*: 170-173.
223 Bannerjee, "Mao": 44.

the height of the revolt, the insurgents are estimated to have numbered 10,000 armed village militia members and 2,000 full time guerrilla fighters, controlling 3,000 villages.[224] While initially the interests of the newly independent state of India and the insurgents aligned, the invasion of Hyderabad by the Indian Armed Forces in 1948 rapidly transformed it into a challenge to the newly independent state. For a number of months the areas of revolt, "remained outside control of the government and the communists had their complete sway".[225] Peasant committees controlled and governed large swathes of the state.[226] By 1950, however, this insurgency had collapsed in the face of political repression and the CPI's failure to build a support base outside of a relatively small section of militant activists.[227]

The relevance of these two examples of guerrilla warfare to the contemporary conflict of India's communist insurgencies in the period immediately following independence is three-fold. First, armed opposition to the state occurred in areas where contemporary Maoism is strong. Specifically, the post-independence insurgencies were strongest in Telangana and Adivasi-dominated areas of West Bengal such as West Midnapore.[228] These constitute areas in which contemporary Maoist insurgency has been strongest. Second, while the CPI and the insurgents sought to overthrow the Indian state, mobilization and support for the revolt was rooted in local grievances. According

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224 Ibid.: 45.
225 Bandyopadhyay, "Abortive Revolution": 17.
226 Ibid.: 17-19.
227 Ibid.: 20-23.
228 Ibid.: 17-19.

to Bandyopahay, the fatal mistake of the insurgents was that they linked their revolutionary demands to local grievances as an effective tactic to rapidly mobilize people against the Indian state, they failed to link the micro-politics of revolt to a broader political critique. This limited the CPI's ability to sustain and broaden the insurgency. In the end, the communists failed to develop a lasting institutional or organizational presence which could be used to link local demands to a revolutionary project. Consequently the movement faded in the face of elite concession and repression.[229]

In contrast to the CPI, the Maoist movement has effectively capitalized on local grievances by explicitly and deliberately linking local struggles to a broader critique of capitalism and the Indian state, mobilizing people in support of a sustained revolutionary political project. This is a core strength of the Maoists; their ability to create an insurgent space fashioned from the numerous peripheral spaces existing on the fringes of the Indian state. While the Maoists have intervened in sectional and territorially-rooted struggles by Dalits and Adivasi groups—over land ownership and mining—they have articulated these local mobilizations within an anti-state framework that link it with an analysis that conceptualizes the Indian state as semi-feudal and semi-colonial. For example, the CPI(Maoist) frames the struggles of the Adivasi against land displacement, industry and the government as one element of a larger project by the Indian ruling class and capital:

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229 Ibid.: 20-26.

> The imperialists, comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie, unscrupulous contractors, moneylenders, traders and government officials have deprived the Adivasis of their land and other traditional means of livelihood. The process of breaking up of their traditional economies, society and culture and their forcible assimilation into the semi-colonial, semi-feudal setup by the Indian ruling classes serving imperialism is proceeding at an unprecedented pace particularly after the transfer of power.[230]

Conversely, in the 1940s and 1950s, the CPI was unable to mobilize the diverse groups and spaces into a coherent and sustained movement. They relied on the optimistic assumption that once the masses were mobilized, history would inexorably sweep away the old order.

While there has only recently been substantive academic work done on the contemporary Maoist insurgency in India, the early years of the movement have been thoroughly examined. Much of the literature which emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, during the insurgency's nadir, sought to explain the failures and seeming collapse of Maoism by pointing to the practical consequences of their ideological belief, emphasizing the counter-productivity of Mazumdar's opposition to mass movements, his elevation of armed struggle as the cardinal revolutionary praxis and the Party's reification of individual 'annihilation'. Specifically, for Mazumdar revolution was imminent and therefore armed struggle was the primary vehicle for class struggle. And armed struggle's only purpose was annihilation and the destruction of class enemies:

> So the revolutionary forces must lead in an organized manner those "partisan" struggles and before the massive counter-revolutionary offensive starts, Party members must be well-trained in the tactics of these

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230 CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics*: 120.

struggles through theories and concrete application. The meaning of the Party Activist Groups today is that they will be "combat units". Their main duty will be political propaganda campaign and to strike against counter-revolutionary forces. We should always keep in mind Mao Tsetung's teaching — "Attacks are not for the sake of attacking merely, attacks are for annihilating only". Those who should be attacked are mainly: (1) the representatives of the state machinery like police, military officers; (2) the hated bureaucracy; (3) class enemies. The aim of these attacks should also be the collection of arms. In the present age these attacks can be launched everywhere, in cities and in the countryside. Our special attention should be paid especially to peasant areas.[231]

In recent years a new wave of revisionist scholarship has reassessed the nature and practical consequences of Naxalite ideology. In particular, the works of Sanjay Seth and Ashish Kumar Roy have linked the internal logic of Mazumdar's ideas and the connection his ideological vision had to Naxalite practice in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For Seth, in India's peasant society power and domination is exercised sociologically through the institution of caste. Thus, Naxalite ideology was an attempt to engage with this reality and create an appropriate revolutionary grammar.[232] Naxalite ideology applied a subjective and voluntarist ethos to revolution, one which understood 'peasant' consciousness as inherently rebellious, and therefore proto-revolutionary, while ultimately seeking to transform an intrinsic rebellious consciousness into a revolutionary consciousness. As Bannerjee writes, the aim was to turn everyday peasant and subaltern grievance into a state of being creating the peasantry as a 'class for itself'.[233] It was this subjectivist logic which led to support for 'annihilation'. Seth

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231 Mazumdar, Charu, "The Main Task Today is the Struggle to Build Up the True Revolutionary Party Through Uncompromising Struggle Against Revisionism," *Liberation* 3.2 (8 December 1966). Accessed 7 August 2016. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mazumdar/1966/12/08.html
232 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess".
233 Bannerjee, "Mao": 263-264.

rejects the arguments of those who criticize annihilation as a fundamental

misreading of Marx, a misreading that leads to a praxis doomed to fail because

of it is rooted in an analytical fallacy which idealizes class. For Seth, the logic of

individual annihilation stemmed from the Naxalites' engagement with the realities

of Indian peasant life and their willingness to draw on existing subjectivities rather

than models rooted in alien historical context.[234] In particular, in rural India:

> The insignia of domination and subordination were everywhere inscribed –
> in the naked use of force, in dress, in language and body language....
> There existed an elaborate semiotics of power, and because domination
> was exercised in and through many sites... It was not enough to deprive
> the landlord of the land.[235]

Consequently, the logic of annihilation is not a product of an idealist

misconceptualization of class—annihilation is an attempt to synthesize

revolutionary praxis through the intermingling of the lived reality of peasant life

with the precepts of Marxism.[236] Individual revolutionary violence makes sense in

the particular 'semi-feudal' milieu of rural India.

Mazumdar and the Naxalite's complete embrace of voluntarism and a

subjectivist understanding of revolution had a detrimental effect for the immediate

success of the movement. The early Naxalites aggressively rejected mass

organizations and reduced revolution to armed struggle. This was in contrast to

Mao, who saw armed struggle as a subordinated element of class struggle.[237] For

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234 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess".

235 Ibid.: 347-348.

236 Ibid.: 348.

237 Thus, writing on the role of the CPC in the anti-Japanese war, Mao wrote, "On questions of united front and of Party and mass organization, we must continue the fight against the 'Left' tendency towards closed-doorism if we are to achieve co-operation... At the same time, we must take care to combat the Right opportunist tendency towards co-operation and expansion which are unconditional in character, or otherwise they will both be hindered and be turned into capitualationist co-operation and

Mazumdar, in India, where power was exercised in equal measure through non-economic techniques of domination, mass organizations had no role in revolution. Mass organizations were destined to degenerate into revisionist vehicles under the control of middle and upper peasants.[238] Therefore armed struggle waged by a clandestine party was not only the highest form of struggle, it was the only path to revolution. As Mazumdar wrote in *Liberation*:

> We differ from the programme of the revisionists on three questions: First, we hold that the democratic revolution can win victory only through armed struggle, that is, through   people's war. Second, the village is the centre and the peasantry are the main force of this people's war. This people's war is a peasant war. Third, this people's war can be victorious only under the guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought. This is why we have accepted Mao Tsetung Thought as the only tool both for theory and practice.[239]

Armed struggle was the only true praxis, functioning as both revolutionary means and revolutionary end, creating a new socialist human being and society.

The rejection of mass organizations had two consequences, one which was immediately disastrous for the Party, and the other which, while compounding the problems of the early Naxalites, has, in the long-term, proven to be beneficial for the contemporary insurgents. First, the rejection of mass organizations and a focus on clandestine activity created a dynamic in which party cadre were isolated, an effect which has been acknowledged by the

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unprincipled expansion" (Mao, Tse-Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung Vol. 1* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1965): 154).

238 Roy, *Unfinished Revolution*: 11.

239 Mazumdar, Charu, "March Onward by Summing up the Experience of the Peasant Revolutionary Struggle of India," *Liberation* 3.2 (December 1969). Accessed 5 June 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Mazumdar/MarchOnwardSummingUp-CM-691200.pdf

CPI(Maoist).[240] Secrecy led party cadre to make tactical mistakes that alienated

potential supporters, further deepening their isolation. When there is a total

reliance on underground action, the world of the revolutionary is defined by a

stark binary: one either fully commits to the revolution or one stands outside it as

an observer. There can be no gradations of participation and commitment

becomes the only possibility. This limits the potential for expanding the support

networks for the revolutionaries. While Naxalism was, rhetorically, a rural

revolutionary movement, its clandestine and conspiratorial structure resembled

that of the urban 'guerrilla' groups which emerged at roughly the same time in

Western Europe and parts of Latin America. They were ideologically focused on

the peasantry, yet urban terror and violence ultimately became the defining

centrality of its praxis.[241]

Additionally, the logic of clandestinity and annihilation combined to create

a dynamic in which the decision to use violence was made by isolated individual

groups lacking a base in the community in which they operated. Therefore,

'errors' (in the language of the CPML) became increasingly frequent, further

alienating and isolating the Naxalite movement from potential supporters.[242] In a

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240 "At the end of 1972, after the arrest and martyrdom of comrade CM [Charu Mazumdar] and even prior
    to it we lost a large number of leaders and cadres in the hands of the enemy. Due to these loses we
    suffered a countrywide setback. Prior to the martyrdom of comrade CM, intensive internal political and
    ideological struggle started against right arch-opportunist clique SNS [Satyanarayan Singh, Maoist
    leader] and others in 1971 itself. Party had disintegrated into several groupings due to our serious
    tactical mistakes, state terror, severe losses, lack of proper leadership and negative effect of two line
    struggle within the Communist Party of China. Since 1972 July to 1980 our Party, the CPML was
    dominated by several splinters most of them lead by right and left-adventurist leadership and disarray
    spread over." (Ganapathy, qtd. in Mydral, Jan, *Red Star Over India: As the Wretched of the Earth are
    Rising, Impressions, Reflexions and Preliminary Inferences* (Kolkata: Archana Das and Subrata Das,
    2012): 166-167).
241 Ray, *The Naxalites*: 5.
242 Ibid.: 166.

veiled reference to the risks inherent in a conspiratorial revolutionary structure,

Mazumdar wrote in *Liberation:*

> Sometimes a sectarian tendency creeps into the struggle against revisionism. Our Party members must be vigilant about this tendency also. The form in which this sectarian tendency is expressing itself at present is the sort of thinking among us that after the formation of our Party we have become the sole revolutionary force in the country. Of course, there can be no doubt whatsoever that ours is the only revolutionary Party in India. Naturally, this tendency weakens our reliance on the revolutionary class, which results in isolation from it. Let us cite an example. The decision to form a guerrilla squad was adopted at a certain baithak [group meeting] of poor and landless peasants. When the assembled poor and landless peasant youths raised their hands for enlisting themselves as guerrillas, the Party leader enlisted in the squad only those who were connected with the Party organization and did not admit the poor and landless peasants who were not connected with the Party organization, because he thought that the latter were not revolutionary enough. This incident clearly proves that this sectarian tendency exists in our struggle against revisionism. It has been seen on many occasions that we form the guerrilla squads only with those who are connected with the Party and do not enlist those revolutionary poor and landless peasants who happen to be outside the Party.[243]

Furthermore, self-imposed isolation began to alter the composition of the

movement. Those who become attracted to it were increasingly those individuals

with the fewest ties to the local community, such as criminals and lumpen

elements.[244] Consequently the CPML increasingly functioned completely

separate from those whom it purported to represent, morphing from a popular

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243 Mazumdar, Charu, "March Onward by Summing up the Experience of the Peasant Revolutionary Struggle of India," *Liberation* 3.2 (December 1969). Accessed 7 July 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPML-Orig/Mazumdar/MarchOnwardSummingUp-CM-691200.pdf

244 Dasgupta, "The Naxalite Movement": 30.

revolutionary movement into a terrorist group.[245] The early Naxalites had very little chance of surviving in the face of a state determined to destroy them.

This critique of Naxal practice and ideology is rooted in the revolutionaries' rejection of orthodox Marxism and Maoism. The argument is that the subjectivism and the rejection of mass organization led to isolation and degeneration of the movement into little more than an urban terrorist network. This critique has not only been made by outside observers, but also by the contemporary Maoists themselves. The CPI(Maoist) has discarded elements of Mazumdar's ideas, specifically what they consider as the 'errors' of 'annihilation' and the fetishization of armed struggle. For the contemporary Maoist movement, the revolution is ultimately about seizing state power, as, "Every genuine Marxist believes that, 'everything is illusion without State Power.' Hence, our Party's basic line is formulated based on the Maoist principle: The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and highest form of revolution."[246] Armed struggle does remain the primary form of struggle and, "From the very beginning, our orientation, perspective and the method of building mass organisations and mass struggles should be to serve the war directly or indirectly."[247] However, in stark contrast to the early ideological formulations and praxis of the Maoists in India, mass organizations have a vital and independent role to play in revolution:

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245 Ibid.: 27-28.
246 CPN(M), "South Asia is Indeed Becoming A Storm Centre of Revolution*," Worker* 10 (May 2006): p. 13.
247 CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics*: p. 119.

> Mass Organisations are absolutely indispensable for the victory of any revolution. The principal aim of building mass organisations is to organise the masses for revolution. Without mobilising the masses into innumerable struggles and raising their political consciousness in the course of those struggles, they cannot realise the need to overthrow the state power of the exploiting classes, they cannot acquire the necessary consciousness and collective will to overthrow the oppressive state machine, and, needless to say, the Party cannot lead the masses to victory in the revolution.[248]

This is a key ideological distinction between the contemporary Maoists and their predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s. For the early Maoists, revolutionary consciousness required revolutionary action and revolutionary praxis was necessarily violent and destructive. Destruction was productive, existing dialectically with the creation and the emergence of revolutionary being and consciousness. In the current formulation of the CPI(Maoist), revolutionary consciousness is created through political activity within revolutionary mass organizations. In effect, armed struggle and violence are required as the state, when faced by a revolutionary challenge necessarily responds with force. Violence and armed struggle are, however, simply means which are not in themselves purposive moral acts. Consequently, the primary assumption underlying the critique of early Naxalism by the contemporary Maoist movement and others is that the efficacy of the contemporary insurgency relative to that of the 1960s and 1970s, is a result of rejecting Mazumdar's subjectivist voluntarism and the embrace of orthodox Maoist precepts. There is even a distinct tendency in the literature treating the early Naxalites and the contemporary insurgency as discrete 'things', a view echoed by many police officials. It is a perspective which

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248 Ibid.: 121-123.

was continuously expressed to me by government and police officials in the region as well as one which is often repeated in the media coverage of the conflict. This view assumes that the early Naxalite movement was committed to ethical (if unrealistically romantic) revolutionary goals that sought change for the betterment of the 'people'. The current Maoist movement has jettisoned the earlier 'sincerity' and concern for the general welfare in favour of a ruthless desire to seize power. This view is reflected by the statement of DT Nayak, former Additional Director-General of Andhra Pradesh Police:

> Early Naxalism was a failure and, aside from some organizational continuities, has very little to do with the present insurgency across India's central hinterlands. Naxalites could do something in the 70s. That is the reason people developed some affinity for Naxalites. Subsequently, after 80s they forgot about their policy, their land policy and all that. They came out in real colours in the sense that they were also a political party trying to capture power. So when you are also a political party and trying to do something to capture power, you lose people's confidence. So they said we'll come to power. We'll capture power. How? Power through barrel of gun. Why barrel of gun when you have elections? Now the Naxals ambition is different. Ambition of capturing power. When I said, is it possible to capture power, then they said why not? In China we could capture power. In Nepal we could do it. So why not here? So now they're totally concentrating on capture of power. The so-called support to the poor, the tribals, that's all only facade. A front. The real system is, the real intention is, to capture the state power through violence.[249]

This is a fundamental misreading of Maoist history which ignores key continuities in ideology and practice. First, it is incorrect to assume that the contemporary Maoist insurgency represents a turn to orthodoxy. India is sociologically, economically, politically and historically distinct from China. Mao operated in the

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249 DT Nayak. Author interview, Hyderabad: 8 February 2013.

context of an illegitimate and collapsing state that was under partial occupation by a foreign power. India, on the other hand, is a broadly legitimate state whose borders are secure. Indian Maoism cannot rely on mobilization through nationalist appeals,[250] nor does it face military forces who are poorly armed, trained and motivated. Additionally, the sociological complexity of India, while not entirely unique, does have formalized hierarchy manifested in caste, differentiating it from places such as China.[251] As Sanjay Seth writes, in rural India techniques and codes of power are inscribed and manifested in the everyday to an extent not seen elsewhere.[252] Consequently, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for a sustained Maoist insurgency in India to simply follow the Chinese model and adopt strictly orthodox Maoist ideology and praxis. This is what much of the literature implies: contemporary Maoist insurgency, however, represents a near-total break from the ideas and practice of early Naxalism. However, the practice of contemporary Maoist insurgency in India is very much rooted in its early history, retaining much of its core ideological precepts and praxis.

The Maoists, on the other hand, subscribe to a voluntarist ideology and praxis which is, paradoxically, both pragmatic and utopian:

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250 To the contrary, Maoist practice in India actively seeks to overturn nationalist control over time and space by symbolic oppositions to the state. For example, in early Naxalism, the first action of an inductee into the movement would be the smashing of statues of national heroes (Donner, "Locating Activist Spaces": 35). More recently, nationalist holidays such Republic Day are treated by the Maoists as a day of mourning with the hoisting of black flags (Sundar, "Mimetic sovereignties": 476). Given that a core element of the Indian state's identity is rooted in the fact that it is a successful parliamentary democracy, the Maoist boycott of elections also has a crucial symbolic element.

251 While there is a risk of ascribing too much to caste, leading to a distorting analytical over-determination, it does play a significant role in structuring oppression and hierarchy in large parts of rural India.

252 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess": 348.

There is no doubt that armed struggle is the principal form of struggle in people's war. But people's war doesn't mean fighting using guns alone. This is a form which would come to the fore depending on the level of consciousness of the people and the response of the state. We consider our people's war to be the consolidated and integrated whole of the entire stage of revolution which consists of many peaceful/violent, unarmed/armed forms of struggles and open/secret, legal/illegal forms of organization.[253]

Thus, correct Maoist practice requires the development of a revolutionary consciousness: without a revolutionary consciousness true revolution is impossible. Therefore, tactical appropriateness is dependent upon the being of the revolutionary subject populations. Subsequently, tactics are flexible and contingent, but tactics, and more fundamentally praxis, also function as a means of creating and developing revolutionary consciousness. Therefore, the role of the individual as a martyr whose destruction contributes to the creation of a revolutionary collective becomes crucial:

Our party has emerged out of the innumerable sacrifices of our cadres and leaders. They lay down their lives unflinchingly for people's democracy and communism. These selfless, exemplary martyrs are the ray of hope in our society. We will definitely hold high their esteemed revolutionary tradition. We will establish their lofty human values in this society. We will steer clear of avoidable losses and display communist consciousness, courage, determination and sacrifice to fight back the cruel enemy. In this process, our party would steel itself in the flames of class struggle.[254]

The role of martyrdom forms a crucial dialectic in the revolutionary struggle—the individual sacrifices him/herself and their existence obliterated in service of

253 CPI(Maoist), "Nobody Can Kill The Ideas of 'Azad'! Nobody Can Stop the Advancement Of The Revolution!!" Interview (Date Unknown): 12. Accessed 7 July 2016.
http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Interviews/Ganapathy-101108-Full-Final.pdf
254 Ibid.: 22.

creating a collective consciousness while, paradoxically being honoured and

remembered for their individual act of sacrifice.[255] In the Maoist schema,

martyrdom represents revolutionary voluntarism rooted in a dialectical

relationship between individual being and the creation of a revolutionary,

subjectivity through the obliteration of self.

Thus, revolutionary consciousness and being is not only a key element of

the new Maoist world, it is the essential 'thing' without which the capture of state

power and the imposition of socialist society would prove chimerical. Thus,

according to the CPI(Maoist) the Chinese revolution ultimately failed because:

> They were unable to successfully imbibe the values of goodness, the masses began treading the old path to happiness. Probably, after the revolution they sought to bring about change too rapidly for which the people were not yet mentally ready. This was both in the realm of the economy as also in the sphere of people's thinking. Obviously, people's consciousness, having just emerge from a backward feudal background, was not yet ripe to accept the commune-type organisation (without private property), nor the selfless values sought to be imposed during the Cultural Revolution.

> Just having acquired the basic necessities of life together with education for the first time in generations, and having so evolved their senses and desires, the natural trend was for greater and greater enjoyment of the newly acquired pleasures, not the rigid sense of duty that the Communist Party sought to impose. So, seeking to forcibly impose selfless values during the Cultural Revolution through the impetuous Red Guards, the cult of Mao, and labour camps (May 7th schools) only created an appearance of conforming to dictates, not real change within the bulk of the people.

> Man cannot change his subconscious/conscious mind through imposition and force. It is only possible through a sense of awareness, voluntarily acquired through a deep understanding that positive values alone can take

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255 Suykens, Bert, "Maoist Martyrs: Remembering the Revolution and Its Heroes in Naxalite Propaganda (India)," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22.3 (2010).

us on the path to genuine happiness, not the instant pleasures of the day acquired through the new-found wealth of the populace over a generation of socialist construction.[256]

While guerrilla warfare and mass struggle are crucial for revolution, they only matter insofar as a voluntarist ethos facilitates the breakdown of the distinction between ideas/praxis and doing/being, leading to the transformation of the self and, ultimately, the whole. Maoist revolution requires the creation of a new socialist human being. However, objective conditions require that praxis must reflect, yet always push forward, the existence of the oppressed.

While the contemporary Maoists have rejected conspiratorial clandestinity, the corollary of this practice, spontaneous action and decentralized decision-making, remains a core element of their praxis. This has allowed the Maoist insurgency to operate in an extensive territorial area, enabling it to absorb sustained and severe attacks by state forces without suffering crippling setbacks. Decentralization is a necessity in a country as large as India where the insurgents operate in geographically separate pockets and where security and intelligence services are relatively effective and are able to identify and arrest or kill leaders of illegal organizations with regularity. Of the 40 Central Committee members and 14 Politburo members to attend the Party's 2007 Unity Congress, as of 2013 only 20 of the former and seven of the latter remained alive and free.[257] The relative autonomy and the decentralization of the Maoists

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256 Ghandy, Kobad, "Questions of Freedom and People's Emancipation," *Mainstream Weekly* 1.35 (18 August 2012). Accessed 7 August 2016. http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article3646.html

257 Majumdar, Ushinor, "Top Maoist Leader Ganapathy admits to leadership crisis in Party," *Tehelka* (19 September 2013). Accessed 21 August 2016. http://www.tehelka.com/2013/09/top-maoist-leader-ganapathi-admits-to-leadership-crisis-in-party/

differentiates them from more typical communist insurgent groups as well as from the organizational precepts of orthodox Maoism, which demands a complete subordination of guerrilla forces to the central political leadership.[258] While the organizational fragmentation which led to internecine conflict in the 1970s and 1980s has been overcome through the unification of the vast majority of insurgents into one party, the CPI(Maoist) has retained decentralization.

Additionally, the voluntarist subjectivism of early Naxalite practice and the revolutionaries' willingness to engage seriously the lived experience of the rural population of India created the basis for a movement that has proven itself capable of involvement in local political struggles, linking them to a broader project of revolutionary transformation. The Maoists have engaged with numerous economic, cultural, ethnic and linguistic struggles manifesting themselves across the Indian landscape.

The combination of organizational autonomy and subjectivity has served the contemporary Maoists well. It has enabled insurgent resilience and facilitated the CPI(Maoist)'s expansion into diverse spaces across the territory of a militarily powerful state. They have harnessed numerous localized, micro-political conflicts as a means of building a support base among marginalized groups across the country. For example, in the 1980s the Maoists became involved in a struggle by

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258 "The essential principle forming the basis of our Party structure is political centralisation combined with organisational decentralisation. This means that all PMs [Party Members] and all bodies, particularly at the lower level, should have solid ideological-political foundations, so that they are able to independently find their bearings and take the correct organisational decisions according to the political line of the Party." (CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics*: 143).

tendu leaf collection, a leaf used to make beedi, a type of cheap cigarette widely

used in India. Tendu is largely harvested by Adivasi in southern Chhattisgarh with

cultivation occurring largely on government land. The Maoists provided protection

to the tendu collectors from harassment by the Indian Forest Service while also

ensuring that government mandated minimum rates were actually paid by the

contractors to the labourers.[259] Additionally, the Maoists have weathered

numerous military setbacks and attacks on both the leadership of the Party and

its cadre: their defeat in one area has rarely led to defeat in another area.

The Blood of Class Enemies: Insurgent Practice

There exists a dynamic and perpetually transformative relationship between the

practice, ideology and terrain upon which the Maoists operate. These three

elements continuously interact and through their interactions create an insurgent

space—a space which is perpetually unstable and constantly in the process of

becoming. In order to understand these processes the production of insurgent

space in India's eastern hinterlands, it is necessary to examine and analyze the

practice of insurgent Maoism and its relationship to ideology.

Schematically, and somewhat simplistically, one can understand the

practices of Indian insurgent Maoism with reference to two levels: the level of the

local (or micro-political projects) and the total (or the macro-political project). At

the macro-level, the Maoist project can be understood as the practice of realizing

a vision which seeks to create an alternative modernity—a project which aims to

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259 Suykens, "Diffuse Authority".

fundamentally break with what is conceptualized as India's semi-feudal, semi-colonial nature.[260] This break does not, however, simply mean an end to India's parliamentary democracy and its replacement by a socialist state. It is a totalizing project to fundamentally transform the human subjectivities of India's population and seeks to establish an insurgent, or revolutionary state, rooted in an obliteration of distinctions between intellectual and manual labour and the urban and rural.[261] It is a project akin to China's Cultural Revolution, an event which has played a formative role in the emergence of Indian Maoism.

While it is evident that the Indian Maoists are far from realizing their vision, the ongoing conflict and the production of insurgent space represents an attempt to create an embryonic form of this revolutionary telos. Partial and fragmented insurgent space is a product of the Maoist's ideological engagement with—and instrumental use of—particularist local political contexts to mobilize support and strengthen their presence in pockets of the country.

In those areas in which Maoists are active they have intervened in local cultural, economic and political struggles, such as those over tendu in Chhattisgarh and the movement for the creation of Telangana state. Currently the areas in which the Maoists are the strongest are those in which there are substantive Adivasi populations, populations which, with notable exceptions, are

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260 According to the Maoists, India is,"Semi-colonial because the Indian ruling classes (big business, top bureaucrats, and leading politicians running the centre and the states) are tied to imperialist interests. Semi-feudal, as the old feudal relations have not been smashed, only a certain amount of capitalist growth has been superimposed on them. So also, the Parliament is no democratic institution (as in countries that have been through a democratic revolution – a bourgeois democracy) but has been instituted on the existing highly autocratic state and semi-feudal structures as a ruse to dupe the masses". (Azad, "Maoists In India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.41 (October 2006): 4379).
261 Seth, "Interpreting Revolutionary Excess": 27.

both economically and socially marginalized. Therefore, it is more useful to think of Maoist interventions as an attempt at a whole transformation of relations rooted in oppression and hierarchy rather than campaigns for material and economic relations. As Insurgent practice in southern Chhattisgarh, for example, is not intended to serve as a poverty alleviation measure for the Adivasi tendu collectors. Rather, Maoist interventions function as a means with which to generate a revolutionary consciousness among the population. Revolutionary governing bodies, established by the Maoists in this area are crucial because they are, "Run by Adivasis—once illiterate—now educated by the party [they] have become politically conscious through class struggle."[262] This reflects the Maoist's rejection of 'economism' and their commitment to a project of an alternative modernity.

While the Maoists have intervened in local struggles for economic rights, such as those of the tendu producers in northern Andhra Pradesh and southern Chhattisgarh, they have also positioned themselves as defenders and promoters of Adivasi cultural practices[263]. When the Maoist People's War Group first expanded into the forests of Bastar in southern Chhattisgarh in the early 1980s, the cadre spent years learning the language and initiating the creation of a written system for Gondi, a local language which had been exclusively spoken.[264] The creation of a written language and the broader engagement with the culture

262 CPI(Maoist), Central Committee, *Collected Statements Part 2 (January 2007-July 2010):* 118-119. Accessed 9 September 2016. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Statements-2014/Collection_of_CC_Statements_Part_2__2007-2010__View.pdf
263 See Shah, *Subalterns and Sovereigns;* Suykens, "Diffuse Authority".
264 Gautam Navlakha. Author interview, Delhi: 13 December 2012.

of those that the Maoists claim to be fighting on behalf of is, of course, partly instrumental. It is in the interests of the insurgents to gain the trust of the local population and create conditions in which their propaganda can be more widely distributed through pamphlets and flyers. However there are numerous other strategic approaches which the insurgents could have pursued, such as repression and terror coupled with an attempt to garner support through interventions in economic struggles. Patient and long-term engagement with the local population is indicative of the form of insurgent space that the Maoists are seeking to establish. This space is rooted in the 'modernization' of communities through the propagation of the local vernacular as a tool to create a revolutionary consciousness through the spread of revolutionary ideas. It is a project both of alternative modernity and one which seeks to consolidate subjectivities.

There is, however, a fundamental set of contradictions extant in the ideological practice and the production of insurgent space in India's central hinterlands. These contradictions are explored in Desai's examination of the relationship between the Maoists and Gond villages in eastern Maharashtra.[265] While the Maoists promote themselves as protectors of local Adivasi culture from an oppressive, assimilationist state, many 'traditional' practices of the Gonds run counter to the modernizing impulses of the Maoists and what some have called their puritanical upper caste bias.[266] Belief in magic and the persecution of 'witches' is a central component of many Gond groups' religious practice. These

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265 Desai, Amit, "Anti- 'anti-witchcraft'and the Maoist insurgency in rural Maharashtra, India," *Dialectical Anthropology* 33.3 (2009).
266 Shah, Alpa, "Markets of Protection: The 'Terrorist' Maoist Movement and the State in Jharkhand, India," *Critique of Anthropology* 26.3 (2006): 301-304.

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'superstitions' are rigorously opposed by the Party. However, in areas where belief in witchcraft is firmly entrenched the Maoists have, without promoting or condoning it, sought to protect these practices from suppression by the state and police forces.[267] This demonstrates the tactical benefits which accrue to Maoists due to their organizational flexibility and ideological decentralization. In spite of the contradictions between the Party's ideological vision and 'traditional' practice, local party leaders and cadre are able to make decisions and judgments based on contextual imperatives and react in ways which effectively ignore the strategic dictates of the central party apparatus.

Other ways in which the Maoists have intervened in local conflicts is through the establishment of an embryonic insurgent legal system. Maoist courts function as a means of maintaining insurgent discipline. They operate as a body which tries and convicts locals deemed to be 'counter-revolutionaries': those individuals who are active opponents of the Maoists (police informers, etc.). The second function played by the courts is as a force for the settlement of local disputes. In an interview in 2009, Koteswar Rao (nom-de-guerre Kishenji), a member of the CPI(Maoist) Politburo killed by the police in 2011, described one such trial:

> If you recollect, before the deployment of Central forces, we held a Jan adalat [people"s court] for 30 CPI(M) people in Madhupur [near Lalgarh in West Bengal]. More than 12,000 villagers attended the trial. The public wanted the death sentence for 13 of those under trial. But Bikas [the Maoist commander of operations in Lalgarh], after hours of persuasion, finally managed to convince the public that the time was not right to mete out such a punishment. Finally, the public agreed that those 13 people be just made to wear garlands of chappals [sandals] and apologise. The other

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267 Desai, "Anti-witchcraft".

killings took place only after continued disregard of repeated warnings that were sent to the victims both by us and by the people of the region.[268]

While the impartiality and the judiciousness of the decisions of the Maoist courts are suspect (in some cases of political turmoil the courts function as a means of settling local scores), the system which the insurgents have replaced is not necessarily preferable. Where the state judicial apparatus functions at all, it is slow and often held captive to the interests of powerful local notables.[269] The fact that insurgent justice is able to provide quick resolution that does not automatically favour the powerful is a means by which the Maoists are able to garner support in areas in which they operate. Furthermore, for the Maoists, justice, except in the case of those deemed enemies of the Party, is rooted in mediation. As Nandini Sundar writes, "under the Maoists, conflicts are settled by agreement alone. People told me that both parties to the dispute have to shake hands. If a fight cannot be settled within the village, it is referred to the dalam who might also decide to hold a *jan adalat*. Everyone gets two warning before they are finally exiled or killed."[270] Thus, with the exception of those deemed to be working against the Party, justice in Maoist regions is relatively egalitarian, transparent and swift.

The control that powerful elite groups have over the local state apparatus is, according to a number of police and government officials, a crucial factor enabling the Maoists to gain sympathy and support from the population. DT

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268 Chattopadhyay, "To Establish a Liberated Area".
269 Planning Commission, Government of India, *Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas: Report of an Expert Group to the Planning Commission* (Delhi: Government of India, 2008): 54; Navlakha, *Days and Nights*: 134-135; Shah, "Morality, Corruption and the State": 302.
270 Sundar, Nandini, *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar* (Delhi: Juggernaut, 2016): 78.

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Nayak, a retired senior official in the Andhra Pradesh police involved in anti-

Maoist operations, describes how in Telangana:

> The lower functionaries are in the hands of these feudals. Police, revenue
> and in some areas forest. These, the fellows are in the hands of local
> feudal lord. Whatever the law is made, it is these fellows who are to
> implement. Normally what the government would do is that it would take
> action against the government servants who are not implementing the
> policies. But government at the highest level it is controlled by them,
> so no action was taken against them. They were shielded with the result
> that the government policies which were done with the good motive, they
> failed with implementation. So government, though at highest level policy
> was there to help the poor, was failing in the implementation stage
> because of feudalism. Naxalites could do something in the 70s. That is the
> reason the people developed some affinity for Naxalites.[271]

These examples illustrate how the Maoists' interventions in micro-political

struggles reflects their ideological flexibility and willingness to engage with the

everyday realities of diverse sets of rural populations in order to gain support and

power across large parts of India. However, the Maoists are more than simply a

group that seeks to 'solve' local problems. They are, first and foremost, an armed

revolutionary group seeking the overthrow of the Indian state and realizing their

vision of an 'alternative modernity' that will create something new out of the

ashes of the old.[272] It is here, at the level which both incorporates and transcends

the local, in which we can best see the production of insurgent space. This space

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271 DT Nayak. Author interview, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh: 8 February 2013.

272 The 'People's Democratic State' will, "put an end to the exploitation of usurers, traders and merchants,
     encourage the co-operatives to make available the necessary capital to the people and will take control
     upon the trade and business.... It will guarantee personal freedom to believe and not to believe religion.
     This state will encourage a scientific and rationalist outlook to eradicate superstition and blind faith and
     will oppose all types of religious fundamentalism... It will establish the revolutionary new democratic
     culture in place of the decadent feudal, colonial and imperialist culture, and on this basis, broadens the
     path of socialist culture. It will continue its march in the direction of realizing communist culture."
     (CPI(Maoist) *Party Programme.* Accessed 7 March 2016.
     http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/partyprogram.htm)

seeks to transform the consciousness of its subjects aiming not only to supplant

the Indian state militarily and institutionally, but also to overturn and supplant the

symbolic power that holds its citizens.

It is not only through control over territory, but also through control over time

that the Maoists seek to overthrow the symbolic power of the Indian state.

Historically, there is a distinction between local sacral and seasonal time, the

marking of seasons through harvest and religious festivals, and modern state

time. One of the ways in which the modern state, seeks to create a nationalist

subjectivity is through the propagation of secular icons and `festivals'. As part of

the Maoist project the insurgents have sought to overturn and obliterate the

temporal celebrations of the Indian state while absorbing the sacral moments of

temporal celebration. The marking of moments such as 'Republic Day' have been

replaced by Martyrs Week, in which all activity is halted in those areas which the

insurgents control and the death of Maoists at the hands of the police is

commemorated[273] Insurgent time not only seeks to displace and obliterate

moments which produce the Indian state, but also seeks to create its own

'patriotic' mythology. In particular, the cult of the martyrs celebrates sacrifice and

unwavering commitment to a revolutionary project, even in the face of death.[274]

As Burt Suykens writes, it is a cult of the present celebrated through the being-in

progress.[275] It is an element of a perpetual production of space which seeks to

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273 Suykens, "Maoist Martyrs": 382.
274 On the symbolic and instrumental function of martyrdom in Maoist insurgency, see Id..
275 Ibid.: 384.

replace the present with a new future, yet the future never comes, because space is never complete.

Lal Sarkar: Insurgent State

As the Maoists seek to create an alternative system which not only aims to challenge the state, but to also replace it, a key component of the production of an insurgent space is the creation of an insurgent order of governance. A key theoretical and practical distinction that the Maoists have is the distinction, drawn from Mao's theories on guerrilla warfare, between the guerrilla zone and the liberated zone. The guerrilla zone is an area in which the state still has a presence, usually through its security apparatus, but is also the site of embryonic insurgent space. While territorial control is fluid, "there are areas in these zones demarcated to ensure that some work can carry on relatively uninterrupted".[276] A liberated zone, on the other hand, is an area in which the state has been entirely pushed out and the insurgents have total freedom of action. While there are a number of areas which the Maoists have declared as guerrilla zones, the only liberated zone exists in Bastar.[277]

More prosaically, these guerrilla and liberated zones also function as a means of raising the money and revenue that the Maoists need in order to sustain their insurgency. It is widely reported that the Maoists raise a significant portion of their income through taxation of contractors and mines in the areas in

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276 Navlakha, "Days and Nights": 126.
277 Human Rights Forum, *Death, Displacement and Deprivation, the War in Dantewara: A Report* (Hyderabad: Human Rights Forum Publication, 2006): 12-13.

which they operate.[278] While this is further discussed in the following chapters on

Bastar and Chotanagpur, it is important to point out that, as Nandini Sundar

writes, "In a world of contractors, Maoists, politicians and middlemen money

flows are often difficult to track."[279] In effect, no one but the Maoists themselves

have a clear idea from where they receive their revenue. In fact, I was told by

Suvojit Bagchi, former Chhattisgarh correspondent for *The Hindu*, that while it

was difficult to develop contact with the Maoists in Chhattisgarh, it was nearly

impossible to discover where their funds come from. This, according to Bagchi, is

because the murky funding of the insurgents implicates not only the insurgents,

but also business elites and government officials in the state. In effect, it runs

contrary to the interests of practically all of the influential and powerful groups in

the state to reveal the complex web financing the insurgency.[280]

Politically the Party is structured along lines which are fairly conventional

in socialist organizations. At the national level are the Politburo and Central

Committee who provide directives to state and special zonal committees. The

special zonal committees are regional bodies that govern guerrilla and liberated

zones which straddle multiple state borders. The most notable of these is the

Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee responsible for Bastar in Chhattisgarh

as well as Gadchiroli in neighbouring Maharashtra. Below this are area

committees who are in charge of local party cells and mass organizations.[281]

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278 Shah, Alpa, "The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed or grievance in Maoist India,"
   Economy and Society 42.3 (2013).
279 Sundar, *Burning Forest*: 66.
280 Suvojit Bagchi. Author interview, Raipur, Chhattisgarh: 22 February 2013.
281 Sundar, *Burning Forest*: 69.

Militarily the Party can be roughly divided into its professional, full time fighting forces and its part time local militias. The People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) is the main fighting force of the Maoists and, "consists of platoons of about 21 people, who come together as a company of 70-80 people and a battalion of 250-300 when required".[282] This is the primary force of the Maoists. They are responsible for conducting hit and run attacks on security forces and form the core of insurgent forces during large raids and operations. Its members are full time cadre who dedicate their lives to the Party and who sever all ties with their previous lives. Additionally at the local level there are militias, "which are armed, but fighting is not their main task: instead their work is ideological and organizational".[283] Unlike the mobile guerrilla squads, the militia members remain stationed in one area, usually the village in which they were born. As well as functioning as local representatives of the Party, they also are as its eyes and ears, reporting on police and government activity and identifying possible police informers within the village.[284] Finally, below this are the village self-defence committees. These are composed of villagers who spend the majority of their time in activities outside of the Party structure, but who can be mobilized for occasional local actions. They are usually provided with only rudimentary weapons and limited training.

Thus, the military organization of the CPI(Maoist) functions on three levels: the full time 'professional' mobile military forces of the PLGA, the full time village

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282 Id.
283 Id.
284 Navlakha, *Days and Nights*: 132-135.

forces responsible for maintaining ideological and political discipline and supporting the PLGA as needed and the part-time village militia primarily responsible for providing a reserve force and defending insurgent villages from attacks. This structure reflects both tactical necessity and the ideological perspective of the CPI(Maoist). Tactically, it makes sense to maintain a mobile force which is always available and battle-ready, as well as a locally stationed reserve forces that can maintain Party control in specific villages and is also available for local defence and supplementing the PLGA as needed. This structure allows the Maoists to operate across large areas with a mobile core fighting force that is difficult for the security forces to target. Additionally, it also enables the Party to maintain reserve forces, provide defence and draw upon reserve forces in local actions.

Ideologically, the organizational structure is also relevant. As discussed above, the early Naxalite movement rejected mass organizations and relied, instead, on clandestine party cells dedicated entirely to the movement. However, the establishment of local militia groups in addition to the full time fighters represents the organizational expression of the Maoist ideological transition. There remain dedicated, full time underground fighters whose entire existence is based in the Party, however the Party also enable different levels of participation. The CPI(Maoist), unlike the early Naxalites, has sought to integrate mass movements and popular ideological training for non-cadre. This has, arguably, made it more difficult for the security to forces to isolate the insurgents than it did

in the 1960s and 1970s. It also enables the Party to develop a mass base and develop embryonic governance systems in competition—and to a certain extent mimicking—the state. More sinisterly, it also mimics the oppressive apparatus of the state and enables the Maoists to maintain ideological control and, potentially, isolate or eliminate their opponents.[285]

This embryonic form of government replaces existing local political bodies, such as village panchayats. In each village a Sangham of approximately 10-15 people is appointed whose primary function is to enforce the will of the Party.[286] In some instances the Sangham has replaced both the legally sanctioned representative governing bodies and the customary institutions of rule such as by village headmen, while in others the customary rulers have maintained control of cultural and spiritual life while the Sangham has taken control over secular life.[287] Additionally, a series of mass organizations representing sectional interests of the population has been established which, in theory, function as intermediaries between the senior party and the populace.[288]

Beyond these explicit organizations directly tied to the Party, the Maoists have established more broadly-based institutions of alternative state rule in those area which they control. These are primarily constituted by Revolutionary People's Committees and brings together a handful of villages which are represented by a committee. These positions are elected. As Nandini Sundar

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285 Sundar, "Mimetic sovereignties".
286 Sundar, *Burning Forest*: 14-15.
287 Ibid.
288 Jaoul, "Naxalism in Bihar": 26.

writes, however, that while, "in theory, anyone could be elected to these committees, not just members of the sanghams or mass organizations."

