The Political Economy of Conflict Between Indigenous Communities and Dominant Societies

Adivasis, Maoist Insurgents and the State in the Central Indian
Tribal Belt

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

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SUMMARY

The Political Economy of Conflict Between Indigenous Communities and Dominant Societies: Adivasis, Maoist Insurgents and the State in the Central Indian Tribal Belt

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This thesis aims to understand the political sociology of Maoist insurgency in India using a combination of disaggregated statistics and qualitative data. The vast majority of insurgent leaders are from dominant or upper caste, middle class backgrounds. Their participation in the insurgency can be understood in terms of ideology and short-term processes of mobilization. The Maoist insurgents provide a unified organizational structure for two separate sections of society. On the one hand, are untouchable or dalit landless laborers who suffer economic exploitation at the hands of higher caste landowners. On the other hand are tribal or adivasi landowning cultivators whose relative autonomy has come under increasing pressure over the past two centuries as the state has established control over natural resources in their area. Their support for the insurgents does not just manifest itself from exploited untouchables' and oppressed tribals' positions in the social structure as structural theories would assume. Rather, the insurgents provide them with collective incentives in order to encourage their support. The actors at the macro and micro levels have very different reasons for participating in the insurgency. The insurgent leaders aim to capture state power through a Protracted People's War, while the objectives of supporters at the micro-level tend to be more concerned with local and short-term issues. The insurgency should be conceptualised as a state building enterprise in which the interests of supporters at all levels are served by seizing local political power and the building of a base area. The thesis demonstrates that the insurgency is expanding most rapidly in the central Indian tribal belt. I use a case study to show that not all tribal communities support the insurgents. Some oppose them, either because their interests have been harmed by the presence of the insurgents, or as a result of a variety of endogenous mechanisms. This indicates that insurgency is a more dynamic and complex process than structural and rational actor theories allow for. The thesis finishes by placing the subject of indigenous communities and insurgency in the global context. It demonstrates that, while so-called indigenous communities listed by the Minorities at Risk project amount to 4.8% of the world's population, they were involved in 43% of the intra-state conflict years listed by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Armed Conflict Dataset between 1946 and 2010.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACD – Armed Conflict Database

AICCCR - All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries

CPI – Communist Party of India

CPI (Maoist) – Communist Party of India (Maoist)

CPI (Marxist) – Communist Party of India (Marxist)

CPI (Marxist-Leninist) – Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)

CPN – Communist Party of Nepal

MAR – Minorities at Risk

MCC – Maoist Communist Centre

PRIO – Peace Research Institute Oslo

PWG – People's War Group

RCC - Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh

REMANO - *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana's*

RSU – Radical Students Union

UCDP – Uppsala Conflict Data Program

District wise map of India, 2001

Introduction

I first arrived in India in 2006 to spend six months studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Walking around campus I was struck by the murals that had been painted by student organizations onto the walls of the library, department buildings and the canteens. Those belonging to the Democratic Students' Union were the most striking. The smaller ones declared, among other things, 'Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!' and '*Naxalbari Zindabad*' (long live or hail Naxalbari). The larger murals displayed more lyrical prose.

The power that flows
from the barrel of the gun
shatters to smithereens
the last ruins of imperialism.
Remember this –
And select the enemies
And turn your weapons
Against them one by one.

This piqued my curiosity – is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism really taken seriously here? What is Naxalbari? Who am I being implored to turn my weapons on? – and so I asked other students about them. I was told about the rebellion that began in the Spring of 1967 among miserably poor sharecroppers in the Naxalbari region of West Bengal and spread out to cover much of the country, how students from some of India's best universities heeded Charu Mazumdar's call for them to go to the villages and join the revolution, and the manner in which the movement was brutally repressed by the state. I learned how, after the end of the Emergency¹ those political leaders who survived were released from jail and returned to the countryside to continue the fight, that they had slowly spread their influence over vast areas of rural India, that their comrades had succeeded in bringing the state to its knees in neighbouring Nepal, and,

¹ The Emergency was a period of 21 months from June 1975 to March 1977 when, faced with declining popularity and a series of legal challenges to her rule, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, effectively suspending democracy and allowing the repression of her enemies.

along with the recently united Communist Party of India (Maoist)² [CPI (Maoist)], were well on their way to building a ‘red corridor’ from Tirupati in south-eastern India to Pashupati in Kathmandu, Nepal.

2006 turned out to be a watershed year in the recent history of the insurgency. The Maoists in neighbouring Nepal signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord, which removed the King and gave them access to political power.³ The counterinsurgent activities of Salwa Judum, a government sponsored militia that had been set up the previous year in the southern parts of Chhattisgarh state in central India, led to the displacement of over quarter of a million people and a massive escalation of violence in the region. These events prompted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2006) to describe the insurgency as ‘the single biggest internal-security challenge ever faced by our country’ – a statement that he has repeated on several occasions (for example Singh 2010). Since then, the insurgency in India has grown in prominence and in recent years various Indian politicians have made remarkable claims about its strength. According to P Chidambaram, the Minister of Home Affairs, the insurgents are currently ‘active’ in 223 of India’s 626 districts and (Chidambaram 2009), and his ministry claims that the insurgents ‘call the shots’ in 40,000 square kilometers of Indian territory – an area similar to the size of Switzerland – mainly in parts of Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand (Times of India 2009a). Towards the end of 2009 the state increased its counterinsurgent activities in the central India in a coordinated assault on the insurgent strongholds involving 100,000 extra paramilitary and police forces that is referred to in the press ‘Operation Greenhunt’ (Mukherji 2010). The insurgents have risen to this challenge and the ambush in April 2010 that killed 76 policemen was the heaviest loss ever incurred by Indian security forces in a single incident – quite an accolade when one considers that since independence in 1947 the

² From the 1980s onwards, Peoples War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) were the largest Maoist insurgent groups in India until they merged to form the CPI (Maoist) in 2004. For more details see chapter four.

³ It is interesting to note that Baburam Bhattarai, the current Maoist Prime Minister of Nepal, spent 8 years studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). He has even been quoted as saying ‘I am what I am because of JNU’ (Jha 2011).

state has been heavily involved in counterinsurgency operations in Kashmir, Punjab, the Northeast and central India.

THE PUZZLES

The influence of Maoist insurgents in India surprised and fascinated me. I was born in 1981 in the United Kingdom. My life has more or less coincided with a dramatic decline in the political influence of the Left at home and throughout much of the world. Margaret Thatcher was the Prime Minister for the first decade of my life. Some of my earliest memories are of watching the fall of regimes that legitimised themselves with Marxist ideology in central and eastern Europe on the news. As a teenager I became interested in international politics and current affairs. The 1990s were indeed ‘interesting times’, marked by horrific violence in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Chechnya, among other places. Nevertheless, there was very little reference to Marxism or to class struggle. As an ideology it seemed to have been consigned, to borrow Trotsky’s phrase, to the dustbin of history. Growing up where and when I did, it was very easy to believe that *there really was no alternative* and this was indeed *the end of history*.⁴

Another reason that the strength of left wing insurgents in India piqued my curiosity was that it did not sit well with what I had read about the country. India was supposed to have liberalized its economy in the early 1990s with great success: economic growth rates were touching double digits; in 2001 Goldman Sachs declared that India was the ‘I’ in BRIC, one of four countries that were set to challenge the economic dominance of the G7 in the new century; and in 2007 the Indian the Gross Domestic Product reached one trillion US dollars for the first time (Wilson and Purushothaman 2003; World Bank 2012). But if the liberalization of India’s economy was so successful, why had a militant organization that was directly opposed to these reforms been so successful at expanding its activities? I had also read that India was the ‘world’s largest democracy’ (Guha 2007b). Despite being home to an enormous

⁴ The first sentence of a recent *American Sociological Review* article by Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009: 316) sums up this argument: ‘Karl Marx predicted that revolutionary class struggles would transform the world during the twentieth century. Instead, it turned out to be the age of ethnonationalist conflicts.’

variety of religious and linguistic communities, India was one of the few post-colonial states to have remained more or less consistently committed to multi-party democracy since independence in 1947. The political system was said to encompass ‘unity in diversity’, but if political power was widely distributed between competing groups, surely the pursuit of political objectives through non-institutional channels would be irrational and self-defeating (see McAdam 1982). This is the overarching puzzle that lays behind this analysis: How can one reconcile the view of India as a thriving economy and a thriving democracy with the fact that there is a thriving Maoist insurgency in large swathes of the country? Over the past decade or so there has been a proliferation of books and articles, which have contributed to our substantive knowledge of the insurgency. But when viewed as a whole, the current body of research is a ‘confused cacophony’ (Mander 2004: 1206).

First, the accounts of the insurgency are not agreed on who the insurgents actually are. It is widely argued that the insurgency is driven by support from untouchable (dalit or Scheduled Caste) and tribal (adivasi or Scheduled Tribe) communities – the two historically disadvantaged groups of communities in India (see Guha 2007b; Banerjee 2008; Roy 2010). Nevertheless, from what we know about the insurgent leaders’ backgrounds, most come from upper or dominant castes, middle class backgrounds. Charu Mazumdar, the charismatic leader of the insurgency in the late 1960s was from a Brahmin landlord family. The most prominent leaders of the present insurgency, Ganapathy, Kishenji, and Azad, are well educated and from Brahmin or dominant caste backgrounds, went to university and gave up good career prospects to join the insurgency. The fact that the insurgent leaders are from a different social background to their supposed support base is largely overlooked. But it seems apparent that understanding how they form a long lasting and robust alliance with one another is crucial to understanding the insurgency.

Second, the analyses are not agreed on the motivations of insurgents. The manner in which the insurgents’ activities are understood is highly politicised. The insurgents’ supporters argue that they are, in the words of Arundhati Roy (2010), ‘Gandhians with a gun’, whereas the state attempts to portray the insurgents as ‘bandits’ and ‘cold-blooded criminals’ (Times of India 2009c; Times of India 2009h). There is evidence to support both of these claims. Even the Government of India

acknowledges that the insurgents have provided the untouchable and tribal communities in areas under their control with a variety of benefits, such as better wages, improved prices for agricultural produce, and reduced caste abuse (Planning Commission 2008). On the other hand, the insurgents have an annual income of 20 billion rupees (about £240 million), which is largely generated by charging economic actors to operate in areas under their control (Times of India 2009j). There are also a plethora of cases where the insurgents have killed and maimed members of the tribal and untouchable communities that they claim to protect. Nevertheless, extant accounts of the insurgency do not attempt to reconcile this apparent contradiction. Rather, they tend to talk past one another, citing facts that support the point of view that the insurgents are either gangsters or Gandhians and ignoring those that do not.

There are also methodological and theoretical problems with the manner in which the insurgency is currently studied. From my perspective as a political sociologist, studies of the insurgency are either too aggregated or too narrow to adequately explain the phenomenon at hand. The dominant method for studying civil war uses cross-national statistics to identify variables that co-vary with the onset of conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Such analyses are too vague to tell us anything about individual cases. For example, they code the Maoist insurgency as a conflict between the Maoist insurgents and the state over state power, and make no attempt to understand which social groups pursue their interests through the Maoist ‘master cleavage’ (see Kalyvas 2006). These studies have rationalist theoretical foundations that imply an implausible ontology of insurgency that totally disregards the role of social context. On the other hand, the vast majority of empirical studies of Maoism in India consist of intense ethnographic research concentrated on a very limited area (for example Bhatia 2005, 2006; Kunnath 2006; Shah 2006; Shah and Pettigrew 2009). These provide fascinating data on the micro-dynamics of insurgency. But their spatial and temporal scope is narrow and they necessarily select on the dependent variable. There are, therefore, obvious limitations in generalising the findings of these cases. What is more, theory is almost totally absent from these accounts. Instead they choose to simply set out the ‘the facts’ at hand – resulting in politicized and parochial explanations of phenomenon at hand.

THE ARGUMENT AND THE ROAD MAP

This thesis attempts to address the issues set out in the previous section and, in doing so, to understand the political sociology of Maoist insurgency in India. To this end there are eight chapters. The first chapter deals with theory arguing that the insurgency should be conceptualised as a state building enterprise in which the interests of both the supporters at the micro level and the insurgent leaders at the macro level are served by seizing local political power and building a base area. In the case of the supporters, it undermines the power of the local elites and in the case of the leaders it is a step towards seizing state power. In this model participants may choose to join the insurgency for a variety of reasons, including those stressed by structural theories and rational actor theories, as well as short term processes that occur during the insurgency. The second chapter discusses methodology. In this thesis I combine statistical analysis at a low level of aggregation with qualitative research. This avoids the vagueness of cross-national studies and the particularism of case studies. Instead it enables me to undertake a study that is systematic and broad in scope, but which pays attention to the specific social context in which the insurgency occurs.

The third chapter argues that the dominant narrative of Maoist insurgency in India should be fundamentally rethought. It starts off by pointing out that there are three distinct waves of Maoist insurgency in India. The first began in what is now northern Andhra Pradesh in 1946 and continued until 1951; the second began in 1967 in West Bengal, but also affected other areas of India, and continued until 1972; and the third wave began in the early 1980s and has continued to the present day, affecting a large area of central and eastern India. The analysis demonstrates that the commonly accepted ‘Naxalbari-centric’ narrative of Maoist insurgency in India obscures our understanding of the phenomenon. When seen from a comparative perspective that takes into account the *longue durée* of Maoist insurgency in India, Naxalbari and the insurgency in West Bengal in the late 1960s and early 1970s looks short-lived and atypical. Many aspects of the second wave that are usually stressed – the charismatic leadership of Charu Mazumdar, the annihilation line, the role played by middle class students, and the urbanization of the movement – distinguish it from the vast majority of Maoist insurgency in India. While the role of tribal communities is generally argued to have been peripheral until relatively recently, this analysis shows that they

have played an important role in the insurgency over the past six decades.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the macro level of the insurgency – that is, the leaders of the insurgency who set the agenda at the national level. I use a combination of insurgent documents and newspaper articles to construct biographies of the sixteen members of the CPI (Maoist) politburo. The vast majority are from either dominant or upper castes and most were either undertaking university education or had professional jobs when they joined the insurgents. It is apparent that neither structural explanations nor rational actor theories help us understand the why politburo members participate in the insurgency. Rather this chapter shows that politburo members came from areas of India where Marxist ideology had historically been strong. They were attracted to left wing politics in their youth, experienced state brutality and came to see peaceful protest as pointless. I then demonstrate, using district level statistics, that the occurrence of insurgent activity in the second wave is a strong predictor of insurgency activity in the third wave.

The fifth chapter considers the meso level, ‘the institutional context within which interactions between political actors and civilians takes place’ (Kalyvas 2006: 106). It aims to move beyond Manichean understandings of Maoist insurgency in India, which either portray the insurgents as gangsters or Gandhians with guns. I use a combination of insurgent documents and newspaper articles to demonstrate that the insurgents’ fundraising activities and violence – which are often cited by critics as evidence that the insurgents are bandits or cold-blooded murderers – fit into the logic of state building. That is, these activities are designed to serve collective interests – the consolidation of insurgent control in the base area – rather than private interests. The establishment of base areas undermines the sovereignty of the Indian state, resulting in a situation of ‘dual sovereignty’ (Tilly 1978). I demonstrate that in certain parts of India where the insurgents operate the state is totally absent, while in other areas it does not have a monopoly of the means of violence and is unable to enforce its will. India’s claims to sovereignty in these areas derive from the state’s internationally recognised rights rather than its exclusive ability to actually govern its territory. In this sense, India, at least in the areas affect by insurgency, resembles what Robert Jackson (1991) refers to as a ‘quasi state’.

The sixth chapter uses a combination of district level statistics and qualitative data to analyze the micro level of the insurgency. It demonstrates that the Maoist insurgents provide a unified organizational structure for two separate sections of society to pursue their interests. In areas with a Hindu social structure the probability of insurgency is highest where there are large numbers of untouchable landless laborers who suffer economic exploitation at the hands of higher caste landowners. In areas where the social structure is tribal the likelihood of insurgency is greatest where there is a high proportion of tribal landowning cultivators whose relative autonomy has come under increasing pressure over the past two centuries as the state has established control over natural resources in their area. Nevertheless, the untouchable and tribal communities' discontent does not spontaneously manifest itself in insurgency in the manner that structural theories envision. Rather, the insurgents provide these communities with a variety of incentives that address their concerns and therefore encourage them to provide the insurgents with food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. The analysis shows that the expansion of insurgent activity over the past three decades has occurred mostly in areas inhabited by tribal communities.

The seventh chapter concentrates on the role of tribal communities in the insurgency. This involves a case study of one district, Dantewara, which has been a crucial case for understanding the relationship between tribal communities and Hindu civilization for the past hundred years and is currently the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency in India. It shows that many tribal people support the insurgents because they provide them with a powerful ally in their conflict with the neo-colonial state. Nevertheless, not all tribals support the insurgents. Those whose interests have been harmed by the presence of the insurgents, as well as others who are motivated by a variety of endogenous mechanisms, support the counterinsurgent militia. This demonstrates that insurgency is a more dynamic and complex process than structural and rational actor theories allow for. It also shows that the more one narrows the focus and increases the magnification, the more complex and dynamic the question of who supports the insurgents and why appears.

The eighth chapter seeks to place the subject of indigenous communities and insurgency in the global context. The majority of the comparative literature on indigenous peoples' political activity concentrates on peaceful arenas such as the

World Social Forum and United Nations (Niezen 2003). Indigenous peoples have been overlooked by comparative analyses of civil war. In this chapter I demonstrate that, while indigenous communities listed by the Minorities at Risk project amount to 4.8% of the world's population, they were involved in 43% of the intra-state conflict years listed by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Armed Conflict Dataset between 1946 and 2010. The risk of indigenous involvement in civil war has increased over time and in 2010 indigenous communities were involved in 57% of the world's ongoing intra-state conflicts. 61% of indigenous communities have been involved in internal armed conflict since World War Two. Communities that suffer more political discrimination and lost their autonomy most recently are more likely to be involved in internal armed conflict. The probability of indigenous peoples being involved in civil war is higher in states that are politically unstable and have low per capita income.

1. Literature review

INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of accounts of Maoist insurgency in India pay little or no attention to theory. Instead they choose to simply set out the ‘the facts’ – resulting in confused, politicized and parochial explanations of phenomenon at hand. As Popper points out, theories – or, as he calls them, conjectures – are prior to the facts that they organize. ‘General theory guides the selection of facts, provides a source of generalizable causal mechanisms, facilitates the cumulation of knowledge across substantive domains, reveals anomalies that lead to new questions, and creates the conditions under which existing theories can be supplanted by superior ones’ (Kiser and Hechter 1998: 785). In addition, Mann (1986; vii) notes that scholars who ignore theory ‘imprison themselves in the commonsense notions of their own society’ – so theory would help use break out of the narrowness that afflicts current analyses of the insurgency. Thus, as King (2010) notes, ‘A theory or meta-theory should provide a starting point for empirical analysis’. With this in mind, what framework should we adopt in order understand the conditions that favor insurgency?

This chapter begins by summarising and critiquing the various approaches to studying insurgency. The structural theories that dominated in the 1970s and 1980s concentrate on the socioeconomic characteristics of the population in the areas where insurgency occurs. They are inadequate as they fail to account for the role that insurgent organizations play in determining the specific timing and form of insurgency. The rational actor theories that are currently dominant are also problematic because they are based on an implausible ontology of insurgency that overlooks the social context in which the conflict takes place. I then set out an alternative Weberian or political-sociology approach in which the insurgency is conceptualized as a state-building enterprise rather than a social movement or a case of organized crime. It is important to analyze the roles played by both the insurgents and their support base, as well the relationship between these two groups. People may participate in the insurgency for a variety for reasons, including those stressed by structural and rational actor theories, as well as short term processes that occur during the insurgency.

THREE PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF THEORY

Insurgency is, put simply, an attempt by a non-state actor to seize state power, which results in an irregular conflict in which a militarily weaker non-state actor refuses to directly engage the state (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Kalyvas 2006). Understanding the conditions that lead to insurgency has and continues to be one of the most important research questions in the social sciences. But the manner in which this research question has been approached has varied dramatically over time with regards to the cases that are deemed to be important, the methods that are thought to be best suited to studying them, the terminology used to describe the phenomenon at hand, and the normative assumptions underpinning the analysis.

In the early 1980s Goldstone (1980, 1982) identified three ‘generations’ of theories that are related to understanding insurgency. First, is the ‘natural history of revolutions’ school, which studied and made comparisons between the great revolutions: The English Revolution of 1640, the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 (Edwards 1927; Pettie 1938; Brinton 1938). These studies consisted of elaborate comparative historical descriptions but did not have a clear theory of how and why the revolutions actually occurred.

The second generation – what Goldstone refers to as ‘general theories’ – broadened their scope to include more common events such as peasant revolts, riots, unsuccessful revolutions and civil wars. They developed general theories of collective political violence that attempted to explain why the transition to modernity tended to be accompanied by violence. The second generation includes insights from psychology (cognitive psychology and frustration-aggression theory) (Gurr 1970), sociology (structural-functionalist theory) (Johnson 1966; Smelser 1963), and political science (the pluralist theory of interest-group competition) (Tilly 1978; Huntington 1968). Goldstone (1980: 426) argues that ‘This generation of writers developed a fairly sophisticated body of theoretical analysis’, but he still makes some damning criticisms of their research. First the casual variables are extremely vague. Almost any kind of social change – be it economic, cultural, technological, military, demographic, organization – may lead to conflict. Second, the casual variables are very difficult to operationalize: it is extremely difficult or impossible to measure the

cognitive state of minds of large numbers of peoples, the strain of a social system, or the resources of all competing groups in a polity.

In the late 1970s a new generation of structural models of revolution emerged – inspired primarily by the work of Barrington Moore (1966) and Eric Wolf (1969). These studies turned away from general theories of collective political violence and instead concentrated on rural insurgency or what was term ‘peasant rebellions’. The interest in the subject should be understood in the context of contemporary political events: as Skocpol (1982: 352) pointed out, ‘once the United States became tragically engaged from the mid-1960s in a military effort to halt the Vietnamese Revolution, U.S. scholars quite understandably became fascinated with the revolutionary potential of the peasantry’. Structural models of revolution concentrate on the socioeconomic characteristics of rural communities. While proponents of structural theories have not always been sociologists, they can be described as sociological because they are concerned with the link between social structure and political outcomes (Walder 2009). Broadly speaking, the structural theories can be split into two camps, the moral economists and the class analysts.

The moral economy theory of Scott (1976), built on the work of Wolf (1969), and is concerned with the anomie caused by industrialization and capitalism. While it is widely argued that this framework is most heavily linked with Durkheim (see Tilly 1978; Paige 1983), the term was coined by EP Thompson (1971) and it is in many ways consistent with Marxist analysis (Rule 1988).¹ The moral economy framework argues that the demographic changes, increased production for the market, and the strengthening of the state destroy traditional agrarian structures. This threatens the rural inhabitants’ physical security because it undermines the willingness of powerful or wealthy members of society to live up to norms of reciprocity. The moral economists argue that communities with different social structures produce different

¹ Although the moral economy approach contradicts Marx [2007 (1852)] who, in describing the political limitations of the smallholding French peasantry during Louis Napoleon’s *coup d’etat*, famously compared them with a sack of potatoes. It also conflicts with the Paige’s (1975) analysis, which is most often presented as the seminal neo-Marxist account of agrarian revolution.

reactions to these processes.

They stress two factors that determine the insurrectionary capacities to resist outside oppression. The first is ‘organizational autonomy’ to resist ‘the impact of hegemony ruling elites normally exercise’ (Scott 1977: 271). Landless laborers are unlikely initiators of rebellion because they are vulnerable to repression from a distinct land-owning class, to whom they are dependent or closely tied. The ‘middle peasants’ social autonomy or tactical leverage comes from the fact that they own and cultivate their own land, and directly control the immediate processes of economic production. The second factor is communal solidarity. Rural inhabitants with strong communal traditions and few sharp internal class divisions ‘are more explosive... Thus the argument runs, the more communal the village structure, the easier it is for a village to collectively defend its interests’ (Scott 1976: 201-2). Communal solidarity tends to be higher among land-owning middle peasants than in other agrarian structures because of the absence from the immediate vicinity of markedly differentiated classes and because they are not mutually competitive.

Paige’s (1975, 1983) class analysis displays elements that are distinctive to Marxist thinking – most notably the notion that class interest forms the basis for recruitment of participants in political movements. In Wolf and Scott’s account the causal variable is the village structure, but for Paige (1975: 9-10):

the fundamental causal variable... is the relationship of both cultivators and non-cultivators to the factors of agricultural production as indicated by their principal source of income. Thus the theory is based in the strict definition of class in terms of relations to property in land, buildings, machinery, and standing crops and financial capital in the form of corporate assets, commodity balance, or agricultural credit.

The ‘nature of rural social movements depends fundamentally on the type of agricultural organization’ that is prevalent in particular area (Paige 1975: 72). Based on Stinchcombe’s (1961) typology, Paige outlines a typology of commercial agricultural organizations, each with a typical pattern of rural class relations. He claims, in contrast to the moral economists, that landholding middle peasants are

mutually isolated, economically competitive among themselves, risk averse and strongly dependent on the rich peasants and landed upper classes. Paige (1983: 706) argues that ‘a combination of non-cultivators dependent on income from land and cultivators dependent on income from wages leads to revolution’. The former’s economic weakness ‘leads it to close off all avenues of social action except violent resistance’, resulting in a zero sum game, in which control of property and state power are inherently at issue (Paige 1975: 58). He concludes that ‘revolutionary Communist movements in rural areas have been almost exclusively associated with sharecropping’ (ibid: 63). Sharecropping tenants are not class conscious because of their common origins in a village or because of a set of village traditions as moral economists have argued. They are class conscious because they exist in a cropping system that generates intense class conflict over land and the surplus produced on that land. Sharecroppers suffer, along with their colleagues in the area, from the same grievances at the hands of the landowning class.²

A major problem with structural explanations is that they fail to explain why insurgency occurs at a specific point in time and manifests itself in a particular form (Walder 2009; Desai 2002). As Skocpol (1982: 364) points out, ‘there has been too much of a tendency in the literature to suppose that the adherence of peasants to organized revolutionary movements must be explained by the economic interests and social circumstances of the peasants themselves’. Insurgency is seen as a more or less spontaneous manifestation of favorable structural characteristics and consequently overlooks the role that is played by political organization. Scott (1977: 295-6) suggests that ‘more often than not it has been the autonomous... action of peasantry that has created revolutionary situations’, while Paige argues that left-wing parties and ideologies do play an important role, but ‘these political affiliations are internally generated, not introduced by outside urban-based parties’ (Paige 1975: 62). It is apparent, therefore, that structural accounts overlook the role played by political

² Zagoria (1971, 1974) comes to similar conclusions about the areas in which revolution is most likely in the context of Indian agrarian social structures. Zagoria (1974: 30) argues that ‘one particular type of rural class structure – family-size tenancy in conditions of heavy pressure on land – is particularly conducive to rural instability and revolutionary organization’.

parties. But even the best-known practitioners of class struggle stress the role of political organizations. Lenin (1929: 96) emphasized the importance of a ‘vanguard party’ composed of full-time professional revolutionaries without which ‘no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle’. Trotsky (1965: xix) wrote that without a revolutionary organization ‘the energy of the masses would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston box’ (although he goes on to clarify, that ‘what moves things is not the piston or the box, but the steam’). As Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (1989: 504) put it, ‘Classes do not simply organize themselves. They become organized in a particular way and by particular leaders, factions, or parties, with particular theories, social objectives, and political/organizational strategies.’ Thus, it seems apparent that a major oversight of structural theories is the fact that they overlook the importance the political organizations and fail to see them as independent variables in their own right.

Sociologists have reacted to the failings of structural theories in one of two ways – both of which narrow the scope of the analysis. The first has been to concentrate on questions of how opponents mobilize the massive resources necessary to take command of a geographical area and effectively wrest power from the old regime (Walder 2009; Tilly 1973, 1978; McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982). This framework provides some important insights, most notably what McAdam (1982) terms the structure of political opportunities, factors that affect the ability of insurgents to launch a credible challenge to the state and the state’s capacity to repress the challenge (McAdam 1982). The second reaction has been to concentrate on subjective aspects of political action, such as framing, formation of collective identities, and the role of emotions (Snow et al 1986; Shin 1994; Goodwin and Jasper 2004; Jasper 2011). Thus, as Walder (2009: 399) points out, ‘for more than two decades debates in this subfield [of social movements] have been about the role of organization, political opportunity, resources, strategy, collective identity, cognitive frames, and emotions, all of them defined as complementary or competing approaches to understanding group mobilization.’ As a result, supposedly sociological accounts of insurgency and contentious politics more generally show little interest in the relationship between social structure and political phenomena, which is one of the fundamental interests of the sociological tradition (ibid).

HOMO ECONOMICUS GOES TO WAR

Samuel Popkin's (1979) *Rational Peasant* was a major challenge to the dominant structural theories of insurgency. Although Popkin refers to his framework as the 'political economy' approach it should be noted that Popkin's political economy has a 'distinctly conservative cast' (Paige 1983: 700). It does not draw from Marx and Weber but can be traced to John Stuart Mills (ibid; Tilly 1978) and Thomas Hobbes (Rule 1988), as well as more recent rational actor theorists in political science, most notably Mancur Olson (1965), based on their mutual affection for rational selfish individual actors.

Popkin (1979: 245) emphasises 'political entrepreneurs, incentive systems, free riders, and risk'. He argues that we should conceptualize rural inhabitants as rational, self-interested, utility maximizers - hence the individual or family should be the unit of analysis, rather than the Scott's villages or Paige's class:

Individuals evaluate the possible outcomes associated with their choices in accordance with their preferences and values. In doing this they discount the evaluation of each outcome in accordance with their subjective estimates of the likelihood of the outcome. Finally, they make the choice which they believe will maximize their expected utility (ibid: 31).

Social solidarity in rural societies is enforced from the top by those who want to sustain their own privilege, rather than being the result of a social or emotional attachment to the 'little tradition' or the 'closed corporate village'. Rebellion against the status quo has the qualities of a public good and is conceptualized as a collective action problem. It is normally not possible because the rural lower classes are dependent on wealthier neighbors for their livelihood and collective efforts tend to flounder because of the temptation to act as freeriders. Popkin argues that the freerider problem can be overcome by political entrepreneurs who offer rural inhabitants selective incentives. The perceived quality of the organization is crucial: 'When a peasant makes his personal cost-benefit calculations about the expected returns on his own inputs, he is making subjective estimates of the credibility of the organizer, the "political entrepreneur", to deliver' (ibid: 259). Thus, in stark contrast to the structural theories that Popkin criticises, he emphasises the importance of the political organization in insurgency. Social structure and history are largely absent

from this explanation as rural inhabitants will take part in insurgency regardless of the social and historical context if they are provided with suitable selective incentives.

The application of rational actor theory to insurgency marked a profound shift in the way that the subject was conceptualised. As Rule (1988: 32) noted ‘rational choice theorists’ model of individual rather than collective interest as the mainspring of collective action places them on a collision course with virtually all sociological theories of civil violence’.³ But what are the assumptions underlying this research tradition? Rational choice theory is based on two premises (Green and Shapiro 1994). One is related to causal arguments. Social outcomes are understood to be the by-product of intentional choices made by rational utility maximizing individuals. Rational actor theory is therefore fundamentally atomistic as it holds that social action is only rational when it satisfies the divisible interests of the actor. Behavior not calculated to provide oneself with divisible gratification – including actions that are intended to further interests of group causes or those that involved some element of sacrifice – is understood to be irrational (ibid). The second assumption of rational choice theorists is universalism or a belief in general laws. Models are ‘stable over time and similar among people’ (Stigler and Becker in Green and Shapiro 1994: 17).

It seems apparent that rational choice theory implies an implausible ontology of human action in general. As Rule (1988: 35) points out, while some people might act in the selfish, individualistic manner envisaged by rational actor theory some of the time, ‘as a comprehensive guide to social action [this] doctrine flies in the face of reality’: people vote knowing their ballot will have little effect or no effect on the outcome; they are reluctant to drop rubbish, even in places that they will never visit again; and they give money to charities and relief efforts that operate in far off countries. It is true that not everyone acts in these ways and some people do act selfishly. But enough people do to suggest that rational theory does not adequately explain social reality.

³ Or, in the remarkable words of an advocate of rational choice theory: ‘Revolution is the subject of an elaborate and voluminous literature and, if I am right, all of this literature is wrong’ (Tullock 1971: 99).

Rational actor theory also implies an implausible model of participation in insurgent activity. Firstly, it conceptualizes insurgency as the sum of self-interested actions, and the insurgents and their supporters to be driven by individual interests, such as ‘plunder, rape, personal revenge’ (Rule 1988: 34). Evidence that participants in an insurgency are willing to sacrifice self-interest for a collective good would challenge the credibility of rational choice theory. Secondly, this framework assumes homogeneity of causality. That is, there is one explanation for all insurgencies wherever and whenever they occur. Self-interest certainly helps us understand some conflicts or even the motivations of some actors in most conflicts. *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*’s (REMANO) activities in Mozambique were largely contingent on funding from South Africa (Weinstein 2007). The *Sendero Luminoso* in the Upper Huallaga Valley – although not in the rest of Peru – were motivated by the opportunity to make money through the drug trade (ibid). But as a general law it ‘flies in the face of reality’. There are plenty of examples where people participate in conflicts in the knowledge that they may not survive to see successful conclusion of the conflict. The most extreme example of this would be suicide bombers, for example in the Israel-Palestine civil war. Thus, I concur with Cramer (2002: 1849) that: ‘Despite the apparent appeal and formal elegance of orthodox economic explanations of violent conflict, there are strong grounds for arguing that these explanations are extremely reductionist, highly speculative, and profoundly misleading’.

What is more, one could even argue that the application of rational actor theory to the study of conflict has pernicious outcomes. It depoliticizes and criminalizes insurgency, presenting all actors who aim to seize state power as selfish individuals and overlooking what might well be legitimate political, economic and social concerns. Nevertheless, rational actor theories of civil war have had a strong influence on policy debates, most notably through its influence on the economics of civil war, crime and violence research initiative of the World Bank, and have been cited in reports by the Commission for Africa, the British Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, and the United Nations Secretary-General’s High level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (Cramer 2002; Nathan 2005). The application of policies based on the implausible assumptions of neoclassical economic theory has been disastrous in other fields. For example, David Stuckler King and McKee (2009) have demonstrated that

the implementation of mass privatization after the fall of communism in post Soviet Central and Eastern Europe resulted in millions of excess deaths. It is certainly plausible that rational actor influenced understanding of insurgency might result in intervention on the side of the state against a legitimately aggrieved group.

RATIONAL ACTOR THEORY – A FOURTH GENERATION?