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze or examine whether or not *lal sarkar* and the institutions of Maoist rule better represent the interests of the marginalized population. The consensus by outside observers is that while the Sangham has a certain level of internal debate and democratic control, the goal and functioning of the apparatus of Maoist rule is to provide a monopoly of governance to the Party and has weakened the populations' ability to control their own destiny.[289] The purpose is, however, to understand the Maoist political project as an active agent that is shaping the spatial production in large parts of India's central hinterlands. The Maoists are not simply a military force, nor do they simply exercise rule through terror or the provision of a developmental social democratic state. Rather, they are a revolutionary force that is actively producing a particular form of insurgent space which is attempting to fundamentally transform the social, economic and political terrain in which they operate and the subjectivities of the population. The proceeding two chapters examining the conflict in Bastar and Chotanagpur will explore in detail insurgent and state practice in the conflict zone.

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289 Human Rights Forum, *Death, Displacement*: 14; Sundar, "Burning Forest": 14-15.

Chapter 4- State and Insurgent Space: Governance and Rebellion in India's Hinterland

This chapter presents a framework for analyzing insurgency in eastern and central India, situating it within historical processes of state formation and consolidation which began during the British colonial project. Conflict dynamics and the creation of the 'conflict zone' (the territorial location in which conflict occurs) are understood as the product of continuous historical, economic, political and sociological interactions. The arguments are informed by James C. Scott's work on Zomia and Henri Lefebvre's conception of space, modernity and the state.[290] The spatial 'taming' currently unfolding in eastern and central India can be understood as an acceleration of a set of processes inherent in modern statecraft, processes in which national territory is constituted and reconfigured through cartographic techniques and the creation of modern infrastructure.[291] The state, as it conceives its relationship to space and territory, is one of domination. As Lefebvre argues, its eminence is rationalized through a notion of permanent, temporally unlimited, usufruct rights manifested through the claim of a sovereign right to deploy violence as a tool of expropriation.[292] It seeks to disrupt, limit, and when necessary obliterate, the fluidity and transience of non-state space by applying a uniform rationality, making concrete its inherent logic.[293]

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290 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*; Lefebvre, Henri, *The Urban Revolution (*Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Lefebvre, Henri 'Space and State'. In *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Lefebvre, Henri, 'The Worldwide Experience." In *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

291 Lefebvre, "State and Space": 224.

292 Lefebvre, "The Worldwide Experience": 275.

293 Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution:* 109.

Rather than conceptualizing central and eastern India as an area undergoing processes of integration into a developmental state seeking to deliver social benefits to a neglected populace – such as education, health care and subsidized food – the current reconfiguration of space in the region is analogous to the processes, described by both Willem van Schendel and James C. Scott, occurring in Zomia,[294] the highland area stretching across south-east Asia into North-East India. This region was constituted by populations who had, over the centuries, fled the depredations and expanding power of plains-based states.[295] Like Zomia, the tribal regions of central and eastern India do not exist outside of historical time or in isolation from civilization. They are historical products – state effects created by purposive behaviours constituted by migrants to areas where inhospitable terrain make statecraft difficult.[296]

Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's ideas of spatial production, I argue that the expansion of state space into eastern and central India has occurred simultaneously with the production of spaces of insurgency and resistance. State expansion and formation in the region has historically been variegated and thin, relying on a mixture of neglect and repression, thereby creating possibilities for the production of anti-state, insurgent spaces. During the previous two decades, the Maoist insurgents have entered into this milieu and are altering the trajectory of spatial production in the region. The hills and forests of eastern and central India are the site of numerous micro-political struggles which have failed to be

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294 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed;* van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland.*
295 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed:* ix.
296 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed:* 62.

resolved through institutional mediation. Furthermore, recent trends have deepened and accelerated longer-term processes of alienation among large numbers of the region's population, providing an ideal terrain for an insurgency which seeks to subsume local political conflicts into a broader project seeking to create an alternative modernity. Specifically, changes in the region's political economy and the practices of counter-insurgency have accelerated and deepened patterns of population displacement and political repression. Simultaneously, these spatial transformations have also had an effect on the nature of resistance. The insurgents have been able to grow in size and capacity in part because of the expansion and transformation of production under neo-liberalism. The increased pace of investment in the region has provided the Maoists with ready access to funds in the form of levies, while also creating a pool of potential recruits from among the displaced.

In this chapter I first discuss Lefebvre's theories on space, the state and resistance. Drawing on his ideas, I examine the historical processes of state formation in eastern and central India, making the case that the region has been created as a peripheral area whose primary purpose has been to serve as an outlet for internal settlement and site for resource extraction. Its marginality to the broader polity and function as a zone of extraction has generated a dual logic of statecraft: minimal and weak state presence manifested through repression and violence. Applying this framework to the historical expansion and contemporary functioning of the state in India's hinterlands, as revealed in changes in regimes

of land regulation, economic activity and patterns of transport networks, I make

the claim that its simultaneous vulnerability and brutality has led to the

transformation of non-state space into insurgent space. This space most clearly

reveals itself in the many moments of rebellion that have occurred in the region

during the previous three centuries, rebellions of which the Maoist insurgency is

only the most recent.[297] Historicizing the processes of state production challenges

claims that the current conflict is a consequence of the emergence of neo-

liberalism and changes in the political economy, while also recognizing that

changes in the modes of production have helped shape the dynamics of the

contemporary conflict.

The chapter concludes with an examination of the effects that the

insurgency is having on the logic and organization of power in the region. In an

ironic twist, the Maoists are a product of opposition to the deepening integration

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297 A common claim is that the Maoist insurgency has grown in strength during the previous two decades as a consequence of the increase in resource extractive industries in the region and subsequent mass displacement and impoverishment. Rebellion in the Adivasi regions of eastern and central India is, however, not unique to the current period. There were at least 67 Adivasi rebellions between the Battle of Plassey, which ushered in British East India Company Rule, and independence in 1947. See Bijoy, C.R., "Forest Rights Struggle: The Adivasi Now Await a Settlement," *American Behavioral Scientist* 51.12 (2008): pp: 1757-1758.

Two broad observations can be made linking most, if not all, of these rebellions. The first is that India's eastern and central hinterlands have a history of violent opposition to authority and particular modes of governance. The second is that most of these rebellions sought to resist the expansion and effects of colonial state power. While some rebellions directly targeted the symbols and institutions of British rule, other revolts were fought in direct opposition to colonial expansion and consolidation.

Just as the production and expansion of the colonial state led to frequent rebellions, the independent state has also faced numerous revolts in its eastern and central hinterlands. Immediately following independence the Telangana region, in contemporary Andhra Pradesh, erupted in violence. In 1946 an uprising against the rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad, a large semi-sovereign Princely State, erupted against his refusal to accede to the Indian Union. This was followed by the intervention of Indian Army troops in 1948 and forced integration into the Republic. India's military victory did not end the rebellion. See Moore, Barrington, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966): 381-382. India's Maoist insurgency is neither unique nor a wholly discrete event connected to contemporary transformations in the region.

of the region into the state, while also functioning as agents accelerating these same processes. New patterns of hyper-state and hybrid state/insurgent spaces have emerged—the latter an emergent system of dual authority in which the demarcation between official and insurgent governance is blurred, the former the rapid production of ideal state space through forced relocations of entire populations into tightly controlled and regulated camps.

Lefebvre, the State and Insurgency

Eastern and central India, the site of one of the world's largest civil conflicts, has long been a rebellious zone situated on the fringes of state power. The Maoists' ability to operate across large parts of this region is often ascribed to failures in socio-economic development and governance—failures that are said to have alienated the local inhabitants from the state, leaving them vulnerable to the revolutionary rhetoric of the rebels.[298] While there may be truth to this claim, it remains an insufficient explanation. This perspective fails to situate contemporary events into a longer-term analysis of the patterns of statecraft that have produced eastern and central Adivasi India as a frontier zone on the fringes of a modern, centralized and bureaucratic state. This argument provides no account of why other areas with equally dismal socio-economic indicators and inefficient or rapacious systems of governance in India and elsewhere have not experienced the near-constant rebellions of eastern and central India.

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298 This view is captured by the Planning Commission's, *Development Challenges*. It is also a view reflected in newspaper reports and was expressed in interviews with the author by a number of police and government officials.

A promising path to help understand insurgency in India, and other historically rebellious zones, lies in Henri Lefebvre's dialectical understanding of the production of space. While Lefebvre was primarily interested in providing an account of the processes driving urbanized modernity and capitalism in Europe, the historical developments that unfolded in Europe were part of broader secular transformations—materially, socially and symbolically—that unfolded across the globe. As a result of colonialism and the expansion of capitalism across the world, the processes that Lefebvre grappled with are not geographically confined to the West. Furthermore, Lefebvre's ideas are theoretically expansive and sufficiently nuanced for helping understand the profound planetary changes that have unfolded during the previous few centuries. Urbanization, the spread of capitalism and the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state, all core concerns of Lefebvre, have transformed India, South Asia and the world.

Drawing on Lefebvre also provides novel insights into the historical processes to which contemporary events in eastern and central India are intimately connected. It fills some of the theoretical and conceptual gaps that exist in the broader literature on state formation outside of Europe and the settler colonial states.[299] First, at the macro level, India shares little in common with the so-called 'thin' or failed states of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia from which much of the literature on state formation and insurgency draws. It is a state with functioning and entrenched, if not always effective, institutions. However, large

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299 See Herbst, Jeffrey, *States and Power;* Vandergeest, Peter and Nancy Lee Peluso, "Territorialization and state power in Thailand," *Theory and Society* 24.3 (1995).

areas of the country do exhibit some of the characteristics associated with failed states. Lefebvre's understanding of space enables us to situate the country's peripheral hinterlands within a broader analysis of an evolving and entrenched bureaucratic state.

Second, there are limitations to other approaches on the logic of state expansion which emphasize state territorialization and ways that the modern state expands and deepens control over land and populations within its sovereign domain. The concept of territorialization relies on a binary action/reaction account of state expansion that under-theorizes the dialectical role that both resistance and state expansion have in creating each other while neglecting the significance of core elements of modernity such as capitalism. A Lefebvrian analysis is able to grapple with the interplay between multiple social, economic and political forces in the region. Thus, for example, it enables one to understand how the expansion of state power in the region was also conditioned by social forces which arose, at least in part, as a consequence of expansion. The later chapter on Chotanagpur, for example, explores how space making and state expansion was shaped by highly localized resistance and the creation of a broad pan-Adivasi cultural and political identity which itself was a product of the very forces of modernity which the subsequent mobilizations sought to challenge. While state space strives for homogeneity, it can never be homogeneous as it constantly creates new social forces and identities with which it must contend. Furthermore, these new social forces are not simply an epiphenomenon, but they

are fundamental to the production of space. Therefore, while it is important to see the state for what it is—the most significant social, political and economic phenomenon of modernity and one in which a totalitarian logic is embedded—its practices produce the very forces and actors of destabilization and limitation, forcing it into moments of accommodation and retreat.

Subsequently, a Lefebvrian analysis can go beyond the mono-causal assumptions of arguments that understand social, economic and political relations in eastern and central India as being the consequence of transformations in the political economy of the region determined by domestic and global capitalism. While these forces are significant, they are only part of the story. As John Agnew writes, "It is not possible to maintain that the system of territorial state is a function and continuous product of capitalism. This is because modern territorial states had their origins in the political absolutism that predates the rise of capitalism in Europe".[300] While capitalism is a crucial element in the unfolding of space in eastern and central India, the role of the state and other social forces cannot be ignored. Rather than framing these processes as a binary interaction between capitalism and defensive resistance, drawing on Lefebvre enables an explanation of how state forces, capitalism and local agents' actions and interactions create, and are in turn created by, space. State and resistance continuously create and re-create one another in a process of perpetual becoming. Resistance is more than a rear guard action against the onslaught of modernity: it creates and structures state space.

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300 Agnew, John, "Capitalism, Territory, and Marxist Geopolitics," *Geopolitics* 16.1 (2011): 232.

There has recently been an emergent branch of research drawing on Lefebvre, the concept of space and liminality in zones of conflict and post-disaster recovery. In particular, the work of Lisa Smirl on the productive function of the international hotel in conflict zones, a space which is often taken as wholly unproblematic and little more than, "material screens upon which geo-political events unfold".[301] Drawing on Lefebvre, Smirl makes the case that space in a conflict zone is not simply neutral, but serves a function of shaping conflict dynamics and, in particular, international actors behaviours and interventions.[302] In spite of the burgeoning literature on space and conflict, there has been no application of a Lefebvrian framework to a broader historical analysis of conflict in South Asia. His work is extremely valuable to both the micro and macro political dynamics of conflict.

At its core, there are three dimensions to Lefebvre's dialectics of space. First, there is spatial practice: "The material dimension of social activity and interaction... networks of action and communication as they arise in everyday life".[303] Second, there is the representation of space: "Representations of space emerge at the level of discourse and therefore comprise verbalized forms such as descriptions, definitions... maps and plans, information in pictures and signs".[304] Finally, there are spaces of representation: "a divine power, the logos,

301 Smirl, Lisa, "'Not Welcome at the Holiday Inn': How a Sarajevan Hotel Influenced Geo-politics," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10.1 (2016): 32.
302 Ibid.
303 Schmid, Christian, "Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic."In *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre,* eds. Kanishka Goonewardena et. al. (New York: Routeledge 2008): 36.
304 Ibid.: 36-37.

the state... The symbols of space could be taken nature... or they could be artifacts, buildings, monuments".[305] This dialectic bridges problematic distinctions between materialist and idealist analysis of political and economic power and everyday life. For Lefebvre the first (material relations) and the second (representation) create the third (signification), all of which interact to produce space, which then re-creates the first and the second in a process of continuous (re)production. Space is not an empty vessel. It is not "prior to whatever ends up filling it". It exists both territorially and temporally—as a 'thing' that is continuously created and re-created through a dialectical interplay between material production, everyday activity (rhythms) and spatial and temporal representation.[306] Thus, Lefebvre provides a way of understanding space (and that which creates it) dynamically—a product of the past that is not determined by the past. Space is perpetual 'becoming': nothing is complete or fixed as the everyday continuously interacts with place and time. It is a rejection of both teleology and the ahistorical obliteration of time which condemns the present to an impoverished existence as a series of discrete, continuously occurring, de-contextualized events.

What we have in Lefebvre's understanding of space is a powerful tool that avoids the teleological metaphysic that casts a shadow over discourses on governance, development and their relationship to insurgency and rebellion. Furthermore, in Lefebvre's work lies a nuanced and powerful conception of the

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305 Ibid.: 7.
306 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space:* 15.

state useful for understanding zones of rebellion such as eastern and central India. Building on Marx, Lefebvre sees modern (what he refers to as abstract) space as, "determined economically by capital, dominated socially by the bourgeoisie, and ruled politically by the state".[307] Importantly, however, the state, while a product of capitalism and an instrument of the bourgeoisie, is also something more: within it lies a totalitarian logic that seeks to dominate and assimilate all. It has the potential to obliterate that which gave it birth and gives it sustenance. Space is, "An apparent subject, an impersonal pseudo-subject, the abstract 'one' of modern social space, and—hidden within it, concealed by its illusory transparency—the real 'subject', namely state... power".[308] The principle of sovereignty, and its structuring logic, seeks to subsume and assimilate all of life within itself—to create an 'absolute' political space.[309] Yet its desiderata can never reach fulfillment. The state is simultaneously a locus of social action and a product of these actions—therefore it, "never quite emancipates itself from activity, from need, from 'social being".[310]

The contradictions of a space that seeks complete dominance and homogeneity, yet can only exercise power through fragmentation, and hence difference, are always laden with possibilities for resistance.[311] As a 'pseudo-

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307 Ibid.: 227.
308 Ibid.: 51.
309 For Lefebvre, the state's tendency to seek to absorb and annihilate all else and create its own fully realized space was only one dialectical possibility among many: "We may wonder whether the state will eventually produce its own space, an absolute political space. Or whether, alternatively, the nation states will one day see their absolute political space disappearing into (and thanks to) the world market. Will this last eventuality occur through self-destruction? Will the state be transcended or will it wither away? And must it be one or the other, and not, perhaps, both?" (Ibid.: 20).
310 Ibid.: 83.
311 Ibid.: 52.

subject' with a totalitarian essence, it seeks to homogenize and flatten while creating centres of power that, by their very essence, undermine homogeneity. Spaces of power create spaces of (relative) powerlessness—peripheral areas in which state power is at its weakest.[312] These peripheral spaces constitute the margins of social, territorial and symbolic life: "the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war".[313] Because of the totalizing logic of the state these peripheral areas are, sooner or later, targeted for destruction and absorption, a 'fact' that can only be halted, if it can be halted at all, by active resistance.[314]

Lefebvre provides a powerful framework for situating Maoist insurgency within the complex processes of state expansion into India's eastern and central hills and forests. Revolutionary Maoism is more than a historically discrete phenomena that is emergent due to the rise of neo-liberal capitalism or failures in regimes of governance. The Maoists are a consequence of, and contemporary agents in, spatial production in the region. These processes are historically structured around a logic of territorial colonization which draws on spatially constitutive techniques such as cartography, the creation of transportation networks and regimes of land regulation. These land regulations are rooted in regimes of forest protection, mineral extraction and processing, and the emergence of the urban. As Stuart Elden writes, "Territory as a political question

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312 Ibid.: 84, 321-322.
313 Ibid.: 373.
314 Abstract space eventually, "absorb[s] all such differences, and they will succeed if these retain a defensive posture and no counterattack is mounted... it only survives inasmuch as it fights in self-defense and on the attack in the course of class struggle in its modern forms," (Ibid.: 373).

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is not simply political-economic or political-strategic, but relates to developments in the law and the history of techniques such as land-surveying and cartography".[315] Territory is only one element of what can be understood as space.

The violence and homogenizing essence of the production of what Lefebvre called 'abstract space' in this peripheral area has helped structure transgressive and rebellious action and consciousness.[316] These peripheral spaces have become spaces of insurgency and rebellion not only against the particularities of state practice, but also against the state itself. The Maoists are highly visible contemporary actors in this insurgent space.

Arguably, one of the primary distinctions between the spatial practices of modernity, as exemplified by the state, and the alternative modernity of the Maoists is that of local agency and the populations' role in creating what is imagined as History. The discourse of the state reproduces a conception of the Adivasi as passive objects in need of protection. Historically, this has been manifested in the discourse of the 'noble savage' helpless in the face of the expansion of modernity and in need of protection by a benevolent state. State paternalism was reflected in the special land regimes first established by the British and then expanded by the independent state. Under the rubric of the neo-liberal developmental state, the discourse of helplessness has contributed to the

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315 Elden, Stuart, "Thinking Territory Historically," *Geopolitics* 15.4 (2010): 759-760.
316 For Lefebvre, abstract space, is the modern socio-political space of capitalism, property and the state. It is a space that is present but not truly visible as it is composed of concrete abstractions, "which includes the 'world of commodities', its 'logic' and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state," (Lefebvre, *The Production of Space:* 53).

emergence of the idea of Adivasi as tragic victims of progress in need of social services and welfare provisions.

The Maoist discourse of an alternative modernity seeks to bring the Adivasi into historical processes and include them in their revolutionary project. The Adivasi are seen as potential agents of their own future capable of self-liberation through the creation of a revolutionary consciousness and participation in the world-historical struggle to build socialism. The Party is the vessel through which the Adivasi will become active agents in their own future. It is the political and ideological mobilization of the Adivasi that distinguishes the state-led process of modernity from that of the Maoist's project of an alternative modernity.

State Space in Eastern and Central India
The core claim in this section is that the production of state space in eastern and central India has historically occurred around strategies creating the region as a peripheral space functioning as a zone of settlement and site for natural resource extraction. Three primary characteristics of state production can be identified: 1) the state's presence has historically been shallow or thin; 2) it has relied disproportionately on its repressive apparatus; and 3) state expansion has been, and continues to be, driven by opportunities for resource exploitation and fear of rebellion.

In eastern and central India, strong bureaucratic states did not exist in the period preceding colonialism. The region did not, however, exist in some kind of

primitive, pre-political idyll. Rather, there existed numerous fluid polities as local headman would gain, and then lose, authority over large numbers of villages. In some cases, these headmen self-consciously mimicked the forms of plain-based polities, adopting the title of Maharaja and importing outsiders as bureaucrats, priests and soldiers.[317] Few of these polities achieved anything near the consolidation or control seen in the great kingdoms of the coasts and plains. Village chiefs retained a degree of autonomy and freedom of action and the self-proclaimed Maharajas were often little more than titular leaders.[318] This began to change under British colonialism as the autonomous and highly fluid polities were gradually replaced by semi-sovereign states that were economically dominated by migrant populations.

The British supplanted the minor chiefdoms and sought to transform social and political life in India through differentiated territorial strategies. In the Presidencies of Madras and Bengal, the heart of the colonial project, British rule was direct. Commercial agriculture and industrial production were promoted and the creation of a native administrative and a bourgeois middle-class encouraged.[319] Conversely, in large part due to the widespread resistance that colonial expansion faced in the forests and hills of the Adivasi interior, integration occurred slowly and spatial transformation was partial and highly variegated. The British established semi-sovereign Princely states and notified agency areas

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317 MacDougall, John, "Agrarian reform vs. religious revitalization: collective resistance to peasantization among the Mundas, Oraons and Santals, 1858-95," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 11.2 (1977): 300.
318 Sivaramakrishnan, K., "Transition zones: Changing landscapes and local authority in south-west Bengal, 1880s-1920s," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 36.1 (1999): 24.
319 Guha, *Elementary Aspects*.

governed directly by a paternalistic representative of the Crown. Here, "the self-governing structures were more or less to be left intact, but intrusion and exploitation of resources continued".[320]

Transformations in the logic and practice of the colonial state are materially visible in the changing patterns of transportation networks in the region. Roads are highly visible manifestations of statecraft and networks of exchange, facilitating the movement of goods and people, enabling the establishment and circulation of bureaucratic and administrative officials and providing territorial access to military and police forces. They are material indicators of a region's political economy, visible markers of the state and structures shaping settlement and everyday life. Simultaneously the configurations of transportation networks and the expansion of state space destabilizes areas outside of their reach, creating 'peripheral' zones which, as Lefebvre writes, "for their autonomy or for a certain degree of independence, challenging their subordination to the state."[321]

During the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the interior hills and forests of eastern and central India were enmeshed in a relatively dense network of roads connecting the petty chiefdoms to the coastal plains.[322] This network was, however, constantly in flux, reflecting the absence of strong, stable and centralized states in the region. Shifting migratory patterns rooted in semi-

320 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggles": 1758.
321 Lefebvre, Henri, "Space: Social Product and Use Value." In *State, Space, World: Selected Essays,* eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2009): 190.
322 Ahuja, Ravi, "Opening Up the Country? Patterns of Circulation and Politics of Communication in Early Colonial Orissa," *Studies in History* 20.1 (2004): 112-113.

nomadic activities, such as swidden and the collection of minor forest products, was reflected in space. Changes in regional, social and economic circulation and politics were materialized as old paths disappeared and new ones emerged.[323] Petty chiefs retained mobile centres of power that would shift in response to changes in circulation. Inaccessibility was their ally, and a healthy distance was maintained between themselves and roads, which could be used by the armies of regional kings for conquest and territorial consolidation.[324]

With the onset of colonialism, the ephemeral interior road network began to fall into disuse as a response to an expanding and powerful state that had decisively captured control over the wealthy and populous plains and coastal zones. Material and everyday spatial practice began to follow new patterns. Large forest tracts were cleared and the British began mapping territory and populations for revenue collection. Increasingly the representations of space began to create particular symbols of abstract space: the revenue village, the district, the road.[325]

The expansion of colonial power was, however, a highly territorially differentiated process. The British had little interest in the interior. They sought to establish a secure means of connecting Calcutta and Madras through the construction of an all-weather road running parallel with the sea, effectively by-passing the hostile and 'untamed' interior hills and forests. This changed in the mid-19th century due to a number of factors such as the global increase in

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323 Ibid: 93-95.
324 Ibid.: 103.
325 Ekka, *Jharkhand.*

demand for coal in the wake of the US Civil War.[326] The large deposits in the

region's hills attracted Britain's attention and would prove to have profound

consequences on the production of state space in eastern and central India. The

British dismantled some of the princely states and undertook vigorous road and

rail construction, connecting the resource-rich interior to the coastal ports.

However, beyond expanding transportation networks, the techniques of statecraft

in the region remained largely structured around the settlement of diku as

commercial farmers and tenured landholders on the plains and fringes of the

forests and, in the interior, the creation of notified and protected zones of

exception, areas where land and governance systems sought to reflect local

custom.[327] There was to be, however, one extremely significant change in colonial

spatial production during this period. The territorial expansion of colonial

capitalism led to the production of concentrated spaces of extraction and

industrialization in the region.[328] Cities such as Jamshedpur and Deoghar (in

modern day Jharkhand) emerged as nodal points connecting the mines and

processing facilities to markets.[329] The creeping expansion of state space in the

region stimulated the need for railways and, subsequently, further fuelled

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326 Ibid.:120.

327 Shah, "Morality, Corruption, and the State": 305-306.

328 See Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism".

329 In 1909 the Tata Iron and Steel Company (Tisco) founded Jamshedpur, the central node of its
   extraction and processing facilities in the region. To this day Jamshedpur is an urban space created and
   controlled by capital, the largest 'company town' in the world, with Tisco holding responsibility for
   municipal government, urban planning, infrastructure and the provision of social services and security.
   See Kling, Blair B., "Paternalism in Indian labour: the Tata Iron and Steel Company of Jamshedpur,"
   International Labour and Working-Class History 53 (1998).

demand for steel and coal. The region's rich iron ore deposits were tapped, in part, to meet this demand.[330]

Outside of the networked infrastructure and extractive nodes the state's presence remained minimal or non-existent. It was not, however, only British disinterest that constrained the region's integration into the state. Attempts by the colonial state to link potentially rebellious areas through the creation of road networks in the interior were often stymied by strategies of active resistance and migration deeper into the hills and forests and further from state power.[331] Colonial officials lamented the difficulties of bringing 'civilization' to the interior in the face of mass opposition to transportation projects, attacks against construction crews and the destruction of roads.[332]

Another key practice of the British state during the late 19th and early 20th century was mapping and classifying the region to facilitate revenue collection. Mapping and classifying the region produced new forms of space: uncultivated 'wastelands' targeted for settlement, revenue villages for taxation and land for state infrastructure. Classification, demarcation and the liminality of colonialism's expansion into the region fundamentally transformed the everyday lives of a population whose economic and social lives had previously been territorially fluid.[333] The processes of state expansion through the techniques of land survey and functional demarcation of planned space were met by fierce resistance from

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330 Simmons, CP, "Indigenous Enterprise in the Indian Coal Mining Industry c. 1835-1939," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 13 (1976): 192.
331 Ibid.: 103.
332 Ibid.: 103-105.
333 Ekka, *Jharkhand,*: 61-62.

those who faced displacement and alienation from access to vast tracts of the region. In the Chotanagpur Plateau, for example, a series of rebellions in the late 19th century forced the British to modify colonial policy. Beginning with the Chotanagpur Tenures Act in 1869, and culminating in the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT) of 1908, the British implemented a land and governance regime that sought to mollify the local population by codifying and enshrining 'traditional' governance and communal village rights.[334] This legislation represents a form of spatial production undertaken by the British, and later Indian, governments creating legally constituted, territorially bounded spaces ostensibly existing outside of modernity, but created by modernity.

Thus the region's isolation was, in part, a consequence of both state logic and local resistance. Few roads were built in part because people prevented them from being built. Furthermore, local population centres and networks of exchange were highly mobile and could re-locate with relative ease to territory as yet untouched by the state. The patterns of spatial practice and representation interacted dialectically. These strategies of state resistance to state expansion structured the material, symbolic and everyday patterns of life in the region, patterns based on an insurgent consciousness that rejected the subcontinental-wide project of statecraft which emerged in the 18th century.

In addition to the abstract space of the regional urban centres, industrial mining belts, and zones of exception, the logics regulating the relationship of the state with the interior were also seen in regimes of forest regulation. Beginning in

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334 Ibid,.: 48-49.

the 19th century, large tracts of terrain were legally notified as 'protected', placing them under the aegis of the bureaucracy and police forces of the Imperial Forest Service.[335] Notification of forests enabled the state to regulate the economic and social activity of the Adivasi, effectively criminalizing mobility, swidden and the exploitation of non-timber forest products (NTFP).

Thus, under colonialism, the region's integration into the state exhibited a high degree of territorial differentiation. Spaces of the state and capitalism were produced in emergent urban centres of economic and political power connected by rail and road to industrial and extractive belts. These spaces were surrounded by protected areas whose creation reflected a superficially contradictory dual-logic of conservation and extraction. Forest notification was intended to manage territory and populations while also facilitating the managed extraction of resources. In effect, land policy mapped and administered the region's fringes as spaces of demarcated wilderness: a space of representation: created to exist outside of modernity but constituted by instruments of modernity. Regimes such as the CNT which 'preserved' and froze spatial practice by legislating an 'authentic' and 'traditional' Adivasi geography that sought to obliterate time by eliminating everyday practices of mobility and sociological change.

In tandem with, and in reaction to, the expansion of the state there emerged forms of resistance which challenged the materialization and infrastructure of abstract space through representations of pristine, Arcadian and

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335 Véron and Fehr, "State power and protected areas".

semi-mythical conceptions of the land and forests.[336] In essence, there was a

dialectic between expansionist modernity and defensive anti-modernity.

Resistance to the state led to the production of 'protected' zones of exception

constituted by special regimes of customary governance and land regulation. In

turn, the creation of these zones of exception shaped resistance. Thus, the hills

and forests of eastern and central India were absorbed into the state and the

colonial political economy through a competing imaginary. From the perspective

of the state the region was seen as a dangerous frontier – as bandit country.[337]

On the other hand, the state was seen, by many of the inhabitants, as a

dangerous and alien entity whose expansion threatened life itself, leading to near

continuous unrest and resistance which periodically erupted with large and

bloody millenarian and apocalyptic revolts expressed through idioms depicting a

semi-mythical Adivasi past.[338]

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336 The songs and stories of resistance often juxtaposed the destruction of 'natural' space with an inevitable response. Birsa Munda, a millenarian Adivasi leader who led a series of revolts against the British in the 1890s, for example, was associated with a song whose words include: "The big river in flood, the dust storm is brewing; O Maina, run, run away; The forest is filled with smoke; O Maina...; Your mother is burning, O Maina...; Your father is floating away, O Maina" (Areeparampil, Mathew, *Struggle for Swaraj* (Chaibasa, Jharkhand: Tribal Research and Training Centre: 2002): 205).

337 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 78-103.

338 This space of representation still has echoes in the present day among activists who see the state and the expansion of extractive industry as a contemporary manifestation of a long historical process. "If you see the history, history suggests that conflict in Adivasi society started with the formation of Indian state. The whole state. Because before there was the Indian state, Adivasi were... they had ownership rights, resources, land, everything. They had their own area. Their saying, I think you musts have heard of it, Santhal country. Or Munda country. They presumed that the area they were living, that is there country. But when the British invaded- first that Aryan invasion, but largely the problem of resources arises during the British invasion. In 1765, British invaded Bengal. And that time Adivasi they protested. There were huge fighting between British and Adivasi. They said no, we cannot accept your rule. We have our own rule. Why should we pay you the tax because land and resources, everything, is given to us by our <inaudible>. That was the whole idea. Then, but with the power of gun and this British they established their rule and then after independence things went from bad to worse. Now everything... every area is captured by the Indian government" (Gladson Dungdung. Author interview, Ranchi, Jharkhand: 1 May 2013).

These logics of spatial production in the region helped shape the nature of revolt: resistance was structured around material demands framed around a discourse of anti-modernity, an opposition to encroachment by non-autochthonous populations and a rejection of the state. The unfolding of state production in both the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods created a particular form of insurgent space.

Contemporary changes in technologies and the political economy of India and state production are, however, simultaneously transforming resistance and insurgent space. To a significant extent, modern technologies have overcome the limitations imposed by 'difficult' terrain and the management of the landscape and new technologies of power projection and territorial domination have led to the gradual integration of places such as Zomia into, "the sovereign nation-state [which] is busy projecting its power to its outermost territorial borders and mopping up zones of weak or no sovereignty".[339] Earlier, the post-colonial developmental state largely bypassed these areas, viewing them as marginal to the nation-building process, intervening only when it had perceived them as a site of security threats.[340] This 'mopping up' process is currently occurring in central India under the rubric of both counter-insurgency and development. State intervention and a concerted effort to reconfigure and further integrate the region into the Indian state are driven by both the perceived threat the Maoist insurgency poses to the security of India and growth in demand for the region's

339 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed:* xii.
340 van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland:* 148.

natural resources as a result of liberalization. Specifically, the relaxation of investment and ownership regulations and the country's economic boom has led to a significant increase in private domestic and foreign investment in the region. In 2000 the Indian government amended the Mines and Minerals Regulation and Development Act governing the industry. These changes delegated mine licensing powers to individual state governments, lifted foreign equity limits and removed 13 minerals that had been exclusively reserved for the public sector.[341]

In the same year the states of Chhattisgarh, formerly part of Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand, formerly part of Bihar, were created—both under a BJP led central government. While the Jharkhand Movement, a popular identity-based movement, had long called for the creation of a separate state, many in the movement saw the new state as the creature of local elites seeking greater control over resources. The same logic is said to have influenced the formation of Chhattisgarh. It is, perhaps, telling that there has been no appreciable improvement in the socio-economic indicators of the Adivasi since the creation of these states and over the past ten years the number of mining licenses issued has drastically increased as private capital has flowed into the region.[342] The subsequent transformations in space, materially marked by the massive expansion of roads in the region as well as increases in the density of industrial belts and the spread of new industrial spaces into 'protected' areas.[343]

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341 Mineral Resources Department, Government of Chhattisgarh, *Mineral Policy: Government of Chhattisgarh 2001*. Accessed 5 September 2012. http://www.chips.gov.in/sites/default/files/Mineral%20Policy_English.pdf
342 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggle": 1772.
343 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 51-97.

Furthermore, under the rubric of 'development', the counter-insurgency in southern Chhattisgarh has led to the militarization of all aspects of statecraft and the colonization of more traditionally benign institutions of the state by a logic of force and power. Throughout the region, the roads and towns have become dotted with barricaded, walled compounds replete with sentry posts while large areas in the major cities have been turned over for the construction of police cantonments and police lines. Modelled on centres in the restive North-East of the country, the government has also established 'Schools of Jungle Warfare and Counter-Insurgency' directly in the conflict zone. Civil infrastructure is in the process of being colonized by the repressive apparatus of the state. Educational facilities have become sites of war-making, having been physically altered, reflecting a hybrid logic of social service delivery and violence.

These changes have placed enhanced stress on the contradictions inherent in the region's land regimes. Much of eastern and central India's mineral resources are in areas that are heavily regulated and where usage is circumscribed. There has been a move towards increased privatization and the transfer of both usufruct rights and ownership of previously protected lands to private interests.[344] While protected land in Adivasi communities cannot be sold or transferred, legislation grants the state eminent domain. It has become common for the government to expropriate land and subsequently transfer ownership to private interests.[345] This has transformed the relationship between the local

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344 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggle": 1772.
345 Bahree, "The Forever War": 84.

populace and the state from one of regulation and control towards one of displacement.

In eastern and central India, the state-building process has, whenever possible, circumvented the interior, a pattern that follows Lefebvre's observation that the state seeks to exclude, as much as possible, peripheral areas.[346] There is, however, a fundamental tension which underlies the creation of the zones of exception in the region. These demarcated areas sought to freeze time by protecting 'pristine forest land' and codifying land ownership and village life as it was imagined to exist at a particular moment. The attempt to create space through temporal stasis relied on techniques of governance such as land surveys, legislation, bureaucratic administration and policing. Thus, while the zones of exception were constructed as spaces existing outside of modernity they were, at a very fundamental level, products of modernity.

Expansion has been deeply patterned by the state 'seeing' the area as a dangerous frontier rich in natural bounty. This view of the region—as both a source of great wealth and danger—contributed to the production of islands of modernity in the region: nodal clusters of industry and extraction linked to the great cities of the plains and coasts through transport corridors. Around these belts the British sought to create a particular kind of space, one which both set the Adivasi interior apart from processes of modernity while also seeking to regulate the everyday life of the population through a rigid demarcation of the 'appropriate' uses of space enforced by the repressive apparatus of the state.

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346 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*: 373.

Thus, colonial expansion into Adivasi areas was marked by two defining

characteristics: 1) the state was shallow and manifested itself through diffuse and

relatively thin systems of authority; and 2) expansion was structured around

fragmentation, displacement and repression. These dual characteristics—

weakness and violence—have generated the impetus for and possibility of the

production of an insurgent space and have had profound consequences in the

contemporary period.

Dialectics of State-Insurgency and the (Re)Configuration of Space

Conflict between expanding state geographies and an oppositional insurgent

space is neither binary nor static. There is a dialectical relationship between both

state and insurgent space, a dialectic that creates, recreates and structures the

logics of both in an endless process of becoming. It is a long historical process in

which local economies, societies and political systems interact with each other

and with an emergent, expansionist state. This process is also a consequence of

the impoverishment of local populations through regimes of land enclosure and

displacement that began in the late 19th century, processes that are currently

accelerating. While insurgent space, by definition, can only exist in opposition to

something, this something (the state) is also produced by opposition to it. The

initial impetus of opposition lies in negation— rejection of state authority in the

social, material and symbolic realms. However, it is more than simply rejection

and becomes productive in itself. Social, material and symbolic life across time

and space are created in opposition to the state, becoming spaces of refusal,

creating the social and material possibilities for opposing state production with

both everyday resistance and violent revolt. The Maoists have entered into this

milieu and are contributing to its reconfiguration. While the Maoists, at the local

level, have drawn on cultural idioms of resistance rooted in particularist practices,

deploying them to critique an encroaching state, their vision is, fundamentally,

rooted in an alternative vision of modernity.[347] The Maoist desideratum is the

transformation of the state along more 'rational' and 'scientific' lines. Therefore

they are engaged in a process that seeks to integrate and subsume local

histories and cultures into a territorially expansive movement that understands

itself as part of a national (and world-historical) revolutionary force.[348] They are

both agents in, and a consequence of, the production of space.

    Across much of the once demarcated and temporally 'frozen' areas, such as

the 'protected' forests and areas regulated by acts such as the CNT, the post-

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347 Interestingly, the Maoists claim that local Adivasi languages in Bastar, specifically Gondi and Maria, were first standardized and written by the Maoists in the 1980s. According to Varvara Rao, head of the Revolutionary Writers Association, a CPI(Maoist)-affiliated literary group, "They <the Maoists> started working among the Adivasis. They have learned their language, they have learned their way of living. First they have translated the songs from Telugu in their language or Hindi. People in Dandakaranya mostly are the Gonds and the Koyas, their language is Gondi, Maria, and other Adivasi dialects. These people <the Maoists> have learned their language, translated very rich... Telugu has got very rich revolutionary literature. Firstly they <the Maoists> have translated them. There's also many oral tradition forms, they were translated. Slowly they <local inhabitants> themselves have started writing in their language. Gondi, Maria language. Today you see in Dandakaranya, they, <the Maoists> bring out 24 magazines. Hindi, Telugu, Maria, Gondi, language, they print 24 magazines" (Varvara Rao. Author interview. Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh: 5 February 2013).

348 "The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is the consolidated political vanguard of the Indian proletariat. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the ideological basis guiding its thinking in all the spheres of its activities. Immediate aim or programme of the Communist Party is to carry on and complete the new democratic revolution in India as a part of the world proletarian revolution by overthrowing the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under neo-colonial form of indirect rule." CPI(Maoist), Central Committee, *Party Constitution.* Accessed 6 November 2016. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/partyconstitution.htm.

liberalization period has seen a simultaneous process of militarization as well as industrial and bureaucratic expansion. There has been a marked increase in both the scope and scale of extraction and the spread of industrial processing facilities, coupled with militarized road construction, the establishment of large cantonments to house the increasing number of paramilitary police forces semi-permanently deployed in the region, as well as an expansion of the welfarist aspects of state infrastructure, such as schools and health clinics.[349] At its most visible, the perceived threat of the insurgency has become an impetus for the deepening of state space in the region facilitated by the expansion of transportation networks for military and police purposes. The Chhattisgarh government, for example, has contracted the Border Roads Organization (BRO), a wing of the armed forces responsible for building and maintaining infrastructure along India's volatile borders with Pakistan and China, to construct a network of all-weather, paved roads in the south-western part of the state where the Maoists have established a significant presence.

In spite of the common patterns that can be identified, the production of space across the region displays diverse characteristics reflecting a continuous interplay between local social forces.

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349 For example, in 2010 the Government of India announced the "Integrated Action Plan to Develop Tribal and Backward Districts in Left-Wing Extremist Areas". The program provides central government infrastructural funding, with a particular focus on social infrastructure such as schools and medical facilities, to districts in which the Maoists are active with an explicit aim of deepening state presence and garnering popular support. See Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, "Integrated Action Plan to Develop Tribal and backward Districts in LWE," Press Information Bureau (10 January 2012). Accessed 5 February 2014. http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=79472

Much of the work examining Maoist insurgency in India, and insurgency generally, has failed to grapple with the historical processes of modern state expansion into peripheral areas. The result can be a static and superficial examination that treats internal conflicts as analytically discrete events frozen in a particular moment. The two actors, the state and the insurgents, become reified 'things' and causality a question of isolating key variables on a spectrum of greed, grievance and opportunity. In the specific case of eastern and central India, those sympathetic to the Maoists point to the emergence of rapacious neo-liberalism and population displacement, often drawing on teleologies of 'failed' development. Those less inclined to sympathize with the rebels point to their brutality and mobilization of ignorant and 'backward' people through the strategic deployment of deception and violence. Both perspectives result in a static and wholly unsatisfactory ahistorical understanding of conflict.

There has, however, also been substantive and interesting work examining the political economy of the Maoist insurgency focusing on resource capture and commodity chains in conflict zones.[350] Integrating some of the elements of this work into a Lefebvrian analysis provides new insights through a theoretical perspective that centres the analysis onto the geographies and logics of power generated by the state. Applying Lefebvre's ideas to the production of state space in the region enables a complex and nuanced reading of the conflict, seeing space as something that, through constant interactions between the social, material and symbolic, is perpetually in the process of becoming, allowing

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350 See Suykens, Shah, Miklian.

for a dynamic, historically rooted analysis. It places emphasis on the particular forms by which the state manifests itself, the response this generates and how this response, in turn, alters processes of state production.

State production in eastern and central India has been relatively thin and acutely violent. The state is simultaneously weak and brutal. This has generated fierce, and often violent, opposition not only to specific techniques of rule, but also to the state's very right to govern and exist. The production of both state and insurgent space in eastern and central India has provided a suitable and hospitable terrain for the emergence of the Maoist insurgency. Crucially, however, the Maoists are transforming these spaces in novel ways. Their strength, territorial reach and ideology (which does not reject the modern state, but only rejects what they see as India's particular 'semi-feudal' class nature) are factors that are contributing to the creation of new forms of space in the region. In the case of Jharkhand, there is the emergence of dual forms of authority in which the lines between the state and the insurgents have become blurred, while Chhattisgarh has seen the emergence of spaces of particularly virulent 'ideal' micro-territorial states. Something new is in the process of becoming.

Chapter 5- Bastar: Bounded Spaces

This chapter explores Maoist insurgency, and state formation with a case study of historical Bastar, the southern third of the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh.[351] Founded in 2000 from 16 districts in eastern Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh has become the primary epicentre of the conflict. The state can roughly be divided into three geographic zones: the northern hills, the central plains and the southern forests. The war in Chhattisgarh is not being waged across the entirety of the state and is concentrated hills and forests of its southern third. While the Maoists did have a presence in the north, they have been pushed out and, according to police officials, there have been no incidents in the area since 2009.[352] The central plains do not have a Maoist presence.

At approximately 31%, the state has the highest population percentage of indigenous people in India outside of the North-East. The Adivasi are concentrated in the south and north, the two areas which contain the majority of the state's large reserves of natural resources. The economically and politically dominant central plains are largely non-Adivasi and composed of Hindi/Chhattisghari speakers who began settling in the area at the onset of British colonialism. While the state has a rapidly growing economy due to the boom in natural resource extraction and processing, it continues to be impoverished, with a Human Development Index (HDI) ranking placing it at the

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351 For the purposes of this paper, Bastar refers, roughly, to the area which constituted the colonial-era Princely State of the same name. It includes the contemporary districts of Kankar, Narayanpur, Bastar, Kondagoan, Dantewada, Bijapur and Sukma. It is a heavily forested, primarily Adivasi area which encompasses all of the strongholds of the Maoists in the state.

352 Girdhari Nayak. Author interview. Raipur, Chhattisgarh: 25 February 2013.

very bottom of all Indian states. While the state's overall socio-economic indicators averages are low, extreme poverty and illiteracy are particularly acute among Adivasi populations.[353]

By all metrics, including the number of deaths of security forces, civilians and insurgents, Chhattisgarh has overtaken the historical heartlands of Maoist insurgency, West Bengal and Telangana, in conflict intensity.[354] A core argument of this chapter is that, contrary to oft-stated claims, the conflict in Bastar is neither caused, nor primarily fueled, by natural resources. While the state is rich in minerals,[355] recent analyses, the author's fieldwork and an examination of the contextual evidence suggests that while resource extraction is intensifying the conflict, it is not the primary driver of war in the region. The war in Bastar can be

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353 There have been a number of reports of malnourishment and even starvation deaths in parts of Bastar. Rahul Pandita, a journalist, told me this anecdote: ""I was travelling with a local guide and he told to meet this person, middle-aged person who I was told his son had died the previous week. I said, I've heard... I believe your son died the previous week. He said yeah. I said how did he die? I thought it's because of diarrhea or cholera, many such diseases, or malaria for example, it's very rampant in these areas. He said he has died of a disease. I said what disease? He said he died of a disease called hunger. So that really shocked. It gave me goosebumps because there was this villager in the boondocks of India who had so resigned to his fate, that he thought hunger was a bloody disease." (Rahul Pandita. Author interview. Delhi: 18 January 2013).

The author also witnessed evidence of severe malnourishment among children while visiting informal camps in 2008. These camps were located in Warangal district in Telangana a few miles of the border of the border with Sukma near Konta in southern Chhattisgarh. Recently, as well, in spite of the Chhattisgarh government declaring the entire state 'food secure', there has been a spate of reported deaths from starvation. See "Hunger deaths: Chhattisgarh government orders probe, opposition up in arms," *Indian Express* (31 May 2015). Accessed 15 February 2017. http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/hunger-deaths-chhattisgarh-govt-orders-probe-opposition-up-in-arms/

354 Between 2005-2014, 33% of recorded India-wide deaths in the Maoist conflict occurred in the state. With the exception of 2005, when Andhra Pradesh's counter-insurgency largely pushed the insurgents out of that state and 2013, 2014 with a spike in deaths in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh has had the highest number of annual 'incidents' and deaths. In the previous few years, however, reflecting India-wide trends, the number of deaths has reduced significantly from a peak of 361 in 2006 to 206 in 2016. (South Asian Terrorism Portal, *Maoist Data Sheets*).

355 The state has approximately 1/5 of India's iron ore deposits. There are also extensive deposits of bauxite, coal, dolomite and limestone, all increasingly in demand due to burgeoning domestic and foreign demand for Indian natural resources. See Meher, "Globalization, Displacement: 471.

understood as the most recent chapter in a longer process of state expansion and consolidation into what has long existed as an internal frontier of the Indian state. Historically the primary means by which the state has interacted with the region is through the regulation of forests and forest communities. These long-term patterns of regulation, in which a 'thin' and weak state has manifested itself nearly exclusively through the repressive apparatus of the armed agents of the Forest Department and, to a lesser extent, the police, has alienated Adivasi communities from pre-existing practices of social and economic life rooted in mobility, swidden and the self-regulating collection of non-timber forest products (NTFP). Additionally, in large parts of the state and on the fringes of the dense forests of Bastar, longer term patterns of external settlement have also accelerated due to the economic boom which is occurring across India.

The processes which began with British rule, and accelerated after independence, can be understood as a form of internal state colonization and spatial absorption. Ironically, these patterns are accelerating as a consequence of the Maoist insurgency. The perceived threat posed by the insurgents to the Indian state and their capability to operate freely in a large territory at the geographic heart of the country has stimulated a set of responses which are both structuring and deepening absorption. The insurgency and the state exist in a dialectical relationship, leading to a fundamental transformation of space in the region. While this transformation of space has been created, in part, by longer historical patterns of land enclosure and displacement, the pathologies of state

expansion/colonization have been deepened as a result of counter-insurgency. The result is a particular configuration, manifestation and expansion of state space into southern Chhattisgarh structured around violence and militarized control.

This chapter draws from theorists of Zomia, a name given to the uplands of South-East Asia, conceptualizing the history of Bastar, as well as the current insurgency and counter-insurgency, through a framework of state absorption of peripheral, hilly and forested non-state spaces. It first examines the history of the region, arguing that the mobile and isolated populations and polities of the region developed, in part, as a state-effect in response to pre-colonial state projects. The chapter then situates the Maoist insurgency and counter-insurgency into a framework that explains how and why the contemporary state is currently absorbing a restive region in the geographic heart of the country. However, because of historical state weakness and the presence of insurgent space, absorption resembles that of counter-insurgent statecraft in Zomia: the creation of nodular, networked state space rooted in force and development.

Absorption

Orthodox, state-centric understandings of the forests of central India see the region as existing 'outside' of civilization, its people living in a mythical, isolated state of being outside of time. This ahistorical and teleological perception is

expressed by numerous police and government officials, and is captured by

Vishwa Ranjan, the former Director-General of Police (DGP) in Chhattisgarh:

> Many India's are there. You have modern India, highly civilized, you have feudal India. You have a tribal India. Every problem you have different India's responding differently. But, what I see is that modern India is gradually engulfing most of the other India's. Gradually. The reaction of people in Bastar is not the same it used to be in 1980. The tribal was absolutely a simpleton in 1980. He's become sharper. He's developing aspirations which he never had before. The modern India is engulfing the other Indias gradually. And it will do so. It has to do so because you can't have two time zones living simultaneously. All of it is happening in the world also, you have two time zones historical time zones living simultaneously in many places.[356]

The Adivasi are seen as existing in a state of pre-modernity and isolation—a

population only now being forced to confront modernity, a modernity for which

they are culturally and sociologically unprepared. What logically follows from this

teleology is the widely expressed view among representatives of the state that

the Adivasi are a naive, primitive and apolitical population who have been

'tricked' by the Maoists, contrary to their self-interests, into supporting insurgency

against the state. Thus, for example, the Superintendent of Police in Kankar

District, an area heavily effected by insurgency, explains why the majority of

cadre of the CPI(Maoist) were Adivasi from Chhattisgarh: "People remained

illiterate for a long time, so they could fool those people and they inducted them

into their organization. So that's why the cadres are from here."[357] From the

perspective of many state actors, the Adivasi exist outside of modernity in a

primitive idyll. Therefore, they are incapable of political analysis and easily fooled

356 Vishwa Ranjan. Author interview. Raipur, Chhattisgarh: 1 March 2013.
357 Rajendra Dash. Author interview. Kanker, Chhattisgarh: 12 March 2013.

by crafty and wily outsiders who, through their cleverness, are able to trick them into supporting the insurgency.

In addition to being rooted in racism, or, at best, a sense of cultural superiority, this trope is empirically and historically flawed. The region and its people have long existed as an integral, if fluid, part of regional economies and polities and did not develop in isolation. The encounter between modernity, the state and the Adivasi populations of central and eastern India is not a recent phenomenon. The advent of colonialism was a watershed event which unleashed a series of changes that have continued to unfold into the present day. As Nandini Sundar argues, "colonialism's distinctive contribution was not in integrating these regions into some wider system, but in changing the terms of this integration".[358]

The problems with the statist perspective are political and analytic. Analytically, it is poor history rooted in a teleological metaphysics of space and time that obliterates difference through an overarching narrative of progress. Politically, it functions as a justification for the marginalization of the aspirations and desires of the population. It strips the Adivasi of agency, transforming them into passive beings whose politics are the product of manipulation and machinations of outside forces exploiting their ignorance. This has consequences for perceptions of how the state ought to behave. Rather than political subjects, the Adivasi have become objects for the delivery of social services and 'development'. As Saroj Giri writes:

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358 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns:* 4.

> It is not only Maoists who are treated as service-providers but ordinary people... who are portrayed as service-seekers. People who could be political subjects, active agents of social change and willing to "suffer" its consequences are here depicted as mere seekers of humanitarian aid.[359]

This perspective is one which is implicitly (and occasionally explicitly) expressed by most government officials and a significant number of conflict analysts.[360]

The teleological, state-centrism that depoliticizes the Adivasi re-enforces a set of strategies rooted in a tandem force and development that fails to grapple with the aspirations and demands of the local populace. There is, for example, the (seemingly) paradoxical fact that a state responsible for mass displacement of populations and ongoing and systematic human rights violations against its citizens has been applauded for its reforms of social services. In particular, its streamlining of the Public Distribution System, an India-wide program which provides subsidized food to those living below the poverty line, has been lauded nationally and internationally by eminent economists such as Jean Drèze.[361]

In this orthodox imagining, Bastar is constructed as a backward and primitive land being integrated into a benevolent developmental state whose failure is not design, but implementation. The state's failure to provide social

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359 Giri, Saroj, "The Maoist 'Problem' and the Democratic Left in India," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 39.3 (2009): 5.

360 Thus, for example a local police commander in an insurgent district argued that: "This is what the approach to counter them. It was a group activity. We had specific strategy, as I told you, having health camps in remote areas, all these civic access programmes. Sometimes we have forces like CRPF, like BSF, they have distributed the daily need materials. In suppose in remote areas they don't have clothes to put on or they don't have food also, whatever it may, whatever problems, small, small needs, they are giving. And in some areas even the forces, they have given them some kind of skill training so that they can get self-employment." (Dash. 12 March 2013).

361 See, for example, *The Economist*, "A Tale of Two Villages." Accessed 6 May 2017. http://www.economist.com/blogs/feastandfamine/2012/10/rural-india

benefits creates conditions where a primitive population, unprepared for modernity, become susceptible to manipulation by a sophisticated external force.

Contrary to this, this chapter makes the argument that what is currently occurring is the absorption and spatial taming of a peripheral area which historically existed on the fringes of state-making projects emanating from coastal and plains-areas. These process resemble those identified in Zomia, the highland region stretching across south-east Asia into North-East India, whose people are, according to James Scott, "best understood as runaway, fugitive, maroon communities who have, over the course of two millennia, been fleeing the oppressions of state-making projects in the valleys".[362] For theorists of Zomia, the South-East Asian highlands do not exist outside of history and 'civilization'. Its complex ethnic, linguistic and cultural patchwork is the product of conscious decisions on the part of numerous populations across time to evade the predations of the state. This strategy involved migration to places where inhospitable terrain made it difficult to establish centralized rule and where state-making, "in the dry season was often undone by the rains and... the diseases of the wet season".[363] To some extent, modern, distance shattering technologies have overcome these limitations. The management of landscape and new technologies of power projection and territorial domination have led to the gradual integration of Zomia into, "the sovereign nation-state [which] is busy projecting its power to its outermost territorial borders, mopping up zones of

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362 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*: ix.
363 Ibid.: 62

weak or no sovereignty".[364] A similar process is currently unfolding across Bastar under the rubric of counter-insurgency and development. State intervention and a concerted effort to reconfigure and further integrate the region into the Indian state is driven by the perceived threat the Maoist insurgency poses to security and growth in the demand for the region's natural resources as a result of India's economic liberalization.

Colonial Encounters

Much of the early literature on Adivasi society in pre-British India depicts the region as existing in a mythical Arcadian past, a pre-modern utopia composed of independent, self-sufficient and egalitarian villages.[365] While strong bureaucratic states did not exist in the region during the centuries preceding colonialism, there was territorial consolidation as local headmen regularly gained authority over larger numbers of villages. Evidence of integration can be found in the relatively dense network of seasonal roads in the interior forests which functioned as a valuable source of revenue for local rulers who imposed taxes on travellers.[366] Challenging the notion of 'the tribal' as a remnant of isolated and egalitarian people living outside of history, Nandini Sundar, writing about Bastar argues that it has, since at least the 12th century, been ruled by 'superheadmen' connected to broader, regional sovereigns that had emerged from within Adivasi society.[367]

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364 Ibid.: xii
365 Dasgupta, "The Naxalite Movement; Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 156-190.
366 Ahuja, "Opening Up the Country?": 102.
367 Sundar, Nandini, "Debating Dussehra and Reinterpreting Rebellion in Bastar District, Central India," *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 7.1 (2001): 21-22.

The idea of Adivasi society as egalitarian, independent and composed of pre-political autonomous villages whose harmonious life was shattered by British colonialism is a myth. There are, however, three significant differences between pre-British and post-British political authority in the region. First, substantive differences exist between the centralizing tendencies of the modern state and the petty kingdoms of pre-colonial eastern and central India. In spite of the existence of larger regional kingdoms, village chiefs and petty kings retained a degree of autonomy and freedom of action within their territory. Discussing the decline of local rulers in the face of a colonial state in Adivasi areas of Bengal, K. Sivaramkrishnan writes:

> These were not unchanging idyllic republics... but local sociology-political entities constantly altered by the admission of new members, the breaking away of parts, and so on. But these village communities had always retained strong institutions of self-government. Headman had supervised agriculture, the extension of cultivation, the maintenance of irrigation works, tanks and village forests.[368]

Crucially, one of the ways in which local autonomy was maintained was ensuring that the local centres of power of petty chiefs were located some distance from roads, roads which could be used by the armies of regional kings for conquest or territorial consolidation. Inaccessibility was the ally of weak chiefs and kings in the face of an expansive state. One common practice was, for example, to blockade or destroy roads that were seen as a threat due to their potential use as transport routes for military and administrative personnel.[369] With the intervention of the British, much of this local autonomy was lost as the colonial power

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368 Sivaramkrishnan, "Transition Zones": 24.
369 Ahuja, "Opening Up the Country?": 103.

governed the region through the strategic and selective patronage of Maharajas and regional rulers.

British rule of India was fragmented and was exercised through territorially heterogeneous arrangements. In the Presidencies of Madras and Bengal, rule was direct, substantially transforming their political economies and societies. Bastar, and other Adivasi areas, were only indirectly integrated into the Raj. In these areas, far from the coastal and plains-based imperial centres of power, rule was mediated through semi-sovereign, tributary princely states and notified 'agency' areas where the British appointed an administrator to represent the Crown. In both types of indirect rule, "the self-governing structures were more or less to be left intact, but intrusion and exploitation of resources continued".[370] In 1865 Bastar was given feudatory status. While the British controlled external relations and reserved the right to control the state's mineral and forest resources, the king was given relative autonomy over his subjects.[371]

In areas such as Bastar there was little or no impetus to construct 'modern' benevolent institutions such as schools, hospitals and impartial judicial systems. Where there were opportunities for resource extraction, the British established regimes that displaced populations and regulated existing economic and social practices. In Bastar the primary means through which the colonial state was made manifest was through the notification of forests—legislating large tracts of terrain as 'protected', placing them under the aegis of the Imperial Forest

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370 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggles": 1758.
371 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 90-92.

Service.[372] This was enforced not through the integration of the Adivasi into a larger regional political economy, but through legislative exclusions enforced by demarcation and policing.

The second significant transformation that occurred with the advent of the colonial state was one of degree rather than kind. Petty Adivasi kings and 'super chiefs' had, for some time, imported 'outsiders' from the plains as soldiers, priests and bureaucrats.[373] With the increase in the size of the state and transformations in the economy, the influx of diku, a derogatory term used for unwelcome non-Adivasi outsiders, expanded substantially in both scope and scale.[374] Whereas outsiders had previously been largely confined to a few specialized bureaucratic and war-making functions peripheral to the everyday lives of the region's population, the advent of British rule led to more substantial economic and spatial transformations.

Partial authority with direct control over key strategic resources was, within the logic of British colonialism, eminently sensible. It was cheaper to administer Empire through indirect rule. It also deflected the inevitable resistance which sedentarization, forest enclosure and revenue extraction generated.[375] All this

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372 Véron and Fehr, "State power and protected areas".
373 MacDougall, "Agrarian reform": 300.
374 Diku, broadly, refers to the non-autochthonous populations. While it can refer to those living in traditionally the non-indigenous people living in traditionally Adivasi territory, more broadly it is used to those who are constituted as 'outsiders'. In that sense, it is a fluid term and thus, for example, among activist groups in the Jharkhand Movement it came to refer to those outsiders who were seen as relatively recent migrants from Bihar and not to all non-Adivasi residents of the region. In effect, as Nandini Sundar argues, the use of the term diku is highly strategic and contingent upon the political purpose for which it is deployed (Sundar, Subalterns *and Sovereigns:* 260-261). In Chhattisgarh it is more often used to refer to caste Hindus who migrated to the region from plains areas.
375 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 103.

while the British were able to reap the rewards of a growing timber and coal industry in the region.[376]

Outside of its fringes, the interior forests were unconnected by roads and remained, aside from a few isolated forest department posts, nearly unaffected by the administrative and physical infrastructure required for the establishment and consolidation of the modern state. The importance of spatial transformation through regulation of the use of and access to the forests should not be underestimated. As discussed above, the primary social, economic and political characteristics of Bastar (and other forested and hill areas in eastern and central India) were inextricably linked to mobility. Mobility structured the economic and social life of the population and militated against the formation of durable, entrenched bureaucratic states. The onset of colonialism and the gradual regulation and enclosure of forest land struck at the heart of the self-replicating spatial arrangements of Adivasi society. The colonial state's intervention had numerous motives, including the seemingly paradoxical twin logic of conservation and exploitation, with the ultimate aim of transforming mobile Adivasi societies into, as Scott writes of upland South-East Asia, a form which was, "legible, taxable, assessable, and confiscatable or, failing that, to replace it with forms of production that were."[377]

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[376] There was a panic about the possible effects of population pressures and deforestation on the viability of both the British colonial state and the longer-term ecological health of South Asia: " Forest officers sent to assess the jungle's value wrote dramatic reports predicting the imminent destruction of forests, soil erosion, landslides, and the dessication of springs if conservation was absent" (Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones': 6).

[377] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*: 5.

In the mid 19th century the state began a long-term process of regulation and enclosure by placing claim on forest tracts across the Central Provinces, which included most of Chhattisgarh.[378] The piecemeal enclosure of forest land by the colonial state was formalized and consolidated in 1878 with the *Indian Forest Act* which granted the state the right to acquire, and thus regulate, usage of all territory which containing trees.[379] This act had two fundamental and long-term historical effects on Adivasi life and spatiality in eastern and central India. First, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, the state began a rapid policy of forest notification and reservation, large areas that had been integral to political economy of the region's Adivasi populations.[380] A long-term process of sedentarization was unleashed on the region which criminalized 'traditional' practices of swidden and access to resources by local communities, undermining the viability of the mobile and fluid polities of the region. Ultimately, in central and eastern India, "the edifice of state forestry... excluded contiguous village communities from forests in two ways. First, physical access was restricted. Second, the use value of the forest for subsistence was minimized by altering species composition and reducing biodiversity."[381]

There was a belief among colonial officials that the traditional practice of swidden and reliance on NTFP by local populations, practices which were not formally legally regulated, threatened the viability and existence of forests in south Asia. According to Sivaramakrishnan, the advocacy of conservation was

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378 Veron and Fehr, "State power and protected areas": 285.
379 Id.
380 Id.
381 Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 20.

rooted in the belief that, "the indigenous people, being 'ignorant', 'careless' and discerning of the ecological functions of the forest, were destructive of forests".[382]

The irony is that the logic of conservation in colonial India was inextricably linked to commercialization. Across much of India, the newly created forest department was placed under the control of the Revenue Department and came to be regarded as primarily a commercial venture.[383] Thus, in spite of the racist belief of British administrators that Adivasi irresponsibility threatened the viability and existence of India's forests, it was, "the pace of railway expansion (from 7,678 kilometres of line in 1870 to 51,658 kilometres in 1910) which brought home forcefully the fact that India's forests were not inexhaustible".[384] Meeting the rapidly expanding infrastructural needs of the colonial state, as well as a desire for revenue, was the primary motivating factor behind the creation of the Forest Department and the broader regime of forest regulation and enclosure. Thus, in addition to enclosure:

> The silvicultural agenda of the forest service was chiefly the transformation of mixed forests into homogeneous stands of commercially valuable species. First sal, teak, and deodar were classified as the superior species, since they were most important to railways, ship building, and military needs.[385]

In addition to its economic benefits notification also enabled the state to regulate the economic and social activity of the Adivasi, effectively criminalizing mobility, swidden and the exploitation of NTFP. This process accelerated in the

382 Ibid.: 17.
383 Ibid.: 10.
384 Guha, Ramachandra and Madhav Gadgil, "State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India," *Past and Present* 123 (1989): 145.
385 Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 18.

late 19th century. In 1891, for example, "the state attempted to reserve one-third of all forest land which meant deporting entire villages which came within these demarcated reserves".[386] The state gained a monopoly over the bounty of the forests through legislation enforced by armed rangers of the Imperial Forest Service, established in 1867 as part of the colonial state's policies of 'scientific forest management'.[387] The enforcement of enclosure required a bureaucratic apparatus capable of deploying violence to counter the resistance bound to occur in an attempt to limit the autonomy of the local populace. Thus, the Imperial Forest Service was established as an armed force tasked with enforcing the exclusion of populations from what had been transformed into government land.[388] The collection of NTFP by Adivasi was outlawed as the state began contracting out harvest, collection and distribution rights to non-Adivasi merchants and traders.[389]

The enclosure and exclusion of forest land and the transformation of space which began in the mid-19th century had significant ancillary effects on the region. It led to transformations in the region's political economy. While pre-existing practices became restricted or forbidden, new opportunities arose with the commercialization of forests and forest products. The result was a sudden influx of 'outsiders' from the plains who were, in part, able to capture the newly emergent positions in the colonial political economy as a result their knowledge of colonial law and their ability to navigate through the new dispensation. In

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386 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 24.
387 Bandopadhyay, "The Story of An Abortive Revolution": 6.1
388 Veron and Fehr, "State power and protected areas": 285.
389 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: 24.

addition to capturing key roles in the newly emergent political economy, elements of the non-Adivasi population were intentionally settled in the region as a form of colonial statecraft in order to help quell adivasi resistance and function as farmers.[390] The consequences of policies pursued by the colonial state, which was in need of revenue and also committed to imperialism 'on the cheap', was the emergence of a diku elite able to benefit from emergent political and economic opportunities. The rise of an elite group of outsiders simultaneously as Adivasis' traditional economic and political power was being undermined proved disastrous, marking the beginning of a long period of sedentarization and spatial transformation in the region. Familiarity with emergent legal institutions and regimes placed the plains-dwelling populations, who had experience interacting with bureaucratic states such as that of the Mughals, state, at an advantage. Increased levels of migration and the newcomers' capacity to navigate state institutions solidified their status as outsiders living in proximity to, but outside of, Adivasi societies.[391] The diku elite were both the instruments and consequences of state expansion into the region.

The new settlers established dominance over key political and economic functions which emerged from the colonial intervention, driving much of the autochthonous population into subservience. Beginning in the early 19th century, the British encouraged the clearing of large tracts of land for commercial agriculture. Although a minority of chiefs transformed themselves into tenure-

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390 Singh, KS, "Colonial Transformation of Tribal Society in Middle India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30.29 (1978).
391 MacDougall, "Agrarian reform": 212-213.

holders, it was largely diku who became the new *zamindari*[392] class responsible

for extracting revenue from tenant farmers.[393] The semi-autonomous polities of

the interior were gradually replaced by British supported semi-sovereign states

structured around the dominance of non-autochthonous population.

British colonial expansion into Adivasi areas was marked by two defining

characteristics. The state was shallow and manifested itself through diffuse and

relatively 'thin' systems of authority. Expansion was structured nearly entirely

around exclusion, displacement, impoverishment and the repression of Adivasi

populations. These patterns were the consequence of a set of colonial logics

which transformed large forest tracts in the region from common resources

accessible to local forest communities into government land for purposes of

resource exploitation and conservation. The notification of forests was the

fundamental instrument used to begin a longer process of sedentarization in the

region and the transformation and 'taming' of what had, hitherto, been an area

which existed on the margins of various state-making projects centred around

coastal and plains areas of the subcontinent. These highly mobile societies relied

upon unfettered access to forest resources for their economic activity and largely

swidden agriculture.

The emergent colonial state expanded through a spatially differentiated

set of policies that included enclosure and indirect rule. This created the impetus

for and possibility of the production of insurgent spaces across large parts of the

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392 A title generally referring to a landlord. Under Mughal, and later British, rule, the zamindar were
    responsible for collecting taxes on behalf of the state.
393 Sivaramkrishnan, "Transition zones": 18-20.

region. The state became associated with its pathological and destructive functions. Simultaneously, state weakness enabled the creation of oppositional spaces marked by regular outbreaks of violence.

Beyond outright rebellion an ethic and systematic practice of state avoidance and non-participation emerged. Avoidance can, for example, be read in the deliberate placement of independent local rulers' territorial centres of power well outside of the reach of road networks. Inaccessibility was one of the many strategies of state avoidance practiced by village and local rulers. Pratul Ahuja describes state penetration into the interior of Bastar as being plagued, according to colonial officials, by the population's resistance and sabotage of road construction projects:

> One fundamental experience that has shaped regional politics for generations, namely that inaccessibility was a little king's best protection against overbearing overlords. Accordingly, headquarters of Garhjat chiefs were often not located spectacularly anywhere near the major traffic routes, but consisted of unpretentious mud forts or palisaded villages in remote, densely wooded parts.[394]

The local chiefs' strategies of avoidance was only one of many oppositional techniques to state expansion. There are numerous records of colonial officials lamenting the difficulties of bringing 'civilization' to the interior because of mass opposition to road building projects, attacks against construction crews and the destruction of existing roads.[395] This is not to say, however, that there was not a transport network in the region predating colonialism. What existed were seasonal tracks which, while known to the local populace, were invisible to the

394 Ahuja, "Opening Up the Country?": 103.
395 Ibid.: 103-105.

colonial state. The existing road network was a problem for the colonial state as they were unable to use it for their own economic and political purposes. The informal road network was also an active threat to the state power. The pre-colonial roads facilitated unfettered mobility, a condition which ran counter to the needs and demands of the colonial state. Additionally (and more immediately), this 'invisible' network served as an alternative, non-state means of communication. As Ranajit Guha argues, the existence of means of circulation outside of state control functioned as networks of transmission for inter-tribal solidarity and, during periods of rebellion, spreading resistance.[396] The isolation of the region from broader regional road networks was only partly the consequence of inhospitable terrain and colonial indifference. Adivasi areas in Bastar were also isolated because of local responses that impeded state expansion. The region's isolation is both a consequence of terrain *and* the consequence of historical processes that produced insurgent space. There were few roads built in part because local people prevented them from being built. According to Ahuja, in addition to actual attacks against road building crews by the local populace, "'passive resistance' took various forms, including the obstruction of labour recruitment, the overcharging of food stuffs and outright refusal to supply any victuals".[397]

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396 Guha, *Elementary Aspects:* 220-277.
397 Ahuja, "Opening Up the Country?": 105.

Ultimately, as Scott writes, the response by the colonial state was to concentrate populations rather than fully integrate territory and space into the broader polity.[398] Thus, for example:

> The British forced the Baigas [an Adivasi group in Bastar] into plow cultivation by repeatedly destroying their crops. If the Baigas fled to escape this ruthless campaign, they were hunted down and forced to work as laborers to collect forest species or fell trees. The Baigas were forcibly resettled on lands not conducive to timber cultivation.[399]

Wherever possible, the British state sought to concentrate and sedentarize populations, relocating them next to roads in order to forestall resistance, extract revenue for taxation and create a source of free labour for the exploitation of forest resources.

Independence

The spatial transformations which began during British rule, marked by the gradual sedentarization of Bastar and an expanding state geography regulating patterns of land use through laws enforced by the armed apparatus of the state, persisted after independence. At the time of independence Bastar was a princely state ruled by the Jagdalpur-based Rajas.[400] While British control over land had deepened and broadened over time, large tracts continued to be held by local

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398 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*: 85.

399 Chhattopadhyay, Sutapa, "Adivasi Insurgencies and Power in Colonial India," *ACME* 11.1 (2012): 71.

400 The pattern of British intervention and control over the Feudatory state of Bastar was both complex and changed over time. Most notably, there was a secular increase in the control exercised by the British government over mineral and forest resources. Customarily, land in Bastar was held in trust by village headman, with the local community enjoying common usufruct rights. The Raja's retained a right to revenue and corvée (Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns:* 57). While from the beginning, the British claimed a right of the resources of the forest, beginning in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th centuries the forest increasingly came under the direct control of the crown (Ibid.: 92-98).

notables who maintained 'traditional' community usage rights. During the period

of land reforms undertaken by the Nehru government in the 1950s, somewhat

ironically, large areas of Bastar's forests and *de facto* common land was notified

as protected forest[401] and, "As a consequence many tribal people... were

rendered 'forest encroachers'".[402] During the 1980s, under the Forest

Conservation Act of 1980 (FCA) the logic of spatial transformation deepened

even further. The FCA removed the right of individual state governments to de-

notify protected forests and, "urged [state governments] to act on forest

'encroachments'," which led to large-scale evictions of people in Bastar, then part

of Madhya Pradesh.[403] Under the aegis of environmentalism, even larger

numbers of people were displaced and whole communities were made *de facto*

illegal in order to preserve wildlife and bio-diversity. These policies suggest that,

for the government and much of urban India, the rights of wildlife trump and

exceed the rights of indigenous people. As Ashok Chowdhury of the National

Form of Forest People and Forest Workers trade union says:

> Urban middle-class is very much against tribals getting any rights in the
> forests. There are more tiger lovers than tribal lovers. That's the paradox.
> We call that highly intellectual bankruptcy. They're taking on the [legacy of
> the] British who came and made the forest department. They have been
> living in the forests for centuries and they lived with tiger and everything.
> Then the tigers were no problem. Tiger problem came after British came

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401 In 1966 the final and deposed Maharaja of Bastar state was killed in his palace by the police after
   clashes between crowds who had arrived in Jagdalpur for Dussehra, a religious festival which was also
   the time when subjects would traditionally petition the king. According to his grandson, and current
   honorific Maharaja, the discontent in 1966 was to a significant extent triggered by the alienation of
   Adivasi from customary common land by the state (Kamal Chandra Bhanj Deo. Author interview.
   Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh: 17 March 2013).
402 Véron and Fehr, "State power and protected areas": 285.
403 Ibid.: 286.

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and it's basically last hundred years. And hunting and all that. It was started by the elites, not by the tribals.[404]

Additionally, the tension between state-led environmentalism and indigenous rights is something which the Maoists themselves are aware of. Discussing displacement in contemporary India, an informant close to the Maoists states that:

> This was also part of the project that the government of India tried to push in terms of trying to save the environment, ecology, forest and creating reserved forests or save tiger projects which emerged around the same time. All coalesced together so even while they were attacking the rights of the Adivasi and encroaching on their domain a lot of it was being pushed in the name of protecting the animals, extinct animals or   animals on the verge of extinction.[405]

Thus the, long-term history of forced sedentarization through exclusion was deepened post-independence. The spatial transformations which began under British rule accelerated and deepened with the Nehruvian developmental state, until greater and greater areas of land were swallowed up by a forest regime which heavily regulated and entirely excluded the region's forest dwelling populace.

Very little changed in substance during the period following independence. The newly independent state continued to primarily interact with the local populace through regimes of forest protection and the repressive apparatus of the police. It could, in fact, be plausibly argued that the policies and spatial transformations which were detrimental to the local populace deepened in the

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404 Ashok Chowdhury. Author interview. Delhi: 19 December 2012.
405 Anonymous. Author inteview.

Nehruvian period. The logic underlining this period was one of national development and post-colonial nation building. The state retained many of the colonial laws which had the most significant detrimental effects on the local population. Forest notification accelerated and the Adivasi were excluded from large and larger tracts of land. Furthermore, independent India sought to 'modernize' along the lines of the developmental statism prevalent in the post-colonial period. Nehru's 'temples of industry' and the massive public infrastructural projects which sought to increase India's industrial and economic power often had disastrous consequences on Adivasi populations. While the British occasionally resorted to relocation and corvée labour in the face of resistance, independent India began a process of spatial transformation marked by a regime of mass displacement. In Bastar the state built large-scale iron ore extraction and processing, such as the Soviet-funded Bailadila project, which sought to to industrialize and 'develop' the region. Ultimately the Bailadila project (and other similar extractive industrialization led by the developmental state) remained rooted in displacement, environmental destruction and benefited only relatively small groups. In Bastar, the Bailadila project has become shorthand for state-led displacement under the aegis of the developmental state. As Gautam Navlakha of the People's Union for Civil Liberties States

> Why is it that in Bastar area people always refer to the experience of Bailadila? And the NMDC [National Mineral Development Corporation] mines? They always refer to it. In any pamphlet, in any poster, any statement that is brought up, they always refer to Bailadila. Why? What is Baladilla? It's a code in which is embedded their whole experience of what

happens when they're displaced and their land is taken and mines are developed. They become peripheral. Skilled labour is brought from outside. If they at all get jobs, they get a job as class IV employees, unskilled labour force. That is the best that they can get.[406]

'Liberalization' and Space

The current period is a continuation of the long-term processes of spatial

transformation that has sedentarized the population, exploited the region's

natural resources and gradually extended the institutions of the state into the hills

and forests of Bastar. There are, however, certain novel characteristics to the

contemporary period. As discussed above, the regimes of spatial regulation in

Bastar have, since the advent of colonialism, operated under three primary

rationales: conservation, sedentarization and state control over natural

resources. Under neo-liberalism extant trends have both accelerated and been

altered. There has been a move away from direct state control of land towards

privatization and the pursuit of policies encouraging the inflow of investment for

resource extraction. This shift is a direct result of the balance-of-payments and

fiscal crisis experienced by the Indian state in the early 1990s. The resultant

liberalization has led to what David Harvey has referred to as accumulation by

dispossession, a spatio-temporal fix to capital over-accumulation through:

> The commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; conversion of various forms of property rights – common, collective, state, etc.– into exclusive private property rights; suppression of rights to the commons; commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative, indigenous, forms of production and

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406 Navlakha. Author interview.

consumption; colonial, neo-colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets, including natural resources; monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land... The state, with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality, plays a crucial role in both backing and promoting these processes.[407]

While the policies of and strategies pursued under the rubric of neo-liberalism represent the most recent iteration of a spatial transformation in Bastar dating back to the colonial period, the contemporary period exhibits some novel characteristics. In particular, the increased tenor of investment and resource extraction has created a regime of displacement whose tenor significantly exceeds that which preceded it.[408]

The most significant recent changes to the political economy and subsequent spatial transformations in Bastar are the changes to resource access and the dispensation of land by the state. Under the developmental state, the central government exercised tight control over extraction of natural resources. This began to change after 1993. By the 21st century the central government had delegated the power to grant mining license powers to individual state governments, lifted foreign equity limits and removed 13 minerals whose

407 Harvey, David, "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation By Dispossession," *Socialist Register* 40 (2004): 74. Additionally, Walker has examined the Maoist conflict in the context of a larger process of accumulation by dispossession. While her analysis provides a valuable contribution to the political economy of Chhattisgarh and the transformations which are presently occurring in the region, it lacks historical perspective with which to situate the current politics of the region and over-determines the role of globalized capital in the conflict and transformations occurring in Bastar (Walker, "Neoliberalism on the Ground").

408 According to the Indian Planning Commission, 60 million people have been displaced since independence, with 40% of those constituting Adivasi (Planning Commission, *Development Challenges:* 15). While there are no concrete figures which compare the tenor of displacement from the current period to that preceding liberalization, there is a consensus that the tenor of displacement has increased. LeMons Walker states that, "According to one calculation, more than 500,000 hectares of forestland were seized for 'development projects' between 2001 and 2006, a greater amount than during the previous 20 years altogether" (Walker, "Neoliberalism on the Ground: 580).

ownership and right to extraction had been exclusively reserved for public sector companies.[409] Consequently during the previous decade the number of licenses issued has drastically increased as private capital has flowed into the region.[410] These changes have placed enhanced stress on the contradictions inherent in the forest notification regime. Much of the region's mineral resources are in notified forests where land is heavily regulated and usage circumscribed. There has been a move towards increased privatization and the transfer of both usufruct rights and ownership of previously protected lands to private interests.[411] Protected land in Adivasi communities cannot be sold or transferred to outsiders. There is, however, legislation granting the state eminent domain. It has become increasingly common for government to expropriate land and subsequently transfer ownership to private interests.[412] This has transformed the relationship between the local populace and the state from one of regulation and sedentarization to displacement. The southern portion of Bastar contains the majority of the state's iron ore deposits, a resource whose extraction is particularly damaging to the environment. In the past 12 years alone approximately 26,000 acres of agricultural land has been lost to mining.[413] This figure does not include the number of acres that have been appropriated, often with the tacit agreement of local officials, for illegal mining.

409 Mineral Resource Department, *Mineral Policy.*
410 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggles": 1772.
411 Ibid.: 1772.
412 Bahree, "The Forever War": 84.
413 Sudha Baradwaj. Author interview. Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh: 26 February 2013.

As a consequence of liberalization, the tenor of the spatial transformation underway in Bastar has increased. As Sudha Baradwaj, a prominent human rights lawyer and head of the Chhattisgarh People's Union for Civil Liberties states, the area has 16 public sector plants which, until recently, were the only ones allowed to operate here. In the past decade hundreds of private sector plans have been built.[414]

In southern Chhattisgarh in addition to the direct displacement caused by land transfers, large swathes of territory has become uninhabitable. Mining byproducts has led to the, "contamination of rivers with iron dust, rendering the only source of fresh water and irrigation for local villagers unusable".[415] And the tenor of acquisitions is increasing. As Suvojit Bagchi, former Chhattisgarh correspondent for *the Hindu* states:

> The iron ore blocks in south Chhattisgarh... it's so damn polluted. So damn polluted. There's no land acquisition rule that can do anything. They acquire any amount of land and while doing that they can clearly threaten people. The companies and the government, the administration can point blank threaten people to take land. And that's how they've taken land.[416]

In spite of all of the problems and pathologies associated with colonialism and the Nehruvian developmental state, there existed a number of safeguards

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414 Baradwaj. Author interview.

415 Miklian, "The purification hunt": 455. According to Sudha Baradwaj: "What does it mean? If it means your land is going to be taken away, and you're not even going to get a permanent job, and your water is being taken by the company, and on top of that power plants, power plants... there are 70 power plants,. 33 crore tonnes of coal per annum is what they're going to require. Korba is already the most polluted area in the country. They don't have any place to dump anymore." (Baradwaj. Author interview.)

416 Bagchi. Author interview. Tellingly, the Bagchi, who works for one of the country's most influential newspapers, *The Hindu*, told the author that covering the Maoists in the state was far easier than it was to cover mining. According to Bagchi, the financing and proceeds from mining implicated large numbers of the state's political and economic elites and therefore exposure of these practices threatened multiple interests.

that shielded the Adivasi from the full onslaught of capitalism and state power. In all of its paternalism, these policies had embedded benefits and protections for the local populace. Under colonialism, Bastar was partly protected from a total spatial transformation through state indifference and an unwillingness and inability to devote the military and financial resources necessary to fully absorb the region. During the period of the developmental state, the local populace was shielded by paternalistic laws that sought to preserve the 'traditional' way of life of the country's tribal populations and the state's commitment, at least on paper, to a social democratic welfare state dedicated to the 'upliftment' of the country's citizens. While the national developmental model pursued before liberalization state was rooted in mass displacement and the transformation of space at the detriment of large numbers of people, this industrial model had a logic which varied from neo-liberal accumulation by dispossession. According to Baradwaj, the creation of an extraction industry, most exemplified by the Bailadila iron ore project in Bastar effectively created a middle-class in Chhattisgarh:

> There was some upward mobility for one section. Some purchasing power increased, that money went into the countryside and people invested and living standards went up. Also because they were public sector they had lot of obligations. They had to run townships and schools and hospitals. So in terms of employment, in terms of increase in purchasing power there was a visible trickle down then.[417]

The Indian state, partly because of its colonial experience and partly due to the developmental models which were dominant at the time, exhibited a distrust of foreign capital. Large sectors of the economy, in particular natural

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417 Baradwaj. Author interview.

resources, were largely closed to foreign investment. Consequently, there was simply not enough capital in the Indian economy for a wholesale investment in extraction that would transform the space of central and eastern India. All of this has changed under neo-liberalism which has generated a spatial transformation rooted in displacement and violence.

The spatial transformations underway in eastern India can be understood as a long-term process whose specific mechanisms vary temporally in response to changes in the national and global political economy. The longer-term process is the sedentarization of a once largely mobile population and the transformation from non-state space state space constituted as a periphery for extraction. This longer-term process has unfolded over three broad periods: colonialism; developmentalism; and neo-liberalism. The mechanisms of this spatial transformation and the content of those transformations has varied over time. Under colonialism, the government functioned under a dual logic of resource exploitation and forest conservation. The British established direct control over large forest tracts and excluded mobile populations from access to forest resources, enforcing exclusion through the establishment of the Imperial Forest Service. Beyond these bounded colonial spaces the state exercised its rule, except in times of rebellion, indirectly through semi-suzerain Princely states and zamindari tax farming. The primary causes explaining this particular form of state formation were that the British were unwilling to commit the administrative and military resources necessary to establish complete control over the region and

wished to preempt rebellion and deflect grievance. The consequence was a colonial state rooted in exclusion whose everyday manifestation was through its repressive apparatus. Other state infrastructure and administrative institutions were virtually absent.

Very little changed in substance during the period following independence. The newly independent state continued to interact with the local populace through regimes of forest protection and the repressive apparatus of the police. It could be argued that the policies and spatial transformations which were detrimental to the populace of Bastar deepened after independence. The logic underlying this period was one of national developmentalism and post-colonial nation building. The state retained colonial laws with significant negative effects on the populace. Forest notification accelerated and the Adivasi were excluded from even larger tracts of land. Furthermore, independent India sought to 'modernize' along the lines of the developmental statism which was prevalent in the post-colonial period. Nehru's 'temples of industry' and the massive public infrastructural projects which sought to increase India's industrial and economic power often had disastrous consequences on Adivasi populations.

While spatial transformation can be periodized, it is important to note that the three moments—colonial, developmental and post-liberal—are not entirely discrete. They are part of a long-term series of processes of state expansion, sedentarization and the expansion of capitalism in the region. Similarly, this long-term set of processes simultaneously unleashes oppositional forces, creating

spaces of rebelliousness and resistance which limit and structure state response. During the colonial period, state unwillingness to exercise direct rule over the region can be in part attributed to wide-spread resistance by the local populace, resistance which included rebellion, a refusal to pay tax, migration and continued grazing and use of forest resources in notified areas of enclosure.[418] The need for a repressive apparatus to enforce spatial transformation and exclusion was the consequence of overt and covert resistance. Thus, the thin, repressive colonial state which set a pattern that continues to be seen in the present-day was a consequence of the actions of the local populace.

The process of producing particular spaces in the region should not be understood as a Manichean struggle between the state as an agent of modernity and the rebellious defenders of a primitive idyll. Rather, it is a historical process in which local economies, societies and political systems have interacted with an emerging, expansionist state. Both shape and create the other. Insurgent space, by definition, can only exist in opposition, that which it opposes is simultaneously created by that opposition. It is a continuous dialectic. While the production of insurgent space can be partially understood as the consequence of moral and ideational resistance through the generation of alternative histories and cultural imaginings, it is also rooted in the material transformations that have occurred from the imposition and spread of forms of rule rooted in displacement, enclosure and the project of sedentarization. There is a visible material element in the production of insurgent space. It is a consequence of the impoverishment of local

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418 Guha and Gadgil, "State Forestry and Social Conflict".

populations through regimes of regulation that emerged in the 19th century and are now being transformed into regimes of displacement. The present historical moment has not only enabled the emergence of Maoist insurgency, but has also, in turn, been transformed by it.

In effect, the primary logic of statecraft in Bastar since independence has been integration of the region through policies of control over land and limiting the access of indigenous communities to the forests. The logic mimics that which Scott describes unfolding in Zomia.[419] It is a project to sedentarize Adivasi populations and create a space which is 'visible' and legible to the state and functions as a peripheral area for the extraction of natural resources.[420] The region is being created as a functional part of a larger bureaucratic and capitalist system.