Popkin's rational actor based explanation, as well as the structural theories of Scott and Paige, were part of a 'boomlet' of studies into insurgency in the 1970s that produced three sets of theories, which broadly speaking represented the three general traditions in the study of social movements (Paige 1983: 699). They were, in part, mutually exclusive and their supporters could provide some empirical data to defend them against rival theories. Thus, for a decade or so after the publication of *The Rational Peasant*, there was lively debate between Popkin and his supporters, and structural theorists and theirs (see Tilly 1978; Skocpol 1982; Paige 1983; Rule 1988).

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a global shift from interstate to intrastate conflict (Harbom and Wallensteen 2005). This has led to a dramatic proliferation of studies that analyze insurgency and civil war (Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Dixon 2009). It is not just the number of publications in this field that is striking, but also their content, which are, broadly speaking, dramatically different in terms of theory to what passed before. The vibrant and diverse research tradition – with Marxian, Durkheimian and Millian/Hobbesian alternatives – has become a theoretically narrow discipline, dominated by rational actor based analyses (Cramer 2002).⁴ It seems apparent that rational choice did not gain ascendancy due to its ability to better describe social reality but due to other factors.⁵ The rise of rational actor theory in insurgency can be seen as part of a broader pattern of colonization of the social sciences by rational actor theory based on the assumptions of neoclassical economics or 'economics imperialism' as Fine (1999, 2000) terms it. What is more,

⁴ Similarly, Mann (2005) points out that the study of ethnic violence by political scientists is increasingly dominated by rational choice theory.

⁵ Green and Shapiro (1994: 9) argue this point with reference to political science more generally: 'few theoretical insights derived from rational choice theory have been subjected to serious empirical scrutiny and survived'.

after the end of the Cold War and the decline of interstate war, international relations scholars interested in violent conflict – whose previous work was often based on game theory – turned their attention to internal conflict. It is useful to note van der Pijl's (2007) argument that International Relations is an inherently conservative subject, in the sense that it was set up to naturalize the state system and the inviolability of nation states in the same way that orthodox economics naturalizes the capitalist system and inviolability of the capitalist class. As such, it has intrinsic dislike for insurgents who attempt to seize state power, and has an interest in depoliticising and criminalising them.

At first, the proliferation of rational actor influenced studies was largely driven by analyses of cross-national datasets that mimicked the 'Correlates of War' project (Tarrow 2007). These studies employ a vigorous correlational logic and use aggregated data proxies to attempt to infer the individual incentives for participation in insurgency. Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) study, which attempted to understand the conditions that favour internal conflict in the period 1960 to 1999, is perhaps the best known in this tradition. 'Greed' is operationalized with proxies for opportunity or feasibility such as primary commodity exports, large populations, low economic development, low income and previous conflict, which are all found to be significantly related to conflict onset. Grievance was operationalized with measures of democracy, inequality, and ethnic and religious fractionalization⁶ – but only lack of democracy was found to have a significant effect on civil war onset. Collier and Hoeffler conclude that greed – or opportunity and feasibility – best explains the motives of participants in civil war, while grievance has very little explanatory power. Another very influential study by Fearon and Laitin (2003) employed a similar methodology and theoretical framework to understand internal conflict in the period 1945 to 1999. It came to similar conclusions, that primary commodity exports –

⁶ Ethnic and religious fractionalization measures the probability that two randomly drawn individuals from a given country do not speak the same language or ascribe to the same religion. Several more recent articles have attempted to conceptualise ethnic grievance in terms of the state's relationship with ethnic groups (Cederman and Girardin 2007) or specific ethnic groups' relationship with the state (Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010).

especially oil – mountainous territories, weak non-democratic governments and political instability were significantly related to insurgency while ethnic fractionalization was not.

These studies inspired a boom in the use of aggregated quantitative data to studying the conditions that favour intra-state conflict. It has been pointed out, however, that ‘despite the sheer volume of recent quantitative work on civil wars, it still lacks a hard core of generally accepted propositions’ (Dixon 2009: 731; also see Hegre and Sambanis 2006). These analyses do not question the assumptions underlying this research program – the microeconomic model of individual behavior and universalism – but instead concern themselves with issues of measurement. They construct datasets based on smaller geographical units (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009), or code civil wars that have resulted in fewer deaths per year (Gleditsch et al 2002). They wonder whether there are possibly two different types of civil war – ethnic conflicts where the warring faction does not want to be part of the state and conflict where the insurgents want to seize state power – that can be explained by two different combinations of variables (Sambanis 2001; Buhaug 2006). Or they attempt to code variables such as ethnic grievances in different ways without questioning whether they can be meaningfully compared across such vast spatial and temporal distances (Cederman and Girardin 2007; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009).

Another branch of research into civil war involves scholars whose major concern is the methodological limitations of using large-n, cross-national datasets. As Tarrow (2007: 590) puts it, ‘there are inherent gaps in large-n studies that even the best measure and longest time series cannot resolve’. For these studies, this problem can be resolved using qualitative data and disaggregated quantitative data of study particular cases to ‘complement the contributions of the [cross national] quantitative tradition’ (ibid; see Sambanis and Collier 2003; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2006). They attempt to ‘fill in the gaps’ that arise from using national level data by collecting thick data on the dynamics of insurgent mobilization at the local level. In some respects this methodology marks an improvement on cross-national studies of civil war: it enables the collection of ‘thick data’ and the formulation of ‘thick theories’ (defined by complex arguments about sequence and duration) in contrast to the thin data and theories that are collected and tested by large-n studies

(Coppedge 1999). Nevertheless, the theoretical frameworks in these studies are based on same rationalist assumptions as large-n studies, reflecting a broader trend of leading rational choice theorists becoming increasingly interested in grounding their studies in detailed evidence from particular cases (Mohaney 2000).

This is perhaps most obvious in two edited volumes by Collier and Sambanis (2003) – two of the main pioneers of large-n, cross-national studies – who conceptualize civil war ‘as an industry that generates profits from looting’ and seek to ‘identify the causal mechanisms through which the independent variables in the Collier-Hoeffler model influence the risk of civil war onset’ (ibid: 1). But even in more sophisticated analyses the same rationalist foundations are evident. Weinstein (2007: 40, 8, 9) begins ‘with the assumption that individuals are rational in that their actions reflect the deliberate decisions designed to maximize payoffs’ and he conceptualizes individuals in conflict zones as either ‘investors’ or ‘consumers’. Thus ‘individuals who share the goal of overthrowing an existing regime contract with one another to invest their time, energy, and resources in a military campaign’ (Weinstein 2007: 41). Wood (2003: 17-18) argues that socio-structural variation cannot explain insurgency. Her analysis ‘draws on the rational actor approach in that individuals decide whether to participate or not based on anticipated costs and benefits’ and her theoretical framework is strongly influenced by Thomas Schelling’s conceptualization of collective action as a coordination game among individuals (ibid: 267). Kalyvas (2006) limits the scope of his analysis to the use of violence in civil war. He attempts to explain violence as the outcome of rational behavior in response to individual incentives and disincentives. The state and insurgents seek to control of populations, regardless of their preferences, by providing credible incentives to those who will support them and sanctions to those who collaborate with the enemy. Kalyvas concludes that, in a situation of irregular warfare, targeted violence is the most effective means of maintaining control.

In the next few paragraphs I will demonstrate that Wood and Weinstein do not actually find the rationalist theoretical tools that they provide themselves with very useful for making sense of the subject at hand. They nevertheless persist with the rationalist assumptions by trying to incorporate anomalies into their framework. In order to understand why this is the case it is useful to set out briefly Lakotos’ (1970)

understanding of progress in science. Science does not advance in any single confrontation of ‘theory’ with ‘facts’, but with defensive attempts by scientists to defend their own theory against refutations. ‘The history of science has and should be the history of competing research programs (or if you wish, “paradigms”)’ (Ibid: 155). Theories are never decisively falsified by facts and, in fact, can coexist with empirical anomalies for long periods. Or as Burawoy (1989: 760) notes ‘We would have no theories if we always abandoned them when they were refuted by facts’. Theories are rejected only when a more plausible alternative theory is proposed and accepted by the scientific community. Lakatos (1970: 100-01) gives the following example. Pre-Einstein scientists would not have rejected Newton’s law of gravitation if they discovered that a planet behaved in an anomalous manner. Rather, they would try to save the established theory in the face of anomalous evidence until a more persuasive alternative theory became available. In case of the planets they would have attempted to explain it in terms of a hitherto undiscovered planet whose gravitational pull could explain the apparent anomaly. If the undiscovered planet was not found they might suggest that it was hidden by dust or blamed it on unreliable measuring instruments.

Wood’s (2003) historical ethnography provides strong evidence that refutes the assumption that insurgent participation can be explained in terms of selfish individuals: ‘Many campesinos ran extraordinary risks to support the insurgency over many years... despite the absence of benefits contingent on their participation’ (ibid: 224). Wood does not reject rational actor theory but instead opts – in Lakatos’ terminology – to add protective belt. She notes that ‘the likely outcomes of participation are not evaluated in terms of conventional self-regarding and outcome-orientated preferences’, but, contra conventional rational actor theory, they are endogenous to the conflict (ibid: 267). Wood emphasises the role of ‘emergent political culture’ and theorizes that those who joined the insurgency ‘came to interpret insurgency as justified by the injustice of existing social relations and state violence, and to interpret its costs, even the highest of them, as meaningful sacrifices’ (ibid: 225). For many insurgents participation is valued in and of itself – in other words it is the selective incentive – because participants are outraged by the state’s violence or because they get the satisfaction of claiming responsibility for their actions.

Some of Weinstein's (2007) data supports the assumption that insurgents are driven by selfish motivations, but some of his data does not. He dealt with these anomalies by arguing that there are two types of insurgency. One is opportunistic rebellions, in which there are few risks, low commitment is required, and there is the possibility of short-term gains. The examples that Weinstein gives are REMANO, which was funded by external donors, and *Sendero Luminoso* in the Upper Huallaga Valley, which generated large amounts of money from the drug trade. In Weinstein's terminology, model participants are 'consumers' who can be understood in terms of the classic rational actor model. Weinstein refers to the second type of insurgency as activist rebellions, and these are distinguished by high commitment requirements, few short-term gains, and high risks. The examples that Weinstein gives are the National Resistance Army in Uganda, which is driven by ethnic concerns and Shining Path in other parts of Peru, in which the insurgents are motivated by ideology. These do not fit into the orthodox rational explanations of civil war and seem to provide evidence that participants in these insurgencies are, to some extent, self-sacrificing. But rather than deviate from the rationalist framework, Weinstein describes participants in activist rebellions as 'investors' who are willing to make large investments of time and risk in return for rewards in the long term. Thus, while opportunistic rebellions are funded by 'economic endowments', activist rebellions are funded by 'social endowments'. In other words social structure or context is not inherently important to insurgency, but is only important as a resource to be utilized by the insurgents.

Just because the theoretical assumptions underpinning these books are problematic does not imply that they are useless. In fact, they provide several important insights into the dynamics of insurgency that I integrate into my own theoretical framework. What these examples do demonstrate is the absolute hegemony of rational actor theory in studies of civil war. When facts contradict the rationalist theory Weinstein and Wood do not reject it or even question the flawed assumptions that underpin their theoretical models. Rather, they attempt to incorporate these anomalies by adding a protective belt around the core of the theory.

A POLITICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE

Lakatos (1970: 179: 119) points out that ‘purely negative criticism does not kill a research program’ and ‘there is no falsification before the emergence of a better theory’. Or, as Elster (2009: 10) succinctly puts it, you ‘can’t beat something with nothing’. I propose an alternative, which uses Max Weber’s political sociology, as well as a variety of other insights from political science and sociology, to build a more realistic framework for conceptualizing insurgency. The assumption underpinning this approach differs starkly from those of the rational actor models. First, while rationalist theories stress methodological individualism, utility-maximizing behavior, and a society in which actions are free and voluntary, the political sociology model stresses the role of social relationships, the importance of habits and norms, and a social context in which power is stratified. Second, I reject the rationalist search for universal laws that are generalizable across all time and space. Rather than seek invariant laws in the same manner as natural scientists, I aim, through historical and cross-societal comparison, to generate causal accounts that are bound by historical and social context.

The literature review has pointed to problems with dominant political science approach to studying insurgency, as well as the structural theories that preceded it. Rational actor theories of insurgency overlook the social context in which the insurgency takes place. To illustrate this point, Weinstein (2006: 4) equates the local population in an insurgent affected area with ‘the grass under the feet of duelling elephants’. In other words, the population, who provide ‘food, shelter, and intelligence’ are merely an ‘outside party’ and support from the local population is seen as an exogenous input – in the same way as external finance – rather than something that is central to the understanding of insurgency (ibid: 41). The problem with the dominant rationalist approach can be better understood if one employs the more hackneyed Maoist analogy of fish and sea: it concentrates on the fish, and does not adequately consider the way that the sea in which they swim can encourage the fish to thrive or flounder. On the other hand, the main problem with structural theories of insurgency is – as outlined above – that they pay too much attention to the social context and overlook the role of insurgent organizations. To extend the Maoist analogy, these accounts concentrate on the sea and fail to analyse the fish.

In addition, none of these frameworks acknowledge the complex and dynamic manner in which social structure and political context interact in the development of insurgency. Walder (2006), in the context of explaining factionalism among Red Guards in Beijing universities during the Cultural Revolution, demonstrates that where political context is ambiguous or rapidly shifting, people in identical social positions may make different choices and end up on different sides of a conflict. Thus, he argues that factional identities are emergent properties that change with political context. As Walder (2009) notes, these processes are similar to those observed by Tilly (1964) the counterrevolution in *The Vendée* in the 1790s, where the factions could not be explained by the social characteristics of their members. Rather, individuals from the same social groups participated on either side of the political cleavage and were split along ‘vertical lines’. Tilly explained this with reference to short-term processes of identity formation that occurred in response a sudden change in the political context, in this case revolutionary regime’s call for the clergy to swear an oath rejecting papal authority. These observations are similar to those of Wood (2003) and Kalyvas (2006), who note the importance of endogenous mechanisms in identity formation. The sea should not be conceptualized as an inanimate object: the tide can ebb and flow to give more or less protection to fish, and it can have more or less predators, shelter, food etc.

An insurgency is a territorially based armed challenge that breaks down the monopoly of violence (Kalyvas 2006). Thus, ‘The battlefield is no longer restricted’, ‘the fight is conducted through the people’, and the two sides are compelled to seek the support of the local populace – thus, support of the local population is ‘the *sine qua non* of victory’ (Trinquier in Kalyvas 2006: 91). Both Mao (1961) and Guevara (1998) argued that the fate of a guerrilla squad was to a large extent determined by its relationship with the non-combatant population. Thus, I propose an alternative model that seeks to understand the motivations of both the support base and the insurgents, as well as the relationship between the two. This neither concentrates on just the fish or the sea, but looks at the ecosystem as a whole.

Table 1.1: An Ideal-typical Structure Insurgency

	Macro level	Meso level	Micro level
Actors	Political leaders and ideologues	Guerrilla squads and front organizations	Rural inhabitants
Constituency	Sections of the middle classes, often from outside the base area	A combination of macro- and micro level actors	Sections of rural inhabitants in the base area
Contribution	Ideology and organisation of modern revolution	Operational doctrine of guerrilla warfare	Mass support and access to local resources
Objective	Seize state power	Seize local power	Improve local economic and social circumstances

Table 1.1 sets out an ideal typical structure of insurgency. An ideal type is an abstract model that identifies and exaggerates certain essential characteristics of a given phenomena. It is not meant to describe or explain the real world, but to provide a standard of comparison that enables the researcher to see the real world in a more systematic way by analysing the extent to which empirical cases match or depart from this analytical construct (see Weber 1949: 90-110).

Kalyvas (2006) specifies three levels for analysing an insurgency: the macro level is the realm of elites, ideologies and grand politics; the meso level, the interface between political actors and the populations they rule; and the micro level, where small groups and individuals interact (also see Walder 2006).⁷ I combine this insight with Desai and Eckstein's (1990: 442) observation that insurgency is a syncretic phenomenon that combines the ideology and organisation of modern revolution, the operational doctrines of guerrilla warfare, and the spirit of traditional 'peasant rebellion'.

⁷ This is not dissimilar to Mann's (2005: 8) observation that in cases of ethnic cleansing 'There are three main levels of perpetrator: (a) radical elites running party-states; (b) bands of militants forming violent paramilitaries; and (c) core constituencies providing mass though not majority popular support.'

Insurgents at the macro- and micro levels are distinct entities with fundamentally different constituencies and objectives. Macro level actors aim to capture state power in the long term through protracted people's war, whereas the objectives of actors at the micro level have more local and often more short-term concerns. Nevertheless, the respective interests of the macro- and micro level actors coincide at the meso level, where the seizure of local power in the form of a base area allows both groups to further their objectives. For macro level actors the seizure of local power is a step towards seizing state power. They develop rural base areas, which they plan to gradually expanding in order to eventually encircle the urban centres (see Mao 1961). In seizing local power the insurgents undertake a project of 'competitive statebuilding' (Kalyvas 2006; also see Huntington 1968; Tilly 1978; Skocpol 1982; Goodwin and Skocpol 1989). They begin to perform the functions of a state before they are close to seizing power in the capital. That is, they challenge the state's monopoly of violence resulting in a situation that Tilly (1978) refers to as 'dual sovereignty'. The crucial issue here is how the insurgent organization establishes its authority (- we could use Weber's term *Herrschaft* -) over the population. All the theories that have been considered so far overlook this issue, even though, as Weber (1968: 941) points out, it is 'one of the most important elements of social action'. It is possible that the insurgents establish control by generating support through the provision of incentives, which might be either selective, as envisaged by the rationalist theories, or 'collective', in the sense that they are offered to certain sections of the population (see Skocpol 1982; Goodwin and Skocpol 1989).⁸ But the insurgents might also use collective and selective sanctions, most notably violence, that discourage collaboration with the state (Kalyvas 2006). As Weber put it, 'In reality, obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope – fear if the vengeance of magical powers or of the power-holder, hope for reward in this world or in the beyond- and besides all this, by interests of the most varied sort' (Weber 1991: 79).

⁸ In cases of left-wing insurgency, these tend to include land reforms and wage increases aimed at improving the immediate economic and social circumstances and winning the support of rural lower classes (Goodwin and Skocpol 1989; Wickham Crowley 1991).

Thus, insurgency entails a transaction between macro- and micro level actors. Macro level insurgents provide their supporters at the micro level with an organisational structure through which they can effectively channel their latent discontent, while the micro level supporters endow the macro-insurgents with mass support and access to resources needed to sustain the insurgency, such as food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. Macro and micro level actors form a mutually beneficial alliance because, in the absence of either contribution, the pursuit of guerrilla warfare and seizure of local power would be impossible. As Kalyvas (2006) points out, insurgencies are processes that provide a medium for a variety of grievances to be realized within the space of a greater conflict – the master cleavage – rather than binary conflicts neatly arrayed along a single issue.⁹

Weber's concept of legitimacy provides us with a means of understanding some of the dynamism inherent to insurgency. Legitimacy refers to validity claims of rulers in the eyes ruled. It is not an internalised constant but an emotional feeling that arises from assessing a state – or state building organizations – at any given moment and can vary from being non-existent to very high (Weber 1968). Individuals must interpret the world around them – they do not react mechanically to their structural position or to selective or collective incentives and disincentives that they are offered. In situations of dual sovereignty two political organizations within the same territory compete to claim and establish legitimacy. There are tendencies regarding which organization is viewed as legitimate or illegitimate that are related to people's position in the structure of power and privilege. But, because actors' assessments of legitimacy are subjective, they can be either reinforced or altered by short-term processes, such as the dynamics of violence (ibid).¹⁰ The flip side of this is that the insurgents attempt to

⁹ The concept of a master cleavage is a challenge to traditional sociological accounts, which are preoccupied with explaining the orientations of the political movements in terms of socio-structural characteristics (Walder 2009).

¹⁰ Nevertheless, as Kalyvas (2006) points out, in irregular warfare it is often very difficult to infer unobservable attitudes from observable actions as the absence of alternatives often produces action irrespective of attitudes. Because of the extreme situation, and the use of violence in particular, people in war zones do not always

frame their insurgency in a way that emphasises ideas or themes that resonate with their support base. The subjective dimensions of insurgency can be related to Wood's (2003) interest in 'political culture' or what is referred to in the sociological tradition as frames, formation of collective identities, and the role of emotions and memory (Snow et al 1986; Shin 1994; Goodwin and Jasper 2004; Jasper 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter began by summarising and critiquing the various approaches to studying insurgency. The structural theories that dominated in the 1970s and 1980s concentrate on the socioeconomic characteristics of the population in the areas where insurgency occurs. They are inadequate as they fail to account for the role that insurgent organizations play in determining the specific timing and form of insurgency. The rational actor theories that are predominate now are also problematic because they are based on an implausible ontology of insurgency that overlooks the social context in which the conflict takes place. What is more, they depoliticize and criminalize all insurgents by presenting all insurgents as selfish individuals and overlooking what might well be legitimate political, economic and social concerns. I then set out an alternative Weberian or political-sociology approach. The insurgency is seen as a state-building enterprise rather than a social movement of organized crime. It is important to analyze the roles played by both the insurgents and their support base, as well the relationship between these two groups. People may participate in the insurgency for a variety of reasons, including those stressed by structural and rational actor theories, as well as short term processes that occur during the insurgency.

choose who to support based on a the collective or selective incentives that they offer or because of their position in the social structure – as if they were voting in election.

2. Methodology

THE NEO-LAKATOSIAN APPROACH

Why study India? Can analyzing this one case refute alternative theories of insurgency? Why is insurgency important to sociologists in general? In order to answer these questions I follow King and Sznajder (2006) by setting out Lakatos' theory of competing research traditions for comparative social analysis. Lakatos (1970: 155) argues that 'the history of science has and should be the history of competing research programs'. Instead of seeking a single confrontation of theories and facts, scientists typically attempt to defend their own theories against refutations. Thus, for Lakatos, research programmes can be compared and evaluated by showing that theories that originate under the auspices of one paradigm are more effective at solving Kuhn's 'puzzles' than their rivals.

Burawoy's (1989) well-known interpretation of Lakatos argues that theories can never be disproved and the total rejection of a research tradition or paradigm can never be secured by empirical data. Other processes or forces determine when a 'paradigm shift' occurs. It seems apparent that Burawoy's interpretation is both too relativistic and too ideological. It implies 'epistemological anarchism': all knowledge is equally uncertain, science does not provide a superior way of knowing things than other systems of thought like folkways or magic, and there is no real scientific progress (Feyerabend 1975). To distinguish their approach from the more relativistic interpretations of Lakatos, King and Sznajder refer to it as neo-Lakatosian. Lakatos referred to himself as a 'sophisticated falsificationist' rather than a naïve one. He agreed with Kuhn and Feyerabend that no theory could be overturned by a single predictive failure. But Lakatos and Kuhn (at least in the second edition of *Scientific Revolution*)¹ did not adhere to the position put forward by Burawoy. For them, science progresses as cases pile up that can or cannot be positively explained by research traditions. 'As maps improve without ever perfectly corresponding to the

¹ In the second edition of *Scientific Revolution*, in order to avoid the charge of relativism, Kuhn suggests several criteria that distinguish an earlier from a more recent theory. These include accuracy of prediction, more esoteric subject matter, and number of different problems solved (Harris 2001).

terrain, science can move closer to objective truth even though it can never reveal a perfect correspondence of reality uninfluenced by metatheoretical logic' (King and Sznajder 2006:765).

I support the view that sociology should strive to be a science, in the sense of science being 'a superior way for human beings to obtain knowledge about the world in which we live' – although there are some things that the scientific method cannot help us understand such as the 'ecstatic knowledge of mystics and saints; the visions and hallucinations of drug users and of schizophrenics; and the aesthetic and moral insights of artists, poets, and musicians' (Harris 2001: 6). As Marvin Harris (*ibid*: 27) points out:

We must recognize that there are many ways of knowing, but we must also recognize that it is not just ethnocentric puffery to assert that science is a way of knowing that has a uniquely transcendent value for all human beings. In the entire course of human history and prehistory only one way of knowing has encouraged its practitioners to doubt their own premises and to systematically expose their own conclusions to the hostile scrutiny of non-believers.²

There is some distance separating science as an ideal and science as it is practiced. Burawoy's interpretation of Lakatos' is similar to the way that science is practiced in some cases. As I argued in the previous chapter, other processes and forces explain the rise to dominance of rational actor theory in the study of civil war. At present the field of study does not live up to 'irenic image of the "scientific community"' with 'no other laws than that of the perfect competition of ideas, a contest infallibly decided by the intrinsic strength of the true idea' (Bourdieu 1975: 19). Nevertheless, 'it is as an ideal that the uniqueness of science deserves to be defended' (Harris: ix). Indeed, the causes of the insurgency in India – which has resulted in the deaths of thousands and the displacements of hundreds of thousands over the past three decades – should not be a matter of opinion or taste – even though opinion and taste play a prominent role in the most current explanation of the insurgency.

² Compare this to Feyerabend's (cited in Harris 2001: 22) suggestion that 'a world in which [science] plays no role whatsoever... would be more pleasant than the world we live in today'.

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

The neo-Lakatosian approach holds that, ‘through careful case selection and paying close attention to the measurement of social mechanisms’ social scientists ‘can partially “telescope” scientific progress, even though no single comparative study... will decisively disprove a metatheory’ (King and Sznajder 2006: 766). The comparative method involves the systematic analysis of a small number of cases in order to test theories related to the causes of important outcomes in these cases. It has been widely argued that the comparative method is merely an imperfect substitute for statistical methodology (see Lijphart 1971; Smelser 1973; Skocpol and Somers 1980). This claim is based on the belief that the same logic underpins both strategies, but that the number of cases in the comparative approach is too small to permit statistical analysis. It overestimates the benefits of statistical analysis; in large-n analyses that employ a vigorous correlational logic cases are reduced to the status of variables, with little identity as individual phenomenon (Ragin 1991). This is evident in the much of recent research into civil war onset (see Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hegre and Sambanis 2006). This claim also underestimates the virtues of the comparative method. In neo-Lakatosian understanding, comparative social science studies should identify the macro independent and dependent variables in order to locate themselves within a research tradition and attempt to prove or disprove macrocausal theories. But, they should also undertake ‘thick’ studies of crucial cases.³ Indeed, ‘The classics of comparative social science are classics because combine a strong macrocausal analysis with compelling thick descriptions of their cases – whether there are six cases [Moore 1966], three cases (e.g., Skocpol 1979; Brenner 1977), or one case (e.g., Neumann 1942)’ (King and Sznajder 2006: 766). What is more, while conventional statistical analyses test ‘thin theories’ that are insensitive to the effects that time and place has on outcome, gathering thick data allows us to test ‘thick theories’ that involve more complex arguments (Coppedge 1999).

³ King and Sznajder (2006) define ‘thick’ in two parts. First, they refer to the in-depth understanding of a historical case and second, they refer to the data being numerous, diverse and of high quality.

The majority of comparative research in the social sciences occurs between countries with nation states as cases. Nevertheless, most theories of rural insurgency identify sub-national and even sub-regional variation as critical (Kalyvas 2006). In this thesis I study one country (India) and one conflict (the Maoist insurgency). In doing this I take into account Tilly's (1964: 38) advice to 'narrow the focus and step up the magnification', and Przeworski and Teune's (1970: 74) reminder that comparative analysis doesn't require comparisons between national units.

Our strategy has several advantages. First, the most obvious problem that comparativists encounter is 'many variables, small N' (Lijphart 1971: 686). This leads to 'causal overdetermination' as several causal explanations remain tenable after all irrelevant factors have been eliminated. Indeed, there need not be any single cause of a particular outcome (Ragin 2000). States are not just objects of revolutionary struggles but are also important actors in the struggle (Skocpol 1979). By comparing cases within one state variables concerning that state remain constant, allowing us to concentrate on issues pertinent to the sociology of insurgency, namely the interaction of the social structure with political context (see Walder 2009). Concentrating on one state therefore reduces the number of independent variables that need to be considered and thus partially ameliorates one side of the small N, many variables quandary.

Second, the question of equivalence of concepts is a central issue in comparative studies because the same context-specific concepts may operationalize in distinct ways in different cases (Przeworski and Teune 1970). As some meanings associated with a concept fail to fit new cases, comparative studies can suffer from what Sartori (1970) calls 'conceptual stretching' – which can reduce the validity of research – as some meanings associated with a concept fail to fit new cases. This is particularly the case with grievances: as Dixon (2009: 725) points out, 'it is extraordinarily difficult to create broad, cross-national measures of grievances, because so many grievances result from a combination of local factors'. Concepts such as caste and tribe do not travel well even within a country as diverse as India, and do not have equivalents outside of South Asia, making comparative studies that remain sensitive to the particularities of caste and tribe relations very difficult. This problem is markedly reduced when the frame of analysis is limited to India, because it can be assumed that these concepts are constant throughout the state.

Third, it might seem apparent that although this approach improves the study's internal validity it harms the external validity. But as mentioned in the previous section, producing laws that apply universally is not the goal for this thesis.

Nevertheless, I do hope to avoid the radical particularism of some studies. Schofield (1993: 221) called for sociologists to define the concept of generalizability in a way that is useful and meaningful to non-statistical research. Guba and Lincoln's (1981), concept of 'fittingness' – analyzing the degree to which the situation studied matches other situations in which one is interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study – is useful in this regard. Fittingness requires an in-depth understanding of sociocultural, economic and political contexts in which social phenomena develop – this applies to both the cases one wishes to generalize from and to. These contexts serve as an important explanatory variable and an enabling tool, rather than constituting a barrier to effective cross-societal comparisons.

STUDYING INSURGENCY

Broadly speaking, there are two main research strategies for studying insurgency. The first undertakes large-N statistical analyses of cross-national datasets. This strategy allows researchers to undertake broad, systematic analyses and has had some success in identifying variables – such as 'anocracy', low economic development and ethnic heterogeneity – that systematically co-vary with a higher probability of internal conflict (for summary see Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Dixon 2009). But they have been heavily criticised by qualitative researchers because they overlook a great deal of complexity (Kalyvas 2006; Tarrow 2007; Weinstein 2008). For example, the datasets that these studies rely on code the Maoist insurgency as a conflict as between the state and the Communist Party of India (Maoist). They therefore fail to account for the possibility that various actors gather around the 'master cleavage' of Maoism (Kalyvas 2006). In addition, as with the majority of comparative research in the social sciences, it compares between countries with nation states as cases. But most internal conflicts occur in limited parts of a country and can be explained by sub-national and even sub-regional variation (Buhaug and Gates 2003; Kalyvas 2006). Finally, where these studies consider the role played by specific social groups within a nation state – usually referred to ethnic groups – they tend to be treated as homogenous and static. But ethnographic studies stress the fact that such identities are, in fact, heterogeneous and dynamic (Sen 2006).

In response to such criticisms, there has been a recent move towards disaggregating quantitative studies of civil (see, for example, Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). Urdal (2005) studies violence in India at state level, but as Indian states are such large entities – Uttar Pradesh had a population of over 166 million in 2001 – it seems that such studies will not solve the problem of over aggregation. To our knowledge there is only one published paper that attempts to study Maoist insurgency in India using district-wise statistics (Borooah 2008) and this is problematic for several reasons. First, the dependent variable, the list of districts affected by insurgent activity, is not generated using open and defensible criteria; second, the data is cross sectional rather than time series; and third, the study shows a fundamental misunderstanding of Indian society – for example in the manner it conflates Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes into one category.

The second strategy is to undertake ‘thick’ analyses – by gathering multiple voices and piles of evidence from a variety of data sources – of one or a small number of cases (Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2008). The vast majority of empirical studies of Maoism in India consist of intense ethnographic research concentrated on a very limited area (for example Bhatia 2005, 2006; Kunnath 2006; Shah 2006; Shah and Pettigrew 2009). Such studies provide fascinating data on the micro-dynamics of insurgency. But their spatial and temporal scope is narrow and they necessarily select on the dependent variable. There are obvious limitations in generalising the findings of these case studies in a country as vast and diverse as India.⁴ Consequently, this strategy provides a great deal of data about micro level dynamics in particular areas, but tells us very little about the broader pattern of insurgency in the Indian social

⁴ Nevertheless, several summaries of Maoism in India attempt to combine and extrapolate the findings of ethnographic research to explain the broader national picture (Planning Commission of India 2008; Mehra 2007). This approach is logically flawed; it selects its sample on the dependent variable – that is, the studies deal only with cases where certain conditions have led to insurgency and not with cases where the similar conditions might not led to insurgency. In such accounts insurgency is explained in terms of a laundry list of India’s social ills – caste, poverty, inequality, etc – that also exist in unstudied areas that are not effected by insurgency.

formation. This brings to mind Jon Elster's (2009: 1, 2) criticism that, in contrast to much of the social sciences which has 'excessive ambitions'. 'the level of ambition [of anthropology] often seems too low, after it embraced postmodern theory, postcolonial theory, subaltern theory, deconstructionism and the other usual culprits'.

DATA

The comparative method is a broad-gauged methodological approach rather than a narrow specialized technique (Lijphart 1971). The inherent complexity of civil conflicts makes methodological eclecticism productive (Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2006). In this thesis I use a combination of statistical analysis at a low level of aggregation with qualitative data to test the theory outlined in the previous chapter. Our strategy allows us to avoid the disadvantages of the two research strategies set out above: that is, the vagueness of cross national studies, and the particularism of case studies. But it allows us to harness the advantages of these strategies by undertaking a study that is systematic and broad in scope, but which pays attention to the specific context of each case. The research strategy in this thesis involves collecting lots of different kinds of data about the Maoist insurgency in India. This includes a unique district level time-series dataset for the period 1982 to 2011, as well as a variety of qualitative data including Government of India and insurgent documents, newspaper articles from the past three decades, and a case study of the situation in one district. Here I briefly outline the data sources. For more details see the individual chapters.

Studies of the Maoist insurgency in India tend to cite numbers of killings produced by either the Union Ministry of Home Affairs or the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM). Ministry of Home Affairs (2010) data covering the period 1980 to 2011 is available, but at the state level. As mentioned above, when states have populations of over 100 million, this does not solve the problem of over-aggregation. On the other hand, ICM data is available at the district level, but only covers the period 2005 to present date (South Asia Terrorism Portal no date). This is problematic as the present wave of insurgency began in the early 1980s and socioeconomic data is enumerated on a decennial basis. For the statistical analysis in this thesis I constructed a new dataset that documented all fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents that were reported in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition), India's most widely read

newspaper, between 1982 and 2011. There were 1,106 fatal incidents in this period, resulting in 4,698 deaths.