In the Maoist insurgency one can find both differences and similarities from earlier rebellions in Bastar. The most significant difference between the past and the present is that past rebellions, with certain exceptions, were highly localized events. Even in those cases in Bastar where unrest spread to a larger area, the demands articulated were reactive. Rebellion either challenged a specific policy or expressed a desire for political, economic and social change

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[419] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

[420] As Scott argues, there is an economic rationale for the expansion of the state into mobile, frontier societies: "The attempt to fully incorporate them has been culturally styled as development, economic progress, literacy and social integration. In practice, it has meant something else. The objective has been less to make them productive than to ensure that their economic activity was legible, taxable, assessable and confiscatable or, failing that, to replace it with forms of production that were" (Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*: 5-6). While this is a vital component driving state expansion into peripheral areas, I would, however, argue that at least in the case of eastern and central India, another fundamental logic has been linked to both concerns about 'security' and a the pursuit of modernity by a state with 'post-colonial' anxiety.

through nostalgic idioms and a desire to (re)create an idyllic political order imagined to have existed in a semi-mythical past. For example, a rebellion of 1910 began in areas which had recently been reserved by the forest department[421] articulated grievance in an idiom which (temporarily) deified the Raja of Bastar as the vessel of Adivasi consciousness.[422] Arguably, the entry of the Maoists has fundamentally transformed this element of resistance. While the Maoists seek to overturn an order deemed to be unjust (which is the basis of historical rebellions in the region), they are also building connections between numerous spatially specific struggles in order to create a widespread, territorially diffuse political project that aims to fundamentally transform the political, social and economic order. It is a project which is territorial and local while also functioning as a revolutionary critique in a modernist idiom of insurgency and an alternative imagining of the state. This modernist, universalist political project differentiates the Maoist insurgency from past rebellions. Earlier forms of rebellion represented very real *political* projects expressed in non-modernist idioms. As Gell argues, for example, the Bastar rebellion of 1910 was a response to fears that reservation, "involved the prospect of harsher taxation and more effective landlordism, which cannot take hold when shifting agriculture is permitted to take place freely. 1910 was a preemptive strike against administration as such, rather than because the tribes 'needed' their forest land in order to subsist".[423] While this was a political struggle, it was reactive, seeking

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421 Guha, *Elementary* Aspects: 120.
422 Sundar, *"Debating Dussehra"*: 27-29.
423 Gell, Alfred, "Exalting the King and Obstructing the State: A Political Interpretation of Royal Ritual in Bastar District, Central India," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3.3 (1997): 446.

to prevent or forestall a real or perceived change in the sociological, economic and political order as it was experienced and understood by the Adivasi rebels. It drew on a shared construction of the past in order to mobilize political action in the present.

What the Maoists have accomplished is to integrate these earlier, highly localized expressions of opposition into a broader, territorially and culturally expansive modernism that seeks to create a new order that draws much of its strength from the subjective, lived realities of the local populace. It is a modernist project tempered (and shaped) in part by the pre-modern political idioms and demands of the population.

In this sense there is a connection between the contemporary Maoist insurgency and previous rebellions. The most interesting, and arguably relevant, similarity between previous rebellions and contemporary insurgency lies in mobility. As discussed above, one of the primary historical strategies of resistance and state avoidance was by moving deeper into the forests. Populations re-located when faced with the military or economic might of the state. Furthermore, mobility was facilitated and resistance transmitted through a series of fluid transport networks largely invisible to the state. Similarly, mobility and the territorial invisibility of non-state space is the ally of the insurgent. Thus, for example, Abujmarh in Bastar, where the Maoists have their headquarters, is a zone of invisibility to the state. It is unmapped and wholly untouched by permanent roads: a black hole over which the state has nothing more than

nominal, imagined control. It is a non-state space. Furthermore, Maoist mobility is reflected in (from the perspective of the state) the shadowy nature of the insurgents. They are constantly on the move and often shed their dress.

Even those spaces which are clearly state spaces are temporally fluid due to the mobility of the state. Thus, in a number of 'national' highways in the state it is the forces of the police who control the roads in the day, while withdrawing to their barracks at night, ceding control to highly mobile bands of insurgents. The insurgents do not require a physical presence in a particular space at a particular time in order to effectively control or contest the space. It is simply enough that the state is absent and the insurgents may be present. In effect, this has created a temporally contingent sovereignty.[424]

Insurgency and Insurgent Space

While the historical, as well as intellectual, heartlands of the Maoist insurgency in India are located in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh has become the primary site of the insurgency during the previous decade and a half. The entry of the Maoists into the area is steeped with a mythological quality. It is, however, generally agreed by both Maoist and police informants that the PWG

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[424] This is something which I experienced on a number of occasions during fieldwork in Bastar. On a number of occasions while traveling the roads around my companions would seek to ensure that we reached our destination before sunset because at night, the area would become "Maoist". The one time I did travel in the night in an area outside of Jagdalpur, there was a great deal of nervousness and one of my companions, a former minister in the Central Government, told me that the Maoists moved freely there at night and that the road 'became there's'. The power of uncertainty, and the idea that much of the strength of the insurgents is based on the idea that they could be anywhere at anytime was an idea examined by Alpa Shah in neighbouring Jharkhand. (Shah, "In search of certainty"). It is also true for Chhattisgarh.

sent a small squad into Bastar in 1979 or 1980 from Andhra Pradesh. The entry and subsequent expansion of the Maoists in the region can be attributed to a number of factors. First, as discussed above, the state in Bastar was both weak and repressive. Consequently, the population of the region was alienated from the state, providing a valuable source of sympathy, if not support, for the Maoists. What state apparatus did exist lacked the strength to resist an armed challenge to its authority and presence. Notably, when the Maoists first began operating in Bastar in the 1980s, the relative absence of state apparatus in the region was reflected in the police forces. As Vishwa Ranjan, former DGP of Chhattisgarh, states, "I was in Bastar in '82-'84. But we had very little police force. A police station had a strength of one sub-inspector, two head constables and seven or eight constables. It was supposed to look after 100 odd villages."[425] 'Villages' in Bastar consist of small clusters of huts scattered across a large area. As Girdhari Nayak, Chhattisgarh DGP (Jails) explains, "Bastar is a huge area. 40,000 square kilometres... In a forest village you'll find two houses here, another few houses after 2 kilometres. Those are forest villages."[426] This provides an indication of how 'thin' state presence was and how it was that the Maoists were able to operate in Bastar relatively undisturbed during their initial expansion into the area.

Second, the ideological and tactical willingness of the Maoist insurgents to engage with the material and the cultural struggles of the local populace enabled

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425 Ranjan. Author interview.
426 Nayak. Author interview.

them to garner support among a population that had long been alienated from the state. The contrast between the behaviour of the state and the insurgents is notable. Reflecting the power distribution of the state, Hindi and Chhattisghari are the only official languages, despite the fact that over 30% of Chhattisgarh's population is Adivasi.[427] This has significant consequences in the everyday lives of the Adivasi. For example, the state does not provide translators for Adivasi who have been charged with crimes, thereby undermining the principal of justice in judicial proceedings. As Sudha Bharadwaj succinctly says: "This state, after 50 years has not bothered to bring in Gondi. You don't have interpreters in court for people speaking Gondi language. You only rule over them, you don't want to talk to them. You don't want to listen to them."[428]

In addition to the inability of non-Hindi speaking Adivasi to represent themselves effectively in criminal proceedings, linguistic non-recognition has had a significant role in the region's contemporary spatial transformation. According to a number of informers, mass displacement and land capture for industrial and extractive use is facilitated by a legal regime that does not substantively or quantifiably define 'fair' compensation. Therefore, when land is designated for seizure, Adivasi are doubly disadvantaged. When negotiating compensation they are often offered well below the actual value of their land, a practice which runs contrary to the spirit of the law. As mentioned above, the courts have significant linguistic barriers in place, preventing individual's from challenge illegal

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427 Sharma, Supriya, "Guns and Protests: Media coverage of the conflicts in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh" Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford: 20.
428 Bharadwaj. Author interview.

expropriations and inadequate compensation. This is in addition to the legal threats, intimidation, violence and false charges which are also commonly levelled against those whose land and livelihood is targeted for expropriation.[429]

In contrast, the Maoists encourage traditional cultural forms and expression in their territory. It was the insurgents who first established a writing system for Gondi, one of the primary indigenous languages of Bastar[430] and the Maoists publish propaganda materials and newspapers in Gondi and other, local, indigenous languages. Insurgent propaganda and 'education' is often expressed in traditional cultural forms through itinerant dance and musical troupes and translation of revolutionary Telugu poetry and music.[431]

The Maoist's engagement with local cultural practice is often understood in one of two ways. Critics of the insurgents interpret engagement as little more than a tactical convenience with which to garner local support. This view holds that Maoist ideology, with its belief in revolutionary modernity and progress, demonstrates that support for local cultural particularities is tactical and temporary. Government and police officials argue that Maoist educational and cultural praxis is little more than propaganda to fool the uneducated Adivasi. This view is reflected in the statement of a senior police official: "People remained illiterate for a long time, so they could fool those people and they were inducted into their organization. So that's why the cadres are from Bastar".[432] The belief

429 Bagchi. Author interview.
430 Navlakha, *Days and Nights*: 91-93.
431 Rao. Author interview.
432 Dash. Author interview.

that the Maoists are able to 'fool' the local people into supporting them is a view held widely by police and government officials in the region.[433]

This perspective reveals two things. First, it implicitly accepts the claim by the Maoists and their sympathizers that it is the insurgents who have demonstrated a willingness to speak with people in their local language using local cultural forms and idioms, something which the state has failed to do. Second, it lays bare the modernizing, teleological vision which sees the state's role as the 'upliftment' of the backwards tribal, guiding them through the painful transition to modernity, a transition which inevitably and tragically requires the obliteration of Adivasi socio-cultural life. The state's inevitable role is to destroy the Adivasi in order to save them from poverty and 'backwardness'.

Those who sympathize with the insurgents, on the other hand, point to Maoist cultural engagement as a key element constituting a revolutionary movement of liberation for India's subaltern populations. This alone, however, is a superficial and naive reading of the production of insurgent space in India. The Maoist project is in fact one of creating an alternative modernity, albeit one tempered and structured by a voluntarist, subjectivist understanding of the processes of revolution. While the Maoists have deployed and encouraged traditional cultural forms, the content of these forms has been imbued with revolutionary meaning.**[434]** The Gondi newspapers published by the Party and the

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433 Various author interviews.
434 "There is no such thing as art for art's sake. He [Mao] emphatically declared 'all our literature and art are for the masses of the people.' He put forth a completely new line. He said that our literary and art workers must 'move their feet over to the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat.' He also called upon them that they should go 'into the thick of practical struggles and through the process of studying Marxism and society.' He further asserted, 'an army without culture is a

travelling revolutionary drama troupes convey a message advocating Maoist revolution. It is an attempt to create a new revolutionary subjectivity rooted in re-constituted 'traditional' practices. It is part of a project to create a new, class-conscious subject whose very identity as Adivasi becomes revolutionary.

Neither of these two positions is terribly convincing.[435] The Maoists have been present in the region for over three decades. Pragmatism and instrumentality are, by their definition, temporary and situational. In parts of Bastar such as Abujmarh, where the Maoists have had a relatively unchallenged presence for decades, there would be little practical need for the maintenance of policies which would run counter to core ideological tenets. Had this praxis simply been a short-term tactical necessity to gain access to a region one could expect these policies to be cast aside once the Maoists had firmly established themselves in an area. There is no evidence to suggest that this has occurred.

The insurgency and the Maoist political project in Bastar needs to be understood dynamically, contextually and dialectically. In effect, what is unfolding in Bastar is an attempt to create an insurgent space which contains nascent

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dull-wetted army, and a dull-wetted army cannot defeat the enemy.' " (CPI(Maoist), *Hold High the Bright Banner*)

435 While the view of the Adivasi as a 'backwards' remnant of an earlier more primitive time who require the assistance of the state in order to be welcomed into modernity and prosperity is deeply problematic, there is some validity in the claim that the Maoists use local cultural forms for instrumental reasons. In a rich and perceptive article on the practices of witchcraft in eastern Maharashtra, Amit Desai writes, "What then of the position of the Naxalites themselves towards witchcraft? In many other parts of the country and in neighbouring Nepal, the Maoists take an avowedly anti-witchcraft, anti-superstition line that accords rather well with what I have described for the local state administration in and around Markakasa. The Maoists subscribe to a particular vision of modernity that is in opposition both to the unequal economic and to the social relations of the past, and the mystifying (and expensive) shackles of 'religion' and 'superstition'.

According to the programme of the Communist Party of India (Maoist)), anti-witchcraft measures, and the use of shamans, diviners and sorcerers, are to be discouraged and banned in the areas in which they control" (Desai, "Anti-Witchcraft": 436).

elements of a radical modernity as well as a liberatory cultural space informed by that modernity. This must be examined in the realms of both ideology and material practice and the interplay between the two.

There are two fundamental elements of the ideological world-view and practice of the Maoists in India which are important to understand the production of an insurgent space in Bastar. The first is their adherence to the basic tenets of Maoism. These tenets are, as critics of the insurgents claim, rooted in a particular project of radical modernity that seeks to create a revolutionary utopia through the dialectical interplay of revolutionary voluntarism and a teleological conception of history.[436] This is the core essence and meaning of what it is to be a Maoist. This is true of the CPI(Maoist) and the broader Naxalite movement in India.[437] Such a vision is inherently linked to a rejection of relativism and cultural difference and has a tendency towards 'totalitarianism' -- a socio-spatial 'flattening' that seeks to assimilate and obliterate difference into a creative project of a revolutionary future. There is, however, a fundamental tension that exists in Maoism. In China, for example, while Maoism was responsible for the Great Leap Forward, a massive state-directed and totalitarian push towards modernity,

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436 "Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level." (Mao, *Selected Works:* 81-82)

437 "Mao stressed the profound truth that matter can be transformed into consciousness and then consciousness back into matter, thereby further developing the understanding of the conscious, dynamic role of man in every field of human activity. Mao Tse-tung masterfully applied this understanding in analysing the relationship between theory and practice, he stressed that practice is both the sole source and ultimate criterion of truth and emphasising the leap from theory to revolutionary practice." (CPI(Maoist), "Nobody Can Kill the Ideas of Azad!").

it was also responsible for the voluntarist, anti-state chaos of the Cultural Revolution. And it was in the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution that the Indian Maoist first coalesced as a coherent and self-conscious force.

As argued in a previous chapter, the emphasis on revolutionary subjectivity and a willingness to meaningfully engage with the lived realities of the subaltern populations of India was, and continues to be, a hallmark of the Maoist insurgency. It is this that makes the movement capable of entering, and sustaining themselves, in various peripheral spaces of India in spite of over three decades of conflict with the state. Thus, in Bastar, the Maoists have patiently engaged with the language and culture of the Adivasi populations. Not only does this enable them to speak directly to the population and spread their revolutionary message and vision directly to the villages of the region, it also demonstrates a willingness to relate to the local populace on their terms. This can be contrasted with the approach of the state and the views of Adivasi culture held by the state's representatives, an approach which emphasizes assimilation. Whether it is instrumental and cynical or not, the Maoists, through their praxis, interact with the local populace on terms of cultural equality. The state, on the other hand, sees the myriad 'problems' of the region, including poverty, illiteracy and alienation, as the product of cultural inferiority. This relationship is, fundamentally, colonial.[438]

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[438] As Desai writes, "The presence of the Maoists (also known as Naxalites) in Maharashtra since at least the late 1980s, primarily in the easternmost districts of Gondia and Gadchiroli, has made the state more urgently involved in people's lives than before; its personnel and policies have come closer to villagers both in fact and in imagination. As the police attempt to tackle what they see as Adivasi 'backwardness', which they believe leads the latter to support the Maoists, they attack so-called 'superstitious' practices such as witch-finding and ghost-detecting" (Desai, "Anti-Witchcraft": 423-

How then does this ideological/practical referent of the insurgents inform and shape the particular material, economic and sociological production of space in Bastar? In a static analysis of insurgency (and politics more broadly) there is a seemingly irreconcilable contradiction with Maoist ideology and practice. Engaging with the lived realities and subjectivities of communities which exist on the fringes of modernity while also pursuing a project of radical modernity is something which, on the surface, is an irreconcilable contradiction.

Yet, the production of insurgent space in Bastar demonstrates a third possibility. If one understands politics in general, and insurgency in particular, as a process of continuous multi-dimensional dialectical interplay, then the contradictions of Maoist ideological practice, a commitment to a project of radical modernity and an engagement with the lived realities and subjectivies of non-modern populations can both exist simultaneously. The praxis of the Maoists alters the lived realities of the local populace while, in turn, their practice is shaped by that very engagement.

How does this manifest itself in concrete practice? The engagement of the Maoists with the populace contains both elements of suppression and accommodation. On the one hand there is the embrace of 'traditional' forms of cultural expression and the cultivation and encouragement of local languages, languages which the leadership and the Telugu-speaking cadres of the Party who initially entered into Bastar did not speak. Second, and materially, the Maoists

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have, supported—and even encouraged—'traditional' economic modes such as swidden and the collection of tendu leaves and other NTFP. This is in sharp contrast to the state, which has sought to sedentarize the population and exclude communities from forest access and usage. By keeping the state at bay and preventing (or slowing) the pace of spatial transformation (or stymieing development, as critics of the Maoists argue) the Maoists function as agents obstructing the spread of a state-centred project of modernity that seeks to integrate the region into the state as a peripheral space for the extraction of natural resources. In this sense the Maoists, through their presence alone, are a force prolonging the existence of non-state space.

This dialectical process can also be seen in the practices of insurgent governance. While romantic conceptions of Adivasi see indigenous societies as pre-modern and egalitarian, the reality is very different.[439] As previously discussed, Adivasi societies have been integrated into the broader political economies and states of the region for hundreds of years. Hierarchies tied, at least in part, to economic differentiation and class exist. This awareness informs Maoist praxis. As Gautam Navlakha states:

> Do you treat Adivasi communities as an organic whole or do you see them as stratified societies also with a large mass of Adivasi being at the receiving end of the traditional ruling elite, the chiefs, the Majhis, the

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439 The romantic conception is captured by an analyst at a respected security think-tank:" You know the tribal society had a different context. People were poor but content. So it was poverty with contentment that was existing. And there was exploitation. I have no doubts that the tribals were being exploited. Firstly because they were not educated secondly they are not exposed to the ways of the world. So by and large they would trade in barter system and things like that. But... I think it was a tranquil society. It is mal-governance that has created problems. And what happened very often was when the outsiders interacted with tribals, the tribals customs and traditions were not really understood clearly" (Alok Bansal. Author interview. Delhi: 11 December 2012).

Mukhias [village headman]. What is the nature of the relationship between ordinary Adivasi and clan chief in terms of cultivation for instance. There have been these differences. The Maoists always believed that you cannot relate to the Adivasis as a homogeneous whole. There are differences. Just like anywhere else, when you start working with Adivasi you have to work amongst the most oppressed sections in order to organize them.[440]

The governance structures which have been established in the areas in which the Maoists operate have sidelined, or in some cases entirely displaced, state-sanctioned structures of local governance, such as Gram Panchayats and 'traditional' councils composed of elders, headman and other local notables embedded in land ownership, access to trading networks and control over local business and money lending.[441] These have been replaced by 'revolutionary' organs connecting the larger Party apparatus with the *Sangham,* revolutionary village-based administrative organs which have displaced and marginalized *Adivasi* elites in those areas where the Maoists are active.[442]

There are two important dimensions in the creation of a parallel insurgent system of governance. First, these structures are a clear attempt by the insurgents to create a political space, a nascent revolutionary structure which mimics the organs of the existing state. It is an embryonic 'rationalized' and bureaucratized system of rule that formally and institutionally connects village communities within a nascent polity. Thus, the Maoists seek to construct a new

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440 Navlakha. Author interview.

441 Miklian, "The purification hunt".

442 "This process of consolidation and along with it the weakening of the grip of the landlords, on the economic social and political life of the village, and the establishment of the firm leadership of the proletariat over the broad masses in the village, will take place only through the course of intensification of revolutionary class struggle in that village and the basis will be laid for forming the Revolutionary People's Committees." (CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and* Tactics: 62).

type of rule through a transition from guerrilla zones to what they conceptualize as guerrilla bases. According to one observer:

> The difference between a guerrilla zone and a guerrilla base is not semantic. It is, Maoists claim, of substance. A guerrilla zone is fluid in the sense that there is a contention for control and the State is not entirely absent, even if it be in the shape of its police or armed forces. However, there are areas in these zones demarcated to ensure that work can carry on uninterrupted. These are 'bases' not easily penetrable or accessible.[443]

In guerrilla zones (or those areas where the state has a presence), the Maoists largely work clandestinely and seek to gain control of existing state-sanctioned institutions. They run their candidates and sympathizers in panchayat elections in order to capture the system from within.[444] In Bastar, which is a base area, the Maoists have created their own parallel administrative structures which mimic the state's in organizational structure. Each village cluster has a Revolutionary People's Committee (RPC), this cluster is linked with up to five other RPCs to form an Area Revolutionary People's Committee, which is ultimately connected to a zonal committee.[445]

The creation of these institutions is connected with the broader goal of creating new revolutionary subjectivities in the indigenous communities of Bastar. In many cases, it is the 'traditional' rulers and notables who have been side-lined in the creation of a nascent revolutionary structure of governance. The new organs have promoted and empowered traditionally marginalized groups within Adivasi communities, with an emphasis on absorbing the young whose

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443 Navlakha, *Days and Nights:* 125-126.
444 Nayak, *Neo-naxal Challenge*: 55.
445 Navlakha, *Days and Nights*: 124-126.

consciousness has been most shaped by Maoist training and propaganda. Insurgent governance is not simply an attempt to create a parallel structure controlled by the Party rather than the state, although this is a crucial component, it is also part of a broader Maoist project of creating a revolutionary human being within a revolutionary space. Ultimately, the administrative structure being built by the Maoists organizationally mirrors that of the state—the Gram Panchayat, the Block Development and the District. However, while it administratively mimics the state, its function varies significantly. In addition to empowering groups that traditionally had little power at the local level, the function of the RPCs is to instill a 'revolutionary' consciousness not only through daily indoctrination and propaganda sessions, but also through the demand that people actively participate in the Maoist revolutionary organs. While the system is ostensibly democratic, there is a degree of compulsion as many of those who participate as delegates and members of the RPC do so reluctantly and as a result of coercion. This can be read as the creation of revolutionary consciousness and a new revolutionary subject through revolutionary praxis- the revolutionary subject will be created through revolutionary action.

Therefore, insurgent space in Bastar can be understood as a project of simultaneous destruction, appropriation and creation. Its fundamental element is fluidity and the creation of a space that is clandestine and everywhere. This is in marked contrast with the expansion of state space in the region. Here, one can draw on Nichola Farrelly's analysis of the spatial transformations occurring in the

uplands of highland south-east Asia. According to Farelly, state expansion in this region (and other peripheral insurgent zones) has become increasingly marked by muscular, state concentration in nodal areas (towns, cantonments) and simultaneous withdrawal from other areas: "In the political systems of contemporary Zomia there is a hardening of the state in places that matter and withdrawing from places that do not".[446] Similarly, what we see in Bastar is the emergence of a nodular and temporally-contingent state space in the region. This nodular state space is paralleled by the production of an oppositional insurgent space marked by the absence and/or destruction of roads and government infrastructure and the creation of parallel governance systems. Crucially, a core element of the Maoist projects logic is an attempt to create an alternative revolutionary subjectivity which maintains existing, 'traditional' sociological, political and cultural forms while fundamentally transforming the content of those forms. It is an attempt to create an alternative modernity to the state, but an alternative modernity which is, contradictory, liberatory, non-assimilationist and totalizing.

Architectures of Force and the Ideal State

The period of modernity and integration of Bastar which began with the colonial encounter can be divided into three periods: the colonial, with the state establishing indirect control over much of the territory while also enclosing large

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446 Farrelly, Nicholas, "Nodes of Control in a South(east) Asian Borderland." In *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia*, ed. David N. Gellner (Durham: Duke UP, 2013): 200.

tracts of forest for purposes of both exploitation and conservation; post-independence national developmentalism with the state accelerating existing regimes of forest enclosure and building large-scale infrastructural projects and created industrial nodes in Bastar; and post-liberalization, marked by an accelerated regime of displacement, the fragmentation and weakening of land protections and an expansive in-flow of private capital for resource extraction. There are continuities between the current period and those preceding it. But while the present can be understood as part of a long-term process of spatial taming, sedentarizing populations and creating a peripheral region whose primary function is to provide natural resources and opportunities for investment capital, the particular logics and subsequent materialization of spatial and state practice is unfolding in novel ways.

There are three key differences in the underlying logics of state expansion which have structured the particularities of the transformation of space in eastern and central India in the post-liberalization period. First, India has become increasingly integrated into the mobile, global capitalist system. This is evidenced by the erosion of restrictions on foreign investment in the natural resource sector and the subsequent increase in demand for the region's mineral wealth. Therefore, extraction is no longer limited by nationalist motives. Simultaneously, at a time where there is growing demand for resources the state is facing a large, sustained insurgent threat over its territorial control. Previous upheavals were relatively short-lived and localized. Therefore, the state had three broad options

with which it could respond to rebellion. First, it could seek to militarily contain and then crush those challenging its authority. This was, for example, the option chosen in 1966 in response to a rebellion led by the last Raja of Bastar during the Bastar Dussehra festival.[447] According to official accounts, the police firing and suppression of the agitation during the attack led to the death of the Raja and 11 others. In the aftermath, the Raja's were officially stripped of their titles.[448] Thus, a territorially concentrated rebellion caused by local grievances was crushed through the application of force and violence and effectively suppressed before it could spread.

A second option was to negotiate with the rebels. As demands were often rooted in local political and economic grievances, negotiation could be a viable option. In 1876 a group of Adivasi detained the Raja of Bastar and his retinue in protest against two senior officials who they accused of excessive taxation and for their toleration of the corruption of petty officials. The Adivasi were fired upon. Fears of escalation led to intervention as the colonial administrator dismissed the

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447 According to the current honorary Raja of Bastar, his role in Dussehra was: "We go to every village and we try to get what they want. We have a sabha, we stay and we meet people. And we try to get what they want and we guide them and we turn it into a paper and we conclude, ok, how can we do that? This is what was done in the earlier days and we have all the different communities of caste, culture. Adivasi people have different backgrounds. The Gond people were different, Maharas were different, then their lifestyle is different. Mahtras are different. So they incorporated all the things into Dushhera. Dusshera was 75 days. So they incorporated all these guys functions into one place so that they can meet each other in Bastar and Maharaja can know that how can we make people come to one place. You should be sustained by it. This is how the political system was sustained. Then what Maharaja did was, all the kotwars were appointed. Kotwars are the people who used to send a message. If I send a message that there's a holiday, a state holiday, who will spread that news? So that was the duty of the kotwars of all the villages, to get the information from us. They should come and get the information and they should go and distribute among the villages by shouting, by going to every house and telling them. This was the responsibility of the kotewar. So this was the system, it was a political system set up by the rulers" (Kamal Chandra Bhanj Deo. Author interview).
448 See Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns:* 200-233.

two officials.[449] Where there were specific local grievances which did not challenge the legitimacy or authority of the colonial apparatus, the British government was, at times, willing to meet the demands of rebels.

Finally, the state could choose to simply ignore rebellion as a local 'law and order problem' to be be dealt with by routine administration and policing. None of these state options are viable in relation to the Maoists. The first option, force, is one element of the broad strategy the state has chosen. Given the strength and geographic dispersion of the insurgency and the relative weakness of state forces, it is, however, impossible to simply surround and, in the parlance of counter-insurgency, 'sanitize' Bastar. Meeting the demands of the rebels is also not realistic. While the Maoists articulate local grievances, their political demands and ideological vision requires the total capitulation of the state and its replacement by a revolutionary, Maoist state. Finally, for many years the state treated the Maoist insurgents as a localized 'law and order' problem. From the perspective of the state, this strategy was a failure. Law and order is, constitutionally, a state responsibility. Until the previous decade, there was little coordination between the states or intervention from the central government, something which the Maoists were able to exploit. If they faced pressure in one state, they would simply move their cadre across a sub-national border, a strategy evident in the Andhra Pradesh-Chhattisgarh border area. Furthermore, according to retired police officials involved in anti-Maoist operations during the 1980s, it was only after the Maoists had established themselves and started

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449 Ibid.: 29.

attacking the police that the state stopped treating their activities as ordinary crime. According to DT Nayak, former ADG of the Andhra Pradesh Police and lead officer in the arrest of Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, the founder of the PWG, "From 1984, things became very serious because they started taking the state head-on. If you kill policeman that means you are attacking the state. Until then they were considered murders by Naxalites. A normal murder. You'd register a case."[450] Subsequently, the Maoists were able to consolidate and grow in military strength and geographic reach. Coupled with the fact that the areas in which they are now strong are rich in high demand resources, this strategy is no longer feasible.

The current period is marked by a contradiction. The state desires control of Bastar so that it can become a site of capital, which requires it to pursue strategies of spatial taming and displacement. Spatial taming and displacement have fuelled hostility to the state and have provided the Maoists with opportunities to strengthen and expand insurgent space across the area, making the spatial taming necessary for sustained resource investment much more difficult. The solution the state has chosen resembles those seen in other hostile peripheral zones which historically have existed on the margins of the state project.[451] It is the creation of a nodular, networked form of state-making which is both spatially and temporally contingent. Rather than decisively capture control of territory, the state has engaged in population relocation into state spaces

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450 DT Nayak. Author interview.
451 Farelly, "Nodes of Control".

networked by roads. These roads are controlled by the state in the day and abandoned to the insurgents at night. It is a form of spatially concentrated, temporally contingent sovereignty which demonstrates the limits of the distance demolishing technologies which have made possible the spread of the modern state over nearly all of the earth's surface. What is unfolding across central and eastern India is, in effect, a form of militarized partial statecraft structured around counter-insurgency and a spatial practice that collapses the distinction between force and development. This is a product of nodular, force-based, territorially and temporally contingent sovereignty derived from an unwillingness and inability to engage in a wholesale occupation of the territory by the armed forces of the country.[452]

While there are similarities between the historical expansion of the state in eastern and central India and other peripheral regions of the country, such as the North-East and Kashmir, there are significant differences in the way the state has responded. Arguably, state response in Bastar has been the consequence of how central and eastern India is situated geographically and how it is understood in relation to the project of Indian nation-state formation since independence. Unlike India's other restive zones, which are framed as borderlands populated by

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[452] On a number of occasions retired senior members of the armed forces told the author that the military should not become involved in the conflict with the Maoists because it was not a force designed to fight its own people. For example, a retired Major-General who requested anonymity told me that the army could 'clean' up the Maoists in a few months. However, according to him, once the Maoists were crushed, big business could carry on displacing the tribal population and ignoring the constitution. There would be no impetus for changing the social, political and economic structures in the region. There are two interesting implications to his perspective. First, he implied that the army would become a mercenary force for big business if they were to become involved. Second, that the Maoists, according to him, are serving a necessary function by forcing the state to reform its practices in the region. Without the Maoists, capital could operate with impunity and there would be nothing to force the Indian state to carry out the necessary reforms.

potential 'infiltrators' and disloyal subjects with ties to hostile regimes, central India's conflict is discursively constructed as causally rooted in alienation. Otherwise loyal and 'authentic' Indians have been failed by a state unable and unwilling to deliver the benefits of 'development'. These state failures have created favourable socio-economic conditions for the Maoists, enabling them to exploit the legitimate grievances of the populace through cynical manipulation through indoctrination with an 'outdated' ideology.[453]

The discursive framing of Bastar as an integral, yet neglected, territory with economically strategic significance has created a particular conception of how the state ought to respond to the security and developmental challenges it faces in the region. This particular understanding of the region, coupled with the material demands of the contemporary political economy, has led to a counter-insurgent statecraft rooted in the application of force and an idea of 'development' that transcends conventional 'hearts and minds' strategies of counter-insurgency. Development, as it is understood in the context of the Maoist counter-insurgency, goes beyond the provision of basic social services to local populations in order to gain their goodwill. Within the context of India's counter-insurgency strategy, development seeks to fundamentally transform the space of India's central periphery, absorbing the region into the 'mainstream' of the country. This set of strategies focuses on the construction of infrastructure such as roads, police stations, administrative buildings, schools and health centres. It aims to integrate the region into the state by spreading its economic,

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453 Ministry of Home Affair, *Annual Report*: 33.

administrative, welfarist and repressive apparatus into territory that has historically existed outside of the ambit of most of its formal institutions.

A key consequence of discursively framing the region as an integral part of the nation has been the successful resistance to pressures for the suspension of constitutional rule in the name of security and counter-insurgency. In other insurgent zones in India, constitutional protections have been suspended under the aegis of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), with military authority superseding civil administration.[454] Due to a number of factors, including the military's reluctance to involve themselves in another seemingly intractable war, as well as the construction of the region as an integral part of the Indian state populated by fellow nationals rather than those of suspect loyalty, the counter-insurgency is, constitutionally and institutionally, being fought by civil, albeit militarized, institutions such as the police.[455]

The Maoist counter-insurgency is rooted in a model utilizing civil institutions as tools to establish law and order in conjunction with a thick developmental strategy integrating the region into the state. Unlike India's restive 'borderlands', where counter-insurgency has been structured around enclosure and containment, the primary logic underlying state behaviour in the central

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454 Noorani, AG, "Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act: Urgency of Review," *Economic and Political Weekly* 44.34 (22-28 August).

455 Informally and in a number of interviews with retired senior military officials, the author was told that the military command was strongly opposed to directly involving the armed forces in a conflict with no 'national security' implications and that the role of the army was not to fight its own citizens. (Alok Bansal. Author interview; Dhruv Katoch. Author interview. Delhi: 4 January 2013). This position has also been publicly expressed to the media by a number of senior officers. (John, Joseph, "Gen. VK Singh opposes deployment of Army to tackle Maoists," *Indian Express* (14 April 2015). Accessed 6 November 2016. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Gen-V-K-Singh-opposes-deployment-of-Army-to-tackle-Maoists/articleshow/46921289.cms)

forests is one of integration through a reconfiguration of space. While development in the region is conceptually and rhetorically promoted in mainstream discourse as a broadly benevolent process, extending democratic governance and social service delivery to impoverished and historically marginalized populations in India's hinterlands, this rhetoric masks its actual logic and practice. In this context, development can best be understood as a spatially and temporally accelerated integration of territory under conditions driven in part by the Maoist military and ideological challenge. As discussed above, this is simply the most recent turn of a longer term process of absorbing and integrating the region into the state. The difference, however, between what came before, when the state was willing to tolerate weak, indirect or non-existent sovereignty across large parts of the region is that the economic and security logics and calculus has been transformed. The region has become an increasingly important zone for the extraction of natural resources and the investment of foreign and domestic capital. It is no longer sufficient, then, to simply notify and enclose certain limited parts of the region for extractive purposes. Additionally, unlike earlier localized rebellions and challenges to state authority, Bastar has now become a source of a growing and militarily significant force which poses an *existential* threat to the state as a whole. Not only are the Maoists acting as a check on the potential of extraction and investment in the region, they represent an ideological threat to the very existence of the state, a threat which is supported through the use of force and arms.

The result of this new context is the militarization of all aspects of statecraft and the colonization of more traditionally benign institutions of the state by the logic of force and power. In contrast to the military occupations of the Kashmir valley and parts of the North-East, the counter-insurgency and state-making processes in central India are being conducted not by the temporary, if prolonged, deployment of the armed forces, which can be withdrawn once an area has been pacified. In central India, it is the civil apparatus of the constitutional state which is responsible for pacification and integration. Consequently the state-making process is fundamentally transforming the nature of these institutions and the state, re-configuring them around logics of force and power. Civil institutions, and the subsequent materialization of spatial strategies, are being colonized by a logic of militarized force. This form of statecraft conflates development with counter-insurgency, generating an architecture of force. The architecture of force is the material manifestation of a spatial transformation in which the social and civic aspects of the state blend with, constitute, and are in turn constituted by, force. It is a highly militarized form of state formation in which the modern 'welfarist' and developmental functions of the state fuse with repressive techniques and institutions of power.

There exists an empirically significant distinction between counter-insurgency waged, on the one hand, by the military and one waged by civil authorities. One can contrast India's counter-insurgency strategy in the centre of the country with that of the North-East and Kashmir. In the latter two cases

counter-insurgency is conducted by the military under the aegis of AFSPA.[456] Three relevant implications stem from this. First, AFSPA, and the subsequent *de facto* occupation of territory by the military, is a state of exception: military occupation is defined by law to be extra-constitutional and, therefore, exists as a temporally constrained set of enumerated extraordinary powers. By definition, a state of exception is temporary. At some point it will end and the space governed by its provisions will return to a state of constitutional normalcy (when and if this will actually occur is another question). Counter-insurgency waged by police forces functioning under 'normal' constitutional rule is not, however, a state of exception. There can be no reversion 'back' to a form of rule less explicitly repressive, nor can there be a time envisioned in the future when the insurgency ends and the forces occupying the territory withdraw. As a crucial arm of the state, the police will remain there whether insurgency exists or not.

The second significant implication is that AFSPA (and more broadly counter-insurgency conducted by the military) delegates responsibility for waging war and violence to an institution whose very function is waging war. In theory, the military is not integrated with the broader civil apparatus of the state and, as such, is a distinct entity which can conduct war in a context where civil administration has been temporarily suspended. When counter-insurgency is waged by police forces, civil government is conceptually and practically

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456 It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze and critique the counter-insurgencies being waged by the Indian Armed Forces under the auspices of AFSPA.

embedded into the very processes of making war. The civil and military aspects of the state function as one.

Finally, India's multiple counter-insurgencies violate the constitutional rights of citizens. In the case of areas under AFSPA, however, there exists a state of exception. That state of exception, while being extra-constitutional, is fundamentally rooted in the constitution. AFSPA can be lifted and the violations that occur under its aegis can be said to either conform or not conform with the powers vested in the military under the state of exception. In the Maoist conflict, however, war is being waged, at least ostensibly, under the constitutional order. Ironically, the very adherence to constitutional principles in the internal waging of war ultimately undermines that order. Everyday acts of violence, which are an inevitable element of war-making, will (and do) violate core provisions of the constitution. The configuration of constitutional rule in this region manifests in a way that is, ironically, fundamentally anti-constitutional.

Thus, for example, the regular courts have become institutions that function as a means of legitimating both police violence, illegal dispossession and criminalizing dissent. As mentioned above, in Chhattisgarh, where none of the proceedings are conducted in Adivasi languages and translators are rarely provided, it is relatively easy for the state to accuse villagers of being Maoists allowing the accused to languish in jail for years. Furthermore, observers have identified numerous systematic human rights and constitutional violations by the state in Chhattisgarh, in particular fake 'encounter' killings in which police forces

commit extra-judicial executions of suspected Maoists and villages.[457] Numerous

informers also have acquaintances who have been killed or 'disappeared'. Ashok

Chowdhury, for example, told of a colleague from Bastar who was:

> Staying at our office in Delhi. He was studying here. He had nothing to do with the Maoist party, but his family was very important there among the community. So he actually ran away. But then we went back [to Bastar] because he couldn't stay here. We told him, 'look, if you go back they will catch you'. But as a tribal it was very difficult   for him to stay in Delhi. So he went back and they got him.[458]

This is just one of countless stories that reveals a state that has lapsed into

brutality and arbitrary violence in spite of the strong constitutional safeguards

from rights which exist in India.

Counter-insurgency is inextricably linked with all aspects of state-building,

a process structured around force and violence There is no clear legal or

practical distinction between the apparatus of violence and that of civil

governance. There exists no state of exception: neither institutionally nor

conceptually are the processes of force or violence understood as something

temporary. There exists no legal framework that can, at some point, be

terminated, returning the region to a state of normalcy. The very institutions and

laws responsible for waging war are the same institutions and laws that will

function on the territory after it is deemed to be pacified. If there is no extra-

constitutionality, there can be no return to constitutionality. The actual practices of

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457 Human Rights Watch, *Being Neutral is Our Biggest Crime: Government, Vigilante and Naxalite Abuses in India's Chhattisgarh State,* Report (2008). Accessed 5 April 2011. https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/07/14/being-neutral-our-biggest-crime/government-vigilante-and-naxalite-abuses-indias
458 Ashok Chowdhury. Author interview.

force and violence inherent in counter-insurgency are thus normalized and become part of the spatial and institutional practices of state formation in the region.

In effect, all of these logics coalesce to create a particular type of statecraft structured by, and practiced through, the normalization and routinization of force and repression. There is a blurring of the lines between the state's apparatus of violence and its civil, social and benevolent functioning. Crucially, because of the responsibilities placed on the police for waging war, the police themselves become an army. Ultimately this leads to a colonization of state institutions by a logic of force that militarizes the police and civil government, subverting the constitutional order.

The consequences of this can be conceptualized as an architecture of force, which at the micro level is the material manifestation of broader logics and techniques of statecraft in spaces of insurgency and resistance. At the macro level, the architecture of force is a metaphor. It can be understood as the colonization of the legal, political, social and administrative functions of the state by a logic of force, and the breakdown of the distinctions between these state functions. By definition this represents a collapse between the ideas and practice of security and development. The macro architecture of force that marks the emergence of this type of statecraft is concretely manifested at the micro level through the expansion of state space expressed through infrastructures of violence whose core functions *always* involve violence.

To situate this conception of spatial transformation and emergent state logic, it is important to examine some of the key policy initiatives and strategies being employed by the government as part of its counter-insurgency strategy. One of the most visible and significant examples of the transformations of space and the re-configuration of central India through the construction of architectures of force has been an increase in land area demarcated for police and paramilitary functions. This transformation has been materialized in four significant ways: the increased militarization, fortification and spread of police stations under the rubric of modernization, the establishment of Counter-Insurgency and Terrorism Schools, relocation camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the transformation of schools into police camps.

The central government has deployed over 90 battalions (approximately 90-100,000 troops) of central paramilitary forces, primarily composed of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), to the region.[459] The general function of the central paramilitary police forces is to 'augment' local police in periods when their numbers are deemed insufficient for the 'maintenance of law and order'. Typically they provide security for elections, and are deployed to areas experiencing severe and prolonged civil unrest.

The government has built a series of Counter-Insurgency Schools for paramilitary police and established a specialized anti-insurgent force named the Combat Battalion for Resolute Action.[460] The creation of these schools, modelled

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459 "Robots enter Maoist battle," *The Telegraph* (28 February 2017). Accessed 6 May 2016.
    https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170228/jsp/bihar/index.jsp
460 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report* :28-29, 142-143.

on those operating in India's North-East, is indicative of the militarization of police

forces that is occurring in the region under the rubric of modernization. In effect,

modernization includes not only increasing the number of state and local police,

but also supplying them with higher calibre weapons and equipment, such as

helicopters and anti-mine vehicles, and providing them with psychological and

tactical training for conducting combat operations in hostile terrain. In their kit and

tactics, as well as in their responsibilities, there is an increasingly thin line

between the civil police forces deployed in central India and the Indian armed

forces.[461] There is also a vision of a police force whose training and equipment

enables them to conduct military operations that clearly transcend their role in

law enforcement and the investigation of criminal activity.

In addition to the militarization of police forces under the rubric of

modernization, there has been a concerted push to implement 'development'

projects in the region, many of which fall under the aegis of the security forces.

Most notable of these is the coordinated Additional Central Assistance for

Leftwing Extremist Affected Districts (previously known as the Integrated Action

Plan), which forms the backbone of the central government's 'developmental'

policies of counter-insurgency.[462] In addition to road construction and the CRPF's

'Civic Action Programmes', which involve the delivery of social services directly

by police forces, this forms the backdrop of the broader statecraft strategies in

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461 Specifically, the Ministry of Home Affairs administers a program called the Security Related
    Expenditure, which provides 100% reimbursement for training and materiel in insurgency affected
    districts (Jha, Om Shankar, *Impact of Modernization of Police Forces Scheme on Combat Capability of
    the Police Forces in Naxal-Affected States: A Critical Evaluation*, (Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies
    and Analyses, 2009):19-21).
462 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report*: 26.

the region. These programs blend the militarization of police forces with infrastructural construction and social service delivery as part of counter-insurgency. This approach is conceptually rooted in the understanding that the insurgency stems from poverty and alienation from the state as a result of its failure to provide tangible material benefits and deliver 'development'.[463] The blending of development and security has, in many cases, led to the implementation of infrastructural construction by the police forces directly.

At the micro level, this has had a number of consequences for the transformation of space in the region and the particular ways in which the practice of statecraft has been exercised in the region. The first, and perhaps most visible and well known of these architectures of force, is manifested by the IDP camps located throughout southern Chhattisgarh. Initially, the camps were established under the aegis of the *Salwa Judum*, a vigilante group funded by mining interests and the state as a tool to fight a dirty war against the Maoists free of legal constraints.[464] In 2014, the Supreme Court of India ruled that the Salwa Judum campaign, was unconstitutional, directing the government of Chhattisgarh to dismantle the apparatus which had initially been built up around the Salwa Judum (SCI). With the Supreme Court order and the collapse of Salwa Judum, the material infrastructure of the campaign, such as the IDP camps and checkpoints, have been absorbed into the state.[465] One way of Salwa Judum

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463 Routry, Bibhu Prasad and Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, "Countering Left-Wing Extremism in India: Conceptual Ambiguity and Operational Disconnect," *ISAS Insights* 213 (July 2013). Accessed 3 May 2015. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/166608/ISAS_Insights_No__213_-_Countering_Left-Wing_Extremism_in_India_08072013153444.pdf
464 Miklian, "The purification hunt".
465 Sudha Bharadwaj. Author interview.

regularization was through the hiring of local youth as Special Police Officers (SPOs), ad hoc auxiliaries authorized under the colonial-era Police Act of 1861.[466] There are, however, indications that something similar may be arising in Bastar again following the election of the Modi government and the general erosian of civil liberties in the country. As Alpa Shah writes, "In 2015-16, the police encouraged their urban acolytes to form groups like the Samajik Ekta Manch (Social Unity Platform), Naxal Peedith Sangharsh Samiti (Naxal-affected Struggle Committee) and Bastar Sangharsh Samiti (Bastar Struggle Committee) to hold anti-Maoist rallies [and] threaten human rights activists."[467] Whether this represents the re-emergence of a Salwa Judum-style counter-insurgent campaign remains to be seen, but the indications are not promising.

The inspiration for Salwa Judum draws on the experiences of colonial counter-insurgency practices, developed by the British in Malaya and the United States in Vietnam, conditioned by the particularities of India's constitutional order. The Indian state, unlike a foreign colonial power operating in a distant and hostile territory, faces significant domestic constraints to waging war against its populace, including the oversight of an impartial, and generally well-respected, Supreme Court tasked with ensuring adherence to the constitution, and a large media sector, some of which (at least nationally) is critical of the government. Therefore ground-clearing counter-insurgency operations were outsourced to what was portrayed as a spontaneous popular uprising targeting the predatory

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466 This was the legal justification for the recruitment of civilians to fight the Maoists provided to the author by a number of senior police officials in the region.
467 Sundar, *Burning Forest*: 16-17.

and violent insurgents.[468] The official narrative of local governments, as well as police officials, is that the popular uprising against the Maoists led to fierce retaliations by the insurgents against the local populace. This compelled the state, whose primary responsibility is protecting its citizenry, to act. In addition to semi-regularizing elements of the militia by designating them as SPOs, the state constructed and supplied IDP camps that were run in conjunction with Salwa Judum leaders.[469]

The police and the state were complicit in a campaign to relocate tens of thousands of people from isolated villages to tightly controlled and heavily militarized camps, resembling open air detention camps rather than relief camps. Access was restricted and controlled by a network of checkpoints staffed by members of the police forces, augmented and supported by armed civilian members of local Salwa Judum militias. The camps were ringed by barbed wire fencing and perimeter walls with guard towers staffed by police personnel while the interior of the camps themselves resembled a makeshift village with semi-permanent shelters for its residents. Access for both outsiders and residents was tightly controlled by the police and Salwa Judum.[470] In effect, the camps represent a technique of managing the population and taming a space in which the state has a minimal presence. It is an architecture of force within an internal borderland, a reconfiguration of space that sought to colonize the *de jure* territory of India through the use of highly instrumentalized violence.

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468 Nayak, *Neo-naxal Challenge*: 63-82.
469 Bahree, "The Forever War": 83-84.
470 Author observations from a visit to three Salwa Judum camps in 2008.

Aside from the violence of the campaign and the camps, one of the long-term effects of Salwa Judum was the transformation of space in large parts of Bastar. According to Lalit Surjan, a senior media figure in Chhattisgarh, the campaign led to the 'evacuation' of approximately 640 forest villages and the displacement of around 300,000 people, the majority of whom have not, and likely never will, return to their homes.[471] It is worth quoting Surjan at length:

> Now what happens? 73rd and 74th amendment of our constitution provides for Panchayati system. Grassroots governance. So you have Panchayat and then you have a Gram Sabha, the village council. The Gram Sabha must meet four times a year. So there are certain rights given by our constitution and particularly in the village areas we have 74th amendment which is PESA. PESA. Panchayati Raj Extension in Scheduled Areas. Scheduled Areas means that predominately tribal population in a state. So with the 640 villages deserted, there is no Gram Sabha in those villages now. There is no Gram Panchayat, there is no village machinery... the local self-government is gone there. Because there is nobody. Now in Panchayati Raj system you cannot buy a land, you cannot open even a minimum industry, smallest industry, without permission of Gram Panchayat. And it has got to be ratified by the Gram Sabha, the larger village assembly. Now if there is no village assembly and there is no village council, who is going to take decision about that land or whatever is there? Then what happened? So 2009 our elections were held. So, the people living in these rehabilitation camps, I would rather call it refugee camps, so people living in those refugee camps, they had a voting right. So what happened, the polling stations were created at those places and those refugee camps were notified as Gram Panchayats. Meaning that these tribal village people, they were deprived of their citizenship and their ancestral and their basic constitutional right of citizenship of the place to which they really belonged. So, I do not know if it has been with and eye on mineral resources or it has been... my suspicion is that it has been done on an eye on the land there.[472]

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471 Lalit Surjan. Author interview. Raipur, Chhattisgarh: 20 February 2013.
472 Lalit Surjan. Author interview.

The mass displacement and relocation of entire population is part of the larger transformation of space and the enclosure and capture of land held by the Adivasi communally and individually. Relocation has contributed to the weakening and, in some areas, complete dismantling, of the spatial settlement that has operated since the colonial period of special land and governance regimes in areas that have been deemed to be culturally distinct and separate from 'mainstream' India. The Salwa Judum re-locations and camps represent the expansion of a virulent form of state space through violence, forced displacement and the concentration of inconvenient populations into heavily policed and regulated nodal spaces.

While the use of semi-private militias in counter-insurgent warfare is not historically unknown, its particular manifestation within the developmental and liberal democratic constitutional framework of the Indian state makes it a relatively novel form of frontier expansion. The constitutional safeguards and the constant re-articulation of the principle that the Maoist insurgency is one composed of, and being waged in, a region whose population is thoroughly Indian, serve as an impetus for the semi-privatized counter-insurgency campaign of the Salwa Judum.[473] Once violence was unleashed, the state, particularly through its police apparatus, could intervene and claim that while it had nothing to do with the campaign itself, the consequences of the campaign required state intervention. Thus the state, in collaboration with the insurgents, created conditions that, under the constitutional order of India, enabled it to expand into a

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473 Dhruv Katoch. Author interview; Vishwa Ranjan. Author interview.

segment of its territory through a highly militarized spatial politics structured around architectures of force.

Additionally, the architecture of force represented by the camps blurs into the developmental strategy of counter-insurgency. The camps themselves are social service delivery nodes funded by the central and state governments.[474] Therefore, development, as understood by greater efficiencies in the delivery of state services, becomes integrated with the 'force-centric' policies of counter-insurgency. In particular, there is a convergence between the spatial requirements of the developmental state and the ability to control populations. As discussed above, the forest villages of Bastar are not villages as conventionally understood, but are widely displaced clusters of houses.[475] As Scott has argued, dispersed populations pose a threat to state control of peripheries.[476] This is as true in Bastar as it is in the South-East Asian uplands. The state sees these villages as a threat. Distance makes controlling populations difficult and leads to 'inefficiencies' in administration. As Girdhari Nayak, ADG Chhattisgarh Police says:

> So basically people have come out from forest village in those areas. And then stayed in clustered areas. And then, now none of the 'peace marches' [Salwa Judum] go on, but these people, they stay in the relief camps, their houses have been built, their livelihood programmes have started in those areas, all these things.[477]

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474 Miklian, "The purification hunt": 53.
475 DT Nayak. Author interview.
476 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed:* 180-182.
477 Girdhari Nayak. Author interview.

This is a strategy embedded in territorial capture and spatial taming revealing the fundamental weakness of the state. This weakness is the legacy of spatial practices dating back to the colonial period and represents the behaviour of a state which has conceded that it is unable to expand and consolidate itself without recourse to the violent re-location of populations and the construction of tightly controlled nodal areas. It is a state space that is produced through violence, a violence which is symptomatic of weakness rather than strength.

The police themselves (and the semi-private militias) become the key state agents for the distribution of material benefits from the state, as well as arbiters of who receives assistance. The consequence is that those within the camps live in a space constituted and controlled by the architectures of force, structured around a logic which, paradoxically, claims benevolence. On the one hand, the state has corralled and contained its citizenry in armed camps because of its constitutional duty to protect its citizens. On the other hand, the camp provides a node for the Indian state's developmental functions. The camps are the spaces in which food and education are provided, as well as the location of election polling stations.[478] The architectures of force symbolically and materially structure state activity, creating a caricature of a liberal constitutional order rooted in developmentalism.

The material, and very visible, architecture of force manifested by the camps creates two types of space: a heavily policed, militarized state space 'inside' and an ungoverned, hostile and untamed space 'outside'. This

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478 Sudha Bharadwaj. Author interview.

demarcation creates a fierce polarization. Those within the camps are subjects of the state and deserve its largess—those outside are suspect. They are either insurgents or sympathizers. India's counter-insurgency strategy, which blurs the distinction between 'development' and state violence, leads to reliance on architectures of force as a means to make the state's power and presence concrete in what is a largely 'untamed' internal frontier.

Another significant material manifestation of the state and core aspect of counter-insurgent statecraft in Bastar is a concerted expansion of road networks. Historically, the transportation networks in southern Chhattisgarh have been thin or non-existent. In addition to creating ideal conditions for insurgency, the lack of road infrastructure is indicative of the weak presence of the state in the region. Specifically, state space has been configured largely through a dense presence in administrative and industrial centres situated along transport corridors. These corridors have become highly militarized spaces, dotted with police patrols, checkpoints, forward operating bases and the IDP camps. Even here, however, there is a spatio-temporal fluctuation of control, in spite of concerted efforts to gain control of this network through the construction of protective architectures of force at strategic points. During the day, the roads are largely under the control of the police; at night state forces withdraw to fortified compounds, ceding control of the roads to the insurgents.[479] The temporal fluidity and differentiated space is indicative of the nature of both state power and techniques of governance in the

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479 Suvojit Bagchi. Author interview.

region: shallow penetration of the state structured around force and materialized in militarized, fortified zones of control.

The blurring between development and security is apparent in recent patterns of road planning and construction. The function and significance of roads overlaps with traditional developmental statecraft and the violence of counter-insurgency. First, an absence of roads limits access to territory by state police forces. Police are compelled to conduct operations in small groups on foot in unfamiliar areas. They are forced to fight on the terms of the insurgents, many of whom have spent decades living in the forests.[480] Limited road access also neutralizes much of the military technological advantage of state forces. The construction of roads enables the deployment of larger, more mobile forces into a region and unleashes a process of spatial reconfiguration. It also facilitates the construction of a growing network of architectures of force that can be used as points from which to militarily dominate a region. Roads enable the construction of fortified police stations and forward operating bases. This allows easier access to local populations and villages for conducting operations for control and, ultimately, dominance.

The second crucial set of functions played by roads in India's counter-insurgency is developmental. The construction of roads enables greater state penetration into contested spaces, allowing not only the construction of architectures of force, but also facilitating the delivery of services and the construction of social infrastructure such as schools and health centres. In effect,

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480 Gautam Navlakha. Author interview. Vishwa Ranjan. Author interview.

it establishes potentialities for the consolidation of the civil governance

institutions of the state into insurgent zones. This has both direct and indirect

effects on insurgency. Directly, it creates the possibility of developing greater

densities of state personnel and institutions, thereby increasing the presence of

the state among restive populations in contested spaces. Indirectly, by enabling

the provision of social services and demonstrating to local populations the state's

beneficence, roads are a minimum condition required in the creation of

constituencies whose material and non-material interests no longer align with

that of the rebels.[481]

The colonization and shift towards an architecture of force as

'development' and statecraft in central India is evidenced by the significant levels

of funding and the scale of ambition of the myriad road construction programs,

which seek to integrate the thinly connected insurgent zones into the broader

Indian state. One of the foremost construction schemes in the country is the

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).[482] Across most of the country, the

PMGSY falls under the rubric of the developmental state, whose rationale is the

provision of modern infrastructure and connectivity to rural areas under-serviced

by existing transportation networks. The PMGSY is a core element of India's

contemporary developmental strategy, seeking to bridge the growing divide

between dynamic urban spaces and economically stagnant rural ones. In

conception and implementation, however, the state's ambitious road construction

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481 Planning Commission, *Development Challenges*.
482 Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, "Introduction: Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak
    Yojana (PMGSY)." Accessed 7 November 2015. http://pmgsy.nic.in/Intr_E.pdf

policies reflect a significantly different logic in zones of insurgency. Here the

developmental aims have been explicitly and implicitly colonized, reflecting the

dual-logic of counter-insurgency: developmentalism and force. In addition to the

PMGSY, there are a number of other road-building plans specifically targeting

insurgent-affected districts and states, the most significant of which is the Road

Requirement Plan for 34 Left Wing Extremism Affected Districts, implemented by

the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.[483] The rationale behind this road

construction program is, as for the PMGSY, developmental. However, an

additional emphasis and explicit purpose is security. The program seeks to

facilitate the mobility of police forces in inaccessible areas and provides funding

for the construction of forward operating shelters and helipads while also, more

broadly, enhancing the security of police bases in isolated insurgent areas.[484]

Transport infrastructure's primary function becomes the creation of a backbone

enabling muscular state expansion into restive areas, creating an ideal space for

the construction of built terrain constituted around architectures of force: a space

that will enable the state to enter, function and tame the ungoverned forests of

central India. In this sense, it is also fundamentally developmental, if one

understands development in the region along the lines implicit in the country's

discourse on counter-insurgency as synonymous with state expansion through

force and control.[485]

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483 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, 2014. 'Schemes for Development of Tribes
    and Tribal Areas'. Press Information Bureau (31 July). Accessed 1 February 2015.
    http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=107711
484 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report*.
485 The line between development and violent state expansion into a frontier zone is also blurred when one
    factors in the support which the road building projects have received from multilateral and international

The state's concerted push to expand road infrastructure in the region is structured around a logic of security and force in both implementation and design. While the PMGSY and other developmentally oriented road projects in India are built and managed by private contractors, the construction of the roads in large parts of central India has deviated from this norm.[486] Oversight and managerial bodies have been constituted combining civil and police institutions for the supervision and implementation of projects. Work plans are established to ensure that the construction of roads is preceded by supportive 'area domination' exercises involving the semi-permanent stationing of security forces in an area, 'sanitizing' it of insurgents.[487] Even this has recently begun to morph, further blurring the distinction between development and force. Increasingly the police themselves have taken exclusive control of project supervision and of road construction itself. In addition to the deployment of engineers from the Border Roads Authority, the construction of roads has increasingly been conducted directly by forces such as the CRPF. The rationale is that numerous state-building projects in the region have been halted by Maoist threats against contractors. Police constructed roads can potentially neutralize this problem.[488]

development agencies such as the European Union and the World Bank (see World Bank,. "PMGSY Rural Roads Project: Vulnerability Framework," (27 September 2010). Accessed 28 January 2015. http://pmgsy.nic.in/downloads/WorldBank/VF.PDF).

486 Government of India, "Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Programme Guidelines." (April 2012). Accessed 28 January 2015. http://pmgsy.nic.in/pmg_e.doc

487 Ramesh, Jairam, "Give the Saranda Development Plan a Chance," *The Hindu* (6 June 2012). Accessed 15 January 2015.http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/give-the-saranda-development-plan-a-chance/article3494009.ece

488 Routray and D'Souza, "Countering Left-Wing Extremism": 5.

The particular architectures of force and the colonization of statecraft by a logic of security in India's central frontiers have their most ironic material manifestation in the general militarization of those architectures of the state whose conventional functions lack any clear military purpose. Roads are, arguably, the core physical infrastructure of statecraft. Their functional logic is diverse, encompassing economic circulation and social exchange as well as military and police mobility. They are vital for both war and social service delivery, therefore their rootedness in an architecture of force is unsurprising. Education, however, does not serve a dual purpose. Arguably it is the core non-military function of the bureaucratic state. Additionally, in many isolated rural areas, the school building is the only physical manifestation of the state. Writing about the recent conflict in Nepal, van Wessel and van Hirtuum point to the fact that schools are often the largest and most durable buildings in a region. As such, they are the site of multiple state related functions beyond education; hosting health camps, electoral polling stations and community meetings among other uses.[489] Additionally, they are constructed as permanent structures spatially designed to contain large grounds on which to conduct cultural programs and parades. In short, they are tactically and symbolically significant sites in hostile and restive frontier zones where state presence is relatively thin. They are the symbolic centres of the state and the site of 'official' activities, designed to allow

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[489] van Wessel, Margaret and Ruud van Hirtuum, "Schools as Tactical Targets in Conflict: What the Case of Nepal Can Teach Us," *Comparative Education Review* 57.1 (2013).

quick conversion into defensible and secure military facilities for government forces operating in hostile environments.

As a result, schools have become key strategic and tactical sites in the conflict zone. In central India, school buildings have been widely used both by security and insurgent forces for temporary shelter and billeting during combat operations.[490] This has led, as in Nepal, to the targeting of schools by insurgents. The Maoists often destroy school buildings to deny security forces access to defensible facilities in isolated areas. The school building, whose primary function constitutes the core statecraft function of developmental and social service delivery, has become a dual-use, hybridized space colonized and dominated by the architectures of force. Short, temporary billeting in school grounds by insurgent and government forces during the course of mobile operations is, however, relatively benign. While it places students at risk and turns the buildings into military targets, it does not fundamentally alter the function and the nature of schools as sites of civic statecraft and social service delivery. Once police forces vacate the space, theoretically its educational function returns. However, the war in India's central frontier and the conceptual and practical convergence of development and violence have led to processes that have fundamentally transformed the architecture of schools in isolated parts of the country, subsuming their educational and civic function within a logic of force. School occupations have lasted months and even years.[491] Security forces have either

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490 Human Rights Watch, *Sabotaged Schooling: Naxalite Attacks and Police Occupation of Schools in India's Bihar and Jharkhand States* (Human Rights Watch, New York: 2009).

491 Ibid.: 3-4.

entirely displaced the students and teachers, leading to a complete colonization of school buildings, or have occupied parts of a school, creating a hybrid school/police base. These semi-permanent occupations are reflected in the highly visible architectural changes that police forces have instigated in school facilities. The schools/bases have been structurally altered through the addition of fortified guard towers, barbed wire perimeters and trenches. Classrooms have been turned into barracks, operations rooms and armouries.[492]

One of the core ideas of military developmentalism in India has been that a root cause of the insurgency is the lack of development in a region, often understood as a lack of state presence and delivery of social services. However, as evidenced by the colonization of schools, the effect has been a blurring of the line between security and development and the colonization of the latter by the former. This has led to counter-insurgency being manifested as a particular occupation and transformation of space along the lines of an architecture of force. The hybrid school/military/police base is simply the most evident manifestation of this. While the camps, the schools and the fortified roads are the most visible manifestation of the architecture of force in India's internal frontier, they are far from the only examples of a particular hybrid-militarized form of statecraft.

The Indian case, however, is unique in many ways. It is an established and stable liberal democracy, with a powerful judiciary and an entrenched constitutional order rooted in civil and political liberties, shaded with

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492 Id.

developmentalism and a modicum of material rights (for example, the right to subsidized basic foodstuffs under the Public Distribution System). In spite of this, however, the state also devotes a relatively large proportion of its budget to police and military forces.[493] The military and security landscape of the country is not, however, structured around an expansionist foreign policy, nor is it rooted in a policy of regional hegemony. India's military and paramilitary strength is largely directed inwards. While the state is based on constitutionalism and developmentalism, this is less true at its margins, particularly in its volatile borderlands in Kashmir and the North-East. Here the constitutional order of the country has been abrogated by a state of exception in which the 'normal' order has been suspended by AFSPA. The rhetorical and material arguments of this state of exception relate to border infiltration by elements from surrounding hostile states and the suspect loyalties of the region's people. Therefore, the normal laws and rights of the citizenry do not apply. Areas such as the North-East have been discursively constituted as peripheral areas well outside of the Indian 'mainland'.[494]

The discursive construction of the insurgency and violence in central India varies significantly. Here, the territory and its people are portrayed as fundamentally part of the Indian nation. They are citizens entitled to both constitutional rights and the fruits of the developmental state. This discourse is

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[493] In 2005-06, military and security spending (including allocations for the various central paramilitary police forces) constituted 22 percent of the Government of India's spending (see Navlakha, Gautam, "National Security: To Control Something That is Out of Control," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40.31 (2005): 3369).

[494] In everyday conversation and in media coverage of the North-East, the rest of the country is often described as 'the mainland'.

framed around the notion that the insurgency is not fuelled by anti-national, restive border regions. Rather, it is fuelled by the exploitation of legitimate developmental grievances by ideologically motivated, criminal elements exploiting the ignorance and naiveté of the local populace.[495] Thus, the response has been to claim that the insurgency must be tackled by force and development simultaneously. The net result, however, has been that force and development have become conceptually blended and hybridized in practice, leading to a colonization of statecraft by policing and violence. The consequence of development as war is the emergence of architectures of force across the conflict zone; architectures which have become, metaphorically, the forward operating bases of the state. The result has been a significant increase in the construction of policing facilities in previously ungoverned spaces as well as the fortification of existing police infrastructure.[496] Throughout the region, the roads and towns have become dotted with barricaded, walled police compounds replete with sentry posts. Large areas of land in the major cities have been turned over for the construction of police cantonments and police lines. The government has also established, modelled on centres in the North-East, 'Schools of Jungle Warfare and Counter-Insurgency' directly in the conflict zone. Civil infrastructure is in the process of being colonized by the state. Educational facilities have become sites of war-making and, in many instances, have been physically altered, reflecting a hybrid logic of social service delivery and violence.

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495 Rajendra Dash. Author interview; Vishwa Ranjan. Author interview.
496 Jha, *Impact of Modernization.*

Dialectic of State/Insurgency

Perhaps the most notable feature of the larger processes which are unfolding in Bastar are those which are a consequence of the dialectical interplay between the state and the insurgents. There is a symmetry between the longer-term projects that shape the production of space by both the Maoists and the state. Both are seeking to transform, and ultimately absorb, the region and its population into broader projects of competing spaces of modernity. The current form of state-making, structured around counter-insurgency, extraction and displacement and materialized through architectures of force represent only the most recent manifestation of a longer term process of sedentarization, spatial taming and absorption which began (albeit haltingly) with the onset of colonialism. This longer term historical process represents, as Lefebvre argues, a simultaneous process of flattening, homogenization and, paradoxically, fragmentation.[497] Thus, for example, we see the state seek to produce specific spatially segmented areas that are homogenized across territory. The he camp serves a specific function regardless of which camp, as does the police station and the school. All seek to divide space while also absorbing it and obliterating difference between territory and populations. The Maoist project of an alternative modernity follows a similar logic. In areas in which they are dominant the Maoists seek to create a political and ideological 'new' human with a Maoist consciousness. This new human exists in a milieu in which the Party is

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497 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*: 52.

everywhere and nowhere. The Party dominates not only the political, social and economic life of the area in which it operates, but also seeks to dominate the inner life of the subject populations. This symmetry between the state and insurgents and the processes of dialectal convergence are visible in the patterns of violence which exist between the two forces. In many ways the insurgents mimic the violence of the state that mimics the violence of the Maoists *ad nauseum*. The extreme violence of the Salwa Judum and the regulation of the camps have their mirror image in the violence and domination that the Maoists exercise over populations in places such as the Maoist stronghold of Abujmarh. The more the logic of violence dominates, the more both become complicit in the production of a space structured around force and repression. They are converging and becoming mirror-images of each other..

The other significant element of the dialectical interplay between the Maoists and the state in Bastar is that the emergence of the insurgency is hastening the expansion, consolidation and integration of the region into the state. There is a certain inevitability to this. As Scott argues, all over the world as the state system has become more entrenched, they are in the process of 'mopping up' those frontier and peripheral areas of weak or no sovereignty and everywhere there is a depressing sameness to the counter-insurgencies which form the primary instrument in this process.[498] As a total social phenomenon, the state cannot tolerate a challenge to its territorial authority, monopoly of violence and preeminent right to govern. Bastar is no exception. While there are long-term

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498 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*:*180.*

historical trends of absorption, there is no question that the particular fury and determination with which the state has sought to expand its domination into the region is, in large part, a result of the insurgent challenge it faces. The irony is that the Maoists, by seeking to overthrow the existing state and replace it with something new, have, in many ways, strengthened it. By seeking to create an alternative modernity and the destruction of the existing order, they have contributed to a muscular acceleration of state expansion into Bastar. The dialectics of state and insurgent space is contributing to a state space structured around a logic of force, violence and repression.

Chapter 6- Chotanagpur: Fragmented Space

Carved out of 18 southern districts of Bihar in 2000, the state of Jharkhand

borders Chhattisgarh and shares geologic, geographic and demographic

characteristics with its eastern neighbour. Heavily forested, Jharkhand is also

extremely rich in natural resources with extensive deposits of iron ore, copper,

coal and uranium and produces more mineral wealth than any other state in

India. Geographically, the state can roughly be divided into two areas: the

Chotanagpur Plateau and the Santhal Parganas bordering West Bengal. It has a

large Adivasi population which, officially, stands at around 30% of total

population.[499] Jharkhand is also one of the primary theatres of conflict in the

Communist Party of India's (Maoist) insurgency.

The creation of Jharkhand by the BJP in 2000 was heralded by the

government as the realization of the demands of the 50 year old struggle. The

reality was, however, more prosaic. Rather than having realized a vision of a

socially and economically just Adivasi homeland, the newly created state has

become dominated by a nexus of actors linked to the extractive and industrial

sectors.[500] This nexus includes traditional elites, Adivasi politicians, government

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499 Historically, the overall percentage of the state's Adivasi population has been declining since the late 19th century as a result of both economically driven migration. Since the 19th century, large numbers of Adivasi have left Chotanagpur for work in places such as the tea plantations of Assam while large numbers of 'outsiders' have moved to the state as a result of the establishment and expansion of the region's extractive industry since the late 19th century. In India, however, 'Scheduled Tribe' is a legal category. Adivasi activists have argued that both the state and central government significantly underestimate the number of people who are Adivasi by arbitrarily and (some argue) deliberately under counting the actual number of tribal people in the state. (Sanjay Basumalik. Author interview. Ranchi, Jharkhand, 26 April 2013).

500 The term Jharkhandi is slightly nebulous one which is used both by the political descendants of the Jharkhand movement and Adivasi activists in the state. While it encompasses the Adivasi of the state, its definition is also much broader than this and exists, to a certain extent, in negation. It is all of those people in the state who are not 'outsiders'. Outsider is both a geographic and an existential term. It is

officials, contractors and private militias.[501] This illustrates a significant difference between the insurgency in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The war in Chhattisgarh is the archetypal 'traditional' guerrilla war. On one side are the Maoists, operating in their isolated hill and forest redoubts. Opposing them are state forces and their allies who control the towns and roads of the region. In Jharkhand the belligerents are ill-defined, territorial control between state and rebels is opaque and there are multiple factions vying for control over access to lucrative resource networks. The state is weak and the Maoists are splintered into dozens of factions.

What accounts for divergent conflict dynamics in states with similar demographic and geographic characteristics? This chapter argues that historical developments in Chotanagpur led to the production of a dualistic, fragmented space incorporating numerous actors including insurgents, political parties, business elites, the police and state bureaucrats into overlapping and lucrative resource networks. The presence of extensive natural resource deposits and the region's proximity to Bengal contributed to Chotanagpur's development as a vital strategic site for the colonial state. Its significant resource endowment was the

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the non-Adivasi people, mostly from the plains of Bihar, who have migrated to the state since colonialism. However, it is not all of these migrants. Jharkhandi's also includes the state's non-Adivasi working class, members of Scheduled Castes and generally those people who both have ties to the land and culture and are not seen as exploitative outsiders. It is a highly subjective term defined in negation to that of 'Bihari'.

501 On a number of occasions, activists and journalists shared anecdotes of these connection. Discussing some research of his colleague, Gopinath Ghosh states the, "He found that the BDO and the Maoist and the contractors, local contractors, has a relation. The contractors paid some goonda [thug] percentage, 20% or 30%, of every project to the Maoists... even the BDO [Block Development Officer] has link with them. So when the BDO and the contractors charged in this corruption charges, the Maoists took action this fellow. And he was killed. So in this case we saw that there is a nexus" (Gopinath Ghosh. Author interview. Ranchi: 24 April 2013).

impetus for the creation of spaces of industrial modernity beginning in the late 19th century. Large parts of the region were integrated into the subcontinental political economy to a degree not seen in neighbouring Bastar. Furthermore, the Maoists of Jharkhand have a significantly different insurgent history than do the Maoists of Chhattisgarh. There formative organizational period occurred in Bihar and was rooted in caste warfare and internecine conflict with competing revolutionary factions.

This chapter first examines the production of space during the British colonial period, focusing on the twilight of imperium in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Because of Chotanagpur's 'difficult' geography, the region has long existed as a peripheral region of the centralized and bureaucratic states of Bengal and the Gangetic Plain. British penetration was gradual and only accelerated near the end of the 19th century. Legislation, such as the *Chotanagpur Tenures Act* (CTA), which created zones of exception that established special land and customary regimes, originated in this period alongside a parallel expansion of industry and the emergence of zones of modernity.

The chapter then examines the production of space in Jharkhand during the early decades of independence, focusing on the policies of industrialization under the rubric of the Nehruvian developmental state. The logic and practice of post-colonial legislative regimes, such as the 5th Schedule of the Constitution and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas Act) is also analyzed. While the

dualism of colonial space in Chotanagpur was deepened in the post-colonial period, new contradictions emerged as the developmental state sought to accelerate 'modernization'.

Following this, the history of the Jharkhand autonomy movement and Adivasi socio-economic activism is examined. The argument is made that in spite of the creation of a separate state, the autonomy movement failed in its primary purpose: the creation of an ethno-regionalist homeland run by and for the Jharkhandi people. The failure of constitutional, political action has helped fuel the dramatic growth of Maoist insurgency in the state.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of the Maoist insurgency in Chotanagpur, with particular attention paid to the legacies of the insurgencies formative period in the caste wars of 1980s and 1990s Bihar, as well fragmentation of the rebel movement and the emergence of resource networks linking the rebels to state officials and business. Maoists in Jharkhand are part of an overlapping set of power networks which constitute a variegated, weak and fragmented shadow state. There is no clear territorial, economic or political demarcation between the state and insurgency.

Pre-Colonial and Early Colonial Chotanagpur

The historical origins of Chotanagpur's political economy and the Maoist insurgency can be traced to developments in the initial colonial encounter with the populations of the region's forests and hills. Broadly, the British colonial

state's expansion into the plateau resembles the experience of Bastar—an expansive, bureaucratic state sought to establish control in a heavily forested region populated by mobile, swiddening communities existing on the margins of the centralizing state projects emanating from the plains. There were, however, significant variations between how the British state sought to transform and absorb the two areas. These differences have had significant effects on the politics and the insurgency in contemporary Jharkhand. Colonial and post-colonial policies, and the fierce resistance of local populations to state expansion at key historical moments, led to the production of fragmented and dualistic space. Spaces of industrialized modernity were created in parallel with zones of exception designed to protect 'traditional' patterns of rule and land ownership.

In the period preceding colonialism, Chotanagpur was composed of highly mobile and territorially fluid polities with minimal infrastructure and bureaucracy. With some notable exceptions, such as among some of the Gond tribes in the southern parts of the plateau, the economy of the region was structured around the practice of *jhum*, a type of territorialized swidden, "practiced as a communal activity. Different clans had clearly demarcated areas whose boundaries were respected and not disputed between clan members".[502] Politically, large areas of the region were governed under what came to be called the Munda-Manki system—customary rule which can be conceptualized as a highly decentralized and informally networked polity. In the Munda-Manki system, each village was led by a headman (Manki) and priest (Pahan) who governed and arbitrated local

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502 Chattopadhyay, "Adivasi Insurgencies": 67.

sacral and secular affairs. Clusters of villages were united by a supra-headman, or Raja, who mediated disputes and ruled on issues relevant to the entire area.[503] While swiddening, thin territorial demarcation and networked polities marked the regions social organization, Chotanagpur did not exist wholly outside of the broader regional political economy. A number of tribes in the region, most notably the Asur people, were involved in small scale iron smelting for commercial purposes.[504] Furthermore, the Mughals had established a presence in the region as regional chieftains paid tribute to the Emperor in Delhi.[505]

Proximity to the great agricultural and trading coastal regions of Bengal and the Gangetic Plains meant that Chotanagpur was integrated into regional political and economic networks to a greater degree than Bastar. By the 13th century there had emerged a centralizing proto-state among the Munda which was, "influenced by the prevailing Hindu Shiva and Vaishnava cults" of the region.[506] This early state system introduced a rudimentary bureaucracy and limited transformations to the mode of production. A rudimentary money economy emerged and land rights were granted to an emergent class of military, religious and political officials.[507] By the 16th century military expeditions by the Mughal Empire had established tributary relations with the proto-states of Chotanagpur.[508]

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503 Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 23.
504 Chattopadhyay, "Adivasi Insurgencies": 67; Corbridge, "Industrialization, internal colonialism": 254.
505 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 44.
506 Ibid.: 43.
507 Ibid.: 43-44.
508 Macdougall, "Agrarian Reform": 300.

While the isolated interior forests of the plateau retained autonomy and were only marginally under the rule of regional Rajas, parts of the region were heavily enmeshed in tributary and trade relations with the nearby agricultural regions of Bengal and the Gangetic Plains. The emergence of the Hinduizing proto-bureaucratic Munda state in the 13th century also marked the beginning of a period of influx of outsiders who were granted "perpetual tenures for military, administrative and personal services as required by the infrastructure of the state".[509] This rudimentary state formation and in-migration by populations in search of land accelerated as the payment of tribute to the Mughals necessitated the creation of a bureaucracy able to raise sufficient revenue.[510]

Thus, parts of Chotanagpur experienced a degree of state-formation, monetization and regional integration unseen in the more isolated and geographically remote forests of Bastar. In spite of this, however, most of the region retained non-state characteristics marked by highly mobile, semi-autonomous polities. The granting of land tenures for state service created an impetus for wholesale population migration as some villages found themselves alienated from land by the emergent bureaucratic class of the Munda Rajas. As the state expanded, people moved deeper and deeper into forest areas which had previously been largely uninhabited. In the interior the migrant communities recreated 'traditional' patterns of social organization with a political economy rooted in swidden.[511] Faced by an expanding state space, large numbers of the

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509 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 43.
510 Macdougall, "Agrarian Reform": 300.
511 Misra, Amalendu, "Subaltern and the civil war: An assessment of left-wing insurgency in South Asia," *Civil Wars* 5.4 (2002): 40.

population responded with a strategy of migration and the creation of non-state spaces through re-settlement.

However, even the emergence of the Munda Rajas represented, at most, a proto-state shallowly mimicking the great bureaucratic polities of the subcontinental plains and coasts. While there was a nascent class of bureaucrats, a basic money economy and rudimentary systems of taxation, none of the other hallmarks necessary for the emergence of a strong and centralizing state emerged. Notably, the growth of fixed agriculture was limited because of geographic constraints. Subsequently, the Chotanagpur kingdoms were unable to generate a sufficient and regular surplus, a prerequisite to the development of sedentary society and urbanization. Commodity production remained marginal and the major trade routes of the region, connecting Bengal to the Coromandel Coast and the Gangetic Plain, bypassed the area. These factors militated against the emergence of trading classes and the raising of excise and customs revenue. There is also little evidence that Sanskritization and the adoption of the norms of sedentary society spread beyond the Rajas and the narrow confines of a tiny elite.[512]

Therefore while there was limited state formation in Chotanagpur, these proto-states lacked the political and social power, as well as taxation capacity, to directly transform space in Chotanagpur. While the rise of these states increased the plateau's integration into broader subcontinental networks centred in India's coasts and plains, their rise simultaneously spread non-state patterns of

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512 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 44.

economic and social life across previously sparsely inhabited parts of Chotanagpur. In response to the influx of outsiders, the suppression of customary patterns of land use and the emergence of a sedentarizing bureaucratic elite, large numbers of Adivasi migrated into the uncultivated and uninhabited areas of the region. The expansion of Adivasi society and the spread of pre-modern polities was, largely, a state effect, representing the nascent emergence of Chotanagpur's dualistic, fragmented space in which two modes of being simultaneously coexist. There was a proto-state space too weak to fully absorb and bureaucratize the region existing alongside a non-state space intended to exist in isolation from the state, but created as a consequence of the state.[513]

With the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal, the British East India Company established itself as the dominant power in the Indian subcontinent, marking the beginning of the end of the Mughal Empire. In 1765 the Mughals were defeated by the forces of the East India Company, completing the expansion of British military and administrative control. Consequently, the East India Company extracted *dewani* rights—or the right to collect land revenue and tax on behalf of the Mughal Emperor.[514] The granting of dewani to the British included Chotanagpur which was, at least on paper, a tributary region of the Mughal Empire.

In that same year, the East India Company established the Bengal Presidency. With its capital in Calcutta and a territorial span encompassing much

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513 In this sense the paradox is that the non-state space was, in fact, a state effect. This mimics the processes described by theorists of Zomia and borderlands.
514 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 44-45.

of eastern and central India, including Chotanagpur, the Presidency became the administrative, military and economic heart of the colonial project in South Asia and the most significant subdivision of Empire. In a matter of a few decades the Company had become the undisputed economic, military and administrative power in the region. This would have profound consequences for Chotanagpur and the Adivasi who inhabited the plateau.

In the imaginary of the colonial elite the Bengal Presidency was the key to the British imperial project. Calcutta became Empire's second city, exceeded in importance only by London. However, the new colonial administrators inherited a system from the Mughals seen as alien and at odds with the modernizing role the British imagined for themselves. The local notables, ensured of a relatively stable source of income, lacked sufficient incentive to improve agricultural land or invest their capital in production, often becoming absentee landlords.[515] The British administrators also saw areas of the Presidency populated by tribal groups in the Santhal Parganas and the Chotanagpur Plateau as essentially backwards. The practice of swidden and community usufruct rights were, for the British, a historical anachronism which, as a part of their civilizing mission, the government had a responsibility to rectify. In 1793 under Governor Cornwallis, the Presidency of Bengal implemented the Permanent Settlement, a set of administrative policies removing the right of the region's landlords to levy military forces.[516] In exchange, the tax farmers of the dewani system became *zamindars*, semi-

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515 Guha, Ranajit *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996): 3-8, 115-116.
516 Ibid.: 154-163.

hereditary landlords granted indefinite, fixed taxation rights over their land. The logic underlying this was two-fold. First, by creating permanent, proprietorial rights over land, the zamindars were to become a stable and loyal native class functioning as intermediary between the British and the Indian peasantry.[517] Second, by fixing the rate of revenue in perpetuity, the system was to provide incentives for landlords to invest in improvements, leading to a virtuous cycle of greater productivity and wealth in Bengal, strengthening state revenue.[518]

As Ranajit Guha has argued, the Permanent Settlement sought to recreate the conditions believed to have led to England's rapid rise to global prominence in the 18th century. This reflected the Anglo-centric Whiggish understanding of history held by administrators such as Thomas Macaulay, a senior advisor to the Governor-General and architect of the Westernization of India's penal and educational codes in the mid-19th century.[519] According to this view of history, England's rise to global dominance was the result of the emergence of a responsible landed rural gentry who invested their agricultural surplus productively. These investments created a sustained aggregate improvement in the general well-being of the peasantry, ultimately leading to secular growth in the national surplus. This surplus was then invested in industry and trade, creating the first industrialized state and the world's preeminent power.[520] It was also the belief that, as a product of mechanistic historical laws, Britain's institutions and historical experience could, given time, be recreated

517 Ibid.: 9, 124-126.
518 Ibid.: 8-9.
519 Ibid.: 164-166.
520 Ibid.: 8-10.

overseas. Unsurprisingly, this colonial vision for Bengal proved to be chimerical. The zamindari class did not become a 'responsible' and productive rural gentry and the very term became synonymous with rapacious corruption and exploitation.

In the plains areas of Bengal, the Permanent Settlement had significant consequences on the nature of space, yet it built upon existing feudal systems of land proprietorship, revenue collection and imperial administration. In Chotanagpur, where such systems did not exist, the effects were more profound and the imposition of the zamindari system, had it succeeded, would have meant the wholesale reconstitution of space. The Permanent Settlement sought to demarcate proprietary land, transform rural populations into territorially-rooted agricultural labourers and producers and create an elite of quasi-gentry with effective ownership of rural estates. In short, it envisioned a space wholly incompatible with mobility, collective ownership and swiddening. These policies would prove both unworkable and ruinous for the Adivasi. The legal termination of collective land ownership, monetization and increased revenue demands led to widespread indebtedness. The emergent zamindar class seized collective land in lieu of debt repayment, deepening displacement. Furthermore, as customary laws were replaced by an unfamiliar and alien legal system based on contract, the Adivasi found themselves at a significant disadvantage relative to those who

came from the plains and were versed in the navigation of imperial power and a cash economy.[521]

In neighbouring Bastar, the British were satisfied with indirect rule and territorially targeted interventions. While forest notification and exclusion had significant effects on Adivasi life, outside of these territorially demarcated spaces the political economy and social structures of the region were left largely unchanged. What discontent did emerge in response to the expansion of colonial power and the transformations of space was directed towards the court in Jagdalpur, which had retained nominal independence from the British. This was not the case in Chotanagpur. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Chotanagpur found itself at the heart of the imperial project with no intermediary ruling group that could divert the ire of the local populace away from the British. Furthermore, the transformations of the Permanent Settlement represented a wholesale assault on the foundational basis of Adivasi life. The Permanent Settlement was a project to produce a space of modernity consciously mimicking an 18th century conception of England's rise. It would prove to be both unworkable and politically explosive. The attempt to transform the region into a space of modernity led to the seizure of vast tracts of Adivasi land by Hindu moneylenders and a newly emergent landlord class. Even in cases where seizure was illegal under the regulations of the Presidency, restitution was unlikely as complainants were forced to travel great distances to courts located in

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521 Damodaran, Vinita, "The politics of marginality and the construction of indigeneity in Chotanagpur," *Postcolonial Studies* 9.2 (2006): 170-171.

district headquarters. Those few Adivasi who did make the journey found themselves faced with a 'rationalized' and modern bureaucratic institution whose navigation was premised on a modicum of literacy, possession of title deeds and basic knowledge of the functioning of the colonial bureaucracy.[522] These were insurmountable obstacles for the vast majority of the displaced.

Predictably, alienation, which was a logical consequence of the production of a 'modern', bureaucratic state space in Chotanagpur, "resulted in widespread protests which continued unabated until the 1830s."[523] According to CR Bijoy, there were at least 67 Adivasi rebellions between the Battle of Plassey, which marked the establishment of British East India Company rule, and independence in 1947.[524] K. Sivaramakrishnan describes these revolt-prone areas as "zones of anomaly" where the encroachment of British-rule was constantly thwarted.[525].

Perhaps the most significant, and certainly the largest, uprising in the history of Chotanagpur was the great Kol revolt of 1831-1832.[526] This rebellion

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522 Id..

523 Ibid.: 171.

524 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggles": 1758.

525 On the colonial view of the Santhal Pargana and other 'zones of anomaly' Sivaramkrishnan writes, "The very appellation 'jungle mahal' that got attached to these areas was like 'bush' in Africa and Australia, a place sharply demarcated as being beyond settlement and not sharing the destiny of cleared lands.... They were also places where the turbulence... did not yield swiftly to standard pacification strategies" (Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition zones": 247).