For the independent variables this study utilizes district-wise figures on social characteristics such as, *inter alia*, the class and caste structure, which are produced by the Census of India. Objections to the use of statistics are particularly strong in relation to official statistics, since they necessarily reflect the interests of the state. Miles and Irvine (1979: 127) claim that ‘the concepts employed [in the production of official statistics] serve to reinforce arguments advanced by political and intellectual representatives of the ruling class’. Consequently most sociologists tend to be extremely ambivalent towards them (Levitas and Guy 1996: 1-6). Bulmer (1980), however, argues that not utilizing official statistics cuts sociologists off from a huge source of data about the social world. Governments, after all, have the financial and legislative capacity to collect data on a scale that most sociologists cannot dream of. Moreover, there is no need for official statistics to be particularly problematic if we accept that all knowledge is constructed and relative to its context (Hindess 1979: 19-27). Official statistics should not be contrasted with accurate descriptions of the real world, because accurate descriptions of the real world are unattainable. Like all knowledge, official statistics must be analyzed in terms of the conditions and instruments of their production. The ‘conceptual instruments’ that produce official statistics are a system of concepts governing assignment of data into categories (ibid: 39; Thomas 1986). These categories provide a system of distinctions and differentiations that allocate individuals into different census classes – and this system constitutes a theory of society. Consequently while there are no general theoretical problems involved with the use of official statistics, any given set of statistics may pose specific theoretical problems because of the accuracy of the conceptual instruments that produce them.

In addition to the statistical data, I also gathered a variety of qualitative data both in the United Kingdom and India. This includes pre-independence official documents from the Official Publications Department in the University Library, Cambridge, as well as post-independence government documents at the Official Documents Section in the Library of the Central Secretariat (Shastri Bhawan), New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, The Institute for Social and Economic Change,

Bangalore, and the Official Documents Department, Indian National Library in Kolkata. I also gathered a variety of insurgent documents from various sources in India, including their journals *Peoples' March* and *Maoist Information Bulletin*, their strategy documents and various press releases. In addition I read all articles mentioning the insurgents that were in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition) between the beginning of 1980 and the end of 2011. This thesis also includes an in depth case study of one district.

COMBINING QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUES

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodological techniques raises profound philosophical and theoretical issues (Mahoney 2008: 2010). Traditionally, the social sciences are understood as being split into two polarized research traditions, one realist-positivistic-quantitative and the other idealist- interpretative/ phenomenological-qualitative (von Wright 1993). In this formulation the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is problematic; one is assumed to moving between paradigms or research traditions at the levels of epistemology and theory, because it is assumed that there is correspondence between epistemology, theory and method (Brannen 1992).

Hammersley (1992: 39-56), however, systemically analyses the dichotomies that supposedly underpin the respective research traditions. He demonstrates that it is an oversimplification to divide social research into realist-idealist, positivist-interactionalist/phenomenologist, quantitative-qualitative dichotomies. Such a binary understanding excludes the vast amount of 'space' that exists between these two extremes and it obscures the full range of options that are available to the social researcher. Hammersley does not resolve the issue of combining quantitative and qualitative work by reverting from two research traditions to one as King, Keohane and Verba (KKV) (1994) have tried to do. KKV (ibid: 3) state that their 'main goal is to connect the traditions of what are conventionally denoted "quantitative" and "qualitative" research by applying a unified logic of inference for both'. But the 'unified logic' consists of imploring qualitative researchers to adopt the norms that underpin quantitative research. There is no acknowledgement that qualitative research can be used to analyze aspects of social reality that cannot be understood using quantitative methods. KKV's proposal removes a host of valuable ideas, strategies

and techniques from the realm of valid social research. Rather, Hammersley (1992) suggests that the diversity of social research cannot possibly be encapsulated within one methodological tradition. Rejecting the 'paradigmatic' approach opens up many options to the social researcher; because one approach is not privileged over the other, we are free to choose the techniques that best suit the goals and circumstances of a particular research project.

One must not, however, fall into the trap of assuming that methodological techniques can be completely freed from their epistemological and theoretical underpinnings. The most common manner in which quantitative and qualitative techniques are combined is 'triangulation'. For example, Tarrow (2007: 594) argues that Collier and Sambanis' (2003) case studies of civil war 'provide strong evidence that the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods will lead to a deeper understanding of civil war.' In this formulation it is assumed that the validity of findings and degree of confidence in them will be enhanced by more than one approach to data collection. It has been frequently noted that this assumption – that data generated by different methods can simply be aggregated to produce a single unitary picture of what is assumed to be 'true' – is naïve (Fielding and Fielding 1986; Hammersley 1995; Bryman 1988; Mason 1994). This naivety is based on the misconception that knowledge can be treated as objective phenomena that unproblematically reflects the real world. Data are, however, constituted by the methodological techniques that produce them, and must be understood in relation to the purposes for which they are created (Brannen 1992). If the techniques and purposes of data production are incongruent then the resultant data sets cannot simply be integrated. Even when quantitative and qualitative techniques are used to investigate the same issue, it is not apparent that are looking at the same things. Rather, they are exploring different aspects of the same problem and should be treated as complementary (Fielding and Fielding 1986). As Mahoney (2010) points out, case study research and statistical research are designed to do very different things. Case studies seek to tell us why particular outcomes happened in specific cases; statistical studies try to estimate the average effects of variables of interest. Both are important but distinct issues.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is a means of coping with

the ‘duality of structure’ (see Giddens 1984; Brannen 1992). There are macro-structural ways of understanding society, which are particularly suited to quantitative techniques and micro-structural approaches, which are more suited to qualitative analysis (Bryman 1992). In the study of insurgencies the broad structural conditions identified with quantitative methods tend to set the stage for examining specific actor-orientated factors. As Weber puts it, the structures load the historical dice. But the closer we investigate insurgency, the more important idiosyncratic factors become, and the more useful qualitative methods are (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Ragin, Berg-Schlosser and de Meur 2000; Kalyvas 2006).

3. A socio-historical analysis of Maoist insurgency in India¹

INTRODUCTION

Table 3.1: The Three Waves of Maoist Insurgency in Independent India

	Dates	Main Revolutionary Party	Main States Affected
First	1948 (1946)* to 1951	Communist Party of India (CPI) factions.	Erstwhile Hyderabad State (now Andhra Pradesh)
Second	1969 (1967)* to 1971	CPI (Marxist) faction. Became CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969	West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. But also Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh
Third	1990 (1980)* to date	People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre. Merged into CPI (Maoist) in 2004	Began in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. Now concentrated in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal

Source.- Gleditsch et al 2002.

Notes.- *The UCDP/PRIO dataset only takes into account years when the state was party to the conflict and when there were over 25 battle deaths. The dates in parentheses indicate when – irrespective of these criteria – the insurgents first engaged in significant violent activity.

Maoist insurgency in India is not a recent phenomenon: although the insurgents have failed to seize state power, insurgencies involving various combinations of left-wing organizations and rural inhabitants have occurred in ebbs and flows since before independence. Table 3.1 uses data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo (UCDP/PRIO) 'Armed Conflict Database' to demonstrate that there have been three distinct 'waves' in Maoist insurgent activity – in which an

¹ Sections of this chapter are based on an article co-authored with Sunil Purushotham that was published *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The majority of these parts – the conceptual framework and the analyses of the second wave are based on my own contribution to that paper – although they benefited a great deal from in-depth discussions that we had while writing the paper. The major exception to this is the section on the first wave of insurgency, which I have re-written, both to remove Sunil's archival sources, and to stress elements of the insurgency that I see as important to this analysis and which I interpret differently to Sunil. Where I include insights that are directly attributable to Sunil I cite the *Comparative Studies in Society and History* article.

armed political organization that legitimized its activities with reference to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology attempted to seize state power through the strategy of protracted people's war.

Naxalbari – an area of West Bengal where a faction of the Communist Party of India (CPI) (Marxist) incited sharecroppers and agricultural laborers to undertake insurgent activity in 1967 – is widely regarded as the starting point of Maoist insurgencies in India and the reference point for understanding what occurred before and afterwards. Rahul Pandita (2012: 22) refers to Naxalbari as 'the foundation stone of the Maoist movement in India'. Sumanta Banerjee (2002: 2115) argues that there 'can be no doubt that Naxalbari was a watershed in the recent history of India... Most of the progressive trends in social activism today can be traced indirectly to the issues raised by or associated with the Naxalite movement in 1960s' (sic). In this formulation the first wave of insurgency that occurred in the late 1940s and mid 1950s – the Telengana movement in what is now Andhra Pradesh – is overlooked. Studies of the second wave present the first as 'a brief insurrectionary phase' organized by a proto-Naxalite cadre (Banerjee 2008: 137; also see Mohanty 1977). In accounts that concentrate on the third wave, the first wave is usually ignored (Shah 2006; Guha 2007a; Planning Commission 2008; Shah and Pettigrew 2009; Miklian 2011). What is more, the third wave is conflated with the second; it is seen as a direct continuation of what began in Naxalbari, which is perhaps why contemporary Maoist insurgents are still commonly referred to as 'Naxalites'.

This chapter challenges the dominant narrative by treating each wave as a distinct case worthy of comparative analysis. There are four sections. The first considers how the ideal typical structure of insurgency set out in the previous section applies to the Maoist insurgency in India. The second, third and fourth analyze the three waves of insurgency; they consider the specific economic, political and social circumstances in areas affected by insurgency, the role played by the insurgents, and the state's reaction. This demonstrates that in the first two waves the insurgent activity prospered in areas where there was willing support at the local level, a cadre of insurgents to channel their energy into Maoist insurgency, and a favorable structure of political opportunities brought about by sudden shifts in political context. In the third wave no

such sudden shift occurred. As a result the insurgents have sought to take advantage of the spatial rather than temporal variations in the structure of political opportunities.

What is more, this chapter demonstrates that the commonly accepted ‘Naxalbari-centric’ narrative of Maoist insurgency in India obscures our understanding of the phenomenon. When seen from a comparative perspective that takes into account the *longue durée* of Maoist insurgency in India, Naxalbari and the insurgency in West Bengal in the late 1960s and early 1970s looks short-lived and atypical. Many aspects of the second wave that are usually stressed – the charismatic leadership of Charu Mazumdar, the annihilation line, the role played by middle class students, and the urbanization of the movement – distinguish it from the vast majority of Maoist insurgency in India. Consequently, while the role of tribal or adivasi² communities is generally argued to have been peripheral until relatively recently, this analysis shows that they have played an important role in the insurgency over the past six decades.

AN IDEAL TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF MAOIST INSURGENCY

Table 3.2 adapts the general ideal typical structure of insurgency set out in the previous chapter (table 1.1) to the specific context of the Maoist insurgency in the Indian context. This structure identifies and exaggerates certain essential characteristics of a given phenomena. It is not meant to describe or explain the real world, but to provide a heuristic device that facilitates the identification of commonalities and differences between three waves of insurgency that have affected India over the past six and a half decades.

² The term adivasi refers to the heterogeneous group of communities claiming to be India’s original inhabitants. Adivasis are Scheduled Tribes in the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, but the terms are not analogous. 85 million people are officially classified as Scheduled Tribes. Of these, about 16 million live in north-eastern India and are not considered to be adivasis (Census of India 2001). The remaining 70 million Schedules Tribes that live in a more or less contiguous hill and forest region in central India are adivasis (Guha 2007a; Padel 2009). For a more detailed discussion see chapter 7. In this paper I refer to tribals and adivasis interchangeably.

Table 3.2: An Ideal-typical Structure of Maoist Insurgency in India

	Macro level	Meso level	Micro level
Actors	Political leaders and ideologues	Guerrilla squads (<i>dalam</i>) and village committees (<i>sangham</i>)	Support base
Constituency	Sections of the middle classes, often from outside the base area	A combination of macro- and micro level actors	Sections of rural inhabitants in the base area
Contribution	Maoist ideology and strategy	Operational doctrine of guerrilla warfare	Access to local resources
Objective	Seize state power	Seize local power	Improve local economic, political, and social circumstances

Macro- and micro levels actors are distinct entities with different constituencies and objectives. A variety of sources have demonstrated that, in the first (Harrison 1956; Sundarayya 1972), second (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008) and third (Bhatia 2005; Shah 2006; Guha 2007a) waves, the leaders of the respective insurgent organization were predominantly upper caste, middle class and well educated. Macro level actors tend to ‘come from a lower middle class background... have a smattering of education, and were often radicalised in college’ (Guha 2007a: 3310). Moreover, it is generally agreed that in all three waves the insurgents’ mass support came from various sections of the rural lower classes, predominantly untouchable and tribal communities (Sundarayya 1972; Mohanty 1977; Bhatia 2005; Guha 2007a; Banerjee 2008; Kunnath 2009).

It seems apparent that actors at the macro- and micro levels will have very different reasons for participating in the insurgency. The insurgent leaders’ strategy is, according to the CPI (Maoist)’s (2004: 10) *Strategy and Tactics of the India Revolution* ‘one of protracted people’s war, as enunciated by comrade Mao – of establishing revolutionary base areas first in the countryside where the enemy is relatively weak and then to gradually encircle and capture the cities which are the bastions of the enemy forces’ (also see Sundarayya 1972; Mazumdar 1967). As Guha (2007a: 3309) points out, ‘the principal aim of the Maoists [at the macro level] is not the social or economic advancement of the Adivasis, but the capture of state power in

Delhi through a process of armed struggle. In this larger endeavour the tribals [and untouchables] are a stepping stone'. The objectives of micro level actors tend to be more local and short term. As Bela Bhatia (2005: 1540) points out:

there is little understanding of the formal ideology of Marxism-Leninism amongst the people who constitute the mass base of the movement... Thus, at the village level few people have joined the Naxalite movement on the basis of its formal ideology... [P]eople who support the Naxalite movement do so because... it finds expression in concrete struggles on immediate issues that concern them like land distribution, implementation of minimum wages, etc.

Nevertheless, the interests of macro level insurgents and micro level supporters coincide at the meso level, where the actions of guerilla squads (*dalams*) and legal front organizations (*sanghams*) undermine state power and allows both groups to further their objectives. For macro level actors the seizure of local power allows for the creation of base areas, which is an important step towards seizing state power – the insurgents' ultimate goal. On the other hand, the local seizure of power undermines the power of the ruling class in rural areas and allows micro level actors to improve their local economic, political, and social circumstances (Sundarayya 1972; Mohanty 1977; Bhatia 2005; Guha 2007a; Banerjee 2008; Kunnath 2009). This explanation differs from and is more sophisticated than that of both the insurgents and their critics. The insurgency is not a process in which a 'vanguard party' of professional revolutionaries make an oppressed stratum of society aware of their class interests. Nor, as the Ministry of Home Affairs (2009: 16) argues, are the insurgents 'exploiting' the discontent of rural lower classes (also see Kujur 2006).

Rather, the insurgency entails a transaction between macro- and micro level actors. On the one hand, insurgents provide disparate groups of supporters with a unified organizational structure. Indeed, there were a multitude of so-called peasant and tribal rebellions in India during the colonial period, but in the absence of the unified and robust organizational structure, these were much more short lived and on a much smaller scale than the Maoist insurgency (see Raghavaiah 1971; Guha 1983). On the other hand the supporters endow the insurgents with access to resources needed to sustain the insurgency, such as food, shelter, intelligence and recruits (Kalyvas 2006). The importance of popular support – in particular intelligence provided by the local

population – is summed up in an account of an insurgent ambush that killed ten paramilitary police in Bastar that appeared in *The Times of India* in 1993:

it is precisely because of the mass support and the tactical superiority that the [Peoples' War Group] has vis-a-vis the cops that its cadre are able to successfully move against the security forces. Every ambush operations call for enormous gathering of intelligence which is provided by the Maria Gond, Dorla, Koya and other tribals.... At the instance of the Narayanpur *dalam*... the tribals reconnoitered the movement of [police] personnel, and when it was clear that a vehicle-load of them was going to move on the road Chhote Dongar-Orcha road, the *dalam* was alerted... the incident... underscores the fact that the operation could not have been carried out without the precise intelligence provided by the tribals (Balakrishnan 1993: 9).

Therefore, when analyzing the insurgency it is important to consider both the economic, political and social situation of the local population who support the insurgency and the role of the insurgents who provide a unified organizational structure through which a variety of different communities can pursue their interests. In addition, one must consider the political context in which the waves of insurgency take occur. In this respect McAdam's (1982) concept of the 'structure of political opportunities', which refers to factors that affect the ability of insurgents to launch a credible challenge to the state and the state's capacity to repress the challenge, is useful.

THE FIRST WAVE OF INSURGENCY, 1946-51

The political economy of Telengana

It is widely argued that the emergence and success of first wave of insurgency can be explained in terms of grievances related to the social structure of rural society on the plains of Telengana (Alavi 1965; Sundarayya 1972; Pavier 1974; Thirumali 1992).³ At independence the *Nizam*, who ruled under British suzerainty, personally owned five million acres and was reckoned to be the world's richest man (Smith 1950). The

³ Telengana region consists of the Telugu-speaking districts of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad, which joined the Indian Union in September 1948. Telengana is now part of Andhra Pradesh.

main pillar of the *Nizam*'s rule in the countryside was 1,100 *Nawabs*, *Jagirdars* and *Deshmukhs* (large landowners), who privately administered a patchwork of *pargana* (fiefdoms), which ranged in size from 2,000 to 160,000 acres (Pavier 1974; Sundarayya 1972). This ruling elite constituted, according to Alavi (1965: 268) 'a backward, oppressive, and ruthless aristocracy'.⁴

The rural lower classes in Telengana had a number of grievances against the ruling elite, some of which only affected some classes and others that transcended class (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012; Alavi 1965; Sundarayya 1972; Pavier 1974; Thirumali 1992). While large swathes of land were concentrated in the hands of a few, a large number of people had no land. By the late 1930s over one-third of the rural population in Telengana were landless (Pavier 1974). The Tenancy Act of 1945 made the problem worse because landlords evicted sharecroppers on a large scale to prevent them from claiming ownership rights. Indebtedness was widespread, landlords and their agents were the main source of credit, and *bhagela* (bonded labor) were commonplace. Caste abuse and *vetti* (corvée) were also widespread. Discontent increased as result of a grain levy imposed during the Second World War, which required cultivators to pay more than half of their harvest or wages to the state. This grievance was compounded by the fact that the ruling elite conspired to avoid paying the levy and often sold their grain on the black market for inflated prices (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). Moreover, there was a strong nationalist dimension to rural discontent. Hindu Telengana was ruled by the *Nizam*'s overwhelmingly (although not exclusively) Muslim, Urdu-speaking autocracy. With the independence of India in sight, the future of Hyderabad State and its place in the Indian Union became a dominant political issue. This crystallized when the *Nizam* refused to join the Indian Union, despite the fact the majority of the population wanted to do so (Alavi 1965).

The social structure was markedly different in the forested, rugged terrain on the northern borders of Telengana, which were inhabited by adivasis or tribals.

⁴ It should be noted, however, that while many observers stress the feudal nature of Telengana, the northern portion of Hyderabad, by the 1940s, capitalist enterprise – most notably in the form of cash crop cultivation – had become more profitable for the ruling elite than feudal exactions (Pavier 1974).

Historically these areas were what Scott (2009) refers to as ‘zones of refuge’. That is, areas where the relatively inaccessible terrain allowed a variety of peoples to avoid incorporation into state-making projects. Adivasis maintained a symbiotic relationship with both nature and the outside world (Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). They practiced low technology agriculture to meet their subsistence needs and collected forest produce for personal use and to trade with outsiders. While the rulers of states on the plains may have coveted the peoples and natural resources in adivasi areas, they did not have the material force to incorporate and assimilate adivasis or to enforce the regular collection of revenue. As a result, interference by the state and other outsiders in these areas was minimal, revenue extraction underdeveloped, and socioeconomic differentiation limited (ibid).

This changed with the arrival of the British colonial state, which set out to systematically control and exploit the subcontinent’s natural resources and therefore restricted adivasis’ access to the forests and attempted to force them to take up settled agriculture (Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). As the forests had great material and ritual importance in their lives, these developments were generally detrimental to adivasis’ wellbeing. They also dramatically increased the infrastructural power of the state in these areas, which undermined the relative political autonomy hitherto enjoyed by many tribal communities. An appendix in the 1941 *Hyderabad Census* lucidly describes the rapid transformation of adivasi society occurring at the time.

aboriginals... are everywhere losing ground; their land is taken up by more advanced and affluent populations, the use of forests restricted by the laws of Government and their simplicity exploited by merchants and money-lenders (Führer-Haimendorf 1941: LI-LII).⁵

The reservation of forests, which began in Hyderabad in 1900 and was upheld by forest guards, prevented shifting cultivation and severely restricted the collection of forest produce. More generally laws operated ‘frequently against, but rarely in

⁵ While Führer-Haimendorf betrays a romanticism about tribal societies, the main gist of his argument – that adivasi communities were, on the whole, adversely affected by the nature of increasing interaction with the colonial state and economy – is valid.

protection, of their [the adivasis'] interests' (ibid: XXXVIII). Non-tribal immigrants from the plains were able to take over land cultivated by adivasis because, although adivasis had cultivated it for generations, they did not have *patta* (legal) ownership. The state encouraged this process because non-tribal cultivators contribute more revenue. Those adivasis who had been granted *patta* often lost it through dealings with non-tribal merchants and moneylenders. In this way tribals were reduced from 'free hill men' to the 'wretched position of landless laborers' and in many cases 'serfs' (ibid: LI, XVI). This process resulted in profound animosity among adivasis towards the state, its agents and other non-tribal immigrants. Before the arrival of the CPI cadre in the late 1940s, adivasi discontent in Telengana took the form of relatively localized and short lived tribal rebellions (Raghavaiah 1971).

Communist Party of India

Since before independence different factions within the CPI had quarreled over how to best apply Marxism to, and achieve Marxist goals in, the overwhelmingly rural Indian context (see Overstreet and Windmiller 1959). Immediately after independence, at the same time insurgency was raging in Telengana, the CPI Central Committee committed itself to parliamentary politics. This changed at the 1948 CPI Congress when they endorsed a Zhdanovist strategy of strikes and urban violence that envisaged an urban vanguard directing the imminent revolution. In response, the state effectively suppressed the CPI in many areas, banning the party and forcing its leaders underground. Thus, even in its infancy, it is apparent that the Indian state had the capacity to repress challenges in areas where the structure of political opportunities was not overwhelmingly favorable to radical dissidents.

At first, the Telengana cadres were a regional dissident group within the CPI. The origins of the Maoist faction that led the insurgency in Telengana can be found in the *Andhra Mahasabha*, a non-violent, Indian National Congress affiliated movement founded in 1928 to campaign for the cultural and social development of Telengana people against the domination of the Urdu-speaking Muslim elite (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The *Andhra Mahasabha* grew into a common front for anti-*Nizam* sentiment and was infiltrated by CPI cadre, who generally came from landowning, dominant caste backgrounds (Harrison 1956). In the mid 1940s the CPI cadre began to set up *sanghams* (committees) that allowed the local population to

voice grievances and assert claims around issues such as forced labor, debt bondage and the grain levy (Sundarayya 1972). The *sangham* attempted to destroy the privileges of the Nizam's ruling elite: taxes, levies, debts and corvée were abolished, a minimum wage was instituted and some land was redistributed. Although it should be noted that property belonging Telugu landowners and capitalist cultivators, who formed a crucial part of anti-*Nizam* 'United Front', was generally not affected by these reforms (Pavier 1974; Thirumali 1992). There was no conscious decision on the part of the cadre to start an armed movement. Rather, the insurgents ordered *sangham* members to train *dalams* (armed guerrilla squads) in response to violence attacks by the forces of the Nizam and his ruling elite (Sundarayya 1972; Gupta 1964). This marked the beginning of the first wave of insurgent activity.

In the summer of 1948 the Andhra Provincial Committee of the CPI, which was coordinating the Telengana insurgency, challenged the Zhdanovist line with the Maoist 'Andhra Thesis'. This was the first statement of Maoist strategy in India:

Our revolution, in many respects, differs with the classical Russian Revolution; but to a great extent similar to that of Chinese Revolution. The perspective is likely not that of general strike and armed uprising leading to the liberation of the rural side, but the dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of agrarian revolution, culminating in the capture of political power (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012).

But it was not until the Andhra Communists gained control of the CPI Central Committee in 1950 that the national party leadership backed the Maoist line. Even then, the national CPI organization remained deeply divided over the question of armed struggle and, consequently, did not give the Telengana insurgents a great deal of support.

Despite mass discontent and a capable insurgent organization, the increase in insurgent activity can only be understood in the context of a marked shift in the structure of political opportunities. The nascent insurgency received a huge boost in June 1947 when the *Nizam* announced that Hyderabad would not join the Indian Union. This went against the wishes of the vast majority of his subjects, including the Telegus, who were discontented with the dominance of the Nizam's Urdu speaking Muslim elite in Telengana (Alavi 1965). It led to widespread manufacturing strikes,

armed border raids by State Congressmen and Socialists, student protests, and an economic blockade imposed by the Indian Union, all of which contributed to the emasculation of the *Nizam*'s administration. In many rural areas of Telengana the CPI was the only political organization fighting against the *Nizam* and the vast majority of pro-Indian forces had little choice but support them as part of a 'united front' (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). As the strength of the movement grew the rural elite and their agents fled rural Telengana and the 'infrastructural power' of the state – the ability to penetrate society and realize its objectives (Mann 1984) – collapsed. This allowed the *sanghams* to fill the administrative void and enact radical reforms, including significant land distribution. At the height of the movement in summer 1948 *sanghams* were functioning as *Gram Raj* (village governments) in between two and 3,000 villages (Sundarayya 1972; Thirumali 1992). Sundarayya (1972) claims at the movement's peak *dalamas* (armed guerrilla squads) had 10,000 part-time and more than 2,000 full-time members. As such, the Telengana movement was 'one of the largest armed peasant uprisings in the history of modern India' (Gupta 1984: 1).

The fall of the Nizam

In September 1948 the Indian Army invaded Hyderabad and within a week the *Nizam* was defeated. Hyderabad joined the Indian Union and a Military Governor was appointed to take charge of the state. This marked another dramatic change in the structure of political opportunities and had two important consequences.

First, the insurgents' support base was markedly narrowed. The insurgents had alienated Telugu landowners when, under instructions from the CPI General Secretary in early 1948, they drastically reduced the maximum landholding in *sangham* villages (Pavier 1974). The new regime in Hyderabad abolished the *Nizam*'s feudal autocracy, which satisfied Telugu landowners and enacted a tenancy act that granted capitalist peasants with security of tenure and the right to purchase their land. Nevertheless, the army returned land distributed during the insurgency to its former owners and re-established many aspects of the pre-*sangham* administrative apparatus. Thus, while the lower orders of rural Telengana continued to support the insurgent movement, Telugu rich peasants and landowners switched their support to the Congress (Gupta 1984). In fact, many erstwhile pro-*sangham* villages they helped Indian forces to

identify communist sympathizers, exposed their hiding places and testified against them in court (Sundarayya 1972; Thirumali 1992).

Second, the Indian state had a far greater capacity for repression than the Nizam's forces. In late 1948 and early 1949 the state undertook a massive counterinsurgency offensive. The army established military camps throughout Telengana, from where they surrounded and attacked *sangham*-controlled villages (Gupta 1984). This decimated the insurgent movement and over 2,000 CPI members and their supporters were killed and 10,000 were arrested (Pavier 1981; Sundarayya 1972). It has often been claimed that this marked the end of the movement on the plains (Pavier 1981; Gupta 1984) – although Purushotham argues that this assertion is not wholly supported by the archival evidence (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012).

After this profound change in the structure of political opportunities, the insurgents were unable to maintain a significant force on the plains. The guerilla squads fled to the rugged terrain inhabited by adivasis on the northern state border and from the end of 1949, the vast majority of insurgent activity was limited to these areas (Sundarayya 1972; Pavier 1974; Gupta 1982). It is usually assumed that communists mobilized the adivasis to take part in armed insurrection against the state, but such claims overlook the fact that various tribal communities were independently undertaking armed resistance against the state in the 1940s. As Purushotham points out, in 1940 Komaram Bhimu led a revolt amongst the Gondi communities against the Nizam's government and attempted to establish a '*Gond Raj*' and in January 1948 – that is before the arrival of the CPI cadre in the area – Gondi communities took up arms against the Nizam's forces and established '*Panchayati Raj*' (local rule) in almost fifty villages (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012).

The CPI cadre provided disparate groups of aggrieved adivasis with a unified organizational structure, which channeled previously discrete tribal rebellions into a common insurgency. The insurgents provided the local population with collective incentives that addressed their primary grievances. They chased away Forest Department Officials, allowing tribals to cultivate reserved land and collect forest produce. The insurgents forced employers to pay fair wages, which increased wages by three to four times, and negotiated higher prices with traders for forest products

(Sundarayya 1972; Gupta 1984). What is more, the CPI also pledged support increased political autonomy for their tribal supporters (Sundarayya 1972). As a result adivasis provided the cadre with mass support (ibid). Approximately fifty guerrilla squads were formed among the tribal – specifically Gond – communities, consisting of about 1,000 fighters, about 200 of which were recruited into the CPI (Sundarayya 1972; Pavier 1981). In 1950 the Chief Secretary to the Government of Hyderabad stated that tribal communities were ‘the backbone of the Communist organisation’ (quoted in Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). Presciently, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau saw the potential strength of alliance between the tribal population hill and forest areas of northern Telengana and what is now southern Chhattisgarh and Orissa. In 1951 he warned that, if the communists succeeded in setting up base areas in this area, it ‘will be difficult to dislodge them’ (ibid).

Why did the movement fail?

These communities paid a heavy price for supporting the insurgents. The Indian army adopted the Briggs Plan, which forcibly moved tribal communities from their villages in the forests into camps that were supervised by the state, in order to deprive the guerrillas of their support base (Gupta 1984). Conditions in the camps were often terrible and it is estimated more than 10,000 inhabitants died of diseases (Sundarayya 1972; Gupta 1984). The state also founded civilian militia into which local people were forcibly recruited and false ‘encounters’ – the extra-judicial killing of suspected insurgents or supporters – became a key pillar of the government’s counterinsurgency strategy (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). This was not, however, the reason why the insurgent activity ended in 1951. The state’s counterinsurgency severely restricted the ability of the insurgents to operate, but it did not defeat it.

Rather, it was a change in the CPI leadership’s strategy that brought about end of the first wave of insurgency. Many CPI leaders were keen to take part in India’s first general elections in 1952 and this strategy was endorsed by Stalin and the Soviet leadership during a visit by a CPI contingent to Moscow in early 1951 (Overstreet and Miller 1959; Gupta 1984). In mid-October 1951 the CPI unilaterally called off the armed struggle in Telengana. The state did not adequately tackle the causes of various micro level grievances, setting the stage for the return of insurgency to Telengana. Indeed, popular support for the communists was evident in the 1952 elections, which

saw the CPI-led Peoples' Democratic Front win most seats in Telengana with overwhelming majorities (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012).

THE SECOND WAVE OF INSURGENCY, 1967-71

The situation in rural West Bengal

Previous studies of the second wave of insurgency have concentrated on the political economy of West Bengal and specifically the conflict between *jotedars* (non-cultivating landholders) and *bargadars* (sharecroppers) and, to a lesser extent, agricultural laborers (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). The existence of sharecroppers was precarious; in a situation of increasing competition for agricultural land their tenure was insecure and the share of produce they had to give to the *jotedars* was not stipulated. Moreover, *jotedars* tended to combine landholding with grain dealing and moneylending, which gave them enormous power over cultivators. The conflictual relationship between *jotedars* and rural cultivators manifested in violent conflict in the second half of 1940s in what it referred to as the *Tebhaga* (three parts) movement (Majumdar 1993; Bandyopadhyaya 2001). While the *Tebhaga* movement was at first spontaneous, the Communist Party of India-dominated *Bengal Kisan Sabha* encouraged it. The police responded to the movement with violent repression and it was abandoned by the CPI leadership in the late 1940s.

In the 1950s the state government passed land reforms with the intention of giving sharecroppers more security, increasing their share of harvest to two-thirds and placing a ceiling of 25 acres on landholdings. In practice, however, these reforms had little impact because *jotedars* retained their dominance over both state and village level politics (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). The inability of the state to enforce these land reform laws demonstrates its lack of infrastructural power in caste dominated rural India.

Towards Naxalbari

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s there were debates within the CPI between a dominant group who advocated a peaceful transition to socialism combined with selective support for Congress policies and factions that proposed a more radical line. This discord came to an impasse in the 1960s as a result of the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-Indian border clashes. In 1964 a pro-Chinese (although not unequivocally

Maoist) faction broke off to form the CPI (Marxist). From the outset the CPI (Marxist) discouraged militancy, which led to dissidence among the more radical elements of the new party. In the mid-1960s Charu Mazumdar, a district level CPI (Marxist) organizer who would become the charismatic leader of the second wave, began propagating a Maoist line among sharecroppers and agricultural laborers in the Naxalbari area of northern West Bengal (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008).

The late 1960s was a period of political upheaval in India generally and West Bengal in particular. Nehru died in 1964 and his replacement, Lal Bahadur Shastri, died 18 months later. In the run up to the 1967 elections the new Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to deal with food scarcities, insurgencies in the north east, discontent in Tamil Nadu and an acute foreign exchange crisis, and open wounds from wars fought with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965). Economic changes and the deepening of democratic political participation helped to undermine vertical ties of clientelism that had been the foundation of both colonial rule and Congress hegemony (Kohli 2009). This allowed new parties to enter the political arena and, while the Congress won the 1967 elections, it was defeated in West Bengal, as well as Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. In West Bengal, the CPI (Marxist), as part of the United Front coalition of centrist and leftist parties, formed West Bengal's first non-Congress government, in which CPI (Marxist) politicians held the Home and Land Revenue portfolios. This precipitated a period of intra-elite struggle for state power that lasted for the next decade until the Left Front won power in 1977.⁶

This brought intra-CPI (Marxist) conflict to a head; the Central Committee claimed they were using the government as 'an instrument of peoples' struggle', but the Maoist faction led by Charu Mazumdar accused them of indirectly strengthening the

⁶ The United Front government lasted from February to November 1967, when it was replaced by a short-lived minority Government and then, in early 1968, President's Rule (when a centrally appointed official rules the state). The United Front returned to Government after elections in 1969, but the coalition disintegrated. In spite of the CPI (Marxist) emerging as the largest party in the 1971 elections, they did not form a government and President's Rule was again declared in June 1971.

state system (Mohanty 1977: 141). The first insurgent activity was reported in Naxalbari on the same day in March 1967 that the United Front was sworn into office (Ray 2002). The timing was motivated by the Maoist faction's desire to distinguish itself from the mainstream CPI (Marxist) and demonstrates the relative autonomy of insurgent actions from micro level grievances. Over the next few months the Naxalbari cadre occupied lands, harvested crops, burnt land records, cancelled debts and passed death sentences on oppressive landlords. By May 1967, the high point of the movement in Naxalbari, the rebels claimed to control 300 square miles, although the police reports suggest it was not more than seventy (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). At first the United Front government reacted with moderation and CPI (Marxist) leaders attempted to negotiate with the insurgents. But the CPI (Marxist) were under pressure from the centre and in July 1967 police operations commenced and the insurgency was quickly defeated (Ray 2002).⁷

Beyond Naxalbari

Although the insurgency was crushed in Naxalbari it continued elsewhere. In November 1967 an All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) was formed to bring together supporters of the Naxalbari model of revolution. The AICCCR formally became the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) on Mayday 1969, which coincided with the United Front coalition's return to government after a period of President's Rule. Between 1967 and 1971 insurgent activity continued to occur in West Bengal (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). But as the insurgents came under increasing pressure from the state, their activities moved away from the original strategy of a rural-based movement driven by mass support from sharecroppers and agrarian laborers.