526 There is debate as to whether the 18th century Adivasi uprisings in Chotanagpur represented simply an inarticulate, pre-political and millenarian reaction to modernity and the rapid expansion of state power, or whether they represented an early articulation of Adivasi politics rooted in pan-tribal Adivasi identity, or a modern precursor of movements such as the Jharkhand movement. For example, Asoka Kumar Sen argues that much of the post-colonial literature on the great rebellions of the 18th century reproduce a form of nationalist colonialism which, "more or less projected Adivasi struggles as negating colonial rule, rather than emphasizing identity assertion as the affirmative trigger" (Sen, Asoka Kumar, "Assertion of Political Identity: the Ho Adivasis of Singhbhum 1779-1859," *Journal of Adivasi and Indigenous Studies* 1.1 (2014): 19). In some ways, this distinction is problematic. The Adivasi rebellions can be seen as both reactive and productive of identity. There is little doubt that they were triggered as a reaction to the dramatic and detrimental changes which were unleashed as a result of the advent of colonialism and the Permanent Settlement. It was also unclear what there goals were

brought together numerous tribes, including the Munda, Oroan and Santhal, who

seized large tracts of the plateau, expelled the zamindar and money-lending elite

and began a march on Calcutta to overthrow Company rule.[527] The Kol rebellion

demonstrates the contrast between the spread of state space into Bastar and

Chotanagpur. In Bastar, rebellions targeted local rulers and often led to colonial

intervention in favour of the local populace.[528] In Chotanagpur the rebellions

directly targeted the state and sought the destruction of British rule.

Historically, the significance of the Kol rebellion lies in its intensity and the

consequent realization by the British that their attempt to produce a 'modern'

bureaucratic state space through the Permanent Settlement in Adivasi regions

would be, at minimum, extremely costly. The upheaval caused a fundamental

shift in British policy and the nascent emergence of the dualistic space which

exists in modern Jharkhand to this day. The Kol rebellion was a key historical

moment in the spatial production of the region and the culmination of a near

continuous state of unrest in Chotanagpur during the early 19th century. Colonial

officials came to understand that the extension of the Permanent Settlement into

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other than expelling the British and (re)creating a new age rooted in what was imagined to come
before. On the other hand, the rebellions themselves involved a degree of inter-tribal solidarity and co-
operation which was historically unprecedented. Sen also points out the Kol Rebellion of 1831-32
involved groups of Ho people from Singhbhum, a population who had been nearly wholly unaffected
by land alienation and colonial power (see Sen, "Assertion of Political Identity"). Furthermore, each
additional rebellion drew on both the living and historical memory of previous rebellions, coalescing
into a narrative of inter-tribal solidarity and political action imagined to stretch in an uninterrupted
path. Thus, it is the position of this paper that the rebellions of Chotanagpur can be both- pre-political,
reactionary millenarianism and politically constitutive projects of the assertion of Adivasi rights and
identity.
527 Damodaran, Vinita, "Indigenous Agency: Customary Rights and Tribal Protection in Eastern India,
1830-1930," *History Workshop Journal* 76.1 (2013): 24.
528 Such as during a rebellion in 1876 when British administrators forced the Raja of Bastar to dismiss two
senior officials who had been accused by the local population of corruption. (Sundar, *Subalterns and
Sovereigns:* 29).

Chotanagpur had been a failure, leading to widespread indebtedness and land alienation, generating an explosive situation which made the region virtually ungovernable.[529] Following the Kol Rebellion, the British began treating Chotanagpur as more than simply another part of their empire. The new colonial policy had a dual logic which bears striking parallels to contemporary strategies of counter-insurgency. First, it was determined that the region needed to be pacified and subjugated:

> Two regiments of Native Infantry a brigade of guns and the Ramgarh battalion the whole force commanded by Colones Richards entered Singhbhum in Nov. 1836. Operations were immediately commenced against the refractory pirs, and by the end of February, following all the Mankis and Mundas had submitted.[530]

After the military campaign, a significant number of Company forces were to remain permanently stationed in Chotanagpur in order to preempt, and when necessary suppress, unrest.

Second, the British undertook a number of administrative changes. In 1834 Chotanagpur was separated from Bengal and became the South-West Frontier Agency (SWFA), a 'non-regulation' administrative division of Empire exempted from the laws and policies in force across the rest of colonial India. A British agent, answerable only to the Governor-General, was dispatched to the town of Chaibasa to govern the region.[531] In addition to the entrenched military occupation of Chotanagpur, the most significant consequence of the creation of

529 Srivastava, PK, "Wilkinson Rule A Critical View." In *Handbook on Land Law*, Judicial Academy Jharkhand, Ranchi: 60.
530 Ibid.
531 Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 45.

the SWFA was the end of the Permanent Settlement and the promulgation of the

'Wilkinson's Rules', a set of policies intended to rectify previous imperial failures

and establish peace in the region. The new regulations exempted the region from

existing colonial courts and enshrined 'customary' practices:

> This set of Civil rules were procedural ones, which prepared the
> framework of Civil justice. The features were ready and expeditious
> justice, the induction of the tribal Munda-Manki system of governance and
> rule through tribal customs. These kept Kolhan beyond the jurisdiction of
> the Civil Procedure Code.[532]

The second significant element of the Wilkinson's Rules dealt with civil and

property law. Land transfer was to be approved by the government's Agent and a

prohibition was placed on the "sale, transfer and mortgage of land for arrears of

rent or debt belonging to the Adivasis."[533] The creation of the SWFA marked the

beginning of an era of paternalistic colonial rule in which the British abrogated to

themselves the role of guardian and protector of the Adivasi from the

rapaciousness of 'intriguing' outsiders.[534]

While these new regulations somewhat alleviated growing Adivasi

displacement and indebtedness, they also vested a tremendous amount of power

in individual colonial magistrates and administrators, many of whom continued to

legitimate land seizures:

> The judges, all non-aboriginals, came to believe that the Mundas and the
> Uraons were rascals trying to avoid paying their lawful dues. The claims of
> the people to their land were regarded as false and fictitious, since the

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532 Srivastava, "Wilkinson Rule": 61.
533 Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 45.
534 Srivastava, "Wilkinson Rule": 66.

tribal people had no record of rights to show what belonged to them and what belonged to the new classes of landlords.[535]

As a result, discontent in the region continued to simmer. In 1855-56, just outside of Chotanagpur in the Santhal Parganas, a rebellion against usurious money lending and zamindar rule erupted that took British troops over six months to suppress.[536] In its aftermath the SWFA was abolished and became the Chotanagpur Division, a non-regulation province under the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.[537].

Thus, the basis of contemporary space was established in Chotanagpur in the first half of the 19th century. In response to land displacement and resistance, the British suspended their attempts to transform space in Chotanagpur. The Permanent Settlement, which can be conceptualized as a project to re-create a modern space mimicking a simplistic understanding of historical processes in England during the 16th and 17th centuries, proved a failure. These policies did little more than create a parasitic money-lending elite who, rather than increasing agricultural productivity and acting as local representatives of the Crown, displaced large numbers of Adivasi, leading to widespread discontent and near-permanent unrest against colonial rule. Consequently, beginning with the Wilkinson's Rules, the British sought to create a zone of exception, a space in which 'traditional' and 'customary' rule was 'preserved' and land demonetized. This was the beginning of the contradictions of contemporary space in

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535 Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 45-46.
536 Ghosh, Arunabha, "Jharkhand Movement in West Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 28.3/4 (16-23 January 1993): 122.
537 Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 46-47.

Jharkhand. The region was to become a zone of exception which would exist in parallel with, but outside of, the spaces of modernity being created in the Bengal Presidency and the heartlands of the British colonial project in South Asia. It was a space imagined to be frozen in time that was, in fact, constituted and preserved by forces of modernity. This period also marked the moment where the logic of an expansionary state faced with a hostile frontier first manifested itself clearly. As in today's contemporary counter-insurgencies, the Company pursued policies which were both repressive and conciliatory. They sought to militarily tame the region and suppress opposition with force, while also instituting policies intended to improve the social and economic lives of its subject populations. It was a 19th century avatar of the security-development tandem.

Late Colonialism: Land and Coal

The production of space in Jharkhand and the integration of the region into a broader South Asian polity during the late 19th and early 20th century was fundamentally conditioned by the events of the first 50 years of British colonial rule. Faced with unrest and rebellion, the British were able to establish only titular control over Chotanagpur. While direct challenges to their authority were greeted by force, everyday life in the hills and forests was left relatively untouched. The relative autonomy enjoyed in the plateau began to change in the mid-19th century. What emerged during this period were the clear contours of patterns of spatial production which continued well past independence.

The British increasingly came to the conclusion that the treatment of large parts of Chotanagpur as an administrative extension of Bengal was both unworkable and threatened the stability of British rule. Beginning in the 1830s, they began to pursue policies which created zones of exception in Adivasi areas aimed, through special administrative policies, to protect Adivasi interests and forestall the mass land alienation that was an underlying cause of the region's near continuous state of rebellion. Perpetual unrest and the subsequent policies of exception implemented by the British fed into the perception that the region was populated by primitive and restless savages living in a land, "yielding little in terms of images of production [or] prosperity... The very appellation 'jungle mahals' that got attached to these areas was like 'bush' in Africa and Australia, a place sharply demarcated as being beyond settlement and not sharing the destiny of cleared lands."[538]

British policy towards Chotanagpur was conditioned by two spatial logics. First, administrators saw the Adivasi as qualitatively different and more primitive than the plains-based populations. The greater 'sophistication' of those from the plains enabled them to steal Adivasi land through trickery and guile. The British self-conception as paternalistic protectors of the lesser races, coupled with a very real fear of rebellion, provided the impetus for colonial administrators to implement spatial policies intended to legally enshrine Adivasi land ownership

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538 Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 247.

and customary laws.[539] Second, as discussed in the chapter on Bastar, there was the logic of sedentarization—mobility was seen as a threat to British rule:

> The wildness of the landscape was ascribed to a primitive mindset and native indolence. Since the lands were highly conducive to cultivation, it was all the more inexplicable and unforgivable that the native did not toil hard enough in the field... Civilization was equated with settled agricultural communities, and dependence on forests for a livelihood was interpreted as an attribute of wildness.... In the early nineteenth century the British believed jungles to be lands that had lapsed into a state of nature because of inadequate care by man.[540]

The dual logic of paternalism and sedentarization served as an impetus for a series of spatial transformations in Chotanagpur which produced a space imagined to be frozen in time. This space of exception was, paradoxically, constituted to exist outside of modernity while being rooted in and created by modernity. 'Customary' practices of rule and patterns of corporate village land ownership and usage rights were legally enshrined—land was, to an extent, decommodified while civil legal power was granted to 'traditional' non-state local entities. The system was, however, built on modern techniques of statecraft such as land survey and administrative legislation and was rooted in a logic of sedentarization. The codification of land title and customary laws effectively tied

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539 Given that the special land regimes began to be implemented in response to rebellion, it is clear that the impetus and a large part of the motivation for enacting special protections was rooted in British self-interest and a desire to pacify the region. However, there was also a vocal element of British opinion, many of whom were colonial administrators, who saw it as a moral duty to paternalistically protect the simple and primitive people of Chotanagpur from the onslaught of 'civilization': "Although frontiers were dismantled administratively to an extent (note the decline of zamindari policing by the 1850s), they were recreated in the jungle mahals as anomalous zones of administrative exception and legislative exclusion that were shaped and reproduced by an official discourse on tribes. This often celebrated their simplicity and loyalty, while bemoaning their obdurate primitiveness in terms already described" (Sivarramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 264).

540 Das Gupta, Sanjukta, "Colonial Rule versus Indigenous Knowledge in Bengal's Western Frontier," In *Asian Environments: Connections across Borders, Landscapes, and Times, RCC Perspectives* 3 (2014), eds. Ursula Münster et. al: 49.

individuals and communities to place. The fluidity and mobility which defined life in the non-state spaces of Chotanagpur was neutered as the British created a protected space frozen in time. It was a Frankensteinian simulacrum of Adivasi society.

The first step towards the production of a temporally frozen and static space in Chotanagpur was taken in 1869. The British conducted a census in the Ranchi area of what was traditionally Munda land, leading to the promulgation of the CTA.[541] The Act created Commissioners for the region empowered to investigate all land claims, grant legal title and restore land that had been unlawfully acquired.[542] On paper, the purpose of the act was to enshrine and protect the land rights of individual Adivasi cultivators and the communal land rights of Munda villages. In practice, however, it deepened Adivasi alienation and further concentrated ownership in the hands of non-Adivasi settlers. Not only were the lands which had been granted to the zamindars under the Permanent Settlement legally recognized, the zamindars were able to capture additional land through the manipulation of land titles and the courts.[543]

Within a few decades the inadequacies of the legislation had become evident. Among the administrators in Calcutta and London, the need for more comprehensive and effective legislation had become clear. Beginning in the 1890s the British undertook a decades-long cadastral survey of Chotanagpur.

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541 Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 48.
542 Judicial Academy, Ranchi, *Handbook on Land Law*: 5
543 For example, as Alex Ekka writes, "The *zamindars* started rumours that the government wanted to know the exact amount of *bhuinhari* fields to exact heavy rent for each plot of land. Hence, some of the Adivasis did not declare their *bhuinhari* lands, while others declared less than what they actually cultivated. On the contrary, the *zamindars* declared more than they cultivated. (Ekka, *Jharkhand:* 49).

The survey catalogued individual and communal land ownership, including 'village notes' describing "the social and economic organization of each village, the rights and duties of headmen and community rights in land and resources".[544] This data led to the creation of the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* (CNT) of 1908, legislation which continues to govern land usage, ownership and transfer to this day. The CNT enshrined protection of special tenures and granted tenants legally established perpetual rents at fixed rates. It also granted Adivasi villages, "proprietary rights over village jungles and wastelands, protected customary practice in the allocation of lands... and in the exercise of forest rights. In sum, the law sought to protect the raiyats [owner and cultivator] of tribal corporate villages against the incursions of landlords and non-tribal entrepreneurs".[545] The CNT envisioned a land regime in which tenancies and the land usage enumerated in the census would remain unchanged in perpetuity. Section 46 of the Act prevented the transfer of land to those outside of the relevant village without the permission of the local District Commissioner. Furthermore, transfer to non-Adivasi was forbidden.[546]

The CNT represents the first comprehensive manifestation of a particular form of spatial production undertaken by the British and by the independent state, subsequently creating a legally defined and territorially bounded space protecting pre-capitalist corporate village rights. However, both the logic and the tools used to create this space—survey, legislation, administration—were

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544 Ekka , Jharkhand: 27.
545 Sivaramakrishnan, "Transition Zones": 13-14.
546 Judicial Academy, *Handbook on Land Law:* 16-23.

fundamentally modern. Through codification of land use rights and access, the CNT, and the broader spatial transformation undertaken by the British in Chotanagpur, tied individuals and communities to place, eliminating mobility and sedentarizing Adivasi society.

The other significant spatial transformation in Chotanagpur during the latter half of the 19th century was the emergence of parallel spaces of modernity which existed alongside the zones of exception. These were spaces of industrial and state concentration connected to the great colonial cities and ports of the Bengal and Madras Presidencies via transport corridors and railways. Mining and processing had been occurring in Chotanagpur for hundreds of years, however it was not until until the end of the 19th century that it emerged on an industrial scale. A primary impetus for the transformation of large parts of Chotanagpur into an extractive industrialized space connected to the heartlands of the British Empire through dense transport infrastructure was the rapid expansion of the British rail system in the subcontinent following the Rebellion of 1857. In the aftermath of 1857, the government began, "underwriting profits. Partly for famine management, but mainly for military reasons, it authorized the laying of tracks to strategic points."[547] One lesson of 1857 was that control over the vast sub-continental empire could only be achieved through territorial integration facilitated by the creation of a rail network enabling both the circulation of goods and military forces. Consequently, as more areas were 'opened' up, ever greater

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[547] Simeon, Dilip, "Work and resistance in the Jharia coalfield," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 33.1/2 (1999): 86.

resources were required to maintain and extend the emerging transport network. Thus, in addition to increasing access to resources, the massive railway expansion undertaken by the British in the latter half of the 19th century significantly increased demand for commodities such as coal and sal for the construction of railway sleepers.[548]

In 1894 a branch line connecting the Jharia coalfields in Chotanagpur to the Ranigunj-Calcutta rail line, which connected the imperial capital to Hyderabad, was constructed, allowing the rapid shipment of coal to the factories and ports of Bengal.[549] What followed was a rapid influx of both British and domestic, primarily Bengali, capital into the region and increased extraction of coal and minerals such as iron ore, mica and copper.[550] Processing facilities in the state and steel factories mushroomed as the distance-destroying rail technologies re-situated Chotanagpur, with its new rail links to Calcutta, as an ideal location for extraction and production. Additionally, the demographic processes unleashed on the region as a consequence of industrialization created a large unskilled labour force available to work in the labour intensive steel industry, further stimulating demand for coal to power the factories.[551]

The primary demographic consequence of this transformation in the heavily industrialized islands of modernity in Chotanagpur was the dramatic decline in the proportion of Adivasi as a percentage of the population in parts of the plateau. The region had long been a site of in-migration for outsiders who

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548 Guha and Gadgil, "State Forestry": 145.
549 Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 252, 254.
550 Ibid.: 254.
551 Damodaran, "Indigenous agency": 146.

served as merchants and bureaucrats for the pre-colonial polities which had emerged on the fringes of the plateau beginning in the 13th century.[552] However, earlier migration had been relatively small and the heavily forested interiors of the region remained predominantly Adivasi.[553] This changed in the late 19th century. The opening of the Jharia coalfields led to a massive influx of migrants, primarily from Bihar, into Chotanagpur. These migrants came in search of employment in the factories and mines and ancillary businesses which arose as a result of the rapid industrialization occurring in and around the emergent islands of modernity.[554] Simultaneously, the production of spaces of modernity in Chotanagpur caused significant out-migrations of the Adivasi. In those regions designated as zones of industry, legislation, such as the *Land Acquisition Act*, 1894, set aside large tracts of state land for extraction and processing. The result was mass displacement of people who suddenly found themselves landless.[555]

This spatial transformation was rooted in two primary logics. First, it freed up areas of previously protected land. As a result of legislation such as the CTA and CNT, Adivasi land could not be acquired by non-Adivasi, nor could it be used for industrial or urban expansion. The promulgation of over-riding legislation for industrial acquisition facilitated a transformation of some parts of the plateau from zones of exception into intensive and concentrated space of urban and industrial modernity linked to the heartlands of the state and capital. Second, the

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[552] Bandyopadhy, Madhumita, "Demographic consequences of non-tribal incursion in Chotanagpur region during colonial period,"*Social Change* 29.3/4 (1999): 10.

[553] Damodaran, "Indigenous agency": 181.

[554] Bandyopadhy, "Demographic consequences": 41.

[555] Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Land and Numbers," *Commonwealth and Comparative Studies* 40.3 (2010): 62-63.

subsequent displacement created an impoverished and mobile workforce that could be employed in the unskilled jobs required in the region's emerging mining and processing industries.[556] The alienated Adivasi became a, "segregated, cheap and unorganized workforce."[557] Those who were not absorbed into the coal and iron ore industries were shipped, en masse, through a system of labour contracts, to work in the tea plantations of Assam where, between 1870 and 1900 approximately 250,000 people from Chotanagpur were employed as seasonal workers.[558] Not all of the Adivasi who were employed in the emergent extractive industries of Chotanagpur were, however, unskilled and impoverished. According to Stuart Corbridge, a small, but significant minority were able to develop relevant skills and gain permanent employment, enabling them, "to use their wages to purchase land from less privileged tribal households within their communities".[559] In addition to the creation of new class cleavages within tribal communities, the emergence of a skilled and (relatively) wealthy group contributed to the growth of a small Adivasi middle-class. This was to become significant in subsequent political developments in Chotanagpur.

The emergence of industry in the region had profound impact of the spaces of Chotanagpur. First, isolated spaces of capitalism and industry were created. These islands of modernity were connected to the larger colonial state and global trade networks by railways which cut through the dense forests of the region. Within these islands of modernity, a new form of spatial organization

556 Bandyopadhy, "Demographic consequences": 41.
557 Id.
558 Ibid.: 42.
559 Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 263.

emerged: a rapidly urbanizing, industrial space increasingly populated by outsiders and a displaced, impoverished and alienated Adivasi population that had been transformed into a mobile, unskilled and contractual labour force for British and domestic capital. An exemplary of this new space of modernity is Jamshedpur.

In 1907 the Tata Iron and Steel Company (Tisco), now Tata Steel, was founded by the Tata family. The company was interested in establishing a steel plant in Chotanagpur because of the region's advantage of being extremely rich in iron ore and coal, both necessary for steel production. In 1907 the small Adivasi village of Sakchi deep in the forests of Singhbhum was chosen as the site for Tisco's proposed plant. Sakchi was near to the Nagpur-Calcutta railway and could easily be connected to the Jharia coalfields and nearby iron ore mines.[560] In 1907 under the purview of the *Land Acquisition Act* (1894), Tisco acquired 12,708 acres of land in an around the village, effectively displacing the population and creating the legal basis for a transformation of the region from forest into an industrialized urban space.[561]

Tisco, however, did not simply seek to build a steel plant in the remote forests of Chotanagpur; it sought to fundamentally transform space in the area into what was to be an ultra-modern example of ideal urbanity reflecting then-fashionable theories of rational planning. Jamshedpur was built using "modern

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[560] Kumar, Rajnish, "Spatial Evolution of Jamshedpur City and its Agglomeration Effects". Paper presented at the Third Conference: GIS-Global History from Asian Perspectives, Tokyo (5 June 2015): 11-12.

[561] Between 1915 and 1925 a further 100,000 acres, passed into the 'public domain' for the quarries of the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Bengal Iron and Steel Company, and for the housing compounds, roads and railway lines that supplied them." (Corbridge, "The continuing struggle": 62-63).

town planning principles, ushering in modernity through new modes of spatiality and lifestyles associated with industrialization".[562] In 1919 construction began on the city and the steel plant. What emerged was a space unlike anything that had been seen in Chotanagpur: an angular, rigidly demarcated and wholly planned space in which functional separation existed between the various parts the whole. Jamshedpur reflected a segmented and routinized mode of being composed of the residence, the park, the road, the shops and the workplace. It was an ideal space of planned capitalist modernity, a place in which clock time and everyday life was spatially segmented and made concrete in the urban form, all of which was planned, built and controlled by Tisco.[563]

Jamshedpur soon became the largest city in the state and an industrial centre based in iron and steel production and ancillary industries such as automobile production. With a population currently over a million, it is the world's largest company town:

> Governed by the Town Division of Tisco [Tata Iron and Steel Company].... At its head is a manager of town services, under him is a uniformed security force of 1,000 men, an Intelligence Wing to report on labor disorders and political activities, and a Vigilance Wing that investigates

562 Sinha, Amita and Jatinder Singh, "Jamshedpur: Planning an Ideal Steel City in India," *Journal of Planning History* 0.0 (2011): 1.

563 "The company oversees every aspect of life in the city. It controls all the land (except that used for government purposes); provides much of the housing; maintains parks and sports arenas; administers many of the schools (and patronizes the non-company ones); owns and manages the hospital; provides public health facilities; regulates markets, bazaars, construction, and zoning; patronizes religious and social institutions; and sponsors social and cultural activities. It owns and maintains the utility infrastructure: sewers, water, power, roads, the airport, and waste disposal facilities. It employs its own guards to maintain order. Through its welfare department, the company undertakes rural development projects in the surrounding villages, including health, education, family planning, and economic development projects. The eastern half of the city is leased to ancillary industries, most of which are also Tata controlled. Each company is responsible for the building and maintenance of its own "workers' colony"following the model of Tisco"(Kling, "Paternalism in Indian Labor": 69-70).

corruption, primarily in the steel mill itself. In 1924, the state government set up what is called a "Notified Area Committee," a form of government designed for small towns not yet capable of self-support. In Jamshedpur this committee is made up of representatives of the various large manufacturing companies. The committee is dominated by the Tisco representatives and has the authorization to collect taxes and fees of various kinds from the companies and individuals of the city.[564]

The city is an island of modernity with comprehensive urban infrastructure, planned streets, extensive welfare provisions and modern housing. The contradictions of this space are highly visible—it is an island of 'ideal' modernity situated in a region whose people are some of the poorest in India.[565]

Jamshedpur is both evocative and representative of the social relations which have emerged as a result of the creation of urban and industrialized nodes of capitalist production in the midst of the forests of Chotanagpur. Its genesis, and its entire spatiality was rooted in Tisco's ideas of corporate paternalism and late Victorian ideal of industry as both regulator and improver of the working class.[566] Tisco provided modern, clean and orderly subsidized housing, sporting facilities and spaces of recreation for its permanent employees

Tisco's industrial paternalism, however, had another dimension which was made visible in the spatiality of Jamshedpur. While the company provided clean, modern and orderly subsidized housing to its permanent employees, the contract

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564 Ibid.: 81-82.

565 Kumar, "Spatial Evolution": 11.

566 Concern with the moral being of the working class was spatially expressed in the emphasis in Jamshedpur on parks and sporting facilities. At its most extreme, it was also rooted in a socialist eugenics that sought to liberate the working class through environment and breeding. Thus, Sydney Webb, the Fabian socialist and founder of the London School of Economics and Political Science, argued that Tisco should, " breed its own workers rather than rely on recruiting from the complex mixture of races and cultures in India which would, in his opinion, lead to moral and physical degeneration" (Kling, "Paternalism in Indian Labor": 79-80).

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labourers who constituted the bulk of its unskilled workforce were provided with nothing beyond wages.[567] The unskilled labourers, mostly displaced Adivasi from Chotanagpur, settled in informal slums surrounding the city proper.[568] A new peripheral space was created, one which enjoyed none of the amenities provided by Tisco to its permanent employees. It was, in contrast to the city proper, unregulated, unregimented and chaotic. Its tenuous and precarious existence was symbiotically linked to the tamed, angular and functionally segregated spaces of Jamshedpur.

Jamshedpur, and other similar planned industrial cities in Chotanagpur such as Bokaro Steel City, built in the 1960s with the assistance of the USSR, are concrete illustrations of the fragmented space emerged in Chotanagpur in the 19th and 20th centuries. These urban centres are clearly demarcated, regimented and disciplined urban spaces primarily populated by non-Adivasi 'outsiders', ringed by informal, unregulated and chaotic peripheral spaces of modernity housing the migrant Adivasi labourers who flock to these cities in search of temporary employment. These spaces of modernity are themselves linked to the coasts and plains through dense infrastructural connections which bypass their hinterlands, the zones of exception and temporally 'frozen' spaces constituted by special land regimes and customary preservation. Under British rule Jamshedpur, and other industrial exclaves, developed as part of Chotanagpur's fragmented space, a space rife with contradictions still in the

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567 Sinha and Singh, "Jamshedpur": 14.
568 Kling, "Paternalism in Indian Labor": 81.

process of resolving itself.

Conversely, an idiom of resistance emerged that challenged the expansion of the most visible manifestations of modern, what Henri Lefebvre calls abstract, space[569] — the city, the railroad, the mine—by drawing on the symbolic and representational power of the land and forest. While resistance to the state project helped produce particular 'protected' spaces, the production of these 'protected' spaces, in turn, shaped resistance. From the perspective of the state, the region was imagined as a dangerous, but naturally bountiful, frontier rife with banditry and populated by particularly uncivilized and recalcitrant populations.[570] From the perspective of much of Chotanagpur's population, on the other hand, the state and modernity was an encroaching, totalizing alien force that regulated, displaced and corralled, a perspective fuelled uprisings expressed in apocalyptic, millenarian terms that sought to (re)create a semi-mythical Adivasi past.[571] These logics of spatial production in the region helped shape the nature of revolt— resistance became rooted in material demands framed around idioms of anti-

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569 "[Abstract space] dissolves and incorporates such former 'subjects' as the village and the town.... It sets itself up as the space of power" (Lebevre, *Production of Space*: 51).

570 Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns:* 78–103.

571 This space of representation still has echoes in the present day among activists who see the state and the expansion of extractive industry as a contemporary manifestation of a long historical process. "If you see the history, history suggests that conflict in Adivasi society started with the formation of Indian state. The whole state. Because before there was the Indian state, Adivasi were... they had ownership rights, resources, land, everything. They had their own area. Their saying, I think you musts have heard of it, Santhal country. Or Munda country. They presumed that the area they were living, that is there country. But when the British invaded- first that Aryan invasion, but largely the problem of resources arises during the British invasion. In 1765, British invaded Bengal. And that time Adivasi they protested. There were huge fighting between British and Adivasi. They said no, we cannot accept your rule. We have our own rule. Why should we pay you the tax because land and resources, everything, is given to us by our <inaudible>. That was the whole idea. Then, but with the power of gun and this British they established their rule and then after independence things went from bad to worse. Now everything... every area is captured by the Indian government"(Gladson Dungdung. Author interview).

modernity, an opposition to encroachment by non-autochthonous populations and a rejection of the state.

Independence: Developmentalism and Neo-liberalism

The fundamental contradiction that arose in the colonial spatial transformation was that industrial intensification existed simultaneously with a land regime that sought to obliterate time and retard modernity. The colonial space of Chotanagpur was dualistic and rooted in two incompatible logics: a logic of extraction and industrialization and a logic that sought to preserve what was imagined to be a pristine pre-industrial past. First, land under the aegis of 'tribal' protection acts such as the CNT explicitly limited economic activity to small-scale agriculture, while also preserving 'customary' governance. The essence of pre-colonial space was, however, found in territorial fluidity and mobility. Following a bureaucratic logic of preservation, the British, through strategies of enclosure, ironically obliterated precisely those characteristics which constituted the pre-modern.

A second contradiction existed between policies encouraging industrialization, urbanization and global economic integration with policies of enclosure and preservation. These contradictions would accelerate in the early 20th century and the period following independence. In 1912, Chotanagpur was separated from the Bengal Presidency, becoming part of the newly created Bihar and Orissa Province. In 1936, there was a further split as the Oria speaking

districts of Orissa (present-day Odisha) were separated and Chotanagpur was attached to the newly created Bihar Province. It was this political organization in which Chotanagpur was placed at independence.

During the decades following independence one of the core pillars of state practice was Nehruvian developmentalism. Inspired in part by the Soviet state's industrialization in the 1930s and the import-substitution industrialization (ISI) adopted by numerous countries from the 1950s to the 1970s as a means of rapidly overcoming the legacies of colonialism, poverty and economic backwardness. ISI was a global political project that sought to create a self-generated modernity in the post-colonial world. Industrialization as both practice and ideology required the extraction and processing of the natural resources found in abundance in Chotanagpur.[572] During this period, the processes of nascent industrialization and extraction which began under colonialism in the region accelerated. Large public sector firms established mines and factories in Chotanagpur. In particular, the Second Five Year plan (1956-61) sought to rapidly industrialize India through the establishment and capitalization of public sector firms: "In the late 1950s the Government of Bihar, in competition with the Government of West Bengal, persuaded New Delhi and the sponsoring Governments of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union to site a cluster of publicly-owned heavy engineering industries in Chota Nagpur".[573] The production of industrial space in Chotanagpur, which began in the late 19th century,

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572 Corbridge, "Competing Inequalities": 67.
573 Corbridge,"Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 254.

significantly expanded in scope and scale under the developmental state.[574] This

had two primary effects on space in the region. The first was that it deepened

and accelerated longer-term historical patterns of in-migration to the state as

most firms were reluctant to hire local labour which they saw as less skilled and

malleable. Thus, large numbers of workers were imported from outside of the

state with only the most menial jobs reserved for local Adivasi populations.

In addition to the deepening of industrial development in Chotanagpur,

independent India maintained and deepened protective land regulations from the

British period, such as the CNT, while also implementing additional legislation

such as the 5th Schedule of the Constitution, the Bihar Land Reform Act, 1950,

and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA).

The 5th Schedule of the Constitution wrote state paternalism and special

protection for the Adivasi into the foundations of the state. The 5th Schedule

constitutionally enshrined special land rights and customary local self-

government for Adivasi communities.[575] In addition to the 5th Schedule, both the

state and central governments created the legally designated category of

Scheduled Tribe (ST).[576] Areas declared 'Scheduled' were those in which a

significant percentage of the population were 'Scheduled'. It is a problematic

tautology as these definitions are often neither "comprehensive nor sociologically

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574 Ibid.: 263

575 Schedule V of the Indian Constitution only applies to 'tribal' populations outside of the North-East. The
   North-East falls under Schedule VI and has its own constitutional provisions and protections. (Bijoy,
   "Forest Rights Struggle": 1759).

576 *Constitution of India*, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. Accessed 5 June 2015.
   http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-4March2016.pdf

valid".[577] As Bijoy writes: "Not all Adivasis are STs, nor are all STs Adivasis. STs in one part of the state are not scheduled in another part of the same state. STs in one state are not scheduled in another state. STs in one area, for instance, are classified under various caste categories in another area".[578] For many activists in Jharkhand, the political consequences of the bureaucratic construction of the category 'ST' is part of a longer colonial history of suppression and absorption:

> The Jharkhand population, I think about 80%, if not 70% at least, are indigenous people. They are not categorized as indigenous people because [the] government does not recognize [them]. Scheduled tribe is a bureaucratic term. It has no history, it has no anthropology, it has no sociology. It is a list of people picked up from the colonial list who are in [it] arbitrarily. There is no rhyme or reason why one group is put into that category and other is not. If you look at Jharkhand history, the people have been fighting for their autonomy and identity from [the]British period. When you talk about tribal, if you narrow down your categorization to scheduled tribe, you will not be able to understand the reality properly.[579]

This lays bare the fundamental contradiction which exists in the 'special' spatial regimes established by the British and extended by the independent state—ST and Scheduled Area are administrative and bureaucratic constructs. As such, they are thoroughly modern. However, these administrative and bureaucratic constructs seek to protect groups of people by producing a temporally frozen space existing outside of that seen to threaten 'authentic' pre-modernity.

Administratively, the 5th Schedule directs all states with Scheduled Areas to create a 'Tribal Advisory Council' whose purpose is to report directly to the Governor (thus bypassing the state government) and advise him or her on, "such

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577 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggles": 1756.
578 Ibid.: 1769.
579 Sanjay Basumalik. Author interview.

matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor".[580] Furthermore, the Governor may determine that, "particular Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State shall not apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State or shall apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification".[581] The Schedule specifically refers to legislation which affects the transfer and use of land by STs.[582]

Thus, in addition to creating a temporally frozen space as a bulwark against modernity, but constituted by modernity, there are echoes in the 5th Schedule of the paternalistic impulse that informed British rule over the Adivasi populations of Chotanagpur. The central government's responsibility is to protect Adivasi from harm. However, power is ultimately vested in the Governor, an official appointed by Delhi. Not only is the Tribal Council simply an advisory body, but it only has a role insofar as the Governor "refers" matters to it. In a sense, the Agent, as paternalistic representative of the Crown has been replaced by the Governor, as paternalistic representative of the Republic.

A more recent attempt to codify and protect Adivasi exceptionalism, is the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), passed in 1996: "For the first time, there is a clear direction that the legislature of a state shall not make any law that is not in consonance with the customary law, social and

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580 Constitution of India, 5th Schedule.
581 Ibid.
582 Ibid.

religious practices, and traditional management practices of community resources."[583] PESA legislates that each village, defined in the act as a series of habitations, "comprising a community and managing its affairs in accordance with traditions and customs... shall have a Gram Sabha consisting of persons whose names are included in the electoral roles".[584] Importantly, the Gram Sabha, representing the institutionalization of Adivasi community government, is intended to function as a body of self-government. Any economic development, re-settlement, land acquisition or mining activity requires its consent.[585] PESA can be seen as an attempt to democratize the spaces of exception created by colonial and post-colonial legislation. In theory, it democratizes the customary rule and has been used as an effective tool used by Adivasi communities to halt displacement from development and mining in Chotanagpur.

During the period following independence, the Indian state faced a number of challenges and competing ideals which would have profound effects on Chotanagpur. The Indian constitution is both a formal legal framework outlining the exercise of law and governance of the country, but also a statement of the nation's self-identity. It is not simply a legalistic blueprint for the structure of the state, but also functions as an aspirational document expressing the framers' visions of how the newly independent nation-state ought to be. The Indian nation is imagined by the constitution as a unified whole with a shared history and shared future which, in keeping with India's diversity, is rooted in pluralism and a

583 Bijoy, "Forest Rights Struggle": 1760.
584 Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, "The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996". Accessed 6 June 2016. http://www.tribal.nic.in/actRules/PESA.pdf
585 Ibid.

commitment to protect religious, linguistic and cultural minorities from majoritarianism in the context of a liberal democratic state. Therefore, the constitution established specific (or scheduled) governance regimes and protections for groups identified as being historically threatened.[586] One of these groups is the Adivasi.

Following independence and the policies pursued by the developmental state, increased production and the expansion of industrial infrastructure, coupled with growing demand for resources led to the growth of industrial spaces and urban centres which were established in the late 19th century. The result was a rapid increase in population and land pressures on both protected and non-protected Adivasi communities. The dualistic space established by the British began to break down as the contradictions inherent in the practices of statecraft seen in Chotanagpur further deepened. The contradiction between an activist and aggressively developmentalist state and legally protected land in places richest in precisely the resources required by the developmental state became acute. Specifically, while the CNT and the 5th Schedule of the Constitution sought to prevent the alienation of Adivasi from their land, provisions for seizure existed under the principle of eminent domain. This principle was widely used for the intensification of industrial activity by state mining and processing companies and

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586 "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION." (*Constitution of India*, Preamble).

the construction of dams and other large infrastructural projects for the 'modernization' of the country.[587]

However, in spite of the deepening of contradictions due to the development state's control over most of the extractive industrial sector, it was able, to somewhat mitigate the effects its policies had on the Adivasi. In the decades following independence, there was limited capital available for investment and industrial growth was steady, but unspectacular. Additionally, at least in principle, the companies licensed to work in Chotanagpur were bound to obey the constitutional provisions which protected Adivasi land from alienation. In spite of this, the spatial contradictions in Chotanagpur continued to increase pressures on the zones of exception.

These pressures significantly accelerated following the reforms of the 1990s and the policies of the previous two and a half decades have led to an acceleration of the erosion of the dualistic space first established by the British. The dialectic between an expanding state and capitalist geography and the zones of exception is creating a networked space which subsumes industry, the state, local elites and insurgents. In this emergent networked space there is no clear delineation between component parts. Consequently, both the spirit and the letter of protective legislation such as the CNT is under acute stress, representing a failure at all levels of the state. As Dhruv Katoch, an analyst with the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, states:

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587 Meher, "Globalization, displacement": 469.

In this 5th Schedule, it states that the governor will form a council, which is called the tribal council to be composed of 20 people. People who have been elected there. But if you do not have that number of elected representatives, then they can be taken from the tribal population itself. Now once you form this council, all rules pertaining to those tribal people has to be approved by this council. What has happened is that when land is being taken for industry as per the constitutional provisions the tribal council has to be put into the picture on the actual ground they have been marginalized.[588]

Contemporary Chotanagpur has become a predatory space nominally held together by a deeply fragmented shadow state. The implications of this is discussed further in this chapter.

In spite of the existence of the zones of exception, displacement and land dispossession has increased since the onset of neoliberalism and the creation of Jharkhand state. As discussed earlier, numerous legal safeguards protect Adivasi from displacement. During the period of the Nehruvian developmental state, these provisions were circumvented and public sector enterprises and infrastructure built using the powers of eminent domain. With the privatization of natural resource extraction and the in-flow of private capital in the region, the tools for violating the spirit of protective constitutional provisions and legislation such as the CNT have become more complex and multi-faceted. Companies, contractors and local government officials have employed diverse strategies to subvert processes which require the consent of *Gram Sabha's*, community council comprising all adult members of a village, for developmental and industrial projects. Unsurprisingly, in eastern and central India 'developmental'

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588 Dhruv Katoch. Author interview.

activities are often so loosely defined that they include private sector mining. As

Gopinath Ghosh states:

> Before any clearance, that Gram Sabha should be given the community
> rights. That they get the community rights even if they have whole forest,
> they are the owner of the forest. That village is the owner of the forest.
> That provision is. What company is doing with the state government and
> government officials and with the help of the local goons and splinter
> groups of Maoists. The TPC is working for the company. The government
> has given order to the village leader to organize a Gram Sabha, which is
> unconstitutional. The government cannot order the Gram Sabha. The
> Gram Sabha is autonomous body. And what will be the agenda of that
> meeting? They're deciding it They are using all types of machinations.
> They are looking the local thanas [police precinct]. Even the police is
> working for the company. The local Naxalite splinter of Maoists, they're
> working for the company. Even the government officials are working
> for the company. And they jointly want to take the clearance from the
> Gram Sabha. And they fake the door of this Gram Sabha and send it to
> ministry of Environment and Forest for the clearance. Forest land
> clearance. So in this way they're taking the land and in many areas they
> have done this type of thing. And what is happening, when we there, the
> people were shouting, no, we will not give our land. We have not signed
> this. We protest that Gram Sabha. That is not Gram Sabha. It is fake Gram
> Sabha.[589]

What Ghosh is describing is the materialization and the manifestation of the

larger resource network and nexus that controls much of Chotanagpur. Elements

of the state, the private sector, police and insurgents are using threats of violence

and force in order to apply a thin veneer of legality to the capture of Adivasi land

and the displacement of populations for extractive purposes.

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589 Gopinath Ghosh. Author interview.

Jharkhandi Movement

Colonial and post-colonial statecraft coupled intensive industrialization and urbanization with cultural and economic protection. This system was rife with contradictions and contributed to the violence, displacement, corruption and political insecurity evident in Jharkhand today. There was, however, a more positive consequence of historical developments in Chotanagpur which can be seen in the emergence of a robust political space rooted in mobilizations around Jharkhandi identity and economic and social justice. The emergence of a zone of exception contributed to the development of a sense of nationhood and being that existed in explicit contrast to the plains society of Bihar and, more broadly, Hinduism. What emerged was a sociological and political sense of autochthony.[590] This consciousness was not solely a consequence of British colonial policy insofar as British colonial policy was itself conditioned and structured by the frequent and ferocious rebellions confronting imperial expansion. Therefore, protected space was a product of local agency and imperialism. The colonial intervention did not create political consciousness as much as it transformed and was transformed by it. Due to the shared experiences at the hands of the state and the creation of the category of 'tribal'

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590 A good analysis of the Jharkhandi/Adivasi identity is expressed by Vijayan, an activist with the Delhi Forum: "Jharkhand has a steady history of 250+ years of native resistance. What you can outright call as native resistance. I don't think you can call it Adivasi resistance. Adivasi is an identity. Native is homogeneous, in large sense of the word, because natives often fight against outsiders. Jharkhandis fought against, in their own language, dikus. Diku is a term that they refer to for outsiders. Their battle has been not just against the British, it has also been against the Marwaris who have gone there to trade and have become a big population of the city of Ranchi now, or against the Baniya community, which is a trading community again. So, they're opposed all forces who represent dikus, for example the police force or the forest department, or military in any sense of the term. All represent dikus. Dikus want of the natural resources of Jharkhand" (Vijayan MJ. Author interview. Delhi: 15 January 2013).

which had both legal and everyday consequences, there emerged, in the 19th and 20th centuries, a pan-Adivasi identity transcending particularist tribal affiliation. This new identity was deployed in political movements led by a stratum of the Adivasi middle-class who had begun to emerge as a result of a number of transformations which had begun in Chotanagpur during the early 20th century.