The insurgents were generally unsuccessful at generating mass support and building base areas in the countryside. This was in part due to the success of the CPI (Marxist) in persuading large portions of the rural lower classes – particularly sharecroppers – that they were the best representatives of their interests and that these would be most

⁷ It should be noted that the insurgency is classified as a law and order issue, and is, therefore, the responsibility of state governments rather than the centre (see Miklian 2011).

effectively pursued through parliamentary politics. The CPI (Marxist) dramatically increased their support base over the period of the insurgency: they won 43 out of 280 seats and 2,293,026 votes in the 1967 state elections, 80 seats and 2,676,981 in 1969 – making them the largest political party in West Bengal – and 113 seats and 4,241,557 votes in 1971 (Election Commission of India N.d.). The CPI (Marxist-Leninist), moreover, committed multiple strategic errors. Mazumdar was optimistically believed the insurgency would transform spontaneously into a mass movement – citing Mao’s aphorism that a single spark could set a whole prairie ablaze – and predicted that the Naxalites would seize state power by 1975 (Banerjee 2008). Thus, Mazumdar failed to take into account Mao’s most basic points regarding guerrilla warfare, the importance of mobilization of a mass support base through the provision of collective incentives and the suitability of terrain for undertaking guerrilla warfare. The insurgents’ inability to generate mass support and build base areas had several consequences.

First, the insurgents’ altered their strategy. Between 1965 and 1968 Mazumdar attached some importance to non-violent activities that focused on the politicization of the local population in base areas; in 1969 the annihilation of class enemies was recognized as the ‘higher form of class struggle’, implying there were other ways; but throughout 1970 and the first half of 1971 the leadership emphasized annihilation as their only goal and one that could ‘solve all our problems’ (quoted in Banerjee 2008:289). The idea was that by killing selected class enemies the rest would flee, liquidating their economic, social and political power, and therefore leading to the establishment of guerrilla bases (Mazumdar 1970a). But in the absence of mass front organizations to provide collective incentives and mobilize political awareness, local populations on the whole failed to respond to annihilations. To compound these problems, the ‘annihilation line’ was a bone of contention amongst CPI (Marxist-Leninist) cadre and leaders, and contributed to the disintegration of the movement (Mohanty 1977; Ray 2002; Banerjee 2008).

Second, the urban middle classes, in particular students, played an increasingly important role in the insurgency (ibid). From 1969 onwards Mazumdar, drawing inspiration from the Chinese Cultural Revolution, encouraged students ‘to plunge yourselves into the revolutionary struggle here and now instead of wasting your

energy in passing examinations' (Mazumdar 1970b: 87-88). Many students went to join the movement in the countryside, becoming the primary support base of the insurgents (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). As a result, the insurgent organization became unbalanced and over-reliant on those who were referred to by their rivals as 'middle class romantics' (Ray 2002: 4).

Third, in the face of increased state repression in rural areas the student cadre returned to Calcutta and other towns in West Bengal and from spring 1970 onwards insurgents and their activities were concentrated in urban centers (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). Here, they enjoyed some extent of popular support due to public resentment towards the police. Fourth, in the cities, insurgents moved away from targeting class enemies. Between March 1970 and mid-June 1971 class enemies, such as businessmen, moneylenders and landlords accounted for only 12% of the insurgents' victims in Calcutta (Rudra 1971). Tensions between CPI (Marxist) and CPI (Marxist-Leninist) rose in the build up to the 1971 elections. Guerilla squads were increasingly used to attack political rivals and it is estimated that they accounted for 37% of victims in this period. This discredited the insurgents, especially among its middle class support base, and indirectly strengthened the position of the Congress Party.

The end of the insurgency in West Bengal

The structure of political opportunities shifted in favor of the counterinsurgents. Indira Gandhi's and her Congress faction's general election victory in 1971 marked a temporary end to political upheaval at the center. Specifically, Indira Gandhi's socialist rhetoric, based on the slogan of *Garibi Hatao* (Eradicate Poverty), allowed her to attract a great deal of support from India's poor – although not so much in West Bengal, where the center gained control of state politics by the re-imposition of President's Rule. Victory in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 bolstered popular support for the central government, and as a result of the China's support for Pakistan, the Maoist insurgents – who had declared that 'China's chairman is our chairman' – were popularly discredited.

From mid-1970 police and military in West Bengal were empowered by a series of laws – some legislation from the colonial period, others specially enacted to deal with the insurgents. As the Ministry of Home Affairs (1971: 33) puts it

In West Bengal a sustained drive was launched against extremists and other antisocial elements operating in league with them. The State Government took recourse to the West Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act, 1932 and also notified certain offences under the Indian Penal Code as cognizable and non-bailable in exercise of powers vested in the State Government under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1932. Two Acts, the West Bengal (Prevention of Violent Activities) Act, 1970 and the West Bengal B (Maintenance of Public Order) Act 1970 were enacted as President's Acts at the request of the State Government in order to strengthen the hand of the state administration.

Central Government increased the amount of troops, equipment and coordination to the West Bengal state, providing them with 'all reasonable assistance' (ibid).

Areas of Calcutta were cordoned off and searched house by house. The West Bengal police divided the urban insurgents into three categories. 'Non-committed' Naxalite students were co-opted with promises of protection from the police and jobs (Banerjee 2008). They were even encouraged to join Indira Gandhi's Congress party. Criminal or 'lumpen' elements were given a monthly salary of 150 rupees to join 'home guards' that helped security forces identify other Naxalites. And those students who were thought to be ideologically committed were shot or held indefinitely in custody. This was a remarkably successful strategy. By the beginning of 1972 the support base of the movement was destroyed and almost all top leaders were either dead or in prison. In July 1972 Charu Mazumdar died in police custody. The CPI (Marxist-Leninist) fragmented into numerous groups, and with the exception of northern Telengana, this marked the end of the second wave.

Beyond West Bengal

Insurgent activity affected several other states, including Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. But it was most intense and widespread in Andhra Pradesh, where two cases require our consideration.

Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, has a large tribal population (referred to colloquially as girijans), who faced similar problems to adivasis in northern Telengana as described

above (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). In 1959 Vempatapu Satyanarayana, a non-*adivasi* communist schoolteacher, set up the *Girijan Sangham*, which affiliated with the CPI (Marxist) after the 1964 schism. Initially the *Girijan Sangham* sought to work within the confines of the law. After the murder of two *adivasis* by the agents of moneylender-merchants in October 1967, the *Girijan Sangham* began to organize armed guerrilla squads (*dalams*). But it was not until October 1968, at a meeting with members of the AICCCR including Mazumdar, that the *Girijan Sangham* decided to follow the Naxalbari model. The first guerrilla action came the following month and by the end of 1969 the insurgents claimed to control nearly 300 villages covering between 700 and 800 square miles (ibid).

The Srikakulam insurgents came under enormous pressure from the state; police action began in early 1969 and was intensified by the addition of central paramilitary forces in summer 1970. Although the terrain where the insurgency took place was hilly and wooded, compared to the vast and densely forested border regions of Telengana, Srikakulam was limited in size and in close proximity to the plains. It was therefore relatively straightforward for the state to conduct the counterinsurgency. Villages were surrounded, often burned to the ground, and inhabitants were moved to newly constructed villages outside the forest (Rangaswamy 1974). Satyanarayana died in an alleged fake ‘encounter’ in July 1970, and several other important leaders were killed or detained in the following months (Mohanty 1977). By the end of 1970 the movement had been defeated in Srikakulam, and moneylenders and traders returned to renew their activities (Banerjee 2008).

In the summer of 1968, another group of dissidents that had recently been expelled from the Andhra Pradesh CPI (Marxist) – including 4 out of 9 members of the Andhra state secretariat – declared that they would launch an insurgency (Mohanty 1977). A significant proportion of this group had been involved in the first wave, including T Nagi Reddy, Chandra Pulla Reddy and DV Rao, an author of the 1948 Andhra Thesis. Their strategy eschewed the Naxalbari model of revolution and, instead advocated a more patient approach that would first allow the insurgents to build a support base among the agrarian lower classes. The Revolutionary Communist Committee of Andhra Pradesh (RCC) was disaffiliated from the AICCCR in February 1969 – although they two maintained fraternal relations (Mohanty 1977).

The insurgency was to take place in the hilly, forested border regions of Telengana that had been the most enduring site of insurgent activity in the 1940s and 1950s. The cadre once more found strong support among the adivasis, as well as terrain conducive to guerrilla warfare. By mid-1970 the RCC claimed to have ‘liberated’ an area of between 7,000 and 8,000 square miles that was inhabited by over half a million people (Banerjee 2008). The RCC leadership was arrested in 1970. From this point, a schism developed between those who supported the erstwhile leaders’ patient approach and those who favored the new leaders’ aggressive line, although both groups continued to be referred to as the RCC. In March 1971 the Government of India sent 10,000 paramilitaries into the area. As in Srikakulam the local population was removed from their villages and placed in roadside camps (ibid). The state’s counterinsurgency did damage the organizational capacity of the insurgents in northern Telengana but, as in the first wave, it failed to defeat the insurgents. In 1974, when the wave of insurgency inaugurated at Naxalbari was long defeated elsewhere in India, armed squads still operated in Telengana (ibid).⁸ It seems apparent, therefore, that despite being a footnote in most accounts of the second wave, the insurgency in northern Telengana was the most widespread and durable.

Why did the insurgency fail?

Unlike in the first and third waves, second wave insurgents – at least those affiliated to the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) fought the state until they were all but destroyed. Thus, the state’s extensive and violent measures of repression are usually presented as the reason for the defeat of the second wave (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008; Oetken 2009). But when considered in comparative perspective it is apparent that this alone is an inadequate explanation because many insurgencies – including both the first and third waves – were far more effective at resisting determined efforts to defeat them. Our analysis indicates that the insurgents’ strategic mistakes coupled with the success of their legal rivals, the CPI (Marxist), meant that they were unable to build either mass support or base areas. As a result they veered away from the Maoist idea of a mass supported rural insurgency, and instead became a top-heavy urban movement.

⁸ Although there was no mention of ‘Left Wing Extremism’ in the Ministry of Home Affairs’ *Annual Report* from 1973 until the early 1980s.

When the structure of political opportunities in favor of the state, the insurgents were unable to effectively resist the counterinsurgency.

THE THIRD WAVE OF INSURGENCY, 1980-PRESENT DATE

Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal in the 1980s

After the Emergency (1975-77), most insurgents were released from jail and some attempted to revive the armed struggle. At the beginning of the 1980s the insurgents were seen as a spent force. An article in *Times of India* (1980a: 7) in 1980 commented that the Maoist insurgent movement 'has split into ineffectual groups in every state where it was once a force to reckon with'. Another journalist referred to the insurgents as the 'backwater left' (Abraham 1980: 8). But by the end of the year the same newspaper noted that 'during the last few months there have been a rash of reports about Naxalites' (Vohra 1980: 8). The Ministry of Home Affairs' 1980 to 1981 *Annual Report* was the first in eight years to mention 'Left Wing Extremism', although for the next decade this only amounted to one paragraph.

In the first two waves, insurgent activity was heavily concentrated in two states, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. The third wave of insurgent activity began once again in these two states, as well as Bihar, in the early 1980s. But while it steadily increased in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar throughout the decade, it tailed off in West Bengal (Ministry of Home Affairs 2010). At first, the insurgents were splintered into dozens of groups but the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG) emerged as the largest and most active insurgent organizations, with bases in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh respectively.

In 1980 Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, a veteran of the Telengana movement in the first wave and a follower of Mazumdar during the second, founded the Peoples War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh. The PWG discarded the annihilation line and instead stressed the importance of organizational consolidation and the provision of collective benefits to rural lower classes. PWG cadre operated in the densely forested border regions of Telengana where, as in the previous two waves, they availed of terrain suitable to guerrilla warfare and a strong support base among the tribal communities whose grievances had not been addressed by the state.

The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), the most prominent insurgent organization in Bihar, can trace its heritage to the hilly, forested areas on the Bengal-Bihar state border, which provided rugged terrain and willing adivasi supporters. The MCC grew out of *Dakshin Desh*,⁹ an insurgent movement formed in 1969 by opponents of Mazumdar's annihilation line who preferred a more patient strategy. Both Andhra Pradesh and Bihar state governments failed to take measures – such as land reforms – to check the dominant position of higher caste landowners on the plains, and the insurgents expanded there from the sanctuary of the hills, where they found support among lower caste cultivators (Bhatia 2005; Balagopal 2006b; Kunnath 2009).

What explains the failure of the insurgents to expand their activities in West Bengal? The CPI (Marxist)-led Left Front won the first post-Emergency elections in West Bengal in 1977 and remained in government for the next three decades. While land reforms have generally made little headway in most of India, West Bengal is an exception. Tenancy reform gave sharecroppers security of tenure and guaranteed an improved share of crops. Unlike other states in India, where putative reforms were not enforced, the Left Front's reforms fundamentally changed the relationship between the sharecropper and the *jotedar* to the benefit of the former (Kohli 1987; Hansted and Nielson 2004). The legislation was accompanied by a massive campaign to register sharecroppers and to educate them of their rights, which had reached 1.5 million sharecroppers by 2003 (Hansted and Nielson 2004). It has been noted that the Left Front's attempts at improving the situation of landless laborers were far less successful (Mallick 1994). Moreover, the local level party apparatus has been an instrument of both patronage and coercion that is, to some extent, responsible for the electoral success of the Left Front (ibid). Nevertheless, land reforms and other measures did go a long way toward placating sharecroppers, who were hitherto the most revolutionary segment of rural Bengal. The remarkable success of the CPM strategy is apparent in the fact they ruled West Bengal uninterrupted from 1977 until their electoral defeat to the Trinamool Congress in May 2011.

Expansion into central India and the rise of the CPI (Maoist)

⁹ *Dakshin Desh* means southern land, referring to India's geographical position in relation to China.

From the early 1980s onwards, but increasing in pace in the 2000s, the insurgency spread from Andhra Pradesh and Bihar to contiguous areas – especially the central tribal belt in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and what became Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand in 2001. Broadly speaking these areas are notable for their rugged terrain and high proportion of adivasis (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2006; Guha 2007a). Insurgent activity has recently returned in earnest to West Bengal, but it is concentrated in the hilly, forested areas bordering Orissa and Jharkhand that are largely inhabited by tribal communities. Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 illustrate how insurgent activity has expanded throughout the period 1982 to 2011.

Figure 3.1: Maoist affected areas, 1982-1991

Figure 2: Maoist affected areas, 1992-2001

Figure 3: Maoist affected areas, 2002-2011

Figure 4: Fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents, 1980-2011

Figure 3.4: Fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents, 1982-2011

We have shown that in the first two waves insurgent activity began in situations where there was micro level discontent, macro level cadre *and* a favorable structure of political opportunities. In both cases the latter was due to exceptional circumstances that temporarily limited the state's ability to repress the insurgents. In the case of the first wave it was caused by a collapse of the state's infrastructural power that occurred when the *Nizam* refused to join the Indian Union after independence in 1947. In the second wave it was caused by a combination of factors, most notably the intra-elite struggle for state power that followed the defeat of Congress in West Bengal in the 1967 general election. When these crises were over, and the structure of political opportunities shifted back towards the status quo ante, the insurgents found it very difficult to conduct operations in anywhere but the mountainous, hilly areas inhabited by adivasis, where the state's infrastructural power remained limited. The third wave in insurgency has not, however, been accompanied by the same dramatic shifts in the structure of political opportunities as the first and the second waves. Rather, it has increased at a time that state's ability to project its power has expanded dramatically in rural areas (Chatterjee 2008; Kohli 2009).

There are two main reasons for this. First, the insurgents are far better organized than they had previously been. Insurgent activity was given a fillip when in 2004 the PWG and MCC merged to form the CPI (Maoist). This was the first time for 35 years that the vast majority of insurgent activity was pursued by a single group. When they were separate groups the PWG and MCC spent a fair amount of energy fighting each other for control of the various areas in which they operated. For example, at the turn of the millennium *The Times of India* reported that there was a ‘full-scale war’ between PWG and MCC in central Bihar (Chaudhary 1999). Second, compared to previous avatars, the CPI (Maoist) is far more specialized as an insurgent organization. It does not have a relationship to mainstream communist parties in the same way that the Telengana cadre was a dissident faction of the CPI and the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) began as a splinter group of the CPI (Marxist), which itself has only split from the CPI three years before the second wave of insurgency began in Naxalbari.¹⁰ Indeed, the national secretary of the CPI recently dismissed the CPI (Maoist) as a ‘disorder’ and compared its leaders to Bakunin in the day of Marx and Engels, or the Left SRs (Socialist-Revolutionary Party) and *Narodniks* who challenged Lenin (Raja 2008: 1). What is more, the CPI (Maoist) uses increasingly sophisticated training, tactics and weaponry. As the Ministry of Home Affairs (2009: 16) points out, ‘the coming together of the major groups under a single banner has been accompanied by growing militarization in their organisation and tactics, thus creating a formidable threat and challenge.’ Indeed, when the state increased the intensity of its counterinsurgency towards the end of 2009, the insurgents were able to hit back with a series of spectacular strikes, such as the ambush that killed 76 members of a Central Reserve Police Force patrol in Chhattisgarh in April the following year.

Second, the insurgents have taken advantage of what I refer to as spatial variance – rather than temporal variances stressed by McAdam (1982) – in the structure of

¹⁰ Although at times the CPI (Maoist) is closer to the parliamentary politics that it appears to be at first glance. For example it engaged in peace talks with the Andhra state government and recently expressed an interest in engaging in talks with the central government (Maringanti 2010; Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). And as I demonstrate in chapter 5 the insurgents have cooperated with parliamentary political parties at various points in time in various areas.

political opportunities. They have taken the conscious decision to build bases in areas ‘where the geographical conditions (mountains, hills, forests, and other favourable terrain) are more favourable for conducting the guerrilla war’ (CPI [Maoist] 2004b: 50). But spatial variation in the structure of political opportunity is not just determined by physical geography, it is also determined by political geography. In India the insurgency is seen as a ‘law and order issue’ and therefore one to be dealt with by the state police rather than the Indian army (Miklian 2011). From the 1980s onwards there has been discussions regarding the use of the army to counter the insurgents (Times of India 1987a). But this has never come to fruition. General Deepak Kapoor, erstwhile Chief of Staff, summed up the view that is prevalent among policy makers in Delhi: ‘The army’s primary responsibility is to guard the borders and maintain territorial integrity of the country. As for internal problems (like Naxalism), the army must be used only as a weapon of the last resort’ (Times of India 2008). At present the Union does provide forces, such as the Central Police Reserve Force, as well as financial assistance, to the states. But the strategy is the responsibility of individual states. Indeed, P Chidambaram, the Minister of Home Affairs, has complained that he has a ‘limited mandate’ to deal with the insurgents (Times of India 2010i). Some states have been successful at dealing with the insurgency – for example Andhra Pradesh over the past decade – but other states have been less willing or able. This has resulted in frustration in New Delhi. In 2009 Chidambaram lamented the fact that the CPI (Maoist) was not banned in West Bengal, despite being classed as a proscribed organization by the central government and all other state governments in insurgent affected areas (Times of India 2009d). And in 2010 Chidambaram complained about the unwillingness of Jharkhand’s state government to give ‘clear directions’ to the police and local administration to ‘resolutely face the challenge of naxalism’ (Mohan 2010a).

CONCLUSIONS

Analysing why the first and second waves subsided demonstrates the importance of the alliance between macro- and micro levels. The victory of the Indian Army in 1948 shifted the structure of political opportunities in favour of the state and the counterinsurgency that followed restricted the insurgents’ ability to operate, especially on the plains. Nevertheless, it was the decision of the CPI to withdraw its support of

the Telengana movement in 1951, therefore depriving the rural lower classes of support at the macro level, that ended the first wave of insurgency. This contention is supported by the fact that when revolutionaries returned to Telangana – in the form of the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in the late 1960s and then the PWG in the early 1980s – the level of discontent among the rural lower classes was such that the insurgents successfully mobilised the mass support needed to pursue guerrilla warfare.

Conversely, the insurgency in West Bengal did not fail because of lack of support at the macro level, but due to the failure to sustain a mass base at the micro level. In the face of government repression the insurgents did not mobilize a support base among rural lower classes in the areas where they operated. Rather, the parliamentary CPI (Marxist) was successful in persuading a large portion of the rural lower classes – particularly sharecroppers – that they were the best representatives of their interests and that these would be most effectively pursued through peaceful channels. During the course of the insurgency they doubled their votes in the state parliament and by 1971 they had 113 out of 280 seats. Consequently, the meso level of the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) was dominated by young, urban, university educated, upper castes (Ray 2002: 53–54). In the absence of a support base at the micro level and, therefore, a base area from which to pursue guerrilla warfare, the Naxalites were defeated with relative ease by the security forces when the structure of political opportunities shifted in the state's favor.

What is more, this analysis demonstrates that the commonly accepted 'Naxalbari-centric' narrative of Maoist insurgency in India obscures our understanding of the phenomenon and must be fundamentally rethought. The first wave of insurgent activity in Telengana was not from being a 'brief insurrectionary phase' as Banerjee (2008: 137) has argued. Rather, it lasted five years, affected a large area and provoked a massive counterinsurgency campaign from the state (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). When seen from a comparative perspective that takes into account the *longue durée* of Maoist insurgency in India, Naxalbari and the insurgency in West Bengal in the late 1960s and early 1970s looks short-lived and atypical. Many aspects of the second wave that are usually stressed – the charismatic leadership of Mazumdar, the annihilation line, the role played by middle class students, and the urbanization of the movement – distinguish it from the vast majority of Maoist insurgency in India.

Moreover, accounts of the first and second waves tend to emphasize the role of sharecroppers and agricultural laborers on the plains of Telengana and West Bengal, while that of adivasis in the forested terrain of central India is seen as a peripheral and recent phenomenon. But this chapter has demonstrated that tribal communities have played an important role in the insurgency over the past six decades.

4. The macro level: the social origins of insurgent leaders

INTRODUCTION

The CPI (Maoist) (2004a, 2004b, 2005) and its predecessors claim to represent the interests of oppressed and exploited untouchables and tribals and there is strong evidence to suggest that the insurgents benefit from mass support of these constituencies (see chapter 6 of this thesis). Nevertheless, several studies have suggested that party's leaders are, on the whole, upper caste, middle-class, middle-aged, well-educated men (Bhatia 2005; Guha 2007b). This presents an interesting puzzle. But studies of the Maoist insurgency in India – as well as insurgency more generally – have not seen the leaders of the insurgent organization as social group worthy of analysis and their social backgrounds and reasons for joining the insurgency have not been analyzed systematically or in any great depth. There are several possible reasons for this omission. With the partial exception of Charu Mazumdar in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Maoist insurgency has never had a charismatic leader to rival Lenin or Mao. Indeed, despite being the most prominent Maoist leader in India since the early 1990s, the media did not know what the CPI (Maoist)'s General Secretary, Ganapathy (real name Mupalla Laxman Rao), looked like until 2009 (Hindu 2009b). What is more, South Asian studies, heavily influenced as it is by the subaltern school, has an aversion to the analysis of political elites and instead focuses on subalterns as agents of political and social change (see Guha 1983).

This chapter concentrates on the 'macro level' of insurgency – the level of 'elites, ideologues and grand politics' (Kalyvas 2006, 10; also see Walder 2009). I seek to understand who the leaders of the contemporary Maoist insurgency in India are, as well as their motivations for taking part in the insurgency. Although I acknowledge that an insurgency cannot be reduced to its leaders, they play a crucial role in determining the legitimizing ideology, organisational structure, and the form and timing of action. Since Lenin, centralised direction by a revolutionary elite has been seen as an important part of revolution. The CPI (Maoist) (2012a: 16) has acknowledged that its strategy is strongly influenced by factors external to India, such as the 'experiences of China, Vietnam and Russia revolutions, experiences of Red Army, experiences of the world wars, the writings of military experts like Sun Tzu

and Clausewitz and the military manuals of various countries'. Indeed, the insurgents provide their supporters with a unified organizational structure and operational doctrine that distinguishes it from more short-lived and disparate forms of violent action such as the 'tribal' and 'peasant' rebellions that were common in the colonial period (Raghavaiah 1971; Desai and Eckstein 1990).

As has already been mentioned, dominant explanations of insurgency tend to stress either structural grievances or individual self-interest. The explanation of the insurgents – who identify the semi-feudal semi-colonial Indian society as the problem, and advocate armed revolution as the solution – incorporates aspects of structural accounts (see CPI [Maoist] 2004a, b and c, 2005). They present the insurgency as a manifestation of discontent among the rural lower classes who are, overwhelmingly, untouchable and tribal communities. Similarly, a wide variety of sympathetic observers explain the insurgency in terms the exploitation and oppression of untouchable and tribal communities by the state, capitalists and landlords (for example Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008; Roy 2010). In such accounts, the motivations of insurgent leaders are conflated with those of their support base and it is assumed that the insurgent leaders come from the same socioeconomic background as their support base, and therefore share a common consciousness and common interests.

Rationalist approaches understand participation in insurgent activity in terms of utility maximizing behaviour – it is the result of greed on the part of insurgent leaders (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). In such accounts the political, national or religious convictions of political entrepreneurs are understood as strategy for justifying the pursuit of personal, and often criminal, interests. This is the view put forward by the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs: newspaper adverts taken out by the Ministry in 2009 referred to the insurgents as 'nothing but cold-blooded criminals' and the Minister of Home Affairs stated that 'maybe one or two of them are ideologically motivated but most of them are simply bandits' (Times of India 2009c and 2009h). Similarly, several accounts by European based academics portray the insurgents as gangsters who, in the context of a very weak state, control the 'markets of protection' (Shah 2006) or the market for *Tendu patta* (leaves used to make traditional *beedi* cigarettes) (Suykens 2010).

An alternative theory, based on the work of Charles Tilly (1964) and Andrew Walder (2006), argues that insurgent participation should be understood in the specific political context in which actors' decisions are made, rather than in terms of unchanging social structural or rationalist assumptions. This places far more emphasis on contingent factors. It allows for the possibility that the insurgents might have joined the insurgency because Maoism appealed to them on an ideological level – rather than being a natural product of their class position or an excuse to justify the pursuit of personal interests.

This paper has four sections. The first uses insurgent documents and newspaper reports to build a picture of the social background of recent members of the CPI (Maoist) politburo, the organization's highest decision-making body. Second, I seek to identify general patterns in this data, showing that neither structural nor rational actor explanations help us understand the participation of insurgent leaders. The common feature linking the politburo members is that, on the whole, they grew up in areas where Marxist ideology has historically had a strong presence among the political elites and where there have been previous instances of Maoist insurgency. The insurgent leaders made their decisions to join insurgency in the context of severe state repression during the previous wave of insurgency. The third section uses district level, time series data to show that, even when one controls variables that accounts for structural and rationalist motivations, there is a statistically significant relationship between areas affected by Maoist insurgency in the 1960s and 70s and those that are now affected by insurgency. Finally, I use a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate that these findings are generalizable to the leaders of the second wave of insurgency.

THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST) POLITBURO

This section constructs the biographies of the CPI (Maoist)'s 16 politburo members in 2007 (Sahni and Fakir 2011). These insurgents have, broadly speaking, been the leading members of the various Maoist insurgent organizations since the beginning of the third wave in the 1980s. Methodologically, I take my inspiration from Michael Mann's (2005: 203) analysis of Nazis, in which attempts to 'throw light on the perpetrators by analysing simple, objective features of their backgrounds and careers'.

Obviously, there is only limited information about members of this clandestine insurgent organization in the public domain. Nevertheless, the arrest and killing of a significant number of the politburo in the past five years has brought to light a reasonable amount of data via Maoist journals (most notably *Peoples' March* and *Maoist Information Bulletin*) and press releases, as well as newspaper articles, which are often based on information from the police.

The main biographical details are summarized in table 4.1. In order to facilitate the identification of commonalities politburo members are clustered together according to their state of origin. Dates of birth are approximate as they are often based on ages of politburo members at a particular point in time. University is used in the broad sense to signify any tertiary educational institute including colleges and polytechnics. Some of the insurgents did not graduate from the institutions that they attended. For ease of reading caste background is divided into three groups. Upper castes include those from Brahmin (priests) and Kshatriya (warrior) communities. Dominant castes are classified as lower (but not Scheduled) castes who, by virtue of their extensive cultivable land, numerical strength, and relatively high place in the local caste hierarchy, dominate village society (see Srinivas 1959). They include, among others, Yadavs and Koiris in Bihar, and Reddys, Kammas and Velamas in Andhra Pradesh (Guha 2007b). The third group is Scheduled Castes and Tribes, which comprises India's historically disadvantaged communities, untouchables and tribals. In addition, there is one Parsi.

Table 4.1: Maoist leaders: Social background of CPI (Maoist) Politburo (2007)

Name	Date of Birth	Education/Profession	Caste
<u>Andhra Pradesh</u>			
Malla Raji Reddy	1950	High School	Dominant
Mupalla Laxman Rao	1952	University/Teacher	Dominant
Mallojula Koteswara Rao	1953	University	Upper
Cherukuri Rajkumar	1954	University	Dominant
Nambala Keshav Rao	1954	University	Unknown
Katakam Sudarshan	1956	University/Teacher	Dominant
Mallojula Venugopal Rao	1956	University	Upper
<u>West Bengal</u>			
Sushil Roy	1934	Unknown/Factory worker	Upper
Narayan Sanyal	1936	Unknown/Senior Bank officer	Upper
Prashant Bose	1937	Unknown	Upper
Amitabh Bagchi	1957	Unknown	Upper
<u>Undivided Bihar</u>			
Akhilesh Yadav	1940	Unknown/Teacher	Dominant
Pramod Mishra	1958	Unknown	Upper
Baccha Prasad Singh	1959	University	Dominant
Misir Besra	1961	University	Scheduled Tribe
<u>Maharashtra</u>			
Kobad Ghandy	1951	University	Parsi

Notes. - List of politburo members according to Sahni and Pradhan 2011.

Can we identify general patterns in the insurgent leaders' social backgrounds? The politburo members are all middle aged to elderly men. They are, on the whole, from upper or dominant castes and therefore have caste and class backgrounds that are far removed from the constituencies that they claim to represent. Out of the sixteen, there are no untouchables, and only one tribal. A large proportion were university educated or had professional careers. Only one had a job – as a factory worker – that could be deemed as working class.

In geographical terms, there are three main groupings. Seven out of sixteen politburo members are from Andhra Pradesh. They are all from the north of the state and five are from the northern Telengana region that had been the centre of insurgent activities in both the first and the second wave. All seven were born between 1950 and 1956. Four politburo members are from West Bengal – which again was another important center of left wing militancy in the first and second waves. Three of these were born

between 1936 and 1939. Four politburo members are from undivided Bihar, an area that was also heavily affected by insurgency in the second wave, and 3 of these were born between 1959 and 1961.

The rest of this section sets out the politburo's social backgrounds in more detail.

Andhra Pradesh

Cherukuri Rajkumar

Cherukuri Rajkumar (often referred to by the nom de guerre 'Azad') was from, by the standards of rural India, a privileged background. Azad was a Kamma, a dominant caste in the fertile agricultural areas of the Krishna-Godavari delta, which traditionally controlled the communist (or 'Kamma-nist') party in Andhra (Harrison 1956; Guha 2007b; Kumar 2010). Azad came from a relatively wealthy landowning family – referred to by the CPI (Maoist) (2010a: 20) as 'a rich peasant family' – in the 'mango belt' of Krishna district (also see Kumar 2010; Venugopal 2010). His father, Cherukuri Lakshmaiah Chowdary,¹ was an ex-serviceman who moved to Hyderabad to run a restaurant. Azad's siblings went on to pursue successful careers: his elder brother joined the Indian army and retired as a Colonel, whereas both of his younger brothers were doctors (CPI [Maoist] 2010a).

Azad was born in 1954. He studied chemical engineering at the well-regarded Regional Engineering College (REC) in Warangal in Northern Telengana. In the mid-1970s REC – sometimes referred to as the 'Radical Engineering College' – was a centre of radical left wing activity. Azad was part of the group of students that formed the Andhra Pradesh Radical Students Union, a legal front for the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), in 1974 and he became the Warangal district president (CPI [Maoist] 2010a). During the Emergency (1975-1977) the Radical Students Union was banned and its members experienced severe repression at the hands of the state. Several of Azad's comrades were killed in 'fake encounters' (extra judicial killings) and Azad, along with hundreds of his colleagues, spent six months in

¹ 'Chowdary' is a title that refers to the position of village heads and the authority to collect taxes.

jail (CPI [Maoist] 2010a; Azad 2010). Azad was elected state president of the Radical Students Union in 1978, while doing postgraduate studies at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam – where he had been sent by the party to spread the movement (CPI (M) 2010a). He went underground in the early 1980s as a member of the People's War Group and went on to become a key member of the Central Committee and Politburo of the CPI (Maoist), most notably as their articulate official spokesman (Azad 2010; Kumar 2010). In 2010 he was killed in an alleged fake encounter (see Singh and Reddy 2010).

Mallojula Koteswara Rao and Mallojula Venugopal Rao

Mallojula Koteswara Rao, alias Kishenji, was a member of the CPI (Maoist) politburo and leader of the party's military wing, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, until he was killed by the state in 2011. His younger brother, Mallojula Venugopal Rao, is still member of the CPI (Maoist) politburo. They came from what the CPI (Maoist] (2012c: 6) referred to as a 'middle class' Brahmin family that historically earned a living as priests in the Karimnagar district of Northern Telengana – although Kishenji notes that his parents 'never believed in caste' (quoted in Mittal 2009; Deccan Herald 2011). Their father was a teacher and a freedom fighter – meaning that he was part of the struggle against British colonial rule. He was vice-president of the state Congress party, and 'he believed in socialism, but not in armed struggle (Mittal 2009). Even before the brothers were born their father, as someone who advocated the Indian Union rather than an independent Hyderabad, experienced harassment at the hands of the Razakars, the Nizam of Hyderabad's militia, who used extreme violence in an ultimately futile attempt to retain his state's independence (Rao and Rao 2012).

Kishenji was born in 1954 in Karimnagar and Venu in 1956. Regarding his political awakening, Kishenji says 'Several things motivated me: Writer Varavara Rao, who founded the Revolutionary Writers Association, India's political atmosphere and the progressive environment in which I grew up' (quoted in Mittal 2009). At school the brothers were involved in the movement for a separate Telengana state. In 1969, during the unrest, they were involved in the burning of a government-owned bus outside their school, spent some time in jail and witnessed a police shooting in their village (Roa and Rao 2012). Kishenji went on graduate with a degree in mathematics from Sri Raja Rajeshwara College, Karimnagar, and then he moved to Hyderabad to

study law at Osmania University (ibid; *The Statesman* 2010). Kishenji became involved in revolutionary politics while at Sri Raja Rajeshwara College: in 1973 he participated in a burning of the tri-colour flag on independence day and the following year he helped launch the Radical Students Union (CPI [Maoist] 2011c and 2012a). Kishenji was arrested towards the end of the Emergency and spent three months in jail (CPI (Maoist) 2012a). He went underground in 1977 first playing a prominent role in peaceful anti-landlord activity until it was violently suppressed by the state, and then as a founder member of the PWG in 1980 (CPI [Maoist] 2011b and 2012c). Less is known of Venu, but he is said to be a graduate and went underground in 1980 (Telegraph 2010; Rao and Rao 2012).

Mupalla Laxman Rao

Less information is available about Mupalla Laxman Rao, or Ganapathy, who has been the General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist) since the merger and held a similar position in the People's War Group since 1991 (CPI [Maoist] 2009a). When he gives interviews he tends to discuss politics, ideology and strategy rather than his personal background (for example Myrdal and Navlakha 2010). He is from the Velama community, a dominant caste in Telengana (Harrison 1956). There is a saying about the Velamas in Telengana that illustrates their position in village communities: 'even if burning coals land on their thighs, they would expect their bonded labourers to remove them instead of saving themselves' (Pandita 2012: 41). Ganapathy was born in Kariminagar district, Andhra Pradesh in 1952. He graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences and a qualification in education (CPI [Maoist] 2009a), and he was involved in radical student politics. After graduating he became a teacher but left to become a full time revolutionary as one of the early members of the PWG (Ramachandran 2010).

Nambala Keshav Rao

Nambala Keshav Rao is number two in the Politburo. He was born circa 1954 and grew up in Srikakulam, in the northeastern extreme of the Krishna-Godvari basin. The hilly forest interior was heavily affected by Maoist insurgency in the 1960s and 1970s and saw severe repression from the state (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). There are no details on his caste background, but Rao appears to be from a relatively privileged family. He has a Masters degree in engineering from REC Warangal and comes from

a ‘family of government officials’ – his brothers are both mid level government officials (Janyala 2009; Ramana 2011).

Malla Raji Reddy

Malla Raji Reddy hails from Karimnagar, northern Telengana – the same district as Ganapathy, Kishenji and his brother. He is from the Reddy community, a dominant caste in the region (Harrison 1956). He was born in 1950, and although he was apparently only educated up to the age of 18, he joined the Radical Students Union in 1975 (Reddy 2007). He was arrested in 1977, went underground after his release from jail and has been part of the Maoist movement ever since.

Katakam Sudarshan

Katakam Sudarshan was born in Adilabad, northern Telengana, in 1956. He is from the Padmasali community, a Telugu weavers caste that has increased its social, economic and political power since independence and is seen as a dominant caste at the local level (Janyala 2010; Radhakrishna, 2010). He studied at the Government Polytechnic College in Warangal, where he was a student leader (Janyala 2010). After completing his studies in 1975, he spent some time working as a teacher, and then joined the People’s War Group in the late 1970s or early 1980s (CPI [Maoist] 2009b; Radhakrishna, 2010). He is currently in charge of operations in the Dandakaranaya, the hilly, forested region made up of contiguous areas of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, which has been one of the major theatres of insurgency activity over the past few decades.

West Bengal

Sushil Roy

Sushil Roy was born circa 1934 in West Bengal (Bhaumik 2006). His surname indicates that his family were positively privileged in terms of property – Roy being a title used by upper castes to indicate landownership. He was the nephew of Dinesh Gupta, a Bengali freedom fighter who was hung by the British in 1931 (Roy 2007). Roy claims that his political awakening occurred while working in a factory in the early 1960s and, in particular, during the Sino-Indian border conflict (1962) when he first came into contact with the Communist Party of India. He was given a leadership role in his union during strikes in 1963: ‘Noticing my advice and active participation

during the strike the workers elected me to the executive committee of the union' (ibid: 3). Roy supported the Chinese rather than Soviet line: he backed CPI (Marxist) when they split from the CPI in 1964 and took part in the campaign that led to the election of the first Left Front coalition – which included the CPI (Marxist) – in 1967. But, a matter of month's later, Roy's political convictions radicalized in response to the CPI (Marxist)'s approval of violent counterinsurgent action against dissidents from the CPI (Marxist), and their sharecropper and agricultural labourer support base, in Naxalbari (ibid). In 1968 he cut all his links with the parliamentary CPI and joined the insurgent movement. Roy has been an insurgent ever since, although since the early 1990 Roy has been 'doing ideological, theoretical and political work within the working class in the industrial areas of Kolkata' (ibid: 4).

Narayan Sanyal

Narayan Sanyal, who was born in 1934. He is from West Bengal and the surname Sanyal indicates that he is a Kulin Brahmin, the highest strata of Brahmins in Bengal's caste system. Sanyal's father was a doctor and he worked as a senior bank officer in Siliguri, West Bengal. In the late 1960s he quit the job and joined Charu Mazumdar's CPI (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI [Maoist] 2010b). Although I have not found any mention of Sanyal's education, he is frequently described as a 'Maoist ideologue' (for example Das 2010). He was arrested in 1973 and spent the next 5 years in jail, during which time he led several struggles for the rights of the political prisoners. Sanyal was released in 1978 and returned to the revolutionary movement. He became the Secretary of the Central Committee of CPI (Marxist-Leninist) (Party Unity) in 1987, and then a leading member of the People's War Group and CPI (Maoist) when they merged in 1998 and 2004 respectively. Sanyal was arrested at the end of 2005.

Prashant Bose

Prashant Bose, was born in Calcutta circa 1937 – within a couple of years of both Roy and Narayan. Boses are a Kayastha, whose historical role was as state record-keepers and administrators, and who are considered to be, along with Brahmins, the highest Hindu castes in Bengal (Inden 1976). Bose is known to have joined the insurgency in the late 1960s (Times of India 2010g). Until the merger in 2004 he was the General Secretary of the MCC and afterwards he became the CPI (Maoist)'s number two.

Little is known about his educational background, but he is reputed to be a ‘known intellectual’ and ‘one of the key voices of the Maoists’ (ibid).

Amitabh Bagchi

Amitabh Bagchi was born circa 1957. Little is known about his background but his surname demonstrates that he is – along with Sanyal – a Kulin Brahmin. His date of birth suggests that, unlike the other three Bengalis, he is too young to have joined the insurgency in the late 1960s. Bagchi was arrested in 2009.

Undivided Bihar

Akhilesh Yadav

Akhilesh Yadav is from Gaya, Bihar, and was born in 1940. The Yadavs are a cluster of low-to-middle-ranking pastoral-peasant castes scattered across northern and western India. They tend to own their own land, are politically well organised and in many villages constitute the dominant community (Guha 2007b). Nothing is known of Yadav’s education, but he was a teacher and joined the movement in late 1960s or early 1970s after meeting the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) leader, Kanhai Chatterjee (CPI [Maoist] 2011a). Yadav edited the insurgent’s magazine, *Lal Chingari*, until his arrest in 2011 (Singh 2011).

Baccha Prasad Singh

Baccha Prasad Singh was born in 1959 in Saran, Bihar. He belongs to the Koiri community, a caste of landowning agriculturalists common in Bihar and not dissimilar in status to Yadavs (Guha 2007b). Singh has a Bachelors of Science and was arrested in 2010 (Khan 2010).

Pramod Mishra

Pramod Mishra is from Aurangabad, Bihar and was born in 1958. There is no information on his education or profession, but Mishra is a Brahmin surname found mostly in the northern and central parts of India. Mishra joined the insurgents in the later 1970s, and was a leader of the Maoist Communist Centre from the mid 1980s until they merged with the CPI (Maoist) in 2004 (Shekhar and Vij-Aurora 2008). He was arrested in 2008.

Misir Besra

Misir Besra was born in 1961 in Giridih district, Jharkhand. Unlike the other politburo members, who come from upper or dominant castes, Besra is an adivasi or Scheduled Tribe, a historically disadvantaged group of communities that are, broadly speaking, India's indigenous peoples. More specifically he is a Santhal, a community that is famous for the Santhal *Hool* or Rebellion (1855-56) against the British and *zamindaris* (landlords), and which now provides the Maoist insurgents with a reliable support base on the borders of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal (Duyker 1987; Misra 2008). It should be noted that Besra studied for a bachelor's degree in Hindi, which indicates that he does not fit into the stereotype of the downtrodden tribal who is unable to cope in modern society (Pandita 2008). Notwithstanding, he claims to have been driven to join the insurgents as a result of the day to day humiliation faced by tribals at the hands of non-tribals, moneylenders and landlords. He describes how 'One day, I took mahua (local brewed liquor) to a shopkeeper and he refused to pay me. He asked me to run away or he would thrash me' (Pandita 2008). Another example relates to an incident when a landlord and his men came to his village and removed a jackfruit tree against the wishes of the community (Misra 2008). In the mid-1980s Besra began to attend cultural events that were organized by Maoist insurgents, then progressed on to acting as a guard at meetings, before his formal involvement with the insurgents began in 1987. He stated how carrying a weapon made him feel empowered: 'It was a feeling of great pride, when I first held the gun in the field, as a part of our army... I realised soon — as Mao had also said — that political power is born out of the barrel of a gun' (ibid).

Maharashtra

Kobad Ghandy

Perhaps the most remarkable biography of any politburo member belongs to Kobad Ghandy. Ghandy came from an affluent Parsi family, his father was a senior finance executive at Glaxo and they lived in a large house on Worli Seaface in Bombay (Bharucha 2009). He was born circa 1951 and educated at two of India's most prestigious educational institutions, the Doon School — at the same time as Sanjay Gandhi (son of Indira) — and St Xavier's College, Mumbai, and then went to the United Kingdom to train as an accountant (Bharucha and Bose 2009). Ghandy's siblings have had successful business careers: his sister ran a family-owned hotel and

his brother owned an ice-cream factory (Punwani 2009). Ghandy apparently became interested in radical politics in UK and was deported (Prasad and Rafiq 2009). Back in Mumbai, he became one of the leading figures in the city's radical Left movement during the mid-70s and after the Emergency he helped found the Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights, a human rights group (Punwani 2009). In the early 1980s, Ghandy, along with his wife Anuradha, a sociology professor and fellow Maoist, left Mumbai and went to live among tribal communities in eastern Maharashtra (Bharucha and Bose 2009; Times of India 2009i). Ghandy has been a member of the PWG since around this time and he continued as a Central Committee member in CPI (Maoist). He was elected to its politburo in 2007 but was arrested two years later (Hindustan Times 2012). It has been reported that Ghandy teaches Maoist ideology to his fellow inmates (Siddiqui 2010).

DISCUSSION

How well is the participation of politburo members explained by the theories set out above? Structural theories do not help us understand the participation of the insurgent leaders. On the whole, politburo members' participation in the insurgency cannot be explained by economic exploitation or caste oppression. Sushil Roy, who became acquainted with the communist movement while working in a factory in Calcutta in the 1960s, is the only politburo member who could be described as coming from a proletarian background. Nevertheless, even he seems to have come from a relatively privileged background: Roy is a title used by upper castes to indicate landownership. The rest either had respectable jobs – as teachers, bank officers – or were studying at university when they chose to join the insurgents. Only Misir Besra – a Santhal – is from a historically disadvantaged community. The Santhals community are classified as a Scheduled Tribe. They rebelled against British rule in the 1850s and now provide the insurgents with mass support in the Jangal Mahal area of Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa (Duyker 1987). Besra claims to have joined the insurgents because he was aggrieved at the exploitation and oppression of his community by non-tribals (Misra 2008; Pandita 2008). Nevertheless, the fact that he was studying for a degree in Hindi when he joined the insurgents indicates that he does not fully fit into the stereotype of a downtrodden adivasi.

The vast majority of politburo members were either from dominant or upper castes. In several cases the interests of these communities directly conflicted with those of the Maoists and the communities that the insurgents claim to represent. In Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s, the CPI (Maoist) (2010a: 7) notes that ‘Reddys, Kammas and others belonging to the so-called upper castes used to harass the “backward” and dalit castes in many ways’. The insurgents claim to have organised ‘struggles against these upper caste chauvinists’ on behalf of landless and downtrodden. Notwithstanding, at least four out of seven politburo members from Andhra Pradesh were from dominant castes, such as Reddys and Kammas. In Bihar, the insurgents represented the interests of landless untouchables against dominant castes (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006). But Akhilesh Yadav and Baccha Prasad Singh are, respectively, Yadavs and Koiris. In the 1980s Yadavs and Koiris even formed private armies (Senas) – Lorik Sena and Bhoomi/Azad Sena respectively – in order to protect their communities’ interests against the Maoist insurgents (Guha 2007b; Kumar 2003). Max Weber (1958:3) argues that India was a land of the ‘most inviolable organization by birth’, and Andre Betiellie (1992) and Srinivas (1962) state that community is the primary determinant of social and political action in India. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the vast majority of politburo members joined the insurgency in spite of, rather than because of, their caste and class interests.

Nor do theories that stress individual self-interest adequately explain the motivations of politburo members. Involvement in the insurgency has not improved the politburo members’ lives. On the contrary, it seems that the insurgents make enormous personal sacrifices in order to take part in the insurgency. The vast majority of politburo members were either studying at university or had stable professional careers when they joined the insurgents. Kobad Ghandy, who had a postgraduate qualification in accountancy from the United Kingdom could have followed in his father’s footsteps and had a successful business career. Several politburo members have siblings that went on to enjoy successful careers, not least Azad, whose elder brother became a colonel in the Indian army and whose younger brothers became doctors (CPI [Maoist] 2010a). The insurgent leaders do not live in glamorous surroundings. They have spent the past three or four decades living in rudimentary camps deep in the jungles of the central Indian tribal belt or moving from safe house to safe house in the cities. For example, when Malla Raji Reddy was arrested in 2007 he was living amongst migrant

construction workers in Kerala (Shaji 2008). What is more, the politbureau members live with the constant fear of capture hanging over them. Insurgent journals such as *Peoples' March* and *Maoist Information Bulletin*, demonstrate that the insurgents are acutely aware of the state's capacity for violence. For example, after the death of Kishenji, the insurgents described how the state 'tortured him cruelly for hours... and killed him in a cowardly manner' (CPI [Maoist] 2012a). Furthermore, it is apparent that being involved in the insurgency has an enormous cost on the insurgents' family lives. They can seldom visit their families – even when they have young children. Besra, for example, only saw his wife and children once every three years or so (Misra 2008), and Venu and Kishenji did not see their parents since they went underground over three decades ago (Rao and Rao 2012). Several members of the politburo have lost their wives as a result of the conflict. Ghandy's wife, a fellow Maoist, died of cerebral malaria in 2008 (Bharucha and Bose 2009; Times of India 2009d), and Sudarshan's wife, also an insurgent, was killed by counterinsurgent forces several years ago (Sudarshan 2009).

Nor can the politburo members' participation be explained by a 'will to power'. Maoist insurgents have been fighting the state since before independence in 1947 and although they control large areas territory, they remain a long way – literally and metaphorically – from the centres of power in India. While Charu Mazumdar (1970: 5) predicted that 'India will surely be liberated by 1975', the current ideologues are less optimistic. The dream of seeing a red flag flying from the Red Fort remains just that, and some Maoist documents forecast that the peoples democratic revolution will not be successful until 2050 (Times of India 2010n). What is more, the majority of politburo members come from communities that are politically well-organized and have good access to parliamentary political power. Upper castes dominate political parties in West Bengal, even those, such as the CPI (Marxist) and Trinamool Congress, that claim to represent the interests of the rural lower classes (Sinharay 2012). Dominant castes are politically organized and are an important political force at state level in both Andhra Pradesh and Bihar (see Guha 2007b; Kolhi 1990). Dominant castes have historically played an important role in Andhra politics; Selig Harrison (1956) noted a decade after independence that the Reddys dominated the Indian National Congress and the Kammas dominated the CPI. In Bihar, dominant castes, in particular the Yadavs, have played an increasingly important role in state

politics since the 1960s. Lalu Prasad Yadav was Chief Minister of Bihar from 1990 to 1997, after which his wife ruled the state with brief interruptions until 2005. It seems apparent, therefore, that if the politburo members had been interested in access to political power for its own sake, their goals would have been best achieved through parliamentary politics.

Maoist ideology is crucial in understanding the participation of the politburo member in the insurgency. It cannot merely be written off as an excuse to justify the pursuit of personal interests. The conflict at the macro level is largely driven by a Schmittian attachment to the Maoist ideology expressed in the master cleavage. So how did the CPI (Maoist) leaders become ideologically enthused? Theoretically, the most compelling framework is one that concentrates on the specific political context in which actors' decisions are made rather than unchanging social structural or rationalist assumptions. By nature this explanation is highly contingent. People from the same social backgrounds can and do react differently to the same stimuli. So what were the shifts in political context that influenced politburo members made the decisions to join the insurgency? It has been noted that the members of the politburo are, overwhelmingly, from areas where Marxist ideology has historically played an important role in forming the ideas of the political elite. These areas were affected by the second wave of insurgency the late 1960s and early 1970s – the period when they were youths and young adults. Seven out of sixteen came Andhra Pradesh and, specifically, either northern Telengana or the Agency Tracts in northeast that were hotbeds of revolutionary activity (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). Four more came from West Bengal, which was the epicentre of the movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s and another four came from undivided Bihar, where insurgent activity spilled over from neighbouring West Bengal. Only Ghandy, who hails from Mumbai, did not grow up in an area that was affected by the insurgency.

We know most about the early lives of the insurgent leaders from Andhra Pradesh and, more specifically, from Northern Telengana. In the late 1960s dissident CPI (Marxist) members began a Maoist insurgency in the area, which was brutally – but not totally successfully – repressed by the state (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The flame of radical politics was kept alive by the remaining insurgents in Northern Telengana, in particular Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, who encouraged the formation

of the Radical Students Union in 1974 (Pandita 2011). The Emergency began the following year, and this appears to be a critical juncture in the political development of the leaders of the third wave of insurgency in Andhra Pradesh. The Radical Students Union members faced severe state oppression: several were killed in false encounters, hundreds of students were arrested, and the remainder were forced to go underground in the countryside, experiencing first hand the life of a guerrilla, as well as the plight of the rural poor. The CPI (Maoist) notes that this was a fantastic lesson for the nascent insurgents;

During the 20 month long fascist emergency period party activists led underground life. They worked under various covers like teachers, village doctors, as persons who washed and ironed clothes etc in the villages to build up mass base (CPI [Maoist] 2012a: 8).

As there were no regular contacts with the secret party leadership during the Emergency, the cadres led their revolutionary life with Bolshevik determination keeping their whereabouts very secret to the enemy and fulfilling their daily needs and traveling expenses etc with the little money they got as funds from revolutionary sympathizers (CPI [Maoist] 2012b).

After the end of the Emergency, the Radical Students Union continued to campaign among in rural northern Telengana every summer, culminating in a peaceful economic boycott of landlords in the late 1970s, which was violently repressed by the state police (see Times of India 1978).

This series of events demonstrated the apparent brutality of the state and powerlessness of peaceful protest. For example, in an interview in 2006, Azad still referred to momentous events in his youth.

Would the government... have allowed the Maoists to concentrate on exposing the anti-poor bias of the present development model and extend their mass activity to a point that would have given their aspiration for state power a solid mass base? If that possibility existed, why in the first place did the

ruling classes attack the legal movement in Karimnagar and Adilabad? (Azad 2006)

West Bengal in late 1960s and early the 1970s experienced a period of momentous political events. In particular, election of the Left Front coalition, which included the CPI (Marxist), in 1967, and then their violent suppression of CPI (Marxist) dissident insurgents at Naxalbari and elsewhere, caused many young people with left wing sympathies to turn their backs on the parliamentary left. As Ganapathy (Communist Party of Nepal [Maoist] 2007: 74) put it:

The stark fact is that the CPI (M) had long back abandoned the communist project and Marxist ideology though it calls itself a Marxist Party. It had become a social fascist party from the time of the outbreak of Naxalbari armed peasant uprising in 1967 when thousands of revolutionaries were massacred upon the orders of the then Home minister Jyoti Basu in West Bengal during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Sushil Roy makes a similar point about the effect of state repression in West Bengal in the late 1960s on his political consciousness:

The events of the Peasant struggles of Naxalbari, police firing on it and the killing of eleven woman peasants including two children and seeing the real face of the social democratic and revisionist character of the party leadership, I cut off all relations with the party (CPI [Marxist]) in 1968 and for the sake of revolutionary ideology I left my permanent (*sic*) job, home, relatives to work as a professional revolutionary in far away villages (Roy 2007: 4).

Our analysis demonstrates neither social structural nor rationalist explanations help us understand the participation of politburo members. The insurgent leaders attempted to mobilize untouchables and tribals against their own dominant and upper caste communities, which involved enormous self-sacrifices over a period of several decades. I argue that the participation of politburo members in the insurgency is best explained by the specific political context in which actors' decisions are made. More specifically, the politburo members were mostly relatively privileged young men,

often students, with an interest in left wing politics. They grew up in areas where Marxist ideology was influential among the political elites and they made their decisions to join the insurgency in the context of severe state repression of the previous wave of left wing insurgency, which demonstrated the brutality of the state and the apparent powerlessness of peaceful protest.

It is interesting to note that Kerala, which is another bastion of Left Wing politics in India, did not experience a similar repression of the left wing in the 1960s (Desai 2002). While many young, well-educated Keralites showed an interest in Left Wing politics (Times of India 1980b), very few, if any, are involved in the upper echelons of the insurgent movement.

QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

This section uses quantitative data to test the main finding of the socio-historical analysis in the previous section. I predict that, even when I control for variables that operationalize social structural characteristics and greed, insurgency activity is more likely to occur in areas where it occurred in the previous wave. This is because young men who are exposed to Maoist ideology and government brutality in one wave of Maoist insurgency go on to lead the subsequent wave of insurgent activity. Thus, I expect to see a significant and positive relationship between areas affected by insurgency in the second wave of insurgency (1967 to 1972) and those affected in the second wave (1982 onwards).

Data and variables

District level data is used to test this hypothesis. As the control variables are from the *Census of India*, which is decennially enumerated, the temporal unit is decades.

The dependent variable is the onset insurgent activity. I documented all fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents that were reported in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition), India's most widely read newspaper, between 1982 and 2011. There were 1,106 fatal incidents in this period, resulting in 4,698 deaths. I then created a dummy variable using the mean number of deaths per decade (four) as the cut off point. The first decade in which four or more deaths occur in a district is coded as having experienced the onset of insurgent activity ('1'). If there are four more

deaths in the following decade, the district is dropped from the dataset. All districts that experience less than four deaths per decade are coded as not being affected by insurgency ('0'). 72 out of 1,111 (11%) districts were affected by insurgent activity.

There are two main independent variables. The first is a dummy variable that codes whether or not a district was affected by the second wave of insurgent activity between 1967 and 1972. The variable is coded from Sumanta Banerjee's (2008[1980]) *In the Wake of Naxalbari*, which is considered to be the seminal work on the second wave of insurgency (see Guha 2007b). The second uses the same data source to code whether or not a district is contiguous with a district that was affected by insurgent activity between 1967 and 1972.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of key variables

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Insurgent activity	1111	0.1	0.2	0.0	1.0
Previous insurgency	1194	0.2	0.4	0.0	1.0
Contiguous with previous insurgency	1194	0.4	0.5	0.0	1.0
Untouchables %	1194	16.7	7.4	4.0	53.0
Tribal %	1194	33.3	25.0	0.0	94.0
Log. total population (000s)	1194	7.4	0.7	3.4	9.3
Literacy %	1194	43.9	15.4	3.0	85.4
Rural %	1194	78.0	16.8	0.0	100.0
Mining	1194	0.3	0.5	0.0	1.0

Sources:- Insurgent activity is generated from the *Times of India*. Previous insurgent activity is coded from Banerjee (2008). All other variables are from the *Census of India*.

I include several control variables in our model that operationalize structural characteristics and proxies for greed (opportunity or feasibility) that are purported to favor insurgent activity. First, as untouchables and tribal communities are seen to be the insurgents' main supporters at the local level (CPI [Maoist] 2004c, 2005b; Planning Commission 2008; Banerjee 2008), I control for the proportion of Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribes in the population according to the *Census of India* (1981, 1991, 2001). I control for the level of development as rationalist studies predict the opportunity cost of participating in insurgency is lower in areas with lower levels of development (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Cross-national studies would tend to use per capita GDP, but because this data is not available at the

district level I use literacy rates. I also include the proportion of the population living in rural areas. As state power tends to be weaker in the countryside, individuals are more likely to participate in insurgent activity there. Mining is said to cause insurgency, both because it causes discontent among the local population as a result of displacement and pollution, and because it provides insurgents with opportunities to extort money (Guha 2007b; Panning Commission 2008). I control for the presence coal, iron ore or bauxite in a district according to the Indian Bureau of Mines' (2000) *Minerals Yearbook 1999-2000*. I also include the log transformed total district population because, due to the way that insurgent activity is operationalized, more populous districts are more likely to be affected by insurgent activity. Finally, when I use times series data I add a calendar year variable to capture possible changes in the geopolitical climate over time. Descriptive statistics of the main variables are set out in table 4.2.

The basic data unit for the statistical analysis is the district, the administrative division below the state and the smallest unit of analysis for which all the data are available. Our sample includes all districts in all states in India, with the exception of Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast where there have been non-Maoist insurgencies since independence and where socioeconomic data is patchy (Zagoria 1974). In 2001 the sample amounted to 481 out of 593 districts, 18 out of 28 states, and 93.5% (692 million people) of the Indian population (Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2001).

Results and Statistical Models

Table 4.3 shows the results of our analysis. As the dependent variable is binary I use logistic regression. I report odds ratio, the exponentiated regression coefficient. In parentheses I specify robust standard errors clustered by district to account for the non-independence of observations from the same district. I use two samples. The first, which is used in models 1 to 2 is cross-sectional data for the first decade of the third wave of insurgency (1982-1991). The second, which is used in models 3 to 4 is time-series data for the whole period of the third wave of insurgency (1982-2011).

Table 4.3: The Second and Third Waves of Insurgent Activity

	Insurgent activity, 1982-1991		Insurgent activity, 1982-2011	
	1	2	3	4
Previous insurgent activity, 1967-1972	8.218*** (4.032)		3.166*** (1.082)	
Contiguous with previous insurgent activity		17.211*** (13.135)		7.626*** (2.511)
Untouchables %	.975 (.033)	.968 (.031)	.989 (.017)	.985 (.016)
Tribals %	.978 (.016)	.981 (.016)	1.000 (.008)	1.003 (.009)
Literacy %	.937* (.023)	.930* (.026)	.974* (.012)	.970* (.013)
Rural %	1.003 (.020)	.987 (.019)	1.022 (.016)	1.007 (.015)
Minerals	2.343 (1.189)	2.323 (1.264)	3.172*** (.987)	3.201*** (1.123)
Log population	2.175* (.832)	2.028 (.891)	1.751* (.450)	1.436 (.375)
Year	-	-	1.034 (.021)	1.041 (.022)
N	339	339	1111	1111
Pseudo R square	.232	.262	.126	.193

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported.

The results show that, as predicted, there is a positive and significant relationship between a district being affected by insurgent activity in the second wave of Maoist insurgency and being affected by the present, third wave of insurgency, which began in the early 1980s and has continued to the present day. When I control for other explanatory variables, a district that was affected by insurgency in the second wave was 8 times more likely to be affected by insurgency in the first decade of the third wave compared to one that was not affected by the second wave. A district that was contiguous with one or more districts that were affected by insurgency in the second wave was 17 times more likely to be affected by insurgency in the first decade of the third wave. When I increase the sample to the period 1982 to 2011, there is still a significant effect, although the effect size is not as large. A district that was affected by insurgency in the second wave is three times more likely to be affected by insurgency in the third wave than a district that was not, while one that was

contiguous with a district that was affected by insurgency in the second wave was 7 and a half times more likely to be affected by insurgency in the period 1982 to 2011.

I performed a number of robustness tests. I reran the regressions after (i) removing outlying and influential cases to test the robustness of over analysis; (ii) with the dependent variable code half (2) and double (8) the mean number of deaths per decades; without the calendar year variable; and with dummy variables controlling for different states. The results were did not alter our main findings. Thus, our quantitative analysis demonstrates that even when I control for structural conditions that are purported to favour insurgency and proxies for greed, insurgent activity in the second wave of insurgency is a consistent predictor of where insurgent activity occurs in the third wave. I argue that the main mechanism explaining this is the presence of a cadre of young men who have gained an understanding of Maoist ideology and strategy in a previous wave of insurgency, reject peaceful protest and go on to mobilize the local population to take part in insurgency in the next wave of insurgency.

OTHER CASES

To what extent do these findings hold for other cases? In this section I use quantitative and qualitative data to test whether our findings are generalizable to the second wave of insurgency. There were three major theatres of war in the late 1960s and early 1970s: West Bengal, Srikakulam and Northern Telengana, both of which were in Andhra Pradesh.

On the whole leaders of the insurgency in West Bengal came from upper caste backgrounds. Charu Mazumdar, the charismatic leader of the insurgency in the late 1960s until his death in 1972, was from Brahmin landowning family (Mohanty 1977; Ray 2002; Banerjee 2008). He was involved in Tebagha movement in the 1940s and after the CPI was banned in 1948 spent the next three years in jail. The majority of Mazumdar's colleagues – Kanu Sanyal, Souren Bose, Ashim Chatterjee, and Saroj Dutta – were from upper caste and relatively privileged backgrounds. The major exception was Jangal Santhal who, like Misir Besra, was a member of the Santhal community.

Vempatapu Satyanarayana, the leader of the movement in Srikakulam, was a member of the Kapu community, a dominant caste in coastal Andhra. Satyanarayana was a communist schoolteacher who moved to the tribal area of the district in 1959 and set up the *Girijan Sangham*. After the 1964 schism he supported the CPI (Marxist) and he sought to work within the confines of the law, but after the murder of two adivasis by the agents of moneylender-merchants in October 1967, the *Girijan Sangham* started undertaking guerrilla activities (ibid).

The leaders of the insurgency in northern Telengana were dissidents from the CPI (Marxist), came from dominant or upper caste backgrounds and were heavily involved in the Telengana movement in the 1940s and 50s. T Nagi Reddy, the leader, was born into a wealthy Reddy family and is reputed to have given away over 1,000 acres of his family's land (Thakor 2006). Other leading figures in Telengana were DV Rao, a Telugu Brahmin, who had formulated the 'Andhra Thesis' of in 1948, Chandra Pulla Reddy, and Kolla Venkaiah, a Kamma.

This evidence supports the findings for the first wave of insurgency. Neither structural nor rationalist accounts help us understand the participation of insurgency leaders in the second wave of insurgency as they tended to come from relatively privileged dominant or upper caste backgrounds. What is more, many insurgent leaders participated in the first wave of left wing insurgency in their youths and experienced severe repression at the hands of the state.

Table 4.4: The First and Second Waves of Insurgent Activity

	Insurgent activity, 1967-1972	
	5	6
Previous insurgent activity, 1946-1951	11.794*** (6.820)	
Contiguous with previous insurgent activity		8.705*** (3.996)
Untouchables %	1.072* (.033)	1.092* (.044)
Tribals %	1.043* (.016)	1.036* (.014)
Literacy %	1.033 (.023)	1.043 (.027)
Rural %	1.004 (.016)	1.003 (.023)
Minerals	1.084 (.445)	.833 (.348)
Log population	4.976*** (2.137)	4.119** (2.003)
N	301	301
Pseudo R square	.2265	.2533

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported.

It is also possible to use quantitative data to test whether insurgency activity is more likely to occur in areas affected in the previous wave, even when I control for variables that operationalize social structural characteristics and greed. Our statistical models are very similar to those in table 4.3. I use Sundarayya's (1972) *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons* and Majumdar's (1993) *Peasant protest in Indian politics: Tebhaga movement in Bengal* to code the districts effected by insurgency in the Telengana and Tebhaga movements. All other variables are from the *Census of India* 1971, except for minerals, which is from *Minerals Handbook* 1970-1. The results of the logistic regressions are presented in Table 4.4 and they are comparable to those in table 4.3, which covered the third wave of insurgency. A district that was affected by insurgent activity in the first wave of insurgency was, even when controlling for other possible causal variables, almost 12 times more likely to experience insurgency in the second wave. A district that was contiguous with a district affected by the first wave of insurgency was almost 9 times more likely to experience insurgency in the second wave.

International comparisons

It is interesting to note that both Mao Tse-Tung and Lenin share somewhat social backgrounds and biographies to the CPI (Maoist) politburo. Mao's father earned a comfortable living farming 20 acres of land and trading grain. Mao was a part-time student at Beijing University and, after returning to his hometown of Changsha, became headmaster of a school. His political views were shaped by the famine in Changsha, when starving peasants rebelled and seized crops (Shram 1966; Carter 1976). Mao described to American journalist Edgar Snow an incident when he and his fellow students witnessed the decapitated heads of rebels' strung to the city gates as a warning. The incident left a profound effect on the boy – he claimed that he began to view the prevailing social order as intolerable and to expect a revolution sooner or later (Snow 1972).

Vladimir Ilich Lenin's father was a teacher and educational administrator who became a hereditary nobleman. His brother, Sacha, was part of a small cell of socialist revolutionaries and he was executed in 1887 for conspiring to assassinate the Tsar (Fischer 1964; Rice 1990). The same year, Lenin began studying law at Kazan University, where he became interested in radical politics. After taking part in protests the university expelled him and the Ministry of Internal Affairs put him under police surveillance and exiled him his family's rural estate.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper aimed to understand who the leaders of the contemporary Maoist insurgency in India are, as well as their motivations for taking part in the insurgency. The participation of politburo members in the insurgency cannot be explained by structural theories. I demonstrated that, on the whole, the insurgent leaders were from upper or dominant castes rather than the untouchable and tribal communities that they claim to represent and that provide the insurgents with mass support. Nor can the participation of politburo members be explained through a rationalist framework, which argues that insurgent activity is a strategy for pursuing personal economic or political interests, as rational actor theories would suggest. In fact, insurgent leaders often made remarkable personal sacrifices, giving up professional careers or good prospects, and forsaking their families to live in basic conditions in rural India for

several decades. Theoretically, the most compelling explanation is one that takes into account the specific political context in which actors' decisions are made, rather than that concentrates on unchanging sociostructural or rationalist assumptions. It has been noted that the members of the politburo are, overwhelmingly, from areas that were affected by the second wave of insurgency in the late 1960s and early 1970s – the period when they were youths and young adults. Our analysis suggests that the politburo members were attracted to left wing politics in their youth, experienced state brutality and came to see peaceful protest as pointless. This also indicates that Maoist ideology is crucial in understanding the participation of the politburo member in the insurgency. It cannot merely be written off as an excuse to justify the pursuit of personal interests. The conflict at the macro level is largely driven by a Schmittian attachment to the Maoist ideology expressed in the master cleavage.