A key factor in the formation of an indigenous middle-class was the Catholic Church's establishment of schools and universities for Adivasi.[591] Proselytization and conversion, which was nearly non-existent in Chhattisgarh, was extensive in the region. The Church emphasized formal Western education as a pillar of its project to fashion a Christian and Westernized population out of what was seen as the backward, heathen tribal population. The Jesuits, in particular, established numerous schools for Adivasi children as well as institutes of higher learning in cities such as Ranchi. The formal education of a small, yet significant, segment of the population had two primary effects. First, it provided a language and a set of tools for an emergent elite to both access and, in some cases, confront bureaucratic, political and business elites. Knowledge of both the law and the training to navigate state institutions is crucial for confronting power in a modern, bureaucratic state. Second, educational credentials enabled a subset of the Adivasi population to gain influential positions in government and the professions. While much of this emergent Adivasi political class became part of the state apparatus, a minority formed a constitutional political opposition

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591 Corbridge, "Competing Inequalities": 60.

through identity-based political parties and organizations.[592] This process of politicization, and in some cases radicalization, which was an inadvertent outcome of missionary activity, accelerated in the 1960s with the emergence of a local version of liberation theology. Alex Ekka, a Jesuit priest and academic refers to this as the 'parallel church':

> Official church is in these matters somewhat slow to really get in because it is more concerned with teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, that kind of traditional approach. In people's issues the official church would not be coming into it, but there are groups in the church which have this freedom to engage in people's struggles is the parallel church.[593]

Many of the universities and representatives of lay communities were radicalized and began to actively preach an activist version of Christianity rooted in social justice and empowerment.[594]

Another factor which has led to the creation of a vibrant activist space in Chotanagpur is the weakness and disarray of the state. Elites in Chhattisgarh are relatively unified which has enabled the state to pursue a determined and effective campaign against dissent supported by the legislative, judicial and repressive arms of the state. In Jharkhand the state is not only weak, but also highly fragmented—politics, bureaucracy and institutions exist in a state of perpetual disarray. Jharkhand has had ten Chief Ministers and President's Rule has been imposed three times since 2000.[595] While violence in Chhattisgarh is

592 Ibid.
593 Alex Ekka. Author interview. Ranchi, Jharkhand: 26 April 2013.
594 Corbridge, "Competing Inequalities": 60.
595 Press Trust India, "Nine governments, three spells of President's rule in Jharkhand in 14 years," *The Economic Times* (23 December 2014). Accessed 5 August 2016.
      http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/nine-governments-three-spells-of-

targeted, extensive and strategic, in Jharkhand both state and non-state violence is sporadic and often linked to highly localized disputes over land and power.[596] The combination of these factors has created conditions which make it possible to sustain an activist space, particularly in larger cities such as Ranchi. While political activists in Jharkhand do face violence it is not, however, systematic and sustained. Its function is not to suppress constitutional opposition and activism as a whole and is far less widespread than is the suppression of groups critical of the government in Chhattisgarh.

Another factor that contributed to the emergence of an influential activist movement in Jharkhand was the development of an Adivasi middle-class. As briefly discussed above, during the early 20th century Chotanagpur developed a tribal elite distinct from the customary village-based elite. An emergent, educated and urban middle-class who retained their ties to the communities from which they arose formed the leadership of the Jharkhandi movement and numerous other social justice movements. India's reservation system in universities and the public sector's commitment to hire at least some local people for skilled manual labour further contributed to the creation of a relatively well educated working class as well as an urban intelligentsia who found employment in government and the professions.[597]

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    presidents-rule-in-jharkhand-in-14-years/articleshow/45619632.cms

596 There is no equivalent of the draconian Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005. From the author's experience, anti-government and anti-mining activists are able to operate openly in the capital without harassment from the police. Additionally, one of the main parties of the state, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, is rooted in mass movements for Adivasi and lower caste rights which emerged in the 1970s.

597 Interestingly, there is, however, very little evidence that the emergent middle and professional classes among the Adivasi in Chotanagpur penetrated into the managerial level of the numerous public and

While the steel and coal industry in the state relied primarily on imported labour, with locals largely relegated to the most menial, unskilled work, there were a few opportunities for advancement. After independence a few of the large state firms implemented policies of hiring and promoting labour from within the STs.[598] Industrial employment also led to experience with collective action and activism through labour union politics and broader struggles which brought together workers in Chotanagpur's coalfields with Adivasi villagers fighting against land alienation and violence from landowners and industry.[599]

The emergence of an educated, urban middle-class and a skilled and semi-skilled working class employed in Jharkhand's industrial sector contributed to the rise of radical, identity politics advocating Adivasi self-government. This form of organized Adivasi politics was rooted in the claim that Chotanagpur had become little more than a colony of Bihar and that the land on which the tribals had lived since 'time immemorial' was slipping from their grasp.[600] As discussed above, beginning in the late 19th century there was a large influx of non-Adivasi 'outsiders' into the region as a result of railway construction and the opening of mines.[601] The expansion of industry and modern infrastructure and the displacement of Adivasi as a result of urbanization and industrialization brought about significant demographic shifts in Chotanagpur. While a minority of the displaced found employment in Chotanagpur's burgeoning industrial sector, most

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private sector resource extraction firms working in the region.

598 Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 263.

599 Simeon, "Work and resistance": 70-72.

600 Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle": 56.

601 Bandyopadhy, "Demographic consequences": 16.

were forced to migrate.[602] The combination of in-migration by those seeking

opportunities in the growing urban spaces of Jharkhand's 'modern' economy and

out-migration by the displaced in search of employment in distant parts of India

led to a demographic transformation. Chotanagpur was changing from having a

predominately Adivasi population dominated by Adivasi to one where they were a

minority concentrated in the remote, zones of exception.[603] Due to the

demographic transformations which were unleashed on the region as a

consequence of industrial expansion and the spatial transformations of the latter

half of the 19th century, by the time of the 1931 census, 'tribals' formed a minority

in the plateau.[604]

    Demographic change, land displacement and mass impoverishment,

coupled with the emergence of an educated Adivasi middle-class and organized

working class led to the rise of an identity-based movement for Adivasi rights and

self-government. Under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, a renowned sportsman,

the Adivasi Mahasabha, an organization articulating the demand for a homeland

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602 Thus, for example, between 1870-1900, 250,000 people, the vast majority of whom were Adivasi,. migrated to the tea plantations of Assam and West Bengal (Bandyobadhy, "Demographic consequences": 41-42). Even to the present-day, many of the labourers in the tea plantations are Adivasi from Chotanagpur.

603 These patterns would continue, and even accelerate, with the growth of the mining and industrial sectors in the 20th century. Thus, for example, in the district of Singbhum, the proportion of STs fell from 58% in 1931 to 42% in 1991 (Areeparampil, Mathew, "Displacement Due to Minining in Jharkhand," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31.24 (15 June 1996): 1527). This was mirrored across the entire region as the Adivasi population relatively rapidly lost its demographic majority as a consequence of both in and out-migration.

604 Bandyopdhyay, "Demographic consequences": 43-44). The percentage of Adivasi in Chotanagpur (and Jharkhand more broadly) is, however, politically contested. As discussed before, the term "Scheduled Tribe' is a legal, rather than a sociological term. Therefore, Adivasi activists have always claimed that the government systematically under-counts Adivasi. There is, however, no doubt that the period following Chotanagpur's absorption into the colonial state and industrial political economy led to significant demographic transformations in those parts of the region which developed as urban and industrial nodes.

for Central India's Adivasi was founded in 1938.[605] Following independence, the Adivasi Mahasabha was transformed into the Jharkhand Party (JP).[606]

Singh and the JP's political project was, as Stuart Corbridge has argued, based in a conception of tribal identity which saw the Adivasi as having been cheated out of their birthright to the land as a result of an influx of outsiders.[607] The JP articulated a sons of the soil ideology which imagined tribal history as an Arcadian idyll threatened by the onslaught of a particular form of modernity. Loss as a basis of politics continues to be a powerful leitmotif for Adivasi activists to this day:

> Earlier Ranchi city was a kind of a big village. Small sleepy place. And tribal presence was very predominant in those days, so wherever you go, you will meet tribal people. That was the scenario 20 years ago. They [Adivasi] are completely isolated, they're sidelined by the influx of huge migration from outside, especially from Bihar. They are dominating. Tribal people are on the outskirt. They have no say now. But in those days it was different. In the evening you will hear the dancing, singing, beating of drums. Very common all around the place. Lots of merrymaking in the nearby villages. So if you pick up a bicycle and go to the village and start taking part in the dancing, different way of life altogether. Different scenario all together.[608]

From the perspective of the autochthony movement, the solution to loss was the creation of a separate state called Jharkhand, a state which would give the Adivasi people (or at least their elites) self-government and control over their own affairs. There were, however, foundational weaknesses in the JP's ideology. The JP failed to grapple with the spatial and demographic transformations which had been unleashed on Chotanagpur during the twilight of imperium. The 'protected'

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605 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 67.
606 Ibid.: 68.
607 Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle": 65.
608 Sanjay Basumalik. Author interview.

spaces of exception that sought to freeze time and preserve 'customary' and 'traditional' Adivasi life were understood to represent the authentic historical condition of the sons of the soil. These spaces, according to the JP, represented a mode of being which existed before the advent of colonialism, industrialization, urbanization and the influx of outsiders. The JP's sons of the soil ideology, which saw Adivasi society existing in a primitive idyll that *still existed and could be preserved and protected through self-government* was fundamentally flawed. The idyll upon which this vision was based was, in fact, the product of the very modernity and spatial transformations which the JP rejected. This gap in their imaginary had concrete implications for political mobilization. The emergence of spaces of modernity and industry, coupled with urbanization, created employment opportunities for some of those who gained work as skilled or semi-skilled labourers in the steel and coal plants of the region.[609] As Corbridge argues, the result was the sudden influx of money into the hands of segments of the tribal population who were able, under the restrictions of the CNT, to purchase plots of land in their home districts:

> It was through means such as this, as well as through the acquisition of government jobs reserved for Scheduled Tribes, that a growing number of tribal families were able to forge lifestyles which can be described as 'middle-class'. Recent research has also confirmed that significant levels of inequality in the ownership and use of land are common in 'tribal' villages removed from the centres of mining capitalism... the assumed unity of 'tribal Jharkhand' has been eroding.[610]

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609 Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle": 62-63.
610 Ibid.: 63.

The JP's 'sons of the soil' ideology was rooted in a vision of an egalitarian, undifferentiated, organic and democratic tribal society. This vision was riven by contradiction. At its core it was a project that sought to elevate a tribal elite, which had been created by the spatial transformations of the region, to political power. While in the 1950s the Jharkhand Party had some electoral success, in 1963 Jaipal Singh defected to the Congress Party and the JP rapidly collapsed.[611] In spite of its failings, however, the JP did have an effect on Chotanagpur's subsequent history. The JP was both a cause and consequence of a series of fundamentally important political transformations. While the party sought to articulate a vision of an Adivasi way of life which no longer existed (and arguably never did), it also represented the first significant manifestation of Adivasi mobilization constituted along 'modern' lines. The JP was a progenitor of subsequent movements that have had profound consequences on the production of space in Chotanagpur.

While the JP collapsed and broke into numerous feuding factions, it was followed in the 1970s by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) under the leadership of Shibu Soren, an Adivasi activist who had, during the 1960s and 1970s, been involved in campaigns targeting migrants to the region.[612] While the JMM shared the JP's demands for separation from Bihar, its ideology and base differed significantly. The JP was a bourgeois party whose leadership emerged from an urbanized middle-class that demanded constitutional changes but had

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611 Ibid.: 67.
612 Ekka, *Jharkhand*: 68.

little to say about the region's political economy. Rather than challenge extractive capitalism, the party wanted to create political conditions which would make capitalism work for the middle-class. The JMM, on the other hand, mobilized around a mixture of class, caste and 'insider' status.[613] Responding to changes in the demographic composition of Chotanagpur, the JMM built its base among the organized working class, unskilled factory labourers, lower castes and rural Adivasi. They created a political movement based on a reconstituted conception of insider-outsider identity. For the JMM the pejorative diku did not include *all* non-Adivasi—the diku were a specific kind of outsider whose function in Chotanagpur was inherently exploitative. It advocated identity politics reconfigured along economic and social categories, or what Stuart Corbridge calls, "radical ethnoregionalism".[614] The Jharkhand movement was redefined as, "A movement not of tribals versus non-tribals, but of peasants and workers against landlords and capitalists regardless of caste or race".[615] Ultimately, the JMM proved to be a more resilient and successful form of mobilizational politics than the JP and it remains, to this day, a potent political force in Jharkhand.

A long-standing demand of the constitutional opposition was the establishment of a Jharkhandi state founded in identity and a conception of a socially and economically just order. The view among activists was that the Chotanagpur Plateau existed in a semi-colonial relationship with Bihar— politicians and business elites, whose power lay in the plains, saw the forests

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613 Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 263-264.
614 Ibid.: 263-264.
615 Ibid.: 263-264.

and hills of Chotanagpur as a site for resource exploitation.[616] This power imbalance was visible in the fact that Biharis controlled large parts of the bureaucracy, managed the large industrial firms and held the majority of skilled and permanent jobs. The argument of the autonomy movement was that there existed a Jharkhandi identity separate from the Bihari identity and this identity reflected long-held cultural traditions such as love of the land, egalitarianism and a belief in social justice. As one Adivasi activist states:

> Conflict in Adivasi society started with the formation of Indian state. Because before there was the Indian state, Adivasi were... they had ownership rights, resources, land, everything. They had their own area. Their saying, I think you must have heard of it, Santhal country. Or Munda country. They presumed that the area they were living, that is their country. In 1765, the British invaded Bengal. And that time Adivasi they protested. There were huge fighting between British and Adivasi. They said no, we cannot accept your rule. We have our own rule. Why should we pay you the tax because land and resources, everything, is given to us by our land?[617]

These myths of an Arcadian past form a powerful mobilizational leitmotif that has been deployed throughout the history of the Jharkhandi movement.[618] It creates a pan-Adivasi identity constituted around both loss and resistance, linking contemporary struggles with past struggles against British and diku domination:

> That mobilization has been part of it. Because Jharkhand movement was a movement of the people of the area who wanted to have autonomy and

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616 Stuart Corbridge, in his critique of this perspective, states that, the 'internal colonialism thesis, "developed by a team of academics led by Dietmar Rothermund... suggests that the development of the Indian coalfield has assumed the form of an "enclave" wherein a dynamic but chaotic urban/industrial sector lives within, and feeds off, a vast sea of rural stagnation" (Corbridge, "Industrialisation, internal colonialism": 255).

617 Gladson Dungdung. Author interview.

618 And perhaps going even further back to the rebellions of the 19th century where millenarian movements often deployed romanticized idioms of 'primitive' Adivasi life as a tool to mobilize opposition to an expansionist state and the onslaught of capitalism.

then trying to preserve their special tradition and culture. Struggle against the British, against the landlords. So that has been working in the history. That culture is there. Even now that fighting spirit is there. Rallying behind a cause and working together.[619]

A pan-Adivasi mobilizational strategy rooted in an idealized past is a useful

political myth with which to combat possible cultural extinguishment, a fear widely

expressed by activists:

> The biggest threat to the Adivasis' civilization. Therefore we are creating... trying to create people's organization, trying to mobilize them and also youth. The thing is youth, especially Adivasi youth, if they could understand and also get together, make unity and fight, then they will survive. Otherwise, at least after 100 years, I think you won't find Adivasis. You will find, but not like the culture... they might live, some of the distraught, majority of Adivasis they might become rickshaw pullers and beggars. Elimination is going on. In Jamshedpur where 18 villages were there. That is majority area of the Adivasi. Nearly 95% Adivasi were living there. But today hardly you find 5%. just happened in a hundred years. Imagine what will happen here after 100 years.[620]

There is a widely held perception among Adivasi activists that the fight against

the state and industry is existential. Given the rapidity of demographic change in

the region during the previous hundred and fifty years, this is not an

unreasonable fear.[621]

On the surface, Jharkhand's creation in 2000 signified the realization of

the autonomy movement's demands. Many activists and analysts, however, see

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619 Alex Ekka. Author interview.
620 Gladson Dungdung. Author interview.
621 In addition to induced, yet 'voluntary' migration, there is evidence of organized trafficking rings operating in the state: "Jharkhandi girls, there maximum is tribals, they are going to metropolitan cities, especially in Delhi and Mumbai, as a domestic worker. Trafficking is a major problem here. Number of girls has been trafficked. Trafficked from here and they have been sold somewhere else. In every tribal police station you will find. But they have not lodged any FIR (first information request] in police station. Either they have not lodged or in some cases police have not lodged those cases. So we have a done fact finding on that and we are planning on doing a study on this number of missing girls. For me, we went to Khunti and we visited only five villages and we found more than 14 or 15 girl child and youths from last one year to 15 years. And they have not lodged any complaints at the police station. But all the children are missing" (Gopinath Ghosh. Author interview).

it as a failure, the outcome of an astute political move to create an environment more conducive to elite interests. Arguably, a small segment of the leadership of the Jharkhandi movement are the only Adivasi who have benefited from separation. The consequence of Jharkhand's creation has been political demobilization, disillusionment and a belief that constitutional politics had failed.

There is a fundamental contradiction in Chotanagpur. A core demand of the popular mobilizations which began with the emergence of the Jharkhandi Movement in the 1930s was the creation of an independent, tribal state within the framework of federal India. The creation of Jharkhand in 2000 by the BJP government has not met these expectations. While the Maoists have, since the 1980s, had a presence in Chotanagpur, it is only since the creation of the state that the insurgency has rapidly expanded. A number of reasons can explain this. First, Jharkhand's creation was not the result of popular agitation, but the product of elite-level negotiations between business interests, political parties and elements of the Adivasi elite. In particular, there was a convergence between the BJP government, who sought to weaken the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), their political rivals and the dominant party in Bihar, and the interests of businesses such as the Tatas who saw in the creation of a new state the opportunity to increase their power in Chotanagpur.[622] From the perspective of many in the Jharkhandi movement, rather than creating an Adivasi homeland, bifurcation was the product of spatial colonization by powerful local interests who have used it as a means of accelerating processes of land alienation and resource capture.

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622 Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle": 57-58.

The disillusionment of many informers active in the popular mobilizations which began in the 1970s is captured by the trope that the birth of Jharkhand was met with 'silence':

> The present Jharkhand state was created not to satisfy the demands of the Adivasis. This state has been the creation of BJP to exploit minerals and other natural resources in a more easy way. This state is not what the people of Jharkhand demanded. When the state was formed, not a single Adivasi cheered or danced and sang. Not a single one. There's a complete silence the day it was declared in Jharkhand. These people have been demanding for a separate state for the last fifty years, and when it is created, there is no celebration from the people. Only the contractors, mining companies, BJP political party leaders and industrialists, they were rejuvenated. They were celebrating.[623]

This sense of failure was widely expressed to me by numerous informers:

> Despite having a separate state of Jharkhand from Bihar in the year 2000, things have not really made much progress, in fact things have gone backwards. There's no politically stability here. In the span of say ten or twelve years we have had about eight governments. And the Jharkhand movement which we had thought would bring tribal people and give them chance to rule and thereby give them chance to take care of their own development process and have their own governance systems. These were the dreams which we had. Somehow Jharkhand movement did not materialize in having this state. It was the political expediency of the then ruling party in Bihar and also Delhi.[624]

The belief is that the creation of the state represented something worse than the continuation of the status quo.[625] As Gladson Dungdung, an Adivasi civil liberties activist states:

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623 Sanjay Basumalik. Author interview.

624 Alex Ekka. Author interview.

625 As Stuart Corbridge writes, "it was ominous, to say the least, that eight Adivasis were shot dead by the police in Tapkara village in the Koel-Karo region on 2 February 2001, less than three months after the formation of the new state. The Adivasis were killed when a large number of them protested at a police action that had, on the previous day, torn down a barricade which had been erected near Derang village as part of a campaign to keep contractors away from the site of a proposed dam on the Koel-Karo river system" (Corbridge, "The Continuing Struggle": 58).

It [Jharkhand] was created when there was, market was ready. Secondly, the people who came in the driving seat, most of the time, they were not part of Jharkhand movement. They don't understand behind the creation of the state. Because most often I hear them speaking... every time they're terming Jharkhand as an economic state. We have minerals. But the fact is this state was not created on ground of economy. But this state was created on the ground of exploitation of the Adivasi and that exploitation was basis of culture. Because people of Bihar, they have different culture. A feudal culture. And then Adivasi we have community culture. So there was clash with two. Therefore we said no. Please give us separate state, we want to rule ourselves because if you are ruling, you are exploiting, you are alienating us from the land, resources, everything. So there was, I think, big problem.[626]

Arguably, the failure of the popular mobilizations around ethno-regionalism has contributed to the expansion of Maoist insurgency in Chotanagpur. The creation of Jharkhand provided opportunities for the expansion of lucrative resource networks in the region. This was a consequence of accelerated investment in mining and extraction as well as the emergence of state patronage networks centred around Ranchi, the state capital. This has provided a ready source of revenue for various actors including the Maoists. Additionally, the failure and demobilization of popular political movements in the region has led to disillusionment with legal activism. The Maoist's could plausibly claim that the failure of democratic movements to combat neo-liberalism and tribal exploitation demonstrated the necessity of armed struggle.[627] It is worth quoting Sanjay

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626 Gladson Dungdung. Author interview.
627 "Basing on the concrete analysis of the concrete conditions prevailing in our country we have formulated the programme and strategy for the Indian revolution in the present stage and the future perspectives of the Indian revolution. We had drawn up the basic, principal and the immediate task of the revolution at the present stage as the establishment of the People's Army and Base Areas in the vast countryside and also decided that the principal form of struggle throughout the stage of the new democratic revolution in India is armed struggle and the principal form of organization is the people's army" (CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics:* 52)

Basumalik, an activist with BIRSA, at length:

> After the collapse of autonomy movement, why all of a sudden large number of people, a mass, overnight, joined Maoists. What attracted them to join Maoists? That has to be understood. What Maoists offered? What did they say that we didn't say? We the autonomy movement activists. Our negotiations failed with the central government. Then we had nothing to say. I give this story to this kind of discussion. After the collapse of our negotiations with the government, central government, Dr. Munda and myself, we were coming back from Dhanbad, after going to our meeting which was not well attended, So we were very sad that well now people have lost interest in us. But then it was midnight, we were coming back. Then Dr. Munda said lets have some tea. I'm not being able to sleep. So I was driving. I stopped near roadside tea stall. Normally at that hour of night they're closed. But that shop, showing some flickering of light coming out through holes. And I expected that maybe some people are still awake. So I knocked the door and people peeked out and said, oh, who are you? I said that can we have some tea? So then he put down his torch and looked at us. Oh, you people. Come, come. So we entered into the shop. And to my big surprise I found that it was a big place, normally these shops are quite small, you must have noticed, full of people. And they were covering themselves with blankets because it was by that time it was winter. And everybody greeted us. Welcome. Come, come, have a seat. So somebody started lighting the stove to get our tea. And then others started talking. So what happened to your negotiation? It failed. Miserably. And then gradually the light, the small beamed light of the lamp I could recognize some faces. These were the people who were involved in the autonomy movement in that area. We had our tea and didn't say anything. But I didn't realize that these people were actually holding guns and when we were about to leave one of them said that, don't waste your time by moving around in this area. What Maoists are offer now the question is. Maoists came to the village and said, see peaceful movement is not going to help. Negotiation has failed. What do you want to do? Your lives are being taken away. Mining companies are coming in a big way. Outsiders are coming in. They're devastating the whole area. What do you want to

do? How can you stop it. So eye for an eye is the answer, Take the arms. Fight them. This is a simple thing.[628]

The creation of Jharkhand, the failures of the autonomy movement to deliver meaningful change and the emergence of lucrative networks of resources from business and the state created conditions ripe for the emergence and spread of armed insurgency. Politically, the alternative to armed struggle seemed to have failed while economically, there were new opportunities for capturing resources through force.

Bihar: Insurgency and Caste Warfare

The majority of insurgents in both Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are members of the CPI(Maoist), formed in 2004 by a merger between what were then the two largest Maoist rebel groups in India, the PWG and the MCC. While the PWG originated in Andhra Pradesh, the MCC had its formative years in the plains of Bihar. It is the MCC which forms the largest component of the unified party and it is, therefore, necessary to briefly examine the history of the Maoists in Bihar during the 1980s and 1990s.

The history of the MCC is very different than that of the PWG. While the MCC was a revolutionary Maoist group, it also functioned as a caste-based militia drawing much of its strength from the Yadav community, a traditionally agrarian community from north and central India. The violence of the PWG was strategic and 'revolutionary'—targets were primarily local elites and

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628 Sanjay Basumalik. Author interview.

representatives of the state. Attacks targeting entire communities were rare and individual 'annihilation' a final step taken only after an escalating scale of 'revolutionary warnings' demanding behavioural 'reform' had failed.[629] Conversely, caste warfare in Bihar was individually indiscriminate and structured around collective violence. Both the MCC and upper caste militias, such as the Ranvir Sena, engaged in tit for tat terrorist attacks targeting entire communities. Massacre was the defining characteristic of the rural conflict in 1980s Bihar.[630]

While the MCC's base initially lay in the plains of Bihar, it gradually moved its focus to Chotanagpur, a shift which accelerated around 2000 with the formation of Jharkhand state.[631] Alpa Shah describes how, during this formative period, it expanded through a network of village-level elites who had been displaced by Bihar's land reforms of the 1950s, gaining their support, "by practising classic vigilante activities such as the 'resolution' of village disputes in 'people's courts' ".[632]

After the MCC was largely pushed out of the plains and into Chotanagpur in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a legacy of communal violence followed them:

> The PWG was a very politically sincere and trained cadre, while the Maoist Communist Centre, the Bihar Maoists, were not operating like that. They were operating in very different terrain and their ideology had already been thrown in the air. And there they have become many times pawns in the hands of the state or political parties like the RJD, Lalu Prasad's Yadav

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629 Desai, "Anti-Witchcraft": 430-431.
630 For more on the Ranvir Sena and the caste warfare of Bihar in the 1980s, see Jaol, "Naxalism in Bihar"; Kunnath, George J., "Smouldering Dalit fires in Bihar, India," *Dialectical Anthropology* 33.3 (2009)).
631 Chaudhuri, Kalyan, "Another Naxalite Strike," *Frontline* 20.1 (January 2003). Accessed 17 May 2016. http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2001/stories/20030117007305000.htm
632 Shah, *In the Shadows of the State*: 169.

party. Where the Ranvir Sena and the landless were in direct confrontation with each other and the conflicts had to be aided with guns. Because on the one hand was the Ranvir Sena which had licensed guns from the state, and on the other hand there were landless people who were fighting a battle unarmed. So it made sense to provide them with arms to do that. But the same force and the cadres once they dissipated could actually became pawns in the hands of existing political parties in the state, the police as well as the corrupt corporate structure. This is what is reflected in Jharkhand today.[633]

Significant numbers of the MCC's cadre and leadership had joined the Party out of self-interest and loyalty to their particular community, rather than out of commitment to a broader revolutionary vision.[634] This legacy, coupled with the nature of space in Jharkhand, has had a profound influence on the nature of insurgency in the region.

Bihar was a stronghold of the nationalist movement and, after independence, of the INC. Following the declaration of Emergency in 1975, however, Bihar became the heartland of agitation against the government of Indira Gandhi. It was in Bihar that the Janata Party first emerged, a party that formed India's first non-Congress government in 1977 by bringing together opponents of the Emergency ranging from socialists to Hindu nationalists. While

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633 Vijayan MJ. Author interview.

634 Alpa Shah has done significant anthropological work in Ranchi and found that the CPI(Maoist) recruits primarily from the village elites whose land was redistributed by the various land reforms of the post-independence period: "The abolition of landlords in the early fifties meant that the rural elites, such as Chotu's family, who faced a gradual impoverishment, increasingly attempted to sustain their lifestyles through state-related resources–whether directly (as in through government jobs) or indirectly (for instance through government contracts). They reproduced (in the case of the descendants of the landlords) or created (in the case of the newer elite) their position through extensive links with the state.... The expansion of the MCC was linked to the politics of access to this informal economy of state patronage. In return for their co-operation in harbouring and fostering the movement, recruits in areas under MCC control were offered privileged and protected access to state resources" (Shah, "In search of certainty": 275-276). Similarly, Chitralekha has analyzed the motives of Maoist insurgents and found that the motivations for joining range for ideological, to opportunistic and that multiple motives often overlap and change over time (Chitralekha, "Committed, Opportunists and Drifters").

the Janata Party coalition collapsed after one term, the 1980s was, nevertheless, a period of political reconfiguration in Bihar. Numerous smaller parties emerged from the remnants of the Janata Party coalition, including the BJP and the Janata Dal (JD) and became competitive in the state. While the divisions between these political forces was ideological—secularism vs. Hindu nationalism—it also reflected caste divisions, with the BJP supported by upper and middle caste groups and the JD by lower castes.[635] In 1999, Lalu Prassad Yadav, the JD's leader who first became Bihar's Chief Minister in 1990, split from the party to create the RJD, a party ideologically wedded to secularism, hostile to the BJP and Hindutva and garnered support from a coalition which brought together agrarian lower castes, such as the Yadavs, and Muslims.**[636]** This inter-communal coalition created both enmity in the BJP, which saw the potential rise of the RJD as a threat to their power base in north India. The BJP's hostility to the RJD and the desire to weaken the new party's strength in undivided Bihar was one of the motives for the creation of Jharkhand in 2000. Subsequently, the BJP was able to split the less populated part of the state from the power centres of both the RJD and the Janata Dal (United), the successor party to the JD.

As mentioned above, caste politics and the struggle over agricultural lands is a key element of politics in the Bihari plains, a legacy that has continued to be evident in Jharkhand's insurgency. During the 1980s and 1990s Bihar proper was

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635 There was fierce competition between the JD and the BJP during the 1990s, including the CM's Lalu Prassad Yadav's arrest of the then-BJP President LK Advani as he travelled through the state in his campaign against the Adhoya Mosque.
636 Kumar, Sanjay, "BJP Crafts a New Social Coalition in Bihar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 49.39 (27 September 2014).

a hotbed of Maoist activity with the Maoists divided between the MCC, the

Communist Party of India(Marxist-Leninist) Party Unity (PU) and the Communist

Party of India(Marxist-Leninist) Liberation. As Bela Bhatia writes, the, "MCC is

considered to be extreme left, Liberation is drifting towards the 'parliamentary

path', and Party Unity is somewhere in between."[637] What this meant in practice

was that the MCC was fully engaged in armed struggle, the PU, while also

committed to armed struggle was also committed to mass movements and

overground political fronts. Liberation had abandoned armed struggle in favour of

electoral politics while maintaining that violence might become necessary under

certain conditions.[638] These divergent positions reflected the differing histories of

these three groups. While the MCC arose as a strictly underground group during

the 1960s, the PU initially emerged as a Maoist group that focused on mass

movements and the organization of Dalit agricultural labourers, only developing

armed squads in order to protect supporters from attacks by landlord militias and

state forces.[639] From its inception in the late 1970s, PU rejected many of the early

ideological ideas of the early Naxalites. As George Kunnath writes:

> The Party Unity adhered to a policy of armed struggle, but rejected Charu
> Mazumdar's emphasis on the 'battle of annihilation'—the killing of class
> enemies—as the highest   form of class struggle. As an alternative
> position, this party followed a policy of 'selective annihilation' in relation to
> oppressive landlords... and placed greater emphasis on building mass
> organizations based on the popular support of the landless labourers and

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637 Bhatia, Bela, "The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40.5 (9-15
    April 2005): 1536.
638 Jaoul, "Naxalism in Bihar": 27.
639 Bhatia, "The Naxalite Movement": 1545.

marginal peasants, while the Party itself remained an underground organization.[640]

In contrast, Liberation has, since its formation, focused almost exclusively on the establishment of mass movements and on electoral politics, having met with moderate success, winning a handful of seats in Bihar and Assam.

A consequence of these organizational and ideological divisions was the intense internecine warfare over control of villages in Bihar. This was especially problematic given that one of the primary means of mobilization by both the PU and Liberation was the establishment of mass political fronts. Supporters and activists of these overground groups were highly vulnerable not only to attacks from the state and landlords, but also from rival factions within the Maoist movement. Liberation especially suffered as the MCC, and to a lesser extent the PU, conducted campaigns of intimidation, assassinations and massacres of the leadership and rank and file in response to their growing electoral and political strength.[641] In a few districts, Liberation was entirely pushed out as a result of campaigns against them by armed Maoist squads.[642] When the PU merged with PWG in 1998, the violence between the new party and the MCC continued sporadically and was one of the primary reasons given for the merger between the two groups in 2004.[643] This legacy of factional violence has continued in contemporary Jharkhand.

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640 Kunnath, "Smouldering Dalit Fires": 313.

641 Jaoul, "Naxalism in Bihar": 32-36.

642 Ibid.: 36.

643 CPI(Maoist), "Joint Interview of the General Secretaries of the Erstwhile CPML(PW) and the MCCI On the Occasion of the Merger of the Two Parties and the Formation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist)," *People's March* (November-December 2004). Accessed 4 July 2017. http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/#Founding_Documents

The intense internecine violence of undivided Bihar has, arguably, contributed to the ideological decay evident in contemporary insurgency in Jharkhand. While in Andhra Pradesh, the PWG was able to maintain its identity as a revolutionary force, this is less true for the former MCC cadre. Evidence of the ideological decline in the erstwhile MCC can be traced back to at least the 1990s. For example, Kunnath describes how the MCC, and other groups such as the PU, initially sought to empower, mobilize and defend the rights of Dalits in parts of rural Bihar where, "the incidence of bondage, workforce exploitation and rural poverty... intensified in the years following independence."[644] The conditions of Dalits in rural Bihar was, arguably, worse in much of rural Bihar than anywhere else in India. It was fertile ground for revolutionary politics:

> Such oppression did not go unchallenged... and from the 1970s the rising incidence of discontent among poor peasants and landless agricultural labourers found its expression in different Naxalite organizations. To counter this grassroots challenge, the landowning classes in Bihar created their own caste senas (militias).[645]

The Maoists expanded into the region, leading mobilizations of Dalits against landowning caste groups. Over time, however, this commitment to the struggle for Dalit rights eroded as the Maoists transformed into an armed group perpetuating caste dominance of local elites. Kunnath describes this process in a Bihari village, where, in the late 1970s, the Maoists initially, "organized the landless Dalit labourers against the landlords, especially from the Kurmi caste,

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644 Kunnath, George J., "Becoming a Naxalite in rural Bihar: Class struggle and its contradictions," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 33.1 (2006): 93.
645 Ibid.

around the issues of land, wages, caste discrimination and sexual abuse."[646]

Following a decade of intense inter-caste violence and Dalit mobilization, the

Kurmi reconciled themselves to Maoist power and the Maoists, "sought to enter

into a strategic alliance 'with the middle peasants' in the struggle for state

power."[647] Ultimately, according to Kunnath, this led the Maoists to become a tool

for the re-establishment and consolidation of Kurmi dominance in the region.[648]

      Arguably, the ideological degeneration described by Kunnath is a legacy

which has continued in Jharkhand. In Bihar, the Maoists organized themselves

around specific caste groups, groups which were often not the most oppressed

or marginalized. Rather than ideological and revolutionary politics, the politics of

Bihari Maoism, at times, became the politics of caste interests couched in

revolutionary rhetoric. There is evidence that casteism has remained a factor in

contemporary insurgency in Jharkhand. Specifically, critics both inside and

outside of the Party have alleged that parts of the CPI(Maoist) in Jharkhand

functions as little more than a vessel for the interests of the Yadav caste.[649]

Furthermore, this ideological degeneration, in which revolutionary goals become

secondary to private or group gain. This is evident with the splintering of the

Party and the emergence of highly localized militias representing particularist

interest.

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646 Kunnath, "Smouldering Dalit fires": 309-310.
647 Ibid.: 321.
648 Ibid.
649 Yadav, Anumeha, "A splinter in the service of police to combat Maoists," *The Hindu* (3 April 2013).
    Accessed 8 June 2017. http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/a-splinter-in-the-service-of-police-to-combat-maoists/article4575219.ece

This leads to the final legacy of Bihari Maoist history in Jharkhand: collaboration with political parties and the state. In particular, the PU and the MCC's intense battles with Liberation, as well as with upper caste militias, led to strategic and tactical alliances with political parties such as the JD and the RJD.[650] The vast patronage networks which political power in a state such as Bihar bestows, tied the Maoists in the region into networks that corroded their ideological vision and their commitment to revolutionary politics. As discussed later, the corruption and connections with elements of the state bureaucracy and political parties, is also evident in contemporary Jharkhand.

Thus, the legacy of both revolutionary and non-revolutionary politics in Bihar has had a significant effect on the insurgency in Jharkhand. It is, however, important not to overstate the case. Specifically, caste politics, while not wholly absent, are far less evident than they are in Bihar and as the focus of the Maoists has shifted from caste politics to broader Adivasi politics and away from issues around land to a focus on industrial development.

Contemporary Maoism in Chotanagpur

As discussed above, a primary characteristic of space in Chotanagpur is its dualism and fragmentation. Inherent in this fragmentation is a contradiction between an expansive capitalist space of extraction and a space of exception. Modern abstract space tends towards homogenization and seeks to assimilate and absorb peripheral and insurgent spaces. In the case of Chotanagpur,

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650 Jaoul, "Naxalism in Bihar": 33-34.

however, the fragmentary and dualistic space that emerged as a result of historical developments since the onset of colonialism has created conditions where no centre of power strong enough to decisively absorb and homogenize space exists. The state is weak and there is no sufficiently unified economic or political elite able to pursue a coherent and determined set of strategies to decisively suppress resistance. This is in stark contrast to Chhattisgarh, where the political and economic elites are united in their opposition to insurgency and dissent. In Jharkhand there are numerous competing elite factions, some of whom have ties with the Maoists and other activists. Furthermore, while the Adivasi political elite have been able to capture a modicum of political power, they have been unable to establish anything resembling hegemony. Therefore, the political project of producing a space rooted in an alternative imagining of modernity, one which benefits the Adivasi rather than outsiders, is stillborn. The existence of zones of exception has militated against the creation of a unified elite-level Adivasi political project and the vast wealth generated from extraction in the region provides easy access to resources, fuelling corruption. Specifically, for many Adivasi politicians and leaders, the temptation of illegal funds from industry undermines the political will to pursue policies which could alienate business and potentially lead to a decline of economic activity in the state. Fragmentation, coupled with modernity's tendency towards homogenization, has produced an increasingly hybridized space in which conventional distinctions between the state, insurgency and capital have broken down. There is no clear

delineation between them and power is composed of overlapping networks which connect diverse, and seemingly antagonistic, political and economic actors. It is a perpetually unstable system.

The insurgency in Jharkhand is territorially nebulous and, at the local level, is not always antagonistic to the state. The conflict dynamics of the state are, in large part, the consequence of the interplay between the historically constituted practices of the MCC and the fragmented spaces of Chotanagpur. The result is a complex, violent, indiscriminate, chaotic and territorially diffuse conflict. The insurgents are both everywhere and nowhere and the MCC is linked to the state and business through their intervention and reconstitution of networks of patronage and power. There is credible evidence of collusion between politicians, Maoists and business, with some analysts alleging that anti-Maoist operations are often halted as a result of political interventions by members of the government with ties to the insurgents.[651] Furthermore, on a number of occasions, senior Jharkhand government officials have had to defend themselves against accusations that they have been reluctant to pursue counter-insurgency operations funded by the central government due to their ties to the Maoists.[652]

These connections are reflected in the reluctance on the part of the police and Maoists to fight one another directly. Rather than fight guerrillas directly, the

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[651] Miklian, Jason "Revolutionary conflict in federations: the Indian case," *Conflict, Security and Development* 11.1 (2011): 41-43. While senior officers deny that there is political interference in their operations, junior officers in the state told me this occurs regularly.

[652] Prasad, Manoj, "Former Maoist MLA offers seat to Soren," *The Indian Express* (25 April 2010). https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Soren-going-soft-on-Maoists/articleshow/5486545.cms

police often target non-Maoist activists opposed to influential corporate and political interests, claiming that they were insurgents. [653] According to Dungdung:

> Sometimes there is supposed to be a huge anti-Naxal operation but when police troops are going to that region, someone from inside, they suddenly inform the Maoists. So they either escape or they trap the whole security forces. Yeah, that is going on. And it is not a secret. It has come in the public.[654]

The Maoists, on the other hand, are often more interested in retaining access to lucrative revenue networks than they are in controlling territory. Rather than seizing territory and gaining the sympathy of the populace through ideological indoctrination and policies such as land re-distribution, one of the main goals of the Maoists in Chotanagpur is to maintain and strengthen their control over lucrative patronage networks. The use of seemingly indiscriminate terror and violence is an effective strategy in contestations over control of parts of these networks. The insurgency in Chotanagpur resembles the archetypal sub-Saharan African insurgency where access to resources rather than control over territory and populations defines conflict dynamics. The insurgents do not require the active support of the populace, they only need their acquiescence.

Arguably, another consequence of the interplay between the CPI(Maoist)'s history in Bihar-Jharkhand and the nature of space in Chotanagpur is insurgent fragmentation. While in Chhattisgarh the insurgency is unified under the aegis of

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653 According to Jason Miklian: "On several occasions, police started then abandoned anti-Maoist operations mysteriously when they began to make headway, with varying excuses (Independence Day, peace discussions, etc.)" (Miklian, "Revolutionary Conflict": 41-42). Dhruv Katoch says, "The tragedy of the whole system is police reforms are not taking place. If the DG of police of the state cannot even move his own personnel where he wants them, right, then what good is he. So if a chap, he is doing a good job and certain political interests are getting threatened, he's removed. He will be posted... I'm not saying he's sacked. He'll simply be transferred to another job" (Dhruv Katoch. Author interview).
654 Gladson Dungdung. Author interview.

the CPI(Maoist), the erstwhile MCC is in a process of organizational decay. Significant divisions exist between the pre-merger cadre of the MCC and the PWG.[655] There are even indications that their alliance is fracturing: "In 2004 what happened was the merger which led to the strengthening of party in areas like Chhattisgarh or West Bengal. But in areas like Jharkhand etc... if you still go there they won't say CPI(Maoist), they'll say MCC. Because on the ground it's still really the MCC which is working not the CPI(Maoist)".[656] Furthermore, dozens of splinter groups have emerged over the past decade, the largest of whom are the Tritiya Prastuti Committee (TPC) and the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI).[657] Fragmentation is the consequence of a number of factors. The dissonance between the MCC's stated ideology and its actual practice coupled with relatively easy access to highly lucrative resources has created conditions ideal for organizational fragmentation. In Chotanagpur, Maoism's association with power and strength is a useful currency for any group seeking to assert itself through force of arms:

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655 Das, Madhuparna, "MCC, PWG divided over peace talks with centre," *The Indian Express* (19 August 2010). Accessed 5 July 2017. http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/mcc-PWG-divided-over-peace-talks-with-centre/ This is in addition to the more open rifts and divisions which have erupted in neighbouring Odisha state after the expulsion of Sabyasachi Panda in 2012 and the mass surrender of members of an Adivasi front organization of the CPI(Maoist). See Nayak, Deepak Kumar, "Naxal Violence: A Profile of Sabyasachi Panda," Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Delhi (14 May 2013). Accessed 18 November 2016. http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/naxal-violence-a-profile-of-sabyasachi-panda-3930.html

656 Rahul Pandita. Author interview.

657 The actual number of splinter groups varies over time as many of these groups are fairly nebulous and only exist on paper. According to Gopinath Ghosh, in 2013, "As per the government record there is 17 groups. We think it is more. It is more than 25 as per our information" (Gopinath Ghosh. Author Interview). As stated, individuals deploying violence for private gain will often use the moniker of Maoist, so it is difficult to track the actual number. One individual act of violence or sabotage may occur that is claimed in the name of a group which does not actually exist.

So in many areas its a... they're like bandits really. So three commanders have come together and they form a small party and they call it the Maoist party. They're basically goons and exploiters. It's almost a brand. So they use the Maoist flag and then they do their own bloody business. You know, they make their own money which the PWG guys don't make, by the way. They get a lot of money, but I've not known of any leader from the PWG who uses it for his own personal life. They don't have any life beyond their party. But that's not true with certain leaders of MCC in areas like Jharkhand etc. Where they hobnob with politicians. I mean the CPI(Maoist) in general hobnobs with politicians in many... for small gains or whatever, but it's more acute in? Jharkhand where the MCC operates. MCC is not as disciplined as... not at all disciplined actually in many ways because of what you get to see in Jharkhand and other areas.[658]

The fragmentation of space in Jharkhand is reflected in the fragmentation of the insurgency itself. Officially, most splits have occurred due to ideological and organizational disputes. However, as mentioned above, the CPI(Maoists) in Bihar/Jharkhand gained much of its strength and leadership from the Yadav caste. As Rahul Pandita, a journalist who has worked extensively in the area, states:

> The very things which the Maoist rebellion wants to eradicate is also leading to that same phenomenon, where in districts like Rohtas [district in Bihar]? you have whole Maoist units made completely of one caste. So there's a Yadav Sena which is fighting against one tribe called Kaimur. So this is not the kind of structure which one envisages in a Maoist rebellion setup. The Maoist party has not been able to rise above these petty considerations of caste etc. or religion in many cases and do what they're supposed to do under the tents of Maoism or guerrilla warfare. So that is the irony and that is the tragedy and that is the bitter reality of the Maoist in many areas.[659]

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658 Rahul Pandita. Author interview.
659 Ibid.