The analysis also demonstrates the dangers of state repression. It does not just harm in the short term – it is also capable of creating a cadre of disaffected young men that will go on to lead the next wave of insurgency. Several articles have argued that the insurgents' supply of student cadre is drying up (Sen 2001; Janyala 2009; Nag 2010). But, Jawaharlal Nehru University, my alma mater, certainly continues to have a strong radical political grouping, the Democratic Students' Union, which is also active in Delhi University. It is a constituent of the All India Revolutionary Students' Federation, which can trace its origins to the Radical Students Union that was formed by, among others, Azad and Kishenj in Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s. The Democratic Students' Union is a front organization of the CPI (Maoist) and 'works towards attaining the ideals of the New Democratic Revolution' (Mohan 2011; Democratic Students' Union undated). As I mentioned in the introduction, the DSU's murals are prominent around the campus, declaring, among other things 'Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!', '*Naxalbari Zindabad*' (long live or hail Naxalbari), and imploring students to 'Select the enemies and turn your weapons against them one by one'. Indeed, there was a strong reaction to the increasing intensity of counterinsurgency operations towards the end of 2009 (the so-called Operation Greenhunt). In 2010, following the killing of 76 state paramilitaries by the insurgents, there were clashes between DSU supporters, who were alleged to have chanted slogans such as '*India murdabad, Maovad zindabad*' (Death to India, long live Maoism), and other students' organization (Gohain 2010). It remains to be seen

whether the present generation of student sympathisers will go on to be the next generation of insurgent leaders.

5. The meso level: gangsters or Gandhians?

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, various Indian politicians have made remarkable claims about the strength of the Maoist insurgents in India. On several occasions, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2006, 2010) has described the insurgency as ‘the single biggest internal-security challenge ever faced by our country’. More specifically, according to P Chidambaram, the Minister of Home Affairs, the insurgents are currently ‘active’ in 223 of India’s 626 districts and (Chidambaram 2009), and his ministry claims that the insurgents ‘call the shots’ in 40,000 square kilometers of Indian territory – an area similar to the size of Switzerland – mainly in parts of Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand (Times of India 2009a).

While such statements are very effective at grabbing the attention of interested observers, they leave many unanswered questions. Lay terms such as ‘insurgent activity’ and ‘calling the shots’ are used as if it is clear what they mean, when, in fact, they are, as Durkheim (1938: 22) put it, ‘nothing but confused ideas, a tangle of vague impressions, prejudices, and emotions’. Indeed, the manner in which the insurgents’ activities are understood is strongly coloured by ideology. The Maoists and their sympathisers view them as self-sacrificing political actors who represent the interests of India’s ‘wretched of the earth’ in a just war against the ‘semi-feudal, semi-colonial’ Indian state (CPI [Maoist] 2004a and b). They are, in Arundhati Roy’s (2010) terminology, ‘Gandhians with a Gun’. This is what *Times of India* columnist Swaminathan Aiyar (2011) refers to as the ‘good-Maoist bad-state’ narrative. On the other hand, the insurgents’ opponents present them as self-serving criminals. The Minister of Home Affairs, P Chidambaram stated that he does not ‘think naxalites are motivated by any ideology. Maybe one or two of them are ideologically motivated but most of them are simply bandits’ (Times of India 2009c). In 2009 the Ministry of Home Affairs took out newspaper advertisements claiming that the insurgents were ‘nothing but cold-blooded murderers’ (Times of India 2009h). Several recent scholarly articles have supported the Ministry of Home Affairs point of view by portraying the insurgents as Mafia or organized criminals (Shah 2006; Suykens 2010; Mahadevan 2012). Evidence or facts can be presented to support both poles of opinion. Maoist supporters point out that the insurgents are often from upper caste,

relatively wealthy and well-educated backgrounds. They have given up comfortable lives and good prospects to spend the past three or four decades living in rural India and working to improve the lives of some of India's most deprived communities. On the other hand, the insurgents' critics can point to the large amounts of money that the insurgents generate from selling protection to various economic actors, ranging from forest produce traders to multinational mining companies, in areas under their control, as well as various incidents in which the insurgents brutally killed or maimed members of the communities that they claim to represent.

How does one make sense of this polarized and politically motivated landscape? Can these apparently contradictory facts be incorporated into a unified framework? This chapter attempts to better understand what the insurgents actually do when they are active or call the shots in an area. In doing so, it aims to move beyond Manichean perceptions of the insurgents and instead understand how they function as an organization. As such it concentrates on the meso level of the insurgency by analyzing 'the institutional context within which interactions between political actors and civilians takes place' (Kalyvas 2006: 106). To this end there are two main sections. The first argues that insurgency is most fruitfully understood as a state building enterprise – although, contra Tilly (1985) I argue that gangsters and state building enterprises are distinguished by whether they serve private or collective interests. The chapter then uses newspaper reports and insurgent documents to show that both insurgent fundraising and violence serve, on the whole, the collective interests of the state building enterprise – that is, to consolidate insurgent control in te base areas – rather than the private interests of individuals who take part in the insurgency. The second section demonstrates how the insurgents undermine the state's sovereignty in areas where they operate, resulting in what Tilly (1978) refers to as 'dual sovereignty'. We conclude by arguing that this analysis has important implications for our understanding of both the insurgents and the Indian state. The insurgents are often portrayed as very antithesis of the state, whereas we show that they are state builders. While the Indian state is widely assumed to be a sovereign and democratic state, our analysis indicates that in insurgent controlled areas the state's sovereignty and democratic processes are severely undermined.

MAOIST INSURGENTS AS A STATE BUILDING ENTERPRISE

Insurgency should be conceptualized as a state building enterprise in which the insurgents attempt to build ‘counter-states’ (Wickham-Crowley 1991: 44; Skocpol 1982; Goodwin and Skocpol 1989; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007). As Kalyvas (2006: 218) puts it: ‘State building is the insurgents’ central goal and renders organized and sustained rebellion of the kind that takes place in civil wars fundamentally distinct from phenomena such as banditry, mafias, or social movements’. The distinction that we draw between insurgency – as a state building enterprise – and banditry or organized crime, places us in opposition to Charles Tilly’s (1985: 169) conceptualization of ‘state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs’. Tilly (ibid) argued that ‘state makers’ were ‘quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy’. Thus, for him the difference between a mafia and a state or state building organization is the extent to which they represent the normative expectations of the population. We argue, contra Tilly, that the key distinction between organized crime and state-building insurgents is whether or not the organization seeks to serve the private interests of its members or the collective interests of society.¹ This draws on the Weberian distinction between traditional (or patrimonial) domination, in which the private and public spheres are merged, and bureaucratic domination in which these are separate (Weber 1968). Of course, these are ideal types that do not exist in this unadulterated form in reality. Even in organizations that are overwhelmingly bureaucratic, informal relationships and private interests play an important role.² As Reno (1999: 3) points out, when he is trying to distinguish between weak states from warlord fiefdoms, ‘This calls for a judgement as to where to draw a line along a continuum of informal versus bureaucratic and collective versus private’.

¹ This is consistent with Reno (1999). It should be noted that Tilly (1975) does argue elsewhere that building a state depends on the ability of state making elites to make war, which depends upon the ability to extract resources from the population through an effective bureaucracy.

² In India the most obvious example is influence that the ‘Nehru-Gandhi dynasty’ has over Indian politics (see Ali 1985). But it seems apparent that, at whatever level one analyses the state in India, officials use their public office for private gain (see for example Gupta 1995).

Building up miniature states in base areas was a key aspect of the New Democratic Revolution that occurred in China between 1927 and 1949 (Mao 1961; Gurley 1976). The Maoist insurgents aimed to win the political, economic and cultural struggle in base areas by, among other things, undertaking land reforms, promoting mutual aid and cooperation, and improving the processes of agricultural production. The CPI (Maoist) – as well as its predecessors – follow an orthodox Maoist strategy. They reject parliamentary democracy and aim to capture political power through a protracted people's war, which entails building up base areas in the countryside, transforming them into guerrilla zones, then liberated zones, and eventually encircling the cities (CPI [Maoist] 2004a and b).

Insurgents' governance in base areas is referred to as *Janatana Sarkar* or People's Government. The CPI (Maoist) operates through two institutional forms, which perform both benevolent and bellicose functions of the state. *Sanghams* (committees) belong to front organizations, such as the *Dandakaranya Kisan Adivasi Mazdoor Sangh* (Dandakaranya Peasant Tribal Worker League) and *Rythu Coolie Sangham* (Farm Labourers League). They live within the community and undertake non-violent activities. These include the political education of the local population, the provision of various public goods, such as health care and small-scale infrastructure, as well as pressuring for better wages, better prices for agricultural and forest produce, land reforms, forest rights, and better treatment of untouchables, tribals and women (CPI [Maoist] 2004c and 2005). *Dalams* (armed guerrilla squads) belonging to the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army live separately from the villages. They undertake military operations against the state, use violence to punish real or potential opponents in areas under their control, which often takes place in Peoples' Courts (*Jan Adalats*), and also back up the *sanghams*' activities with the credible threat of violence. As K Balagopal (2006a: 2185) points out, the insurgents' priority is political, to control their base areas: 'The need to establish and secure their authority, protect their armed squads from the police and the paramilitary, secure the obedience of the people living in the area to the *sanghams* set up by them, etc, become matters of predominant concern'. In the rest of this section we shall consider how the insurgents' violence and fundraising activities fits into the logic of state building.

Cold-blooded murderers or state builders?

The insurgents and their supporters view them as the protectors of tribal and untouchable communities (CPI [Maoist] 2004a, b and c, 2005; Roy 2010). But the insurgents' opponents portray them as, in the words of the Ministry of Home Affairs, 'cold-blooded murderers' and point to evidence that they have killed large numbers of tribals and untouchables (Times of India 2009h). How can these two views be reconciled?

As Kalyvas (2006) points out, insurgency is conducted through the people and the outcome of irregular war hinges on the behaviour of the local population. They provide insurgents with resources that are essential for fighting guerrilla warfare, such as shelter, food, intelligence and new recruits (Weinstein 2007). Thus, a crucial issue for the insurgents is to ensure the obedience of local population in order to secure these resources. Azad (2006: 4381), the erstwhile CPI (Maoist) spokesman, points out that 'the class struggle at the ground level... is a struggle for power' which involves a combination of patient politicization of the masses and violent suppression of reactionaries. This echoes Weber's (1946: 79) argument that 'obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope', as well as the observation of a recent *Times of India* article that 'Most residents [in insurgent controlled areas] speak of the rebels with a strange mixture of fear and awe' (Ghosh 2010).³

Loyalty can be acquired through the provision of benefits and even the state admits that the insurgents have provided tribal and untouchable communities with collective incentives, such as land reforms, better prices for forest produce, improved access to forests, and protection from violence by upper castes and state officials (Planning Commission 2008). It is obviously difficult to get systematic data about the level of support for insurgents among the local population. The closest thing that we have is a poll of lower castes undertaken by the *Times of India* (2010o) in areas of Northern

³ In a similar vein, others refer to repression and loyalty (Wintrobe 1998) or coercion and persuasion (Kalyvas 2006).

Telangana that had, until recently, been under insurgent control.⁴ 58% percent of those questioned said that the insurgents had been good for the region whereas 34% believed that life had improved since the state had regained control. Only 15% were willing to describe the insurgents as just ‘goondas, gangsters or extortionists’. Nevertheless, it should be noted that when asked to explain the insurgents’ former strength in the region, the majority answered that it was due to either fear or a combination of approval and fear.

Violence, or the credible threat of violence, plays an important role in the encouraging behaviour that is beneficial to the insurgents. But this is not specific to the insurgents. Rather, it is normal for state building enterprises and states. As Weber (1994: 310) points out, violence is ‘not the normal or sole means used by the state’ (or state-building institution) but the relationship between the two ‘is a particularly intimate one’. Similarly, Mao argues that power grows from the barrel of a gun and Tilly (1975, 1985) also stresses the importance of coercion in state building. This might seem like a facile point to political sociologists, but it is overlooked by many of the insurgents’ critics. For example, Prakash Singh, a police intelligence officer refers to the insurgents as terrorists and defines terrorism as ‘the use of violence towards political ends’ (Singh 2008: 10). He therefore either fails to acknowledge that the state uses ‘violence towards political ends’ or views the state as a terrorist.

Primarily, the insurgents use violence in areas under their control to punish those suspected of collaborating with the state and to warn others against this path. Most often the victims of insurgent violence are insurgents-turned-defectors or suspected informers. Frequently this is done through People’s Courts (*Jan Adalats*) that are conducted in front of the public and are designed to both punish the accused and warn those watching against treachery. For example, in Surjuga, Chhattisgarh, in 2001, the insurgents gunned down three suspected defectors in front of journalists, government officials and a large public audience after a public trial that had lasted from 2.30 pm to 7 pm (Mishra 2001). Sometimes victims’ bodies are displayed in public with

⁴ A total of 521 people were surveyed in these five towns: Kamareddy in Nizamabad district, Gudi Hathnoor in Adilabad, Sirsilla in Karimnagar, Mahbubabad in Warangal and Palwancha in Khammam.

descriptions of the accused's crime. For example, in 1990, in Aurangabad, Bihar, the insurgents beheaded a suspected police informer and left his decapitated body on a road with a note explaining his crime (Times of India 1990). In 2009 the insurgents beheaded a comrade who they accused of being a police informer in Hazaribag, Jharkhand, leaving a note next to the body warning others tempted to inform on the insurgents that they would also meet the same fate (Times of India 2009e). There are other reports of suspected informers having their hands or legs chopped off with axes (Times of India 1982c, 1998b). In all of these cases the message to the local population and clear: if you collaborate with the state, you will be punished with brutal violence.

It seems apparent that the insurgents expand the attacks on suspected collaborators when their control of an area is threatened by the state. In 2010, when the insurgents came under pressure from state forces in West Midnapore, West Bengal, one of their first reactions was to initiate a drive to 'identify and annihilate' police informers. 20 people suspected informers were killed in one month, some of them in public, triggering 'panic among the people' (Times of India 2010h). Similarly, in 2011 it was reported that whenever a major counterinsurgent operation took place in Koraput, Orissa, it was swiftly followed by the murder of a suspected police informer by the insurgents (Times of India 2011g).

This underlines the Kalyvas' (2006) point that there is a logic to insurgent violence. Collaborators pose an enormous danger to the insurgents because they may provide information to the state about the insurgents' modus operandi that undermines their ability to control an area. CPI (Maoist) General Secretary Ganapathy (2007: 68-69) makes this point in response to criticism by the Independent Citizen Initiative (2006) of the insurgents' use of violence against tribal counterinsurgents in southern Chhattisgarh:

Retribution... is a necessary to control these goons... In principle, we are against death penalty and our new system that would evolve after the seizure of power will scrap death sentence. But now the oppressed people and the revolutionaries are compelled to resort to it for our defence; after all, our very survival is at stake if proven counter-revolutionaries are allowed to create

havoc with people's lives and pass on information about our movements to the police (sic).

Lalu Prasad Yadav, Chief Minister of Bihar from 1990 till 1997, repeated this logic when he recently declared: 'why shouldn't Maoists kill civilians if civilians tip off police about them?' (Times of India 2010j). Yadav goes on to make the distinction between indiscriminate violence against the masses and targeted violence against the insurgents' opponents: 'Maoists never target common people as we have observed during the past several years... It is a different matter that Maoists used to punish those who spied for police'.

There are, however, cases when the violence is used against opponents under the pretence that they are informers. Kamlu Varda, a tribal teacher was killed in April 2011 after a Peoples' Courts (*Jan Adalat*). The Maoist press release claimed that he had been a police informer since 2004 (Sharma 2011b). Nevertheless, his fellow teachers, insisted he 'was killed because he dared to defy' the insurgents. Rather it seems apparent that he was killed for criticising the insurgents in public and objecting to some of their activities, such as taking rice from his school and using its playground for executions. One might see this violence as distasteful, but it can be understood as defending the insurgents' collective interests. That is, it aims to protect the insurgents' ability to control their base area.

On the other hand, the state's violence in insurgent controlled areas is much more indiscriminate. For example, in the summer of 2012, the police shot at a group of people who had gathered for a Maoist organized hearing over a land dispute in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, killing 18 tribal villagers (Sethi 2012). And in 2011 the security forces attacked a village, burnt down 37 houses and raped two women in Dantewara, Chhattisgarh (Sharma 2011a). State terror in southern Chhattisgarh reached its zenith in the middle of the last decade when the scorched earth tactics of a state sponsored counterinsurgent militia, Salwa Judum, displaced over a quarter of a million people (Independent Citizen's Initiative 2006). This is as Kalyvas (2006) would predict: in areas under their control the insurgents have good access to information and can therefore target their violence, whereas the state does not and can only resort to more indiscriminate – and often counterproductive – violence.

In some situations insurgent violence crosses the blurred boundary between private and collective interests. For example, in the late 1990s there were cases of insurgents killing their comrades in order to claim financial rewards from the Andhra Pradesh Government. In 1998, Somla Naik, a PWG member of a guerrilla squad in Nalgonda, killed four sleeping comrades, including her commander, in order to claim a 340,000 rupees (£4,250) reward (Iyengar 1998a). Ten days later, Jadalū Nagaraju, another PWG cadre, killed the Karimnagar PWG district committee secretary in order to collect a reward of one million rupees (£12,500), after which he was presented at a press conference beside Andhra Pradesh's Home Minister and Director General of Police (Times of India 1998a). There are also cases where the insurgents have killed people who have brought attention their comrades' financial interests to public attention. In 2011 Niyamat Ansari, a social activist, was killed by the insurgents days after making allegations of corruption involving his colleagues, as well as state officials and private contractors in Latehar, Jharkhand (Balchand 2011). Private interests do not just involve to money, sometimes they are related to love. For example, in 2011 in Ranchi, Jharkhand, the CPI (Maoist) shot dead a young computer engineer who was, according to the local police, the boyfriend of a women who was having an affair with a local Maoist area commander (Lal 2011a).

It should be noted, however, that the insurgents attempt to dissociate themselves from acts of violence that do not fit into the logic of serving the insurgent organisation's collective interests. As politburo member Misir Besra says 'mistakes have certainly been made — but they were not the decisions of the party... If civilians are killed for no reason, we do not think that is right and we also admit our mistakes to say that this will not be repeated' (Misra 2008). Indeed, on several occasions the insurgents have apologised when people have been erroneously killed. For example, in 2011, the CPI-Maoist's Bihar-Jharkhand-north Chhattisgarh-Uttar Pradesh Regional Committee stated that a 'lower level committee' had committed a 'mistake' by executing Niyamat Ansari and 'apologized' for it (Chatterjee 2011). In 2007 Ganapathy (2007: 68), the CPI (Maoist) General Secretary, apologised for two accounts of errant violence that had recently occurred due to bad information: 'Deaths of members of the marriage party returning from Gadchiroli or of the traders in Kanker were unfortunate incidents that occurred due to mistaken identity'. He goes on to say that

‘No revolutionary would ever think of committing such attacks on innocent people’ (ibid). This demonstrates that the insurgents do distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate use of violence. What is more, it underlines that point that the insurgent leaders do realise that indiscriminate violence against civilians in areas under their control is counterproductive (see Kalyvas 2006).

Bandits or state builders?

The Minister of Home Affairs has referred to the insurgents as ‘simply bandits’ (Times of India 2009c). Various figures have been given as estimates of the insurgents’ annual income. Chhattisgarh Director General of Police Vishwa Ranjan claimed, based on captured cashbooks and other documents, that throughout India the insurgents generated 20 billion rupees per year (about £240 million) (Times of India 2009j). Other sources suggest that the figure is closer to 15 billion rupees (£180 million) (Satapathy, Ojha and Mandal 2010). These amounts are portrayed by the Indian press as being surprising large – one article referred to ‘the mid-sized corporation called the Maoist empire’ and compared its turnover with companies such as Exide and Hindustan Motors (ibid). Nevertheless, it should be noted that these figures are just a fraction of the Indian state’s Gross Domestic Product, which was over one trillion pounds in 2010 (World Bank 2012).

The insurgents resort to various tactics in order to generate their income. These include bank robberies. For example, in 2008 suspected that CPI (Maoist) activists looted more than 50 million rupees (about £600,000) from an armoured van belonging to ICICI Bank that was travelling from Jamshedpur to Ranchi in Jharkhand (Ojha 2008). The vast majority of the Maoists’ income, however, comes from their ability to charge a variety of economic actors for carrying out business in areas under their control. As Home Minister P Chidambaram points out, ‘We must remember, even a small contractor is compelled to pay protection money to Maoists. You can sympathise (with him) or criticise him, but he is not giving (money) out of love but since he has no other option’ (Sharma 2011g).

At the lowest level rural local classes are expected to ‘voluntarily’ donate two days income per year to the insurgents (Kishenji in Mittal 2009). The insurgents also coerce government employees into paying them a proportion of their wages. Dipak

Majhi, a primary school teacher in Koraput, Orissa explained: 'I deposit Rs 100 (about £1) every month at a spot in the forest, otherwise they may burn down my house' (Varma 2009). When the plains of Bihar were under insurgent control, landlords paid protection money. Initially the landlords raised their own private armies of Sena to fight the insurgents, but according to the Home Commissioner for Bihar and local police, after the insurgents demonstrated that they were a force to be reckoned with many landlords agreed to pay them large sums in 'protection money' (Times of India 1988b: 17). As Nununu Sharma, a landlord from Jehnabad, stated in 1988: 'We have to protect ourselves against the Naxalites. Either we pay them handsomely or arm ourselves. For peace it is better to pay them' (ibid).

In the hilly, forested areas of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand the insurgents control the market for forest produce, especially *Tendu Patta*, the leaves used to wrap traditional *beedi* cigarettes. Only those forest traders approved by the insurgents – based on the price they pay to tribal collectors and the levy they pay to the insurgents – are permitted to operate. It is estimated that the sale value of the *Tendu* market controlled by insurgents is worth 5 billion rupees (£60 million) and the insurgents take a cut of between five and ten per cent (Sharma 2011d; also see Suykens 2010). The insurgents are said to take a share of the profits from illicit trade in teak (Ray 2007), cannabis (Mishra 2009; Times of India 2011j) and opium in areas under their control (Thakur 2009a; Times of India 2010e). They also charge building contractors working on government-funded projects in areas under their control (see Shah 2006). In 2009 the insurgents destroyed a construction company's machinery and kidnapped six guards working for them in Jamui, Bihar, after the owner refused to pay protection money (Prasad 2009).

The most important source of protection money is the large industries operating in insurgent controlled areas. As former home secretary GK Pillai put it: 'Many industries in Maoist areas are forced to buy peace with leftwing (sic) extremists due to an insecure environment' (Sharma 2011f). This is not a new phenomenon. In the early 1990s the police found documents indicating that Ballarpur Paper Mill in eastern Maharashtra paid 5 million rupees (£62,500) each year in 'taxes' to the insurgents (Sirendran 1992). This money allowed the paper mill's employees to carry on with

their business unhindered. According to the District Collector⁵ at them time, until a couple of years ago ‘there were numerous complaints by the mill officials and contractors of their goods being destroyed by the Naxalites and their men being beaten up. Now, there are no more complaints’ (ibid).

The largest source of income for the insurgents is the mining industry. Large companies mine and process iron ore, bauxite and coal in areas of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and Orissa that are under insurgent control. The insurgents have the capacity to severely disrupt these operations. For example, a senior official working for the National Mineral Development Corporation claimed that in 2009 the Bailadila mines in Dantewara, Chhattisgarh lost 4.8 billion rupees (£60 million) as a result of Maoist interference that included attacks on railways tracks, trains and strikes: ‘In 2009-10, dispatch of iron ore was affected for 80 days. We were able to do only 60% of normal business’ (Ghosh 2010). It is common knowledge in these areas that mining companies pay the insurgents large amounts of protection money. It recently became clear – in part as a result of wikileaks revelations – that ESSAR, an Indian conglomerate, regularly pays the insurgents (Times of India 2011e). In 2005 ESSAR opened a 267 kilometre pipeline to transport iron ore slurry from Dantewara in Chhattisgarh, through Malkangiri in Orissa, to the port of Vishakhapatnam. The pipeline runs through areas where the Maoist insurgents have a strong presence and was previously subject to a number of attacks. Vishwa Ranjan, who served as Chhattisgarh’s Director General of Police from 2007 until 2011, states that ‘the company’s security officer suggested we raise a battalion that they would fund’ but he ‘turned down the suggestion because a force cannot be raised for a private company’ (Sharma 2011f). With the Indian state unable to guarantee security, it seems apparent that ESSAR cut a deal with the insurgents.⁶

⁵ District Collector is the chief administrative and revenue officer in a district.

⁶ The income from mining does not just come from legitimate companies. For example, in Jharkhand the Maoists charged protection money for illegal mining operations that also benefitted the erstwhile Chief Minister, Madhu Koda, bureaucrats, and mining companies (Thakur 2009b).

Do these activities – in which the insurgents sell protection to various economic actors operating within areas under their control – indicate that the insurgents are bandits or gangsters? Above, we suggested that, contra Tilly (1985), there is a qualitative difference between the state building enterprises and the gangsters. While bandits are motivated by the private concerns – the accumulation of personal wealth – state-building enterprises pursue collective interests. As pointed out in chapter four, there is no indication that the insurgent leaders have gained financially from their participation in the insurgency. They sleep in rudimentary camps in the jungle or travel between safe houses in urban areas. The insurgent leaders certainly do not live in a manner that one would expect of mafia ‘Godfathers’ to live. The CPI (Maoist) leaders attempt to legitimize their fundraising activities by explaining that it is used for collective rather than private means. Kishenji (quoted in Mittal 2009), the CPI (Maoist) General Secretary, claims: ‘We collect taxes from the corporates and big bourgeoisie, but it’s not any different from the corporate sector funding the political parties. We have a half-yearly audit. Not a single paisa is wasted’. It seems unlikely that gangsters or organized criminals would feel the need to explain their accounting practices to the media.

In reality, as the strength and size of the insurgent organization has increased, the insurgent leaders have experienced problems related to the discipline of the cadre at the local level. Misir Besra, a politburo member, recently stated that ‘local level splits are happening because of corruption — because of money. The self-contradictions are arising because of the stealing of money by people’ (Misra 2008).⁷ On the whole, however, insurgents who want to pursue their own private interests leave the insurgent organisation, often resulting in violent retribution. In Aurangabad, Bihar, the insurgents killed a former colleague for extracting money in the name of their organisation in 2010 (Times of India 2010k). In 2011, it was reported that Nageshwar Ganju, a former Maoist who, according to the police, left the insurgents to lead a group that ‘was largely involved in extortion, kidnapping and levy collection’ was killed by the insurgents on the borders of Hazaribagh and Chatra district in Jarkhand (Times of India 2011f). In the same year the *Times of India* reported the death of a

⁷ Although, as we noted above this is not dissimilar to the local level corruption that occurs among state officials (Gupta 1995).

man in Ranchi, Jharkhand, who had been very active in the Maoists in the early 2000s but left the insurgents to join a criminal gang as a ‘shooter’ (Times of India 2011i). And in 2011, in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, the police arrested a former PWG insurgent who was ‘extorting money from government officials posing as secretary of the Maoist party’ (Times of India 2011d). The fact that insurgents leave the Maoist organization in order to pursue their own personal financial interests, in spite of the very real risk of retribution, indicates that opportunities for private wealth accumulation within the CPI (Maoist) are limited.

An interesting recent phenomenon that underlines the difference between the insurgents and gangsters is the rise of ‘fake Maoists’ – that is, criminal gangs that have never had any connection with the insurgents but extort money in their name. Below are three examples that occurred in 2011 in Orissa: seven youths were arrested for extorting money from vehicle owners while posing as Maoists in Rayagada district (Times of India 2011b); in Koraput, a man who falsely claimed to be representing the insurgents was arrested for trying to extort money from the owner of a stone crushing unit, threatening ‘dire consequences’ if he did not pay them 20,000 rupees (£250) (Times of India 2011c); and in Jharsuguda, district a gang of 12 ‘fake Maoists’, who robbed people in their houses at gunpoint, were arrested (Times of India 2011h).

International links and weapons procurement

The extent to which the insurgents have links with external donors is an important issue. The state has consistently tried to discredit the insurgents by linking them with foreign patrons. As Ganapathy, General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist), laments, ‘Trying to prove the involvement of a foreign hand in every just and democratic struggle, branding those fighting for the liberation of the oppressed as traitors to the country, is part of the psychological-war of the reactionary rulers’ (quoted in Pandita 2009). If it were the case that there were strong links between foreign donors and the insurgents it would suggest that the insurgents were, to misuse Robert Jackson’s term, ‘quasi’ state builders. That is, the insurgents’ success would not be the product of their internally generated capacity to control base areas, but the result of foreign support, in terms of money or weapons. As such, it would severely damage the CPI (Maoist)’s claims of legitimacy.

Obviously the insurgents' ideological inspiration comes from China. In the 1960s and 1970s they used the slogan 'China's chairman is our China' and they received moral support from China in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Mohanty 1977; Banerjee 2008). For example, *People's Daily* (1967: 20), the organ of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee reported in 1967 that 'A peal of spring thunder has crashed over the land of India'. Nevertheless, the Chinese government do not assist the contemporary Maoist insurgents. Home Affairs Minister P Chidambaram recently informed Parliament: 'We have no evidence on reports that China is lending support to them [the Maoists]' (Times of India 2010l).

Pakistan is generally perceived as India's biggest enemy. There have been some half-hearted efforts to link the Maoist insurgents to Pakistan and, specifically, the Inter-Services Intelligence (Times of India 2010m). Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the insurgents receive support from which. Indeed, it should be noted that areas affected by Maoist insurgents are in eastern and central India, along way from the border with Pakistan. Although it is interesting to note that local police in southern Chhattisgarh refer to the insurgent controlled areas as 'Pakistan' (Pandita 2012)!

Maoists are now a powerful political force in neighbouring Nepal. But there is no evidence to suggest the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) provide the CPI (Maoist) with assistance. The insurgency in Nepal started in 1996, well after the insurgency in India, and in its early days the Indian insurgents provided their Nepalese comrades with inspiration and support. Indeed, insurgent activity was already common on the Nepalese border in the early 1980s (Times of India 1983b). After the CPN (Maoist)'s victory in 2006, they have sought to distance themselves from the CPI (Maoist) in order to retain good relations with the Indian state. Since then, leading members of the CPI (Maoist) have publicly criticised the CPN (Maoist)'s policies (see, for example, Azad 2008).

There are also suggestions that the insurgents had links with the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, which, it should be noted, was strongly influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology. The General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist), Ganapathy, stated: 'there is no

relation at all between our party and the LTTE', although he does admit that several former Tamil Tigers provided the insurgents with 'initial training in the last quarter of the 1980s' (Ganapathy 2009). This is corroborated by several reports in the early 1990s that the insurgents were being trained in the use of arms and explosives by the LTTE (Mani 1990; Times of India 1993c; Balakrishnan 1993).

This issue of external support is most clear in weapons provision. Weapons are a crucial resource that is needed to fight a Protracted People's War, but they are not readily available from the local population in the same way that food or shelter is. There have been suggestions in the press that some arms have been purchased from the Tamil Tigers – and these are consistent with what is known about the relationship between the LTTE and the Maoists (Mishra 2000). The insurgents also have the capacity to produce their own weapons. In the past this was limited to what are referred to as 'country made' guns (Times of India 1993b). There have been claims that the insurgents now have the capability to produce much more sophisticated arms (Times of India 2010b). It is apparent, however, that the vast majority of weapons used by the insurgents have been captured from the police and paramilitaries during insurgent raids. In a booklet published to mark the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army's tenth anniversary, the location of attacks, the number of losses on either side, and the numbers and types of weapons and ammunition captured are noted (CPI [Maoist] 2010d). Some insurgent raids are motivated by the express desire to capture the contents of police stations armouries. In 2004 the insurgents attacked the district armoury, five police stations, and the jail in Koraput, Orissa. Following an operation lasting six hours, they had seized 1,000 sophisticated guns and 1,000 other weapons estimated to worth over 500 million rupees (£6 million) (Times of India 2004a). In February 2006, the Maoists killed eight paramilitary policemen and looted 14 tonnes of explosives from the Bailadila mines in Dantewara, Chhattisgarh (Ghosh 2010). In 2008, Maoists killed 13 policemen and looted around 1,200 arms and 100,000 bullets, from the Nayagarh police armoury in Orissa (Mishra and Mohanty 2012). In 2009 the insurgents attacked a mine in Koraput, Orissa, shot 10 police and looted large amounts of explosives and detonators (Hindu 2009a).

It seems apparent that the insurgency is overwhelmingly a home grown affair. The insurgents' ability to control areas of India does not come from the support that they

receive from outside donors, but from their capacity to generate resources within the areas that they control.

MAOIST INSURGENCY AS DUAL SOVEREIGNTY

What, in practice, does a state building enterprise do? Weber's famously claimed that a state is the exclusive enforcer of regulations in a particular territory, backed up with a monopoly of the legitimate means of violence (Weber 1964: 324-373). A key aspect of statehood in the Weberian conceptualization is exclusivity of jurisdiction, that is, the extent to which the state's decisions can and are contradicted by another authority. Nevertheless, it has been noted that in reality this is often not how sovereignty manifests itself in many states outside of Western Europe. In such cases sovereignty is not derived from the ability to carry out various functions of state, the cooperation of the population, and control of natural resources, but from the state's internationally recognised right to exercise control over a territory (Jackson 1991; Ruggie 1993; Reno 1999). As Jackson (1991) points out, many states in the Global South are in fact 'quasi states', that rely on external support rather than internal legitimacy for their status.