The TPC emerged out of Dalit and low caste cadre who claimed that the MCC was little more than a caste-based militia.[660] This splintering along caste lines illustrates that the CPI(Maoist) has been unable to create a similarly disciplined, revolutionary and ideologically unified force as it has in neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

While factional disputes over internal politics and struggles over leadership are the stated reason for the splits, observers in the region have pointed to other, less salubrious, motives for the emergence of new armed groups. In Chotanagpur, many areas where the rebels operate contain lucrative extractive industries. While Bastar provides some opportunities for raising revenue through revolutionary taxation/extortion, possibilities for profit pale in comparison to the potential in Chotanagpur. Bastar is where the insurgents find their most ideologically committed cadre and leadership while Chotanagpur is where the insurgency raises its funds. Furthermore, the Maoists do more than simply tax existing industries. According to reports and informers, the Maoists have facilitated and encouraged resource extraction in their areas. For example in the Saranda Forest which was, until 2011, fully under insurgent control:

> The Maoists themselves promoted illegal mining. They started getting huge amount of money from mining companies. That is protection money. So, in the Saranda Forest, which government claims was a liberated zone of the Maoists, therefore no development activity could take place. Government had no access to this region. However, how this mining companies were operating there? Because more than 15 mining were

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660 Yadav, "A splinter in the service of police".

going on during this period when state had no access to this reason. It was only because of the support of the Maoists.[661]

The Maoists not only tolerate, but have also encouraged extraction as a means of generating revenue.[662] Consequently, they have become agents of spatial transformation in Chotanagpur. Their activities have encouraged the deepening of the contradiction inherent in the region's dualistic space and contributed to the breakdown of the zones of exception. However, this is a spatial transformation rooted in networks of power and extraction not embedded in a powerful state. It is, therefore, not abstract space in Lefebvrian sense, but something new. It is a hybrid space constituted around capitalist extraction and supported by competing networks of power. The conflict in Chotanagpur can be conceptualized as a struggle for access and control over the vast network of wealth stemming from government contracts and private sector investment in the region.

It is through this lens that the emergence of splinter groups in Jharkhand is best understood. The erstwhile MCC has developed as a fairly ideologically lax and corrupt organization functioning as a caste-based militia seeking access to government and private resources.[663] At the cadre level they are an ideologically weak and ill-disciplined force which attracts opportunists seeking enrichment.

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661 Gladson Dungdung. Author interview.

662 Gladson Dungdung claims that the Maoists generated approximately 5 billion rupees (or 75 million USD) annually from their operations in Saranda Forest (Gladson Dungdung. Author interview).

663 It must be pointed out that the Maoists do not deny that they raise revenue from 'taxation' in Jharkhand, however, they claim that the revenue is used to fund their insurgency and to support their social programs. One Maoist sympathizer in Jharkhand told me, when asked about the allegations of corruption, that: "When it comes to resource to finance, basically the one major part of finance, or the greater part of the resource, they spend on their own protection. But at the same time, if you look at Jharkhand, there are so many malaria prone zones and there are so many medical camps by the Maoists for the people of that malaria zone. And they are distributing in the area kits. Kits. Malaria kits. And there are some schools also. There are also some schools run by the organization, Maoist organization." (Anonymous. Author interview).

These ideological and organizational problems are not denied by the Maoists or

their sympathizers. Ill-discipline and corruption are, however, blamed on a failure

to sufficiently educate cadre in a revolutionary ethos rather than the

consequence of systematic problems implicating the leadership and the Party as

a whole. The official claim of the CPI(Maoist) is that, in Jharkhand, the

organization does its best to combat corruption. As one informer with close ties to

the Maoists in Jharkhand states:

> Those who are leaders are very good politically and ideologically. They are
> very good. Very sound. But when... in terms of the lower division of Maoists,
> they are not sound ideologically. They are human beings. They have family,
> children. Suppose your family needs some medical health in terms of
> money, but you don't have money. Then what do you do? You approach to
> any contractor who is working there. According to the Maoist ideology taking
> money from the contractor it is wrong. It is wrong, but [on the] other side
> you want that money because your family has medical issues. So what is
> happening when the leaders of the Maoist found out that this guy has taken
> rupees from this particular contractor, what Party will do? Party will dismiss
> that guy. So what he will do, already he knows everything about Naxalism
> and Naxal movement. The low level Maoists dedication level is little. And
> this is the cause that many times they are diverted, they are derailed of their
> political ideology.[664]

The Party claims that the splinters were formed as a result of internal anti-

corruption efforts. There is some truth to this. Some of the larger groups, such as

the PLFI, were created by cadre who had been expelled from the CPI(Maoist) for

allegedly taking bribes and conducting activities contrary party policy.[665]

Furthermore, in spite of the problems of the CPI(Maoist) in Chotanagpur, there

are differences between it and the splinter groups. While many of the

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664 Id.

665 Tellingly, the PLFI was founded as the Jharkhand Liberation Tigers in 2002 as an armed criminal group
who made no explicit ideological claims. It was only after a number of expelled members of the
CPI(Maoist) joined the JLT that they claimed to embrace Maoist revolution See. Majumdar, Ushinor,
"Extortion in the name of Maoism," *Tehelka* 41.10 (10 December 2013). Accessed 3 March 2016.
http://www.tehelka.com/2013/10/extortion-in-the-name-of-maoism/

CPI(Maoist)'s activities involve raising revenue, this is tempered by at least a

measure of revolutionary ideological commitment among the leadership. The

splinters, on the other hand, exist only as organizational vehicles for the capture

of resources:

> They're working directly for the company, the TPC. Whereas the Maoists
> [CPI(Maoist)] in some cases we find that they are also involved in taking
> the commission from the contractors and working in favour of the
> contractors and the local government officials. They're working in favour
> of them and doing some actions against the people also. So in somehow
> we find that both the Maoists, the TPC, or other allied Maoist groups who
> are working here, their nature is mostly same. Mostly same, I feel.[666]

While the Party may not tolerate individual corruption, much of its organizational

activity is dedicated to capturing sources of revenue. There exists a structural

imperative. Chotanagpur's tremendous wealth is a potential source of revenue

and war requires funding:

> If you are totally dependent on arms, then you need more money. You'll
> have to keep buying arms, if not arms, bullets. Where do you get it from.
> You'll have to be in negotiation with the people have money. Mining
> companies, industry, those people have money. So you have to enter into
> negotiation with them. You'll have to enter into negotiation with other
> contractors. Bureaucrats. So what do you end up with? Exactly those
> people you are fighting against, you are going to their doors with begging
> bowl.[667]

Consequently, the splinters can be conceptualized as competitors of the

CPI(Maoist) for resource access. Much of the money raised by the CPI(Maoist) in

Jharkhand leaves the state, destined for the coffers of the insurgents in

Chhattisgarh, Odisha and West Bengal. For those who see membership in the

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666 Gopinath Ghosh. Author interview.
667 Sanjay Basumalik. Author Basumalik.

Party as a means of enrichment, the outflow of funds is contrary to their interests. The 'Maoist' splinter groups in Jharkhand have emerged as small, localized groups competing over access to resources and markets of protection. They are economic, as much as ideological, rivals of the CPI(Maoist). While some of the splinters are organized around personalities and local 'strong men' others are organized around specific communal groups. The PLFI, for example, is predominately Adivasi while the TPC is composed of Dalits and lower castes. They are not revolutionary groups in any ideological or practical sense. They function as local mafia groups representing the interests of specific individuals and groups.[668]

The contemporary praxis of insurgency in Chotanagpur is not, however, simply the product of the MCC's history in Bihar and Jharkhand. It also reflects the nature of space in Chotanagpur. As discussed above, space in Jharkhand is fragmented with zones of exception coexisting alongside modern spaces of industry and extraction. Historically self-rule and customary governance existed alongside the apparatus of the bureaucratic state. With the advent of neo-liberalism there has been a collapse of this spatial division as mining and industry has begun to spread into protected areas. The erosion of fragmented space and the rapid influx of capital into the region, coupled with the creation of Jharkhand

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[668] One informer working with the government in the region told me: " Basically, nowadays what is the pattern that is taking place, if you really wanted to do a crime, join some people. Declare yourself you are part of the movement. It happens something like that. There's a nearby redacted> in 2002 or 03, there is a school and few people raped school teacher and they robbed the school properties. And a group has claimed they are Naxalites. But later it was found that it was three local boys. Such things have happened. In the name of Naxal movement, they are fulfilling their interests" (Anonymous. Author interview).

has led to a destabilizing rush for control over political and economic networks. This has contributed to a situation of acute instability in the state, without a single government having completed a full term. This is in sharp contrast with neighbouring Chhattisgarh, where all four of its governments have.

There is also a blurring of the distinction between the state and Maoists, arguably a legacy of the links that developed between political parties and groups such as the PU and MCC in Bihar during the 1980s and 1990s. For example, 22 independent candidates with links to the various Maoist groups ran for election in the 2014 Jharkhand state elections.[669] There are credible claims that these candidates function as little more than proxies for groups such as the PLFI and other groups involved in the state's resource nexus.[670] Furthermore, parties such as the JMM and its leader, Shibu Soren, have been found to have business interests with the Maoists. As one analyst states:

> You see the biggest problem today is that there is a convergence of interests between big business, politicians, and with this convergence of interests, you know, they're looking at the land and the minerals down below. Now the Maoists have come into the picture. He's a new entrant in. He takes his tax from big business, too. So long as that chap is paying... big business is paying the Maoists, the business can carry on. So, the Adivasi, the tribal, is marginalized, right.**[671]**

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669 As Deepu Sebastian, correspondant for the *Indian Express* in Jharkhand told me: "There is a way in which independent candidates keep on winning in Jharkhand. Independent candidates like, if you look at it there must be around 10 in the Jharkhand assembly out of 82. 10. That's quite a large number. And these people... a lot of them, I'm not saying all of them, but a lot of them are from Maoist areas. And the Maoists like them to win because they destabilize the government" (Deepu Sebastian. Author interview. Ranchi: 28 April 2013).

670 Sebastian, Deepu, "7 candidates with 'Maoist links' win," *The Indian Express* (24 December 2014). Accessed 17 September 2015. http://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/7-candidates-with-maoist-links-win-elections/

671 Dhruv Katoch. Author interview.

The chaos in Jharkhand is reflected in the state's counter-insurgency 'strategy'. There is a high degree of political interference that periodically prevents the police from effectively combating the Maoists.[672] Furthermore, there is evidence that the police have collaborated with some of the splinter groups in order to fight the CPI(Maoist) and were instrumental in helping the PLFI establish itself in the early days as a counter-balance to the Party.[673.] Allegations of collusion between police and Maoist splinter groups have been made by the Maoists as well as independent journalists and activists.[674] According to one informer sympathetic to the Maoists:[675]

> The state itself is funding private mercenaries. They have created this. They have even provided weaponry. They will fight against the Maoists. So what police is doing is giving is a kind of freedom. You can go to this particular area and you can collect the levy. Taxes. So what is happening, the funding that the group is getting from the police and some amount which they're collecting from tax, the tax is huge amount of money

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672 While the Additional Director-General Police (Modernization) of the Jharkhand Police, SN Pradhan denied that there was political interference in police operations, another lower ranking officer informally told me that senior officers often complained to him of receiving calls from politicians ordering them to end specific operations (SN Pradhan. Author interview. Ranchi, Jharkhand: 25 April 2013).

673 Nayak, Deepak Kumar, "Naxal Violence: The People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) in Jharkhand," Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Delhi (29 March 2013). Accessed 7 November 2016. http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/naxal-violence-the-peoples-liberation-front-of-india-plfi-in-3861.html

674 According to Deepu Sebastian, the Director-General of Police openly admitted to him that the police were assisting the TPC: "Official quote saying that official stance is. Not necessarily saying the story is wrong or right, just saying that we have nothing to do with the TPC. As the police of Jharkhand we consider them like any other left-wing organization. And we don't treat them specially. We want that on record from an officer. Call anybody. Get me a quote. That's a normal journalism practice. Balancing the news. So I called the bloody DGP and I'm like, so I'm running a story next week. It says that the <inaudible> TPC, the police are always helping them, etc. And this man starts grinning and starts laughing and says, yeah, there are people who... we have done that" (Deepu Sebastian. Author interview).

675 Informers in the anti-mine movement Jharkhand told the author that they had been threatened by both the police and splinter groups for their activities in mobilizing communities to oppose MoUs with mining companies.

compared to funding. So what they are doing, they're collecting the tax and then giving to the police officials also.[676]

These allegations are plausible given that many of the splinter groups, most notably the TPC, have declared the CPI(Maoist), rather than the state, as their primary enemy.

Notably the dynamics and territoriality of the conflict in Chotanagpur differs substantively from that of Bastar where the insurgents operate in (loosely) delineated territories and the police and rebels fight one another directly. In Chotanagpur, since the Maoists were pushed out of Saranda Forest in 2012, there is no equivalent territorial division. The war is being fought less over territory than it is over access to resource networks. It is a de-territorialized war. Civilians are targeted by both the Maoists (in particular the splinter groups) and the police. For example, Alex Ekka, a Ranchi-based Jesuit priest and activist, recounts one murder:

> There was a killing of one father in Hazzaribagh and he was just demanding rights for the people, for Dalits and so on. That the land had been given to them so why was it not possible that land should be given rather than the landlords would still be having control over that. So he was trying to speak on their behalf. Now the Maoists one day they caught hold of him and they butchered him. In Hazzaribagh. It is about 90 kilometres from here. So there are so many splinter groups and oftentimes they don't agree with each other. Ideologically they are no more trying to espouse ordinary people's causes and therefore work for them.[677]

While official figures suggest that the number of civilians killed as a proportion of the total dead is similar to the overall percentage India-wide (20-

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676 Anonymous. Author interview.
677 Alex Ekka. Author interview.

25%), activists in Jharkhand dispute this number, claiming that a large number of those identified in official government statistics are, in actuality, civilians. As Gopinath Ghosh states:

> From 2005 to 2011 in Jharkhand the number of civilians who has been killed is about 434 and security forces was killed about 243. The Naxalites or other extremist groups, person has been killed, that number is 370. Total figure is near about 994 until 2011. And this case we have found civilians number is more than those who have the guns. And the number, what here is given, is a government figure. We are collecting some information from newspapers and other resources and we are also compiling all those things and we are also willing to make a report on the basis of this information and within a year we may compile all those information and bring out a report on the basis of that information.[678]

In effect, violence is deployed as a tool of terror and control to expand and maintain control over populations and strategic nodes in resource networks.

While the conflict in Bastar and Chotanagpur are part of one larger insurgency, this picture is misleading. The nature of the two conflicts varies significantly. Bastar is a strong and unified state facing an ideologically committed revolutionary insurgent force in a war over territory. Jharkhand, on the other hand, is a weak and unstable state with fragmented and undisciplined insurgent groups fighting for access to resources and political and economic networks. The conflict in Chotanagpur resembles the 'new wars' of sub-Saharan Africa, constituted by competition over resources and access to the international political economy. The difference between the war in Chotanagpur and the war in Bastar lies as much in the different histories of space as it does with differences in the history of the insurgency in the region. It is the history of space which has

678 Gopinath Ghosh. Author interview.

constituted, and is constituted by, the history of insurgency, the state and

capitalism in both Chotanagpur and Bastar.

Chapter 7- Conclusion: Leviathan

India's Maoist insurgency provides an opportunity to understand contemporary insurgency and processes of state expansion and consolidation into peripheral, 'frontier' zones. This dissertation has explored how a seemingly discredited ideology has been able to inspire a large and powerful revolutionary movement to overthrow what is, for all its flaws, a democratic and constitutional state. Theoretically and conceptually this was accomplished through an analysis of space which draws on the work of Henri Lefebvre. The argument is that political and historical processes unfold, spatially and temporally, through continuous dialectical encounters. The history of eastern and central India is the product of both state expansion and resistance to that expansion. The result is a weak and fragmented state relying largely on its repressive apparatus in order to rule. Its weakness and reliance on force creates opportunities for an insurgent group articulating a radical, revolutionary anti-state vision to gain support from the local populace and capture territory. As the Maoists grew in strength, this insurgent challenge further motivates state response, which, in turn, deepens processes of state expansion and consolidation. In effect, the Maoist insurgency functions as an impetus to deepen a longer-term process of state expansion into an 'unruly' frontier.

Chapter Three provided the reader the necessary background with which to situate and understand contemporary Maoist insurgency in India. It provided a historical account of the Maoist's emergence from earlier communist movements

and the rise of the Naxalites in the late 1960s. It then periodized Maoist history from fragmentation in the 1970s and 1980s to consolidation and expansion in the 1990s. The chapter also examined the ideology of revolutionary Indian Maoism. There were two fundamental aims of this analysis. The first was to provide implicit critique of excessively materialist understanding of conflict and insurgency. By analyzing the movement's ideology and ascribing to it analytical and ontological importance as a basis of praxis, it returns politics back into what is a fundamentally political phenomena. This does not, however, imply that material factors are not significant. Rather, there exists a dialectical relationship between ideological vision and insurgent practice—both structure and create each other.

Consequently, this chapter both explored how Maoist ideology influences their praxis and how this shapes conflict dynamics in eastern and central India. In effect, the question is how and why did we get to where we are today? The answer is two-fold. First, the insurgency originated with a novel ideological formulation. Naxalism represents a South Asian version of Maoism which emphasizes revolutionary subjectivity and spontaneous praxis conditioned by an almost anarchist emphasis on will and the individual. Its weakness lay in its consequent rejection of mass movements. Spontaneity and individualism requires constant energy and individual will—without a mass movement with which to institutionally sustain themselves, the Naxalites were rapidly weakened through cadre exhaustion, individual demobilization and state repression.

However, this same revolutionary subjectivity enabled the Maoists to integrate themselves into the lived reality of some of India's most marginal populations. It allowed them to seriously engage with subaltern worldviews and practices of resistance. Their ideology, tempered by the lessons of their failures in the 1960s and 1970s, gave the Maoists the tools to patiently, over decades, intervene in ongoing struggles across eastern and central India. While the insurgents learned from their mistakes, adopting more orthodox Maoist positions on people's war and embracing mass, sustained, revolutionary movements, the heterodox subjectivism of the Naxalites continued to influence their praxis. Ultimately this enabled them to expand across large parts of the country with diverse histories.

Chapter Four presented a theoretical framework, rooted in Henri Lefebvre's Heideggerian dialectics, with which to understand the Maoist insurgency. Space and history are the product of multiple contradictions, contradictions which are generative. The 'new' is, however, always unstable and evolving, containing within itself the seeds of its own destruction. It is a perpetual process of becoming never reaching completion.

The chapter then used this analytical framework as a tool to explore long-term historical dynamics in central and eastern India, arguing that the production of space in the region was the result of a series of world historic encounters—the expansion of the modern bureaucratic state through the British imperial intervention in South Asia, the development of global capitalist production and

trade, encountering mobile populations in terrain not easily penetrated by the infrastructure of the modern state. The expansion of imperialism, met with localized (and occasionally regional) resistance. This dialectical and antagonistic interaction, between the modern state and mobile populations, produced a particular space that has had implications for the contemporary conflict. In Bastar, the British delegated power to a local king who ruled on their behalf. The state was extremely thin and manifested itself through regimes of forest regulation enforced by armed rangers and police. In the Chotanagpur plateau, where resistance was more intense and prolonged, and where British penetration was greater, the result was fragmentation. On the one hand, there were zones of industry and urbanity constituted around coal extraction, processing and the settlement of 'outsiders'. These zones existed in simultaneity with spaces of exception, where the British sought to placate local populations through the creation of special zones preserving customary Adivasi life. The irony is that custom and 'traditional' Adivasi life was rooted in fluidity and mobility, characteristics which were abolished by the regimes of protection.

The chapter then explored how this spatio-historical analysis can be applied in order to further our understanding of the contemporary conflict in eastern and central India. The insurgency and the state's response is transforming space in unintended and ironic ways. The Maoists have become agents of modernity, as counter-insurgency rooted in spatial transformation and

the expansion of the infrastructures of the state is leading to further absorption of the region.

Chapter Five examined the insurgency in Bastar, southern Chhattisgarh. Bastar's spatial transformations are a product of historical legacies, Maoist practice, counter-insurgency and changes in the global political economy. Historically Bastar existed on the margins of state-making projects. The state was thin and violent, relying almost exclusively on its repressive apparatus and interactions with the local Adivasi population were primarily through displacement and spatial exclusion. This is ideal terrain for insurgency: an alienated populace living in an area broadly inaccessible to both the repressive and beneficent apparatus of the state. The Maoists, who expanded into the area in the early 1980s, were able to use this to their advantage, gradually gaining local support, spreading their influence and consolidating their control largely unchallenged. Their capacity to gain influence in Bastar was also strengthened by their willingness to engage with the everyday lives of the local populace, enabling them to patiently cultivate support through an engagement with the political and culture worlds of the population.

The chapter also argued that the state's counter-insurgency is accelerating the absorption of the region into the Indian state. This absorption is structured around a collapse of the distinction between 'development' and security, materialized in what I termed an architecture of force. An architecture of force is the material expression of the colonization of statecraft by the logic of

violence, repression and militarized control of territory and populations. Bastar is imagined as a fundamental part of the body politic and, therefore, establishing control has not not been done through states of exception, extra constitutionality and reliance on the military, as is the case in India's restive borderlands in the North-East and in Kashmir. The counter-insurgency is being waged, at least on paper, under the aegis of the constitution by the civil security forces. Ironically, because counter-insurgency is inherently brutal, violent and violative of constitutional norms, the legal state of normalcy has led to state formation embedded in acute violence.

Chapter Six a case study of the Chotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand, made the case that the production of space in the region was fundamentally structured by the presence of natural resources and historical resistance to state expansion. Chotanagpur was more closely integrated into subcontinental economic and political networks than neighbouring Bastar. Largely because of the region's proximity to the colonial centres of power in Bengal, the British sought to fully integrate the region into the state through the Permanent Settlement. This attempt at a wholesale transformation of space created a near-permanent state of unrest in the region, making Chotanagpur virtually ungovernable. Subsequently, the colonial state pursued a strategy of semi-compromise— sedentarizing the population, while also codifying special land regimes and administrative frameworks that preserved 'customary' rule and land ownership. Conversely, however, the growth in demand for the plateau's natural resources

also led to the production of parallel spaces of modernity structured around

mines and industrial processing. These two spaces, the zones of exception and

the zones of modernity, existed in spatial and temporal conjunction and

contradiction. At present, with increasing land encroachment and the

transformations of the political economy as a consequence of neo-liberalism, the

demarcation between these two spaces is in the process of collapsing. What is

emerging is a networked space in which overlapping state and private actors

participate in an often violent competition for network access. The Maoist

insurgency in the region reflects this. The insurgency is in the process of

fragmenting as new groups, rooted in personalistic and particularistic interests,

are emerging, groups whose primary purpose and reason for being is to capture

access to lucrative resources.

Theoretical Implications and Future Research: Limits and Possibilities

The theoretical concepts, framework and analysis of the dissertation have

applicability beyond the confines of the examined cases. Central and eastern

India are not the only parts of the country experiencing insurgency with

populations hostile to the state.

Globally, India is one of the most conflict riven states.[679] In addition to the

Maoist conflict, there is the Kashmir conflict and the 'small wars' of the

geographically isolated and culturally distinct North-Eastern states. While all

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679 India regularly ranks near the bottom of 'peace indexes' and was, for example, 137th out of 163 in the 2017 Global Peace Index. Accessed 12 June 2017. http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/

insurgencies have their unique dynamics, the conflict in Kashmir differs

significantly from that of central India. It is unlikely that the approach developed in

this dissertation is appropriate. First, the Kashmir conflict is being waged in an

area of the country not historically peripheral to the state making projects of

South Asia. Kashmir has, historically, been a relatively central part of the broader

trade and economic networks of the region. Second, the Kashmir conflict has a

significant geopolitical dimension absent from the Maoist conflict. While the

conflict has numerous actors, the war cannot be understood without reference to

the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Within Kashmir there is a long history of

alienation from the Indian state by large swathes of its Muslim population. While

it cannot be wholly understood as a proxy war, the geopolitical dimension, while

not all encompassing, is significant. Elements of the Pakistani state, most notably

the Inter-Service Intelligence, have funded, trained and provided logistical

support to Kashmiri militants, engaging in a shadow war against the Indian state.

There is also the geopolitical fact that the conflict is rooted in competing territorial

and cultural claims between rival states. Therefore, in substance, there is simply

too much variation between the Maoist and Kashmir conflict. The analysis

developed in this dissertation would be inappropriate.

It is, however, in the numerous insurgencies of the North-East where such

an approach would have utility. Of course, there are substantial differences

between the Maoist conflict and those in the North-East. For example, there are

trans-border issues, an international dimension wholly absent in central India.

Some of the insurgents have organizational and ideological connections with groups in Myanmar, while even those groups without formal cross-border ties are able to use the poorly policed border and regional state weakness to their advantage.[680]

The geopolitical and trans-border effects have implications for the waging of counter-insurgency by the state. As previously discussed, central India is at the geographic heart of the Indian state and is conceptualized as an essential part of the nation. The North-East, on the other hand, has historically been seen as a restive and isolated borderland with significant cultural, religious and ethnic difference, placing it outside of the Indian mainstream: "In the records of the colonial state it is a 'frontier' on the subcontinental mainstream in terms of social norms, speech practices, notions of political power, agrarian production, marketing networks and ecosystems".[681] Interestingly, in India, when discussing the North-East, the rest of the country is referred to as 'the mainland' as if it were a literal island separate from the rest of the country.[682] These international dimensions, as well as the perception that the region exists on the fringes of the Indian nation, have been partly responsible for a counter-insurgency strategy that varies substantially from that being waged against the Maoists. In the North-East the Indian Armed Forces are the primary actors in counterinsurgencies being

680 Hussain, Wasbir, "Ethno-Nationalism and the Politics of Terror in India's North-East," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 30.1 (2007): 97-98.
681 Misra, Sanghamitra, *Becoming a Borderland: The Politics of Space and Identity in Colonial Northeastern India* (London: Routledge, 2011): 3.
682 Sethi, Nitin, "Nothing covert about it: We think of Northeast India only as a frontier," *Business Standard* (12 June 2015). Accessed 7 June 2017. http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/nothing-covert-about-it-we-think-of-northeast-india-only-as-a-frontier-115061200799_1.html

waged under the auspices of AFSPA. The small wars of the North-East are formally being waged extra-constitutionally under a state of exception.

Another conceptual and practical difference between the wars in the North-East and central India is the nature of the insurgents themselves. The Maoists are ideologically motivated and seek to replace the existing Indian state with a socialist state. The North-East insurgents are, largely, rooted in ethno-nationalist demands for greater autonomy or outright independence.[683] They have no aspirations to seize control over the entire country.

I would argue, however, that the theoretical framework developed in the dissertation is an appropriate and potentially valuable way in which to analyze the insurgencies of the North-East. While there are large variations between the two conflict zones, significant commonalities exist. Central India is not a borderland, it is however, as this dissertation argued, a frontier with minimal state presence perceived by the state through a lens of danger and threat. Both are historically isolated, culturally distinct (and anomalous) zones which have existed on the fringes of the plains-based state-making projects. Consequently, both regions have a weak and minimal state presence largely constituted through repressive rather than social and civic apparatus.

Additionally, while the North-East insurgencies are explicitly rooted in ethno-nationalist demands and that of the Maoists in a universalist revolutionary ideology, these differences are, in practice, less significant than they seem. The Maoist insurgency, while committed to its broader ideological goal, has become

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[683] Hussain, "Ethno-Nationalism".

grounded in Adivasi politics. They have, in part due to strategic necessity, become agents furthering the socio-cultural, economic and political aspirations of Adivasi groups. This is demonstrated by their interventions in economic struggles, such as those over tendu collection, and cultural struggles, such as the right to use local indigenous languages such as Gondi and the suppression of practices of witchcraft by the state.[684] As this dissertation has argued, the Maoists represent a subjective, hybridized political movement that is, in practice, expressive of particularist demands of the marginalized populations of eastern and central India.

The dissertation's theoretical framework is rooted in an analysis that seeks to understand the dynamic between state building and insurgency/conflict in peripheral, frontier zones. Therefore, further research could shed light on continuities and discontinuities between the production of space in places where counter-insurgency is waged 'constitutionally' and in places where it is waged under the aegis of a formal, militarized state of exception. Aside from exploring why the North-East is the site of so many insurgencies, it would also be able to address comparative questions shedding further light on Indian state expansion and consolidation. How does the Indian state deal with ideological rather than separatist challenges and how does this affect the state's perception of threat and the waging of counter-insurgency? How are demands framed in terms of ethno-cultural difference received in comparison to ideological challenge? Do these different challenges either preclude or create possibilities for negotiation

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684 Desai, "Anti-Witchcraft".

and accommodation? Therefore, the framework developed in this dissertation is extremely powerful for future research on the conflicts in North-East India.

Furthermore, the processes described in this dissertation are not unique to India. I have made the argument that the production of space and the expansion and manifestation of the Indian state in eastern India is the product of a longer history of plain-based state expansion into isolated, geographically difficult, peripheral regions. This expansion is the product of local agency, colonialism and a democratic state. While the particulars are unique, the broader processes which the theoretical framework captures are not, however, restricted to either India or South Asia. It is a story which has unfolded over the previous four hundred years—colonialism, capitalism and military and communications technologies have made the reach of the state planetary. Through the establishment of the modern, bureaucratic state, the centralization of economic and political power, peripheral areas have been produced across the globe. In many cases, processes of absorption are generating both the conditions and the catalyst for low-intensity insurgent challenges to the state. From the Kurdistan Workers Party in the peripheral hill areas of south-eastern Turkey to the Uighur rebels of North-Western China, these are insurgent challenges to centralized and relatively stable states. They are contemporary products of state consolidation in regions far outside of metropolitan centres, areas with long histories of 'rebelliousness' and resistance to state making projects.

Whither Maoism?

The arguments in this dissertation have been imbued with a pessimistic philosophy of history. The implicit, and occasionally explicit, assumption is that the spread of modernity, the expansion of the state, the absorption of the periphery and the production of abstract space is part of a longer term 'rhythm' of history, a "Phenomena that can be measured over a century or more. At this level, the movement of history is slow... On this scale the French Revolution is no more than a moment, however essential, in the long history of the revolutionary, liberal and violent destiny of the West."[685] While historical rhythms are not necessarily linear and unfold fitfully, they are a process of movement. The movement of the contemporary era is marked by the secular flattening of the earth's territory, the deepening integration of peripheral regions into global capitalism and the 'taming' and absorption of marginal populations. In a longer-term historical context, this rhythm of history can be conceptualized as the globalized sedentarization of highly mobile and culturally distinct populations dwelling in geographically isolated and 'difficult' terrain. While this project is almost as old as human history, in the past hundred years or so a number of changes have made this territorial closure nearly universal. The weak, complex sovereignties of pre-modern empires and states and the European colonial project were predicated on fragmentation. These zones of anomaly were seen as either fabulous lands of mystery, existing outside of known state geographies, or 'wild' and 'savage' frontiers of semi-suzerain polities. The logic of the European

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685 Braudel, Fernand, *A History of Civilizations* (New York: Penguin, 1995): 34.

state, from which colonialism was spread to a planetary scale, is unable to tolerate spatial ambiguity and differentiated sovereignty. Thus, the tributary polities of the Mughal Empire were transformed into the Princely States of British imperium. The modern state is characterized by territorial homogeneity. In its aspirations (if not in actual reality) it is the Leviathan: the ultimate source of authority, power and arbiter of life.

As has been argued in this dissertation, it is the logic of the state to expand and absorb everything within its frontiers—and its frontiers now encompass nearly everything—and to produce an abstract space which is both homogeneous and fragmented.[686] The outcome of this logic, the absorption of peripheries, is being accelerated in eastern India because of the threat that the Maoists pose to the state's monopoly of violence and its supreme authority. The Maoists have become agents of modernity and state expansion in central and eastern India. They, however, do not pose an existential threat to the state. It is highly unlikely that, even in the long term, they could realize their goal of seizing power and establishing a socialist state along Maoist lines. The Indian state, for all of its weaknesses—lethargic bureaucracy, the lack of co-ordination between its constituent parts—is the more powerful force. The symbolic and perceived existential challenge that the Maoists pose is likely to further accelerate the counter-insurgency process, a counter-insurgency rooted in the absorption of the peripheral area through a strategy materializing force. There is nothing to suggest that this process will not continue as it has. The Maoists continue to be

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686 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*: 49-53.

further pushed out and the process of a violent and repressive state building process structured around militarized statecraft is accelerating in places such as Chhattisgarh.

Furthermore, liberalization and an increased demand for natural resources globally and domestically has generated pressures to deepen existing extraction sites and expand mining and resource extraction into new areas—areas in which the Maoists have a presence. These pressures are intensifying. Short of a cataclysmic black swan event, demand for raw materials is likely to continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

These factors, the logic of absorption, the existential threat represented by the Maoists and increasing demand for natural resources, suggests that the counter-insurgent push is unlikely to abate. All trends and patterns point to the likelihood that the war will intensify in the near future. The result of the increased tenor of counter-insurgency has been, in addition to what the insurgents themselves refer to as a 'tactical withdrawal', a further splintering and fragmentation of the Maoist movement. While this fragmentation has occurred across the insurgent zone, it has been most visible in the state of Jharkhand which, as the dissertation argued, has a less ideologically disciplined and organizationally united Maoist movement. Furthermore, the high degree of spatial fragmentation in Jharkhand has encouraged insurgent decay. Opportunities for resource capture and the absence of territorial control have conspired to create a far less disciplined and unified insurgency than is the case in Chhattisgarh.

These factors have facilitated the emergence of splinter groups that can be divided into two types. The first are groups which have emerged as a result of splits within the leadership of the CPI(Maoist) in Jharkhand. These have emerged based around middle-ranking cadre who have, at least rhetorically, split from the party due to ideological claims, particularly around claims that senior leadership positions are blocked to Adivasi, Dalits and non-Telugu speakers.[687]

The second type of splinter group which has emerged are highly localized armed groups who claim to be inspired by Maoism, but are often little more than local criminal gangs seeking access and control over resources. While some of these groups are composed of former cadre of the CPI(Maoist), others use the term out of convenience. In parts of rural Jharkhand the Maoists are a known force that is both feared and respected and a certain amount of power is attached to the appellation. The risk to the Maoists by these groups is significant. First, they are competitors for resource access, resources needed to wage their war against the state. Furthermore, a number of authors have argued that the Maoists have managed to consolidate themselves across Jharkhand in part by their ability to broker access to resource networks connected to both the state and the extractive industries.[688] The emergence of local armed competitors threatens the Maoist's access and control over these networks, and hence weakens their ability to garner support through brokerage politics.

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[687] It should be pointed out that this personality-based fragmentation is nothing new to the Maoist insurgency. In fact, it is one of the hallmarks of the movement dating back to the split with the Andhra Maoists in the late 1960s. See Ray, "The Naxalites and their Ideology": 148-151.
[688] Shah, "Markets of Protection".

Additionally, there is evidence that many of the splinter groups are actively collaborating with the police and industry. The Maoists in Jharkhand are increasingly being forced to fight non-state groups who have, unlike the police, local knowledge and a social/support base in communities in which the insurgents operate.

What is clear is that the Maoists in Jharkhand are facing a crisis. Their decline raises questions. Could there be a negotiated settlement between the state and the insurgents, a settlement that would lead to reforms in state practice and ultimately see the Maoists lay down their arms? Long-term, anything is possible. For example, the recent demobilization of the FARC in Colombia illustrates that an insurgent group with a long history and an ideological commitment to seizing state power can, under certain conditions, negotiate a transition to parliamentary politics. In the immediate future, however, the possibilities for a negotiated peace seems extremely unlikely. The government and the Maoists have a history of failed negotiations, negotiations which have been used by both sides as little more than a chance to consolidate their position and prepare for the resumption of hostilities. There is little trust between the state and the Maoists and both have significant disincentives to negotiate.

Furthermore, given that the Indian state's counter-insurgency efforts are bearing fruit, there is little incentive for them to negotiate. In Nepal, for example, the rebels and the state had reached a stalemate. The insurgents were unable to topple the government and the government was unable to defeat the rebels. In a

context where it seems unlikely that either side can win and both sides can negotiate from a position of relative equality, there are incentives for belligerents to engage in negotiations. This is not the case in India. While the insurgency is spread across an expansive geographic area, it remains confined to a small part of the country well away from the larger population centres. The threat which the Maoists represent to the Indian state is symbolic rather than substantive. There is little chance that the Maoists will be able to threaten the government or the country's political and economic centres of power.

Of course, the Indian state has proven itself willing to engage in negotiations and pursue settlements with insurgent groups. Negotiation has ended a number of the small wars in the North-East.[689] However, these negotiations have all been premised on a willingness to grant increased autonomy or statehood to specific ethnic and linguistic groups. The precedent, set by Nehru in the 1950s, of creating sub-national units along ethno-linguistic lines, demonstrates that it is well within the spirit of the constitution and the history of the Indian state to accept and grant autonomy and statehood to mobilized ethno-cultural minorities.[690] However, the Maoists are not an insurgent group fighting for autonomy or the rights of one particular group. Their ideological and strategic aim is to capture state power. Thus, in a way, the same logic which has led to a counter-insurgency being waged under the auspices of the constitution and by the civil policing arms of the state also preclude the possibility

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689 Hussain, "Ethno-Nationalism": 94-95.
690 Lacina, Bethany, "How Governments Shape the Risk of Civil Violence: India's Federal Re-organization, 1950-56," *American Journal of Political Science* 58.3 (2014

of a negotiated settlement that does not involve the Maoists' rejection of their strategic goals and ideological beliefs. This may happen in the future, but there are few indications to suggest it will.

It is also extremely unlikely that the Maoists will succeed in their aims of defeating the Indian state. It is one thing to wage an armed insurgency in an isolated, geographically inaccessible peripheral region of the country with an alienated population. It would be entirely different to wage a war in the heartlands of the country in territory where the Indian state enjoys legitimacy and support. If there truly were an existential threat to the Indian state, the Maoists would face the full force of the Indian military and security services, something which they would be unable to resist. As guerrillas, their strength lies in their capacity to choose the time and place of their battles, striking their enemies and retreating. Guerrilla war, where numerically inferior forces face a larger, better armed opponent, requires areas inaccessible to state forces for the location of rear base areas. This would be more difficult in the vast plains of the country.

What is more likely to occur is military victory by the state. As has been discussed above, the counter-insurgency has forced the insurgents into what they claim is a tactical withdrawal. They have been pushed out of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and large parts of Chhattisgarh. A significant number of their leadership and middle-ranking cadre have been killed or imprisoned and, in places like Jharkhand and Odisha, the movement is riven by defection and division. Additionally, there is no reason to think that the Indian government's

counter-insurgency push will slacken in the near future. If anything, it can be expected to accelerate. Does this then mean that there is a chance that the insurgents will be militarily eliminated in the near or medium term? Again, while this is a possibility, it is one which is unlikely for a number of reasons. First, as discussed earlier, one of the hallmarks of the Maoist insurgents is their operational decentralization and flexibility. Time and again the Maoists have proven that defeat has simply forced them to withdraw to new, isolated areas of the country where they are able to patiently rebuild. There is no reason to think that this time will be any different. The insurgents have proven that their revolutionary practice and visions of a revolutionary future has resonance. They will maintain their social base in the isolated parts of the country and, even if they retreat, the Indian state will likely forget about them until they grow too large to ignore. As has been argued, counter-insurgency and the expansion of the Indian state and capitalism is producing space which will, if anything, amplify the already pathological characteristics of governance in the central and eastern hinterlands. Thus, one could reasonably conclude that alienation borne out of state oppression will deepen. The only question is whether the unfolding of an architecture of force will be potent and strong enough to establish decisive control over what have, historically been, restive populations.
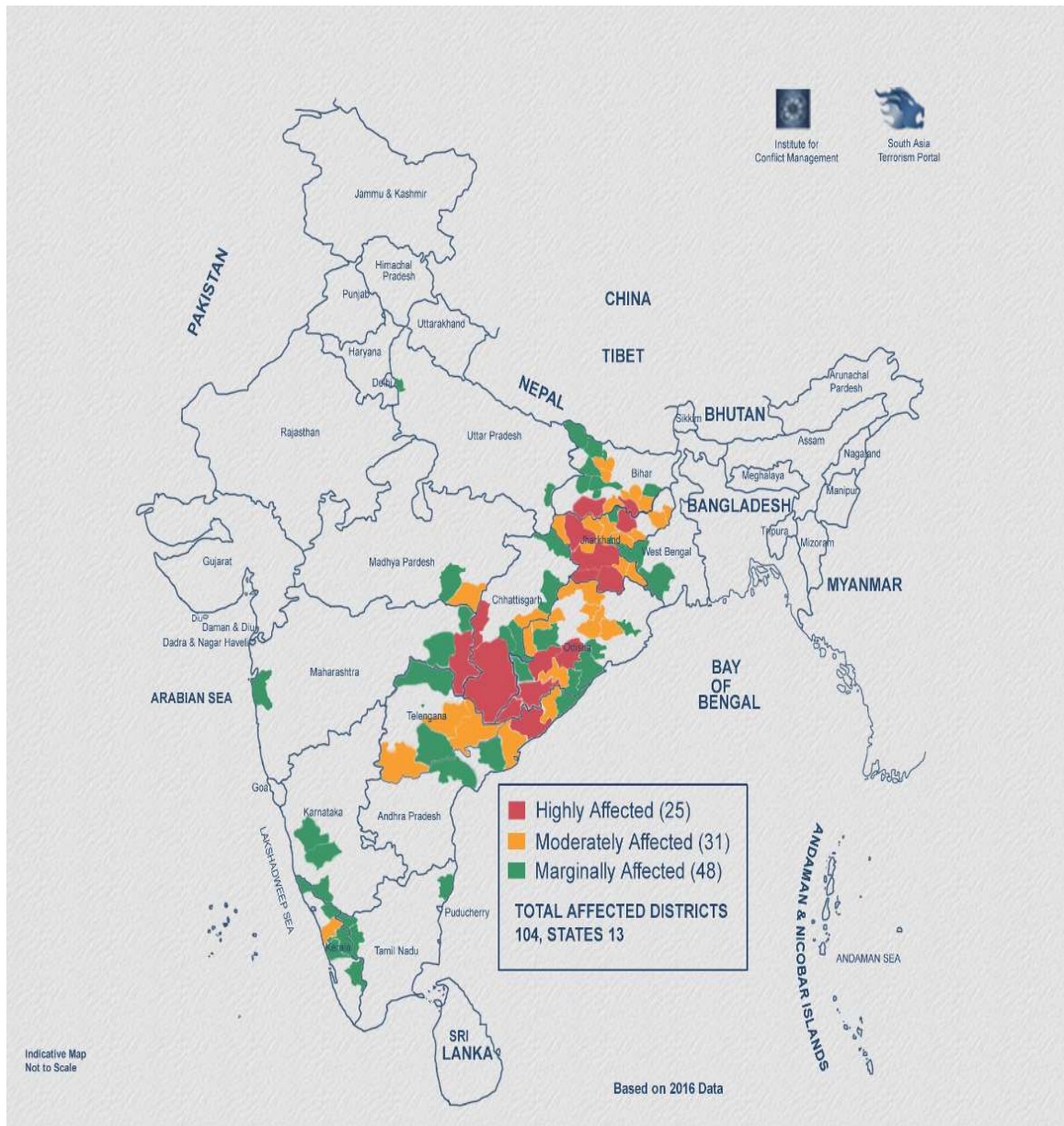
Appendix: Maps

Figure 1: Maoist Affected Districts in India, 2017. Source: Institute for Conflict Management and South Asian Terrorism Portal

Figure 2: States and Union Territories of India. Source: Wikicommons

Figure 3: Districts of Chhattisgarh. Source: Wikicommons

Figure 4: Districts of Jharkhand. Source: Government of Jharkhand.

Interviews

Alex Ekka. Author interview. Ranchi, Jharkhand: 26 April 2013.

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Ashok Chowdhury. Author interview. Delhi: 19 December 2012.

Deepu Sebastian, journalist. Author interview. Ranchi: 28 April 2013

Dhruv Katoch. Author interview. Delhi: 4 January 2013

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Gautam Navlakha. Author interview, Delhi: 13 December 2012.

Girdhari Nayak. Author interview. Raipur, Chhattisgarh: 25 February 2013.

Gladson Dungdung. Author interview, Ranchi, Jharkhand: 1 May 2013

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