The Indian state's 'infrastructural power' (Mann 1984) – its ability to penetrate society and realize its objectives – has historically been very limited in rural areas. On the plains, where caste-based social structure predominated, many of the functions of the state – such as law and order – were dealt with by upper castes (Moore 1968; Myrdal 1968; Kohli 1990). Indeed, when the insurgents first started gaining influence on the plains of Bihar in the 1980s, the dominant castes did not turn to the police but instead formed their own private armies or *Sena* (Times of India 1988a and b). This indicates that the state did not have a monopoly over the means of violence. What is more, the hilly, forested areas of central where tribal communities lived had historically been buffer areas in between princely states (Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). Tribal communities paid tribute to rulers of the plains, but these areas were largely unruled by states. As a result, after independence the Congress Party's hegemony was based on what Bayart (1993) calls 'elite accommodation'. That is, in order to retain a reasonable semblance of sovereignty – the exclusive control over territory and people – the Congress Party made informal deals with influential local big men who controlled 'vote banks', used in its original sense to describe the political influence

exerted by a notables – often upper caste patrons or tribal headmen – over lower caste and tribal clients (Srinivas 1955; Kohli 1990; Guha 2007b).

What is more, irregular warfare alters sovereignty in a crucial way because the state's monopoly of violence is broken by a territorially based armed challenge. This leads to a situation in which there is 'dual sovereignty' (Tilly 1978). Kalyvas (2006) suggests that the simplest way to understand the division of sovereignty is to distinguish between zones of incumbent control, where government troops and administrators are able to move safely day and night, zones of insurgent control where the government troops are unable to move safely and administrators are unable to perform basic functions, and zones in which control is contested.

The conceptualization of the Maoist insurgency as a situation of dual sovereignty is perhaps most lucidly illustrated by importance attached by both sides to the flying of flags on symbolically important days such as Republic Day or Independence Day.⁸ The insurgents often organise processions and fly black or red own flags in areas under their influence. For example, on Independence Day 2009 insurgents went on processions with black flags in various areas of West Midnapur, West Bengal, and in one village the police reported that over 5,000 people watched the hoisting of a black flag (Times of India 2009f). It was reported that black flags were flown over schools in areas of Bihar on Republic Day 2011 (Times of India 2011a) and in Orissa on Independence Day in 2010 (Mohanty 2010). On the other hand, the state also attempts to assert its authority by raising the national flag in areas of contested sovereignty on national days. In 2011, the Orissa state airlifted ministers in helicopters to insurgent affected areas to hoist the Tricolour during Republic Day celebrations (Satapathy 2011). On the same day, the Indian Police Service make a big show of flying the Union flag from Rohtas fort, Bihar, which had until recently been a stronghold of the insurgents (Chamaria 2011).

⁸ Republic Day and Independence Days are celebrated in government institutions such as schools with flag hoisting ceremonies.

Zones of insurgent control

On a day-to-day basis dual sovereignty manifests itself in the state's limited ability to exert its power in areas where the insurgents operate. Some areas of India are zones of insurgent control where the state is more or less totally absent. The most notable example is an area of 4,000 square kilometres centred on the Abujhmad forest in southern Chhattisgarh. Brigadier (Retired) B K Ponwar, the director of the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare College in Chhattisgarh, recently suggested that it is 'a liberated zone and under the total influence of Naxalites' (Hindustan Times 2009). Ponwar pointed out that 'there is no police station in the region, and the Naxalites have put up explosives and landmines at all entry routes'. A *Times of India* journalist who visited Gadchiroli, a neighboring district in Maharashtra, noted that

security forces have avoided visiting these hamlets for long. The villagers could not recall seeing a police search party or an operation in the adjoining jungles in a long time. On the other hand, Naxals have been holding regular meetings with the villagers and also using them for safe shelter with no intelligence leaking from here. Police rarely have a sympathiser in such hamlets where rebel influence reigns supreme (Bose 2011).

Obviously, the police have no capacity to enforce the law in this region, which also includes contiguous areas on the other side of the state borders with Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. For example, in 2011 when the insurgents executed seven men in a People's Courts in the Abujhmad, no First Information Report⁹ was filed because, as the *Times of India* noted, 'the area is out of bounds for the Indian state' (Sharma 2011b). It is not the state but the insurgents who have exclusivity of jurisdiction in their base areas. As the Ministry of Home Affairs (2005: 44) notes People's Courts 'supplant the local State machinery and assert [the insurgents'] hegemony over rural tracks'.

Currently, the only other area in which the insurgents have more or less complete control is parts of West Jharkhand. For example, the Sarju area of Latehar district was described by the *Times of India* (2010a) as a 'state within a state' citing the example

⁹ A First Information Report (or FIR) is a written document prepared by police when they receive information about an alleged offence.

that although the police lodged First Information Reports against residents who were suspected of being insurgents in 2003, they have until now been unable to enter the area. Several other areas have been under more or less total insurgent control at some point over the past three decades – although this is no longer the case. The most notable examples are the plains of Central Bihar until the mid to late 1990s (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006), parts of northern Telengana in Andhra Pradesh until mid 2000s (Balagopal 2006a) and the Jangal Mahal area of West Bengal until recently (Harriss 2011; Mahato and Ganguly 2010). The vast majority of areas in which the insurgents are active – the 40,000 square kilometres cited by the Ministry of Home Affairs – are areas of contested sovereignty in which the insurgents and the state fight for control.

Areas of contested sovereignty

In other parts of southern Chhattisgarh there are fortified police stations but the fact that the police are unable to move safely beyond their confines demonstrates that the state does not have control of these areas. In 2011 a *Times of India* journalist visiting the police station in Kishtaram, Dantewara district was told by a resident police officer that they never venture out:

Do you see that hut?' he says, pointing 100m away. 'It is beyond our reach. We cannot go there'. Then, shifting his gaze to the concertina wire and sand bags just 10m away, the middle aged policeman continues, 'This is the boundary of our existence' (Sharma 2011e).

The only way to transport policemen and their supplies between Kishtaram police station and areas of India that are under the state's control is by helicopter. The danger that state forces face in the surrounding areas was demonstrated in 2007, when 12 police were killed in an ambush while they were travelling by road to Kishtaram in order to rescue five of their colleagues who were suffering from cerebral malaria (Mahajan 2007).

Similarly, the police camp at Jagargunda, Dantewara, was built to protect a large Salwa Judum (counterinsurgent militia) settlement. There are, however, no other state forces within a 15 kilometres and 'the village-cum-camp became an island in the middle of Maoist controlled territory' (Sharma 2010). Supplies and troops are transported by helicopter (Sethi 2010). The camp 'inmates' – the supporters of Salwa Judum militia – are unable to leave in order to cultivate their fields because of the

threat of violent retribution at the hands of the insurgents. Instead, they rely on state handouts to survive, which are transported every six months by road:

a convoy of trucks laden with food rations, painstakingly travelling 60 km in 10 hours, trailing behind landmine clearing devices and earth-moving vehicles (meant to fill trenches dug up by Maoists). Meanwhile, nearly a thousand policemen spread out into the jungle to protect the convoy from Maoist attacks (Sharma 2010).

There are various areas in India where the police are unwilling to venture out of their police stations at night or where they will only go out during the day in unmarked vehicles wearing civilian clothing. For example, it was reported in 2002 that most police stations in southern Orissa ‘resorted to working during the day. With sunset, police stations, particularly in the interior areas, are downing their shutter to reopen the next day’ (Satapathy 2002). The PWG had recently attacked and killed Jajati Sahoo, a local politician representing the Biju Janata Dal Party – at the time part of the ruling coalition in the state – in Rayagada district. On the night of his death, Sahoo had called the police station, which was situated 2 kilometres from his house, on several occasions. Although the police had new vehicles they did not come, and he was dragged out of his house, shot and hacked to death. The next day, when the police visited the scene, they arrived in an unmarked taxi wearing plain clothes. In a television interview the officer in charge of the police station defended his actions, saying that the police had been ‘instructed by the authorities not to venture out in the night’ (ibid). This is not an isolated case. For example, in 2010 in West Midnapore, West Bengal, it was reported that police stations were locked at night and that policemen did not venture out even if there is a murder (Mahato and Ganguly 2010), and in areas of both southern Chhattisgarh and eastern Maharashtra the insurgents have been forced to shed their uniforms and marked vehicles when on patrol (Times of India 2005).

Violence against the state

The insurgents assert their control over the state using violence and the credible threat of violence. The most obvious method is to ambush state officials, and such attacks most often involve a combination of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and automatic guns (Lal 2011b). The most notable recent attack was in April 2010, when

a group of paramilitary police that were on an ‘area domination exercise’ in Dantewara, Chhattisgarh, were attacked, resulting in 76 deaths. This was the heaviest loss even incurred by Indian security forces in a single incident in more than six decades of counterinsurgency in Kashmir, Punjab, the Northeast and central India. It is not, however, an isolated incident, nor limited to this region. Attacks on police as they travel through insurgent affected areas are a regular occurrence. There are many more examples from southern Chhattisgarh; in Malkangiri, Orissa, 38 police were shot dead while on a combing operation in 2008; in 2009 16 police were killed in an ambush in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra; and, in 2012, 13 police were killed by a landmine blast in Garhwa, Jharkhand. It should be noted, however, that the police are not always safe when they are in their camps. For example, in 2010 the insurgents attacked Silda police camp in West Midnapore, West Bengal, and killed 24 policemen (Mahato and Mandal 2010). In 1997 16 police were killed when their police station was attacked by insurgents – eight while they were sleeping – in Khamman, Andhra Pradesh (Iyengar 1997).

Such attacks have engendered fear in the many of India’s counterinsurgency forces. In 2011, 27 policemen in West Midnapore, West Bengal took their commander hostage when he ordered them to travel through landmined terrain to a police camp thirty kilometres away (Times of India 2011c). There are also numerous episodes in which police have refused to be posted to areas affected by the insurgency. In 1991, 40 rank and file (*jawans*) from the special armed forces and 30 constables of the state police who were stationed in undivided Bastar resigned in response to increased insurgent violence, specifically, a landmine attack that killed 8 of their colleagues (Times of India 1991). In 2009 the Chhattisgarh government dismissed 13 police for not reporting for duty in insurgent affected areas of Rajnandgaon district after they had undergone training at the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare College in Kanker district of the state (Times of India 2009g). These vignettes underline the extent to which the police – who are supposed to enforce the state’s monopoly of violence – fear the insurgents’ violence.

Law and order

Another indication of the limits to the Indian state’s sovereignty is that when the state has managed to arrest insurgents, it has not always been able to keep them in captivity

for long. The insurgents have used two main tactics to subvert the state's judicial processes. One is to attack jails and free the prisoners. The most dramatic example of this tactic was in 2005, when following a gunfight outside the central jail in Jehnabad, Bihar, insurgents released 389 prisoners (Bhatia 2006). But this was not an isolated example. In 2006, the insurgents attacked a jail in Gajapati district, Orissa and freed 50 prisoners in an operation that lasted more than two hours (Times of India 2006). In 2007, an imprisoned Maoist 'overpowered a jail guard in Dantewada jail in Chhattisgarh, snatched his service weapon, and managed to set free 294 inmates, nearly 110 of who were Maoists or Naxal activists' (Tiwari 2007). In 2009 the insurgents attacked a court in Lakhisarai, Bihar and freed Misir Besra, a member of the CPI (Maoist) politburo (Reddy 2009). These raids are not just a recent phenomenon, nor are they limited to provincial backwaters of India. For example, in 1984, PWG cadres raided the prison wing of Osmania Hospital in Hyderabad and freed their leader Kondapalli Seetharamaiah (Singh 1999).

The second tactic is to kidnap various people – often government officials – and to offer to release them in exchange for captive insurgents. There have been several recent high profile cases in Orissa. In April 2012 two Italian tourists – the first non-Indians to be kidnapped by the insurgents – were released in exchange for five Maoists, one of which was the wife of the Orissa state commander (Times of India 2012b). In February 2011, Maoist leader Ganti Prasadam was freed from Ongole prison in order to secure the release of kidnapped Malkangiri District Collector R Vineel Krishna (Pattnaik 2011). But this strategy is not recent, nor limited to Orissa. In Lalgargh in 2010, when 190 suspected insurgent sympathisers were arrested, 23 of them were soon released to secure the freedom of an abducted police officer (Mahato and Ganguly 2010). And in 1987 the Andhra Pradesh Government released seven People's War Group leaders in exchange for seven kidnapped Indian Administrative Service officers (Kumar 1988). These are just the most notable examples – kidnappings have taken place on a regular basis since the mid 1980s. The manner in which the state is forced to bargain with the insurgents over who it can and cannot imprison underlines the state's lack of control in many parts of the country.

Benevolent functions of the state

In areas controlled by the insurgents, other state officials are also, on the whole, unable to operate. In December 2011, the Union Minister for Rural Development stated that:

In the heart of the country, these two places (west Jharkhand and south Chhattisgarh) are liberated zones. Our officers – be it deputy commissioners, block development officers or anganwadi [neo-natal] workers and health employees – don't venture in these places of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The public distribution system is not working (Ojha 2011).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the insurgents undertake various programmes that mimic and to a large extent surpass the efforts of the state. In areas under their control the insurgents have enforced a minimum wage, increased prices for agricultural produce, undertaken land reforms, improved access to forests and worked to reduce caste abuse (see Planning Commission 2008). Many of their programs are actually in line with the Constitution of India and other legislation and policies, but due to the strength of vested interests and the lack of infrastructural power in many rural areas, the state has been unable to enforce these laws.

In areas where sovereignty is contested, government employees and insurgents sometimes form unexpected alliances. There are cases where state officials are able to operate but follow the orders of the insurgents rather than those of the state. In 2011, Lalan Kumar, a Congress politician in Bihar, said that in several districts state-employed workers were taking orders from the insurgents: 'Even 10% of the recommendations of the MPs and legislators are not being implemented, while all the schemes mooted by Maoists are being adhered to' (Times of India 2011k). What is more, when the insurgents agree with the state's development program, they can be better implemented in areas where the insurgents have influence. Cabinet Secretary K M Chandrasekhar points out the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) scheme – the government's flagship welfare program that provides guaranteed paid work to the rural poor – is actually more effectively implemented in areas where the Maoists have a stronger influence (Mohan 2010c). It is apparent that, just as the Indian state does not have a monopoly of the means of coercion in insurgent affected parts of the country, it also does not have a monopoly of the means of administration.

The world's biggest democracy?

In areas controlled by the insurgents, the Indian state's democratic processes do not function well. The Maoists consistently call for elections to be boycotted. For example, a press release before the 2009 elections stated: 'Parliament is an instrument of oppression and terror in the hands of the reactionary ruling classes, Boycott the parliamentary election! Advance the people's war to establish organs of genuine people's revolutionary-democratic power!!' (Azad 2009). At the local level, the insurgents put up posters imploring people not to vote. In 2009 in Garhwa, Jharkhand the insurgents put up handwritten posters stating 'No vote for Capitalists. No vote for a government that allows police to kill innocent people in fake encounters' (Times of India 2009k), and in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, posters stated that 'In Bastar, parliamentary democracy, Indian constitution, social activist Anna Hazare's Lokpal bill, all are not even of the worth of toilet paper' (sic, Sharma 2011c).

The boycotts are backed up by violence and threats of violence that disrupt the democratic process. The local population is coerced into not voting. The insurgents threaten to chop off the fingers or hands of those who have the indelible ink marks from having voted (Hindustan Times 2009). When a journalist asked a local women in an insurgent controlled areas of Bijapur, Chhattisgarh if she was going to vote in a 2011 by-election she replied '*dada logon ne mana kiya hai*' [the Maoists will not allow us to] (Sharma 2011c). What is more, in areas where the insurgents are active, politicians are often unable to campaign. For example, it was reported that, in the run up to the 2009 election, none of the seven candidates dared to campaign in the Abujhmad forest. Shankar Sodhi, the Congress candidate in Bastar, said: 'Campaign in Abujhmad? No way! Everybody knows the situation there' (Hindustan Times 2009). The situation is similar in areas of Jharkhand. In East Singhbhum, for example, campaigning is limited to the towns, and when candidates travel through the countryside they try to do so incognito. Pradeep Kumar Balmuchu, and incumbent Member of Parliament and the leader of the Indian National Congress in Jharkhand, admitted, 'I prefer motorcycle over SUVs [Sports Utility Vehicles] to campaign in my

constituency as rebels have much influence in the area and threat to our life is always exists' (sic, *ibid*).¹⁰

Similarly, election officials are not able to operate unhindered in areas under insurgent control. Elections are accompanied by violence in many areas – the insurgents attack and sometimes kidnap election officials, as well as destroying electronic voting machines and other poll material. For example, on the first day of Parliamentary (*Lok Sabha*) elections in 2009 the insurgents killed 18 people: five election officials died in a landmine explosion in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh; a bus carrying Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on election duty was attacked in Latehar, Jharkhand killing nine; in Gaya, Bihar, two police were shot outside a polling booth and the electronic voting machines were stolen, and four election officials were kidnapped in the same district; and the Maoists set fire to several polling booths, as well electronic voting machines and other poll material in Orissa's Malkangiri district (Times of India 2009b).

Pamed, a police camp in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, is another small island of sovereignty in the middle of a Maoist controlled area – on the border of Andhra Pradesh – that is only accessible by forest paths. It is described by the *Times of India* as 'a ramshackle camp perched on a hillock, tetering (sic) in frightening isolation, surrounded by the forest and Maoist guerrillas, with the next police station at Usoor or Basguda, nearly 50 kilometres away' (Sharma 2011c). During the 2009 elections, the state had to fly election officials in from the district headquarters using a Mi17 helicopter. Seven polling centres that were supposed to be situated in seven different locations over a 25 kilometre radius in the surrounding areas were all placed in one school building that lay opposite the police camp. In such situations, voting levels are obviously very low.

¹⁰ The movements of democratically elected politicians movements are, in some cases, restricted outside of election times in areas of contested sovereignty. For example in June 2002, when the PWG threatened to kill Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly in Bastar and Surjuga divisions of Chhattisgarh in response to the death of one of their military commanders, the police could not guarantee their security and the Chief Minister ordered politicians to stay in the state capital, Raipur (Times of India 2002).

At Pamed, out of 5646 voters, just 126 voted, a poll percentage of just 2.23%. Unsurprisingly, all 126 voters were those who lived down the lane of the police camp, and were listed in the main booth. They voted but left without the mandatory blue ink mark on their finger. ‘They might get into trouble if we mark them,’ said Ganpat, one of the poll officials, ‘besides the problem here is not bogus voting, but zero voting’ (Sharma 2011c).

The situation is similar in small areas of Jharkhand and Maharashtra. For example, not a single vote was cast in the Sarju area during the 2009 Lok Sabha elections (Times of India 2010a), and there were also areas of Gadchiroli where the state could not conduct elections in 2009 (Bose 2011).

Nevertheless, for all their proclaimed aversion to parliamentary democracy, there are, cases where the insurgents interfere with the functioning of the democratic system in unexpected ways. For example, the insurgents have cooperated with ruling political parties in various states at various times. When Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR), the founder of the Telugu Desam Party, was attempting to overthrow Congress hegemony in Andhra Pradesh in the early 1980s he referred to the Maoist insurgents as ‘patriots’ (*Desh Bhaktalu*) (Pandita 2012). After NTR came to power he clamped down on the insurgents, who were then courted by Congress. In the early 1990s it was reported that the Peoples’ War Group were helping the Telugu Desam Party campaign in areas of Andhra Pradesh (Singh and Dasgupta. 1991). In Bihar, the erstwhile MCC and then the CPI (Maoist) has consistently been accused helping the Rashtrya Janata Dal during elections. In both the 1995 and 2004 elections it is alleged that the insurgents only enforced the election boycott in areas where the party was struggling (Sengupta 1997; Times of India 2004b). The CPI (Maoist) interfered in polls in Jharkhand on behalf of the Jharkhand Mukti Morch and Rashtrya Janata Dal parties in the 2009 election. In areas where the insurgents were close to these parties’ candidates – some of who were, in fact, former insurgents – they stopped other parties from campaigning, kidnapped other candidates and even knocked on the doors to campaign for their favored candidates (Das 2009). Jairam Ramesh, the Union Rural Development Minister, recently stated ‘that Jharkhand is probably the only place where I fail to draw line between the Maoists and politicians’ (Times of India 2012a). There is evidence that interference also occurs in Village Councils (*Gram Panchayat*)

elections. For example, in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, 582 out of 906 of *Gram Panchayat* candidates were elected unopposed in 2010, reportedly due to the insurgents intimidating rivals of their preferred candidates to step down (Bose 2010). In the same district in 2012, the insurgents forced several elected *Gram Panchayat* members that they did not approve of to resign (Bose 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper sought to look beyond Manichean understandings of Maoist insurgency in India, which either portray the insurgents as gangsters or Gandhians. Instead, we use a combination of insurgent documents and newspaper articles to understand the institutional context in which CPI (Maoist) operate. I argue that the insurgency should be conceptualized as a state building enterprise rather than a mafia or social movement. The insurgents' strategic aim is to seize state power, but in practice they build up miniature counter states in base areas. This occurs in areas where the infrastructural power of the state has historically been weak. The base areas undermine the sovereignty of the Indian state, resulting in a situation of dual sovereignty. This is remarkable when one compares the respective resources available to the state and the insurgents. The Indian state has a Gross Domestic Product of over one trillion pounds (World Bank 2011) and armed forces of almost 5 million, if we take into account the army, reservists and paramilitaries (Hackett 2010; 359-64), compared to the insurgents' estimated 10,000 armed members and turnover of £235 million. We show how the insurgents' fundraising activities and violence – which are often cited by critics as evidence that the insurgents are bandits or cold-blooded murderers – fit into the logic of state building. That is, they are designed to serve collective interests – to consolidate insurgent rule in base areas – rather than private interests. In practice there is some deviancy at the local level but this is condemned by insurgent leaders. Thus, while the insurgents are often portrayed as lawless and the very antithesis of the state, it can be argued that they actually extend the infrastructural power into areas where it was previously very weak.

Our analysis also calls in question the assumption that India is a sovereign and democratic state. In areas of India where the insurgents are strongest, democratic processes are totally absent as neither election candidates or election officials are able to go there. In other areas, where sovereignty is contested, political parties cut deals

with the insurgents to buy protection and improve their electoral performance. This cooperation should be understood as a process of what the Bayart refers to as 'elite accommodation'. In order to retain a reasonable semblance of sovereignty the state cuts mutually beneficial informal deals with the insurgents to carve out areas of influence – in a manner similar to the way the state cooperated with upper class patrons and tribal headmen who controlled vote banks in the decades after independence. According to Weber's definition, the most important aspect of sovereignty relates to a state's exclusive ability to govern its territory. It is apparent, however, that in parts of India where the insurgents operate the state is totally absent, while in other areas it does not have a monopoly of the means of violence and is unable to enforce its will. Rather, India's claim to sovereignty in these areas is based on its internationally recognised right to govern the territory. In this sense, India, at least in the areas affected by insurgency, resembles what Robert Jackson (1991) refers to as a 'quasi state'. This casts severe doubts on the claim made by P Chidambaram, the Home Affairs Minister, that the state has 'a legitimate right to use as much force as necessary to regain control of areas dominated by Maoists' (Times of India 2010c).

6. The micro level: exploited untouchables and oppressed tribals

INTRODUCTION

Political science accounts of insurgency tend to concentrate on a conflict's master cleavage and the macro level actors – that is, the realm of elites, ideologies and grand politics at which strategy documents, such as the CPI (Maoist)'s program, are formulated (Kalyvas 2006; Walder 2009). Thus, the cross-national datasets used by quantitative studies of civil war code the insurgency as a conflict between the CPI (Maoist) and the Indian state over state power (Gleditsch et al 2002; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). What is more, this focus is implicit in the manner in which many accounts by the media, academics and the state refer to the areas affected by insurgent activity as a 'red corridor', therefore understanding the insurgency as a binary conflict between the state and Maoists over state power (Ahuja and Ganguly 2007; Borooah 2008; Planning Commission of India 2008; Yardley 2009; Debroy 2010; Harriss 2011; see figure one).

As I have already suggested, the macro level is not the only, nor necessarily the most important, level at which an insurgency can be analyzed. The insurgency is not just an enterprise of the upper and dominant caste, middle class politburo members that were covered in chapter four. Insurgents do not live in isolation from the social context in which they operate (Mao 1961; Guevara 1967). The insurgent leaders rely on the local population to provide resources that are crucial to fighting the insurgency, such as food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. The motivations of insurgent supporters cannot simply be understood in terms of the conflict's master cleavage. Rather, insurgency entails a transaction between supra-local and local actors, which enables the latter to benefit from external muscle and a unified organizational structure, and the former to tap into local networks and resources (Kalyvas 2006). It seems apparent, therefore, that a full understanding of insurgency should consider not just macro level insurgents, but also micro level actors who provide mass support, as well as the meso level at which they interact.

Figure 6.1: The Red Corridor

This chapter combines district level data and a variety of qualitative data to understand who the Maoist insurgents' supporters are at the micro level and why they support them. To this end there are four sections. The first combines anthropological accounts of Indian society with more general sociological theories of insurgency to generate testable hypotheses. I then use a unique district level dataset covering the period 1982-2011 to test these hypotheses and demonstrate that the

insurgents have two distinct support bases: in caste based ‘Hindu’ society the probability of insurgency is highest where there are large numbers of exploited untouchable agricultural laborers as predicted by neo-Marxist class analysts, while in tribal areas it is more likely where there is a high proportion of tribal landowning cultivators as predicted by Durkheimian moral economists. Third, we use primary and secondary qualitative data to further examine the dynamics of insurgency in these two separate socioeconomic contexts. This demonstrates that untouchable and tribal support for the insurgents does not just spontaneously manifest itself as a result of their position in social structure, but is a response to collective incentives provided by the insurgents.

EXPLAINING MAOIST INSURGENCY IN INDIA

Hindu society and tribal communities

If Maoism provides a master cleavage around which a variety of actors unite to undertake collective action, we would expect that, in different social contexts distinct causal pathways lead to insurgency. Historically, the greatest social cleavage in South Asia was between communities living on the plains, and those that lived in hilly, forested areas (Béteille 1986; Gell 1997; Xaxa 1999; Padel 2009). Béteille (1986: 311) distinguishes between ‘heterogeneous, differentiated and stratified’ Hindu¹ society and ‘homogenous, undifferentiated and unstratified’ tribal communities.² Gell (1997: 433-34) describes in more detail how caste-based communities that undertake

¹ Béteille is referring to Hindu in social rather than religious terms, that is, as all communities in which there is a caste-based hierarchy justified by ideas of purity and pollution.

² Of course, these categories should be seen as ideal types – abstract models that exaggerate certain essential characteristics – rather than a description of social reality. Indeed, as Sundar (2007) points out, there is some stratification in tribal society at village level, with the headmen, whose power stems from their supposed ability to mediate with the local gods, tending to have more or better land. Acknowledging this does not, however, undermine the crucial point that, in contrast to the rest of India, there was no landowning class distinct from a landless laboring class (Béteille 1986; Xaxa 1999; Padel 2009).

settled agricultural on the plains were ‘three dimensionally hierarchical’ and based on ‘twin pillars of landlordism and officialdom’ in which ‘a dense screen of social barriers and material relationships of clientship and extraction intervened between the very high and the very low, creating the minutely nuanced, infinitely graduated, social hierarchy’. In contrast, tribal societies were ‘hierarchically flat’ as they were ‘founded on the stark opposition of ordinary subjects (the tribes) and the King and his court’ and were distinguished by the absence of intermediary layers between the tribal cultivator and the King.

It is widely recognized that there are two historically disadvantaged groups of communities in India (Government of India 1950; Béteille 1992). The first – untouchables, dalits or Scheduled Castes – exist within Hindu society, at the very bottom of the caste system. At the village level caste is typified by the *jajmani* system, a hierarchy justified by notions of purity and pollution, and based on inherited occupation and a corresponding distribution of authority (Srinivas 1962; Dumont 1966; Béteille 1992). Untouchables are the most ritually impure community and they suffer various forms of exploitation and abuse at the hands of higher castes. They tend to comprise the majority of landless agricultural laborers and sharecroppers in a village, are forced to undertake humiliating tasks such as manually clearing human waste from dry pit latrines, and frequently suffer physical violence – and in the case of women sexual violence – at the hands of higher castes (ibid; Human Rights Watch 2007; Arthur, Kennedy and Prakash 2007).

The second historically disadvantaged group of communities is tribals, adivasis or Scheduled Tribes. Béteille (1986:316) points out that, despite their differences, historically tribal communities have one thing in common: ‘they all stood more or less outside Hindu civilization’ (also see Xaxa 1999). They inhabited more rugged terrain in the central Indian tribal belt, undertook shifting subsistence agriculture and collected forest produce for self-consumption and to sell to traders from the plains. Tribal communities were intimately associated with, but not politically or socioeconomically dominated by, state-governed societies on the plains. Surplus extraction from the tribal areas did not occur through taxation on land or the exploitation of a class of landless laborers (Gell 1997; Sundar 2007). Instead, the abundant natural resources that lay above and below the forest, such as timber, non-

timber forest produce and minerals, were the chief source of state income. Before the arrival of the British commercial exploitation was not carried out on a systematic basis. This changed with the institution of the modern nation state – first in its colonial, then its independent form – which sought to incorporate self-governing tribal communities within its putative borders and control the natural resources in these areas (Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009).

Since independence, academics have criticized flaws and inconsistencies in these in these categorizations (Galanter 1984; Cohn 1990; Appadurai 1993). We acknowledge the administrative origins of the categories of untouchables and tribals. The scheduling of castes and tribes acquired a systematic character in the 1930s (Béteille 1986; Bayly 1999). Following the Government of India Act (1935) – which established a federal structure, introduced direct elections, and granted Indian Provinces greater self-rule – a list or ‘schedule’ of depressed castes and tribes for whom parliamentary seats were to be reserved was created. The Constitution of India (1950) retained this colonial definition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, as well as extending affirmative action to higher education and public sector jobs. As a result, within these definitions there are a large number of separate communities with distinct cultural and political economic features.

Notwithstanding, there are empirically informed reasons for using categories such as untouchables and tribals in comparative analysis. First, while they are made up of a vast number of different communities, they are united by being ‘placed *outside* the bounds of larger society’ – untouchables ‘on account of the segregation imposed on them by the rules of pollution’ and tribals ‘on account of their isolation in particular ecological niches’ (Betielle 1992: 35). Second, most objections to the use of these categories relate to the fact that they cannot be reduced to economic or cultural characteristics. Nevertheless, these categories are what Mamdani (2002) refers to as ‘political identities’, legally enforced groups that can only be understood with reference to state formation during colonialism and its historical legacy (also see Scott 1998). What is more, while the categories were originally imposed from above, supra-local tribal and untouchable identities have been appropriated by the communities and now form the basis of political claims made at the national and international level (Srinivas 1962; Karlsson 2003). In Murray Li’s (2000) formulation, adivasis claim the

tribal or indigenous ‘slot’, while untouchables articulate a united position that reflects their unique and disadvantaged position in Hindu society (see Ambedkar 1945).

Many accounts within India – including those of both the state and the insurgents – argue that untouchables and tribals form the foundation of the insurgents support base (CPI [Maoist] 2004a, b and c, 2005; Banerjee 2008; Planning Commission 2008). But these accounts tend not to distinguish separate mechanisms based on their respective social structures – instead they see general levels of deprivation as the problem and development as the solution (Planning Commission 2008). Other explanations fail to address why only some dalit and adivasi communities are involved in the insurgency while others are not (CPI [Maoist] 2004c, 2005; Banerjee 2008). Some of the worst abuse of untouchables is in areas, such as Haryana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu that were either never effected by Maoist insurgency or have not been affected by insurgency in recent years. Bizarrely, both the government (Planning Commission 2008) and the CPI (Maoist) (2004b) cite examples of horrific caste abuse that occurred in these states as explanations of expanding influence of the insurgents. Similarly, areas of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have large adivasi populations but have experienced little or no insurgent activity (Planning Commission 2008: 3). In the next section we turn to sociological accounts of insurgency in order to generate testable hypotheses regarding the specific characteristics of untouchables and tribals in areas that are affected by the insurgency.

Exploitation and oppression

In discussions of the disadvantages experienced by untouchables and tribals, the concepts of exploitation and oppression are widely invoked but never defined. They are used interchangeably to signify the hardship that results from their historically disadvantaged positions.³ But defining and distinguishing between these two concepts is crucial to our analysis. According to Erik Olin Wright (1997: 11) the difference between exploitation and oppression is that, in the former, ‘the exploiter *needs* the

³ For example, Ramachandra Guha (2007a: 3305) argues that ‘exploited’ adivasis supported the Maoist insurgents, while ‘oppressed’ dalits were insurgents support base on plains of Bihar (Guha 2007b: 618).

exploited' because their prosperity depends upon them, whereas in the latter it would have been preferable to oppressors if the oppressed did not exist. It seems apparent that untouchables tend to suffer exploitation at the hands of upper castes because they play a crucial role in village life, as agricultural labours working for upper caste landowners and by performing various ritually impure tasks. On the other hand, surplus extraction from tribal communities predominantly occurs through the removal of natural resources that lie above and below the ground. Tribal workers do not play a crucial economic role in this process and it would be far more straightforward for the state and mining companies to remove these resources if these areas were uninhabited. We might also note Mann's (2005: 31) observation that 'Land ownership is inherently monopolistic. Unlike capital or labor, land is finite. Possession excludes others from its use'.

In order to understand the specific characteristics of rural inhabitants that take part in insurgency, we must follow Walder's (2009) advice to revisit structural theories of insurgency. In the class analysis account, Paige (1976, 1983) argues that a combination of proletarianized rural inhabitants – landless laborers or sharecroppers – and 'backward capitalists' who have nothing but their ownership of the land as the basis of their domination, is most likely to lead to insurgency. In other words, it is predicted that rural inhabitants are most likely to be involved in insurgent activity where the exploitation of agricultural labor generates intense conflict over land and the surplus produced on that land.

The moral economy approach argues that landowning 'middle peasants' living in communal villages outside landlord control are more likely to be involved in insurgent activity for two reasons (Scott 1976, 1977). First, their relative 'organizational autonomy' or 'tactical leverage': they cultivate their own land, directly control the immediate processes of economic production and are free from tight control of landlords. Second, rural inhabitants with strong communal traditions and few sharp internal class divisions are more likely to revolt than those that are structurally and hence socially divided. Thus, in the Durkheimian approach it is oppression – that is persecution by forces outside the community who do not depend on the rural inhabitants for their prosperity – rather than exploitation that explains rural inhabitants' participation in insurgency.

The Indian social formation

Figure 6.2: Exploitation, oppression and resistance

Taking into account the analysis set out in the previous section, I predict that the class analysis will be more applicable to areas in which the social structure is typical of Hindu society, whereas the moral economy framework will best predict insurgent activity in areas where the social structure is tribal. Thus, I anticipate that there are two distinct routes to Maoist insurgency in India. In Hindu areas untouchable landless laborers will form the insurgents' mass support base, whereas in the tribal belt it will be oppressed landowning tribals. Figure 6.2 presents this graphically. In the next section we will test the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1.— *In areas where the social structure is typical of Hindu society, insurgent activity is more likely where there is a larger proportion of untouchable landless laborers.*

Hypothesis 2.— *In areas where the social structure is tribal, insurgent activity is more likely where there is a larger proportion of tribal landholding cultivators.*

Hypothesis 3.— *Untouchable landless laborers and tribal landholding cultivators provide the insurgents with two distinct support bases in areas where the social structure is respectively Hindu and tribal.*

I appreciate that there is a large extent of local variation in both India society and the specific causes of insurgency. Nevertheless, this theoretical framework attempts to identify the essential characteristics and the mechanisms that explain Maoist insurgency in India. To borrow Herbst's (2000: 5) analogy, this study 'ignore[s] a vast number of trees in order to see the forest'. I believe that this structural argument is a powerful one and that the benefits of this outweigh the costs. Ultimately, the test of our research strategy will be the empirical analysis.

STATISTICAL METHODS AND DATA

Research strategy

I mentioned earlier that the over-aggregation of cross-national studies of insurgency means that they overlook a great deal of complexity and context (Kalyvas 2006; Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). This over-aggregation has several aspects.

First, most quantitative accounts of insurgency use cross-national statistics with nation states as the unit of observation, but most internal conflicts occur in limited parts of a country and can often be best explained by sub-national variation (Kalyvas 2006). This study analyzes one conflict in one country – India – by comparing its districts, the administrative unit below the state and the smallest unit of analysis for which statistical data are available. This strategy reflects a recent trend towards disaggregating the study of conflict below country level to analyze sub-national political units (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009).

Second, although there are a couple of exceptions (Sambanis 2001; Buhaug 2006), most quantitative analyses of intra-state assume homogeneity of causality. The outcome – internal conflict – is assumed to be caused by the same combination of the variables in every positive case. In general, this is not necessarily true (Ragin 1987, 2000; Abbot 2001) – and this criticism is especially pertinent in a social formation as

diverse as India. As Kalyvas (2006:384) points out: ‘civil wars are concatenations of multiple and often disparate local cleavages, more or less loosely arrayed around the master cleavage’. This analysis, therefore, explores the possibility that the Maoist cadre provide a unified organizational structure for a variety of social groups to pursue their interests through insurgency.

Finally, independent variables tend to be over-aggregated in cross-national studies. Where they consider inequality or deprivation it is very general terms, such as national Gini coefficients and per capita gross domestic product. They cannot use context-specific concepts because they will operationalize in distinct ways in different cases and this leads to ‘conceptual stretching’ (Satori 1970). For example, India-specific determinants of inequality and deprivation, such as caste – and to some extent tribe –, do not have an equivalent outside of South Asia. By limiting the study to India, it is possible to analyze the relationship between caste, tribe and insurgency.

Dependent variables

The dependent variable is the onset insurgent activity. We documented all fatalities in incidents involving Maoist insurgents that were reported in *The Times of India* (Mumbai edition), India’s most widely read newspaper, between 1982 and 2011. There were 1,106 fatal incidents in this period, resulting in 4,698 deaths. As the census data we use for independent variables is enumerated decennially, the temporal unit of our analysis is decades. 1981 census data is used to explain the insurgent activity in the period 1982 to 1991, and so on. The one year lag between independent and dependent variables reduces endogeneity.

We operationalized the onset of insurgent activity in two ways. The first created a dummy variable using the mean number of deaths (four) as the cut off point, with unaffected districts being coded as ‘0’ and affected districts coded as ‘1’. We dropped those cases that were affected by insurgent activity in the previous decade. This is preferable to civil war incidence – meaning that the dependent variable is coded as ‘1’ for every country year with civil war occurring and zero otherwise – where the estimated coefficients are complicated averages of the ‘effect’ of a covariate on both the onset and the duration of civil conflicts (Fearon 2010). 72 out of 1,111 (11%) districts were affected by insurgent activity.

Second, we disaggregate insurgent activity to test the prediction that there are two distinct mechanisms leading to insurgent activity. We operationalize areas where tribal social structure predominates as districts covered by the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, legislation designed to protect adivasis from being dispossessed of their lands and natural resources in areas they have historically inhabited (Ministry of Tribal Affairs undated). 19% of districts in the sample are located in tribal areas (see figure 7.2). In this formulation the dependent variable is split into three categories: ‘0’ for districts not affected by insurgent activity; ‘1’ for districts affected by insurgent activity and not covered by the fifth schedule of the Indian constitution (‘Hindu areas’); and ‘2’ for districts affected by insurgent activity and covered by the fifth schedule of the Indian constitution (‘tribal areas’). 45 (62.5%) affected districts are in Hindu areas, whereas 27 (37.5%) are in tribal areas.

Independent variables

Our dependent variables are taken from the decennial *Census of India* (1981, 1991, 2001). The census enumerates two mutually exclusive agricultural occupations: landless ‘agricultural laborers’, who have ‘no risk in the cultivation, but merely works on another person's land for wages’ ... ‘in money or kind or share’, and landholding ‘cultivators’, who take on the risk of cultivation on land that they either own or rent (Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2001). These categories are commensurate with Paige’s proletarianized landless laborers and sharecroppers, and Scott and Wolf’s landowning middle peasants respectively. The census collects separate statistics for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In our analysis we use two main independent variables. The first is *untouchable landless laborers*, which is operationalized as the percentage of Scheduled Caste workers that are agricultural laborers. The second is *tribal landholding cultivators*, which is operationalized as the proportion of Scheduled Tribe workers that are landholding cultivators. In order to tests the converse of our hypotheses we also run regression models with the opposite formulations, the percentage of Scheduled Caste workers that are cultivators and the proportion of Scheduled Tribes workers that are agricultural laborers.

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics of key variables

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Insurgent activity	1111	0.1	0.2	0.0	1.0
Untouchable landless laborers %	1194	40.4	22.3	0.0	96.0
Untouchable landholding cultivators %	1194	26.9	20.3	0.0	88.2
Tribal landless laborers %	1102	30.7	21.0	0.0	87.1
Tribal landholding cultivators %	1102	33.3	25.0	0.0	95.0
Log. total population (000s)	1194	7.4	0.7	3.4	9.3
Literacy %	1194	43.9	15.4	3.0	85.4
Rural %	1194	78.0	16.8	0.0	100.0
Previous insurgent activity	1194	0.2	0.4	0.0	1.0

Sources:- Insurgent activity is generated from the *Times of India*. All other variables are from the *Census of India*.

Control variables

We control for several other variables that are also enumerated by the *Census of India*. First, we include the log transformed total district population because, due to the way that insurgent activity is operationalized, more populous districts are more likely to be affected by insurgent activity (Sambanis and Hegre 2006). Second, we control for the level of development because less developed areas are more likely to be affected by insurgent activity (ibid). Cross-national studies would tend to use per capita GDP, but because this data is not available at the district level we use literacy rates. Third, because state power tends to be weaker in rural areas, insurgents are able to build up base areas in the countryside without interference from the state (ibid). We therefore control for the proportion of inhabitants that live in rural areas. Additionally, we control for insurgent activity in the previous wave of insurgent activity, as in chapter 4 this was shown to have a significant relationship with the onset of insurgent activity (Banerjee 2008). Finally, we add a calendar year variable to capture possible changes in the geopolitical climate over time (Wimmer, Min and Cederman 2009). Table 6.1 shows descriptive statistics and Appendix A is a correlation matrix of the main variables.

Sample

The basic data unit for the statistical analysis is the district, the administrative division below the state and the smallest unit of analysis for which all the data are available.

Our sample includes all districts in all states in India, with the exception of Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast where there have been non-Maoist insurgencies since independence and where socioeconomic data is patchy (Zagoria 1974). In 2001 the sample amounted to 481 out of 593 districts, 18 out of 28 states, and 93.5% (692 million people) of the Indian population (Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2001). When we include tribal variables in regression equations the sample size is reduced by 5% because there are no Scheduled Tribes in either Punjab or Haryana.

STATISTICAL MODELS AND RESULTS

The regression results are reported in table 6.2 (untouchables) and 6.3 (tribals). Each model has two parts. The first, part A, reports the results from binomial logistic regressions in which districts affected by insurgency are coded as ‘1’ and all others are coded ‘0’. Part B reports the results of the multinomial logistic regressions equation in which insurgency affected districts are divided into those in Hindu area – ‘1’ – and those in tribal areas – ‘2’. In part A we report odds ratio, the exponentiated regression coefficient, and in part B we report relative risk ratio (RRR), the equivalent for multinomial regression. In parentheses we specify robust standard errors clustered by district to account for the non-independence of observations from the same district. The fourth column in the multinomial regression models gives the probability that the variable estimates for the two alternative outcomes are statistically different.

Table 6.4 reports sets out the predicted probabilities at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentile on the given variable when all other covariates are held at their mean.⁴ Δ percentile is calculated by dividing the 95th percentile by the 5th. Thus, a value greater than one indicates a positive relationship between the variable and insurgent activity, while a value below one shows a negative relationship. Calculations are based on both binomial and multinomial models in Tables 3 and 4.

⁴ Appendix B shows the predicted probabilities at the twenty-fifth and seventy-fifth percentile.

Table 6.2: Scheduled Castes and Maoist Insurgency in India, 1982-2011

	(1A)		(1B)		(2A)		(2B)	
	All India	Hindu	Hindu	Tribal	p($\beta H = \beta T$)	All India	Hindu	Tribal
								p($\beta H = \beta T$)
Untouchable landless laborers %	1.019** (.006)	1.040*** (.008)		.992 (.009)	<.001			
Untouchable landholders %						.972** (.009)	.954*** (.009)	.995 (.013)
Total population (log)	1.545 (.357)	1.766 (.570)		1.298 (.400)	.489	1.653* (.387)	2.057* (.638)	1.215 (.381)
Literacy %	.980 (.011)	.991 (.015)		.967* (.016)	.254	.968** (.011)	.968* (.013)	.966 (.018)
Rural population %	1.017 (.015)	1.023 (.025)		1.008 (.015)	.607	1.027 (.015)	1.039 (.022)	1.007 (.017)
Previous conflict	2.754** (.896)	2.156* (.848)		4.127** (2.154)	.300	2.395* (.830)	1.888 (.760)	3.530* (2.056)
Year	1.025* (.018)	1.024 (.022)		1.040 (.026)	.919	1.023 (.018)	1.020 (.022)	1.029 (.026)
R ²	.100		.113			.105		.105
N	1111		1111			1111		1111

Notes: - * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported. The first column or 'A' model is a binomial regression with all insurgent affected districts as the dependent variable. The second and third columns or 'B' model is a multinomial regression in which the dependent variable is bifurcated into insurgent affected districts in areas where the social structure is typical, respectively, of Hindu and Tribal society. The fourth column in the multinomial regression models gives the probability that the variable estimates for the two alternative outcomes are statistically different.

Table 6.3: Scheduled Tribes and Maoist Insurgency in India, 1982-2011

	(3A)		(3B)		(4A)		(4B)	
	All India	Hindu	Tribal	p($\beta_H = \beta_T$)	All India	Hindu	Tribal	p($\beta_H = \beta_T$)
Tribal landholders %	1.009 (.006)	.991 (.006)	1.042*** (.008)	<.001				
Tribal landless laborers %					1.004 (.006)	1.008 (.007)	.998 (.006)	.186
Total population (log)	1.646* (.380)	1.778 (.527)	1.476 (.479)	.664	1.464 (.335)	1.787 (.540)	1.084 (.341)	.251
Literacy %	.984 (.011)	.981 (.012)	.997 (.019)	.434	.979* (.010)	.983 (.012)	.971 (.016)	.505
Rural population %	1.015 (.014)	1.026 (.020)	.997 (.016)	.244	1.015 (.014)	1.025 (.021)	1.000 (.014)	.316
Previous conflict	4.094*** (1.441)	3.406** (1.430)	6.110*** (3.317)	.360	3.793*** (1.277)	3.319** (1.422)	4.646** (2.389)	.608
Year	1.019 (.018)	1.016 (.021)	1.019 (.027)	.942	1.020 (.018)	1.018 (.022)	1.025 (.025)	.809
R ²	.086	.111			.082		.075	
N	1019	1019	1019		1019		1019	

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported. The first column or 'A' model is a binomial regression with all insurgent affected districts as the dependent variable. The second and third columns or 'B' model is a multinomial regression in which the dependent variable is bifurcated into insurgent affected districts in areas where the social structure is typical, respectively, of Hindu and Tribal society. The fourth column in the multinomial regression models gives the probability that the variable estimates for the two alternative outcomes are statistically different.

Table 6.4: Predicted probabilities of key independent variables

Model and variable	All India (binominal)			Hindu areas (multinomial)			Tribal areas (multinomial)		
	5th %ile	95th %ile	Δ %ile	5th %ile	95th %ile	Δ %ile	5th %ile	95th %ile	Δ %ile
1. Untouchable landless laborers	.023	.091	3.956	.006	.095	15.833	.024	.013	.542
2. Untouchable landholders	.092	.018	.196	.081	.004	.049	.020	.017	.850
3. Tribal landholders	.040	.080	2.000	.046	.023	.500	.004	.074	18.500
4. Tribal landless laborers	.048	.063	1.313	.028	.047	1.679	.021	.018	.857

Notes:- this table shows the predicted probabilities at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentile on the given variable when all other covariates held at their mean. Δ percentile is calculated by dividing the 95th percentile by the 5th. Thus, a value greater than one indicates a positive relationship between the variable and insurgent activity, while a value below one shows a negative relationship. Those variables that are significantly related to the onset of insurgency are in **bold**. Calculations are based on both binomial and multinomial models in Tables 3 and 4.

The results reported in tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 support the hypotheses set out in the previous section.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that in areas where the social structure was typical of Hindu society, insurgent activity is more likely where there is a larger proportion of untouchable landless laborers. Model 1A uses binomial regression to demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between the proportion of untouchable agricultural laborers and insurgent activity ($p=.002$). A district in the 95th percentile for the proportion of untouchable landless laborers is four times more likely to be affected by the insurgent activity than one in the 5th percentile. In the multinomial regression (model 1B), there is a no significant relationship between untouchable landless laborers and insurgency in the tribal areas ($p=.368$) But in Hindu areas the relationship is more significant ($p<.000$) and the effect size is more than four times as strong as in Model 1A, with a shift from 5th to 95th percentile increasing the likelihood of insurgency by a factor of 16. Model 2A shows that there is a significant negative relationship between the proportion of untouchable landholders and insurgent activity ($p=.002$). A district in the 95th percentile for the proportion of untouchable landholders is five times less likely to experience insurgent activity than one in the 5th percentile. In the multinomial regression model (2B) untouchable landholders is insignificant in tribal areas ($p=.702$), but it is significant in Hindu areas ($p<.000$), where a shift from the 5th to 95th percentile decreases the likelihood of insurgency by a factor of 20.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that in areas where tribal social structure predominates, insurgent activity is more likely where there is a larger proportion of tribal landholding cultivators. In the binomial logistic regression (model 3A), there is not a significant positive relationship between tribal landholders and insurgent activity ($p=.094$). The corresponding multinomial regression (model 3B) demonstrate that while there is no significant relationship ($p=.182$) in the Hindu areas, in tribal areas there is a significant relationship ($p<.000$), with a shift from the 5th to 95th percentile increasing the probability of insurgency by a factor of 18.5. Models 4A ($p=.423$) and 4B ($p=.241$ and $.718$ in Hindu and tribal areas respectively) demonstrate there is no relationship between the proportion of tribal landless laborers and insurgent activity.

Figure 6.3: The spatial distribution of Maoist insurgents' two support bases

Figure 6.4: Deaths involving Maoist insurgents by social structure, 1982-2011

Hypothesis 3 predicted that untouchable landless laborers and tribal landholding cultivators would form two distinct support bases in areas where the social structure is, respectively, typical of Hindu society and tribal communities. The third column in the multinomial regression models gives the probability that the variable estimates for the alternative outcomes are statistically different. Models 1B and 3B demonstrate, respectively, that the outcomes for the proportion of untouchable landless labourers and tribal landholding cultivators are statistically different in Hindu areas compared to tribal areas (in both the cases $p < .000$).¹ It is, therefore, apparent that the picture is more complex than indicated by the binary regression model and the insurgency should not simply be conceptualized according to its master cleavage as a ‘red corridor’. In fact, the binary model can give a misleading picture of the insurgency in India. For example, model 3A indicates that there is no relationship between tribal landholders and Maoist insurgency. Figure 6.3 paints affected districts different colors depending on whether they are in Hindu or tribal areas. The southern-most tip of the insurgency occurred on the plains of Andhra Pradesh, and to a far lesser extent Tamil Nadu, in districts where there was a high proportion untouchable landless laborers. The affected districts in the middle – from the northern reaches of Andhra Pradesh,

¹ In addition, the coefficients for the proportion of untouchable landholders are statistically different in model 2B ($p = .006$).

through Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa to Jharkhand – are situated in the tribal belt, where landholding tribal cultivators support the insurgents. In the north, on the plains of Bihar, the insurgency occurred in areas where there are large proportions of untouchable landless laborers. We see, broadly speaking, that two distinct support bases unite around the master cleavage of Maoism: one on the plains of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar consisting of untouchable landless laborers and one made up of landholding tribal cultivators in the rugged terrain of the central Indian tribal belt. What is more, figure 6.4 shows that insurgent deaths have increased at a much faster rate in tribal areas as compared to Hindu ones. In first decade of our sample, 1982 to 1991, there were almost twice as many deaths in Hindu areas, whereas, but in the last decade, 2002 to 2011 there were almost twice as many in tribal areas. This might be explained by the fact that, because untouchable landless laborers perform a variety of crucial economic and ritual roles, upper caste landowners are more likely to reach a compromise with them. In the tribal belt, where the conflict is a zero sum game over the extraction of natural resources, the state, its officials and other non-tribal actors do not have the same constraints.

Finally, the only control variable that consistently predicts insurgent activity in the period 1982 to 2011 is insurgent activity affecting a district in the second wave, from 1967 to 1972. It is not specific to either the Hindu or tribal areas and therefore transcends social context. This is consistent with the findings in chapter 3, that demonstrated that the previous wave of insurgency radicalized a cadre of young men who went on to become leaders of the next wave. This finding provides support for theories that stress the importance of endogenous mechanisms in the formation of factional identities (Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006; Walder 2009), as well as accounts that stress the role that political organizations, that are relatively autonomous from underlying social structures play in determining the form of political practices that predominate in an area (Desai 2002). The effect size appears large because it is a dummy variable. Therefore the odds ratio measures the difference in likelihood of insurgent activity between those districts that previously experienced insurgent activity and those that did not. All the other variables use continuous data and the odds ratio measures the difference in likelihood of insurgent activity resulting from a one unit – in most cases one per cent – change in the independent variable.

It is interesting to note that none of the other control variables – log population, literacy and rurality – which are used as proxies for opportunity or feasibility in rationalist analyses and are found to be the most consistent predictors of insurgent activity in cross-national studies of intra-state conflict onset – are consistently related to insurgent activity.

Robustness tests

We performed a series of robustness checks on our findings. First, we removed cases with standardized residuals of greater than $|3|$ in order to test the effect of outliers. The regression models were not significantly altered. Second, we experimented with the definition of the dependent variable, using half (2) and double (8) the threshold of deaths. The main regression models were largely unchanged. Third, we ran the regressions while controlling for the proportion of untouchables or tribals and agricultural laborers or cultivators in the general population in order to check that it was not the general level for these variables that account for the increased probability of insurgent activity. These tests did not materially alter the significance of the main explanatory variables and increase our confidence in the findings.

THE TWO INSURGENCIES

These quantitative results provide compelling evidence that the sociostructural characteristics of the population play an important role in explaining where insurgent activity occurs. But as I argued earlier in this thesis a problem with structural explanations is that they fail to explain why insurgency occurs in a specific form at particular point in time. Indeed, the Maoist insurgency did not spontaneously manifest as a result of the socio-structural characteristics of certain areas. Rather, as Weber emphasizes, structural factors load the historical dice for different outcomes. In this section we use a variety of qualitative data – including secondary ethnographies, government and insurgent documents, and newspaper articles – to further investigate the dynamics of insurgency in these two social contexts, paying particular attention to the manner in which the insurgents mobilized their support bases.

Insurgency on the plains of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar

The socioeconomic history of the plains of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar is characterized by enduring conflict between higher caste landowners – who were often supported by

the state – and lower caste sharecroppers and agricultural laborers (Jannuzi 1974; Das 1982; Thirumali 2003). Contrary to the expectations of many observers, the situation intensified after Independence (Thorner and Thorner 1962). Higher caste landowners continued to form the dominant caste in the village; they were numerically strong, owned the majority of the land and had political control over village institutions such as the village council (*Gram Panchayat*) (Srinivas 1987). Despite the abolition of the colonial *zamindari* system of land tenure, the majority of lower castes continued to work in harsh conditions for low pay. The *Times of India* (1988a) reported that in central Bihar in 1988, when the statutory minimum wages was 11 rupees per day, landowners only paid between 3 and 4 rupees. It was common for laborers and sharecroppers to owe money to landowners, and these debts and the bondage that went with it were passed from generation to generation (Brass 1999). What is more, despite the de jure abolition of the caste system, caste remained a crucial determinant of life chances in rural India. Dalits still lived in separate settlements outside main villages, were made to use separate wells and forbidden from entering the temple; they were forced to perform ritually unclean tasks; and sexual abuse of lower caste women by upper caste men was commonplace.

Although the dominant castes were really landowning peasants (*kisans*), untouchable laborers referred to them as large landowners (*zamindar* or *maliks*) and feudal lords (*samant*) (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006, 2009). Indian newspapers in the 1970s and early 1980s are full of accounts of disputes over land and wages between untouchables and upper caste landowners in Bihar. Most frequently ‘the former have come to grief’ and ‘the kulak wrath against them has virtually no limits. Their houses are set on fire. They are even shot or roasted alive’ (Singh 1980: 8). The upper caste largely acted with impunity and when the police did act it most often in defense of the dominant castes’ interests. For example, there are cases where landless laborers who were peacefully campaigning for minimum wages were shot at and killed by the police (Singh 1981; Times of India 1982b). As a well-known proverb among the landowners put it, ‘only the zamindari system has gone, muscle power is still intact’ (Times of India 1992a: 7). Thus, before the arrival of the Maoists in the early 1980s, lower caste laborers were unable to launch effective collective action against the dominant castes. In the words of one of Bhatia’s (2006: 1546) informants, ‘we had no power to put any pressure on them, so they ignored our demands’.

Shashi Bhushan Singh (2005: 3170) describes how, when the insurgents first arrived in Bihar, they gave ‘marginalised people a space from where they could challenge the supremacy of the upper castes’. They provided the necessary muscle that allowed untouchable landless laborers to stand up to their exploiters. Legal front organizations (*sanghams*) addressed the concerns of lower caste laborers. In particular they first gained prominence in villages ‘following disputes over non-payment of statutory minimum wages to landless labourers’ (Times of India 1981d: 5). Their programs included campaigns to redistribute land; improve access to common resources; implement sharecropping laws and eliminate usury, forced labor and bonded labor; demand essential services from the government; enforce a minimum wage; and organize a defense force (*Rakshadal*) to protect the vulnerable and marginalized against theft, abduction, rape and other ‘feudal atrocities’ (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006, 2009). The front organizations used a number of different tactics including strikes, fasts (*dharnas*) and blockades (*gheraos*). Often, these actions were part of a general economic strike against a landlord (*aarthik nakebandi*). An important aspect of these embargoes was the unity among laborers in the surrounding area, which made it impossible for a targeted landlord to continue economic activity (Bhatia 2005). This should be read in the context of Moore’s (1966) suggestion that the caste system, being based at the village level, atomised the rural lower classes and inhibited the development of class consciousness, which, to a large extent, explains the absence of a modern political revolution in India. It is apparent that the insurgents provided a supra-local organisation that unified the previously disunited lower castes on the plains of Bihar.

These peaceful actions were backed up by violence or the threat of violence from the guerilla squads (*dalam*). As an insurgent cadre explained, ‘because we have arms, the *zamindars* have shrunk with fear’ (Bhatia 2005: 1546). To complement embargoes, the guerilla squads often burned the landowners’ crops. They carried out selective violence; the targets of insurgent violence were most frequently upper caste landowners, in particular those who had committed offenses against untouchable landless (for example Times of India 1981b). For example, in February 1992 the MCC cut the throats of 35 people belonging to Bhumihar – a Brahmin landowning caste – in the village of Bara, Bihar, in retaliation for an attack in which ten

untouchables were killed by Buhimars three months previously (Times of India 1992a). In response to these threats dominant castes formed various private armies (*Senas*) and at the local level these *Sena* were encouraged by the police who did not have the capacity to fight the insurgents themselves (Times of India 1986, 1988b; Mishra 1992). Thus, in order to gain dominance in rural Bihar the insurgents had to defeat the private armies of upper caste landowners in battle (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006, 2009).

The ethnographic research shows that – at least at first – the Maoists delivered some real benefits to lower caste rural laborers on the plains of Bihar (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006, 2009). According to police, in areas where they were successful the insurgents ran a ‘parallel government’ (Times of India 1981c, 1983a). Laborers were able to sell their labor to whomever they please and Bhatia (2005) estimates that agricultural wages doubled in areas where the insurgents were strong. The insurgents asserted the equal rights of lower caste laborers to common property resources such as communal grazing land and village ponds. They reduced instances of caste abuse and rape of lower caste women have decreased dramatically. The insurgent organized village committees, which include many lower caste laborers and even untouchable women, and have become increasingly powerful in comparison to the traditional village councils (*Gram Panchayats*) that were traditionally controlled by dominant caste males. Even upper castes now use these committees to resolve conflicts with their neighbors. Nevertheless, the insurgents were not able to enact meaningful land reforms in the plains of Bihar and the dominant castes still own the vast majority of land (Bhatia 2005; Kunnath 2006, 2009). This is in large part due to their eventual willingness to come to terms with the insurgents – and in some cases join the movement – once it was clear that it would not be possible to defeat them. Already in 1988 it was noted that ‘private armies are on the decline in central Bihar, as landlords are turning to Naxalites for protection’, with landlords paying ‘huge sums of money’ in return for protection (Times of India 1988a: 17). Kunnath (2009) noted that this process has led to increased disillusionment among the lower caste rural lower classes. The end result was a decline in deaths from insurgent incidents, to the extent that the *Times of India* (Ahmad 2010) recently declared that Bihar’s ‘killing fields’ were now largely peaceful.

The available evidence demonstrates that the dynamics of the insurgency are similar on the plains of Andhra Pradesh. Maoist insurgents have been active on and off since 1946 – that is, before independence and before Mao's victory in China. The movement was supported by lower caste landless laborers and sharecroppers, who referred to landowners as lord or master (*dora*), and were aggrieved by low wages, forced labor, bonded labor, caste abuse and the sexual exploitation of women, and (Singh 1996; Balagopal 2006b). The insurgents used front organizations, backed up by the guns of armed squads, to fight feudal domination and economic exploitation (Iyenga 1998b; Balagopal 2006b). As in Bihar, agricultural wages doubled in areas where the insurgents were active, although in contrast to Bihar they were more successful at forcibly redistributing land belonging to big landowners (Singh 1996). Notwithstanding, Balagopal (2006b) argues that the support base has become disillusioned as, in response to increasing pressure from the state, the insurgents increased the guerilla squads' violent activities and cut back the front organizations non-violent campaigns.

Insurgency in the central India tribal belt

Tribal communities historically existed outside state control. While the rulers of states on the plains may have coveted the natural resources in their homelands in precolonial times, they did not have the material force to incorporate and assimilate them (Sundar 200; Padel 2009). The advent of the British colonial state radically altered the balance of power with tribal communities. The new administration set out to control and exploit the subcontinent's natural resources and they passed legislation with the aim of restricting tribal communities' access to the forests and forcing them to take up settled agriculture (Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). These laws had a detrimental effect on tribal peoples as the forests had great material and ritual importance in their lives. It should be noted, however, this process was not simply carried out by the military and administrative apparatus of the colonial state for overtly economic reasons. Actors – both institutions and individuals – at a variety of levels from international to local, were driven by various political, religious, scientific and ideological, as well as economic, motivations (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). They formed powerful constellations that had a shared interest in altering the terms of interaction between tribal communities and the wider Hindu society. This process resulted in profound animosity towards the state, its agents and other non-tribal

immigrants, and there were a significant number of insurrections in the central tribal belt in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century (Raghavaiah 1971). Many of these were in areas where the population now provides strong support for the insurgents: for example Gudem-Rampa (1920s) and the Komaram Bhimu's revolt (1945-46) in the hills of northern Andhra Pradesh (Kennedy and Purushotham 2012); the Muria (1876) and Bhumkal (1910) rebellions in what is now southern Chhattisgarh (Sundar 2007); the Kalahandi rebellion (1882) in eastern Orissa (Padel 2009); and the Kol (1831-32) and Santhal *Hool* (1855-56) in what is now West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand (Duyker 1987).

Today, Scheduled Tribes are, in theory, protected from losing their land by the Indian Constitution and later legislation such as the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (1996) and the Forest Rights Act (2007). But in practice the power constellations that dominate tribal communities are, in some respects, similar to those that were present in colonial India (Guha 2007a; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009; Padel and Das 2010). As Sagar (2006:3177) points out, 'the Indian state since independence in 1947 has been basically predatory in the experience of indigenous people. The state and its various agents have exploited them, violated their rights at whim and robbed them not just of resources but of their very human dignity'. Some observers have suggested that the postcolonial Indian state exercises neocolonial forms of control over adivasi areas, and that internal colonialism² has replaced British colonialism: 'even though colonization has ended, the situation has changed little... ruthless and exploitative political and economic forces continue to dictate and dominate the destinies of the tribal regions' (Sundar 2007: 189).

On the ground, traders, forest guards, police and government officials remain the primary oppressors of tribal communities (Sundar 2007). Tribals were 'fairgame to the forest department staff who fleeced them on all sorts of pretexts – collecting Rs 10 (12 pence) per goat per year for grazing in the forest, as well as in kind. Other "mamools" [regular payments] were levied on each plough used and each "machan"

² Blauner (1969:396) used the term 'internal colonialism' to refer to 'the imposition of external power and the institutionalization of powerlessness' in African-American ghettos.

[platform] set up to scare away wild life' (Rao 1987). Mining companies cooperated with the state officials and police to forcefully remove tribal communities, pollute the land of those that remain with impunity, and put down any dissent with tactics that are not dissimilar to their colonial predecessors, such as including *lathi* (baton) charging, tear gassing and shooting peaceful protestors (ibid; Padel and Das 2010). Thus, in contrast to the Hindu areas, where untouchables main exploiters are upper caste landowners from within the community, in adivasis oppressors are non-adivasis – forest guards, police and mining companies – from outside tribal areas. In the late 1980s, just as the insurgents were expanding in central India, BD Sharma, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987: 2) wrote that the state's development policies has worsened the position of adivasis, resulting in a 'backlash of modernisation' and 'simmering discontent in almost the entire middle Indian tribal belt particularly on issues of land and forest'. Sharma concluded that there would be no peace between adivasis and the state as long as the issue of autonomy – in terms of political empowerment and command over resources – remained unresolved.

The Maoists address issues that are of most concern to tribal communities. The insurgents chased away Forest Department Guards, improving adivasis' access to the forests. They threatened to cut off the hands and legs of forest produce traders if they failed to pay their stated price (Times of India 1984c, 1994). Over the 20 to 25 years that they have been active in central India, the insurgents secured an astounding fifty-fold increase in price of *tendu patta*, the leaves used to produce traditional *beedi* cigarettes, and prices are 60% higher in areas where their organization is strong (Planning Commission 2008; Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006).³ This 'boosted the disposable income in the hands of tribals substantially and has been the single-most important benefit the Adivasis have got from the presence and organisation of the Naxalites' (Balagopal 2008: 11). A report published in the *Times of India* in the early 1990s described how in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra the insurgents

³ Figures given in the *Times of India* are even more dramatic, suggesting that between 1980 and 1992 the price for a *puda* (100 bundles) of *tendu patta* increased more than 100 times, from 7 rupees to 750 rupees in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra (Sirendran 1992).

slowly but steadily they won the tribals' trust. They fought for them, nursed then and sympathized with their plight. They fought the contractors, the police, politicians and indoctrinated the unsuspecting tribal youths in the virtues of armed struggle... What the government could not or did not do the Naxals did. They brought the forest contractors to their knees, browbeat politicians and traders into submission. Corrupt government employees either corrected themselves or fled the scene. Flexing muscles, the tribals were told, had its own use (Sirendran 1992).

It would be hard, however, to argue that the insurgents have improved adivasis' quality of life in areas where they operate, because the very presence has led to a massive increase in the presence of the state and, in particular, its belligerent arm. A report by the People's Union for Civil Liberties from 1989 stated that 'the presence of the large contingent of armed police in the interior adivasi villages has changed the environment completely' (Times of India 1989). The report documents police raiding villages, stealing property and grain, sexually abusing women, brutally killing some adivasis and detaining and torturing others. It is apparent that such incidents have continued up to the present day in insurgent affected areas of tribal belt (Independent Citizens; Initiative 2006; Nagarajan 2010). Notwithstanding, the insurgents have been successful as presenting themselves as the defenders of tribal interests. This analysis is corroborated by several recent government reports. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2006: 15) points out:

A situation is thus developing where the STs [Scheduled Tribes] view the State as their exploiter and enemy, and the preachers of violent actions as their protector and friend. Tribal people tend to support these violent movements as they feel that it would help them to get their rights, protect them from exploitation and redress their grievances.

MORE QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

It is possible to further test these claims using quantitative data. It is widely argued that mining activity encourages insurgency (Independent Citizens Initiative 2006; Bhaduri 2007; Guha 2007a; Planning Commission 2008; Padel and Das 2010; Miklian 2011). These studies hypothesize two mechanisms that link mining activity and insurgency. The first is that it provides the insurgents with opportunities to

generate income by demanding money from mining companies in exchange for protection. This is not specific to either the Hindu or tribal areas as it concerns macro level actors and therefore transcends social context. The second mechanism is that mining activity creates discontent among the local population because it leads to displacement and pollution. This mechanism is more relevant in tribal areas because tribal communities tend to have a stronger symbolic and material attachment to the land they live on (Padel 2009). Thus we would predict that while there is a significant positive relationship between mining and insurgency in both tribal and Hindu areas, the effect size will be stronger in tribal areas. The statistical models in table 6.4 are based on the models in tables 6.2 and 6.3. In addition, the regression equations include a variable to measure for mining activity. I use a dummy variable that codes whether or not there are commercially viable quantities of minerals in the district according to the *Indian Minerals Handbook 2000-2001*. Mining is operationalized in two ways: in one I use all minerals, and in the other I use only bauxite, coal and iron ore, which are said to be the minerals that are most strongly related to insurgent activity. The results are presented in table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Mining and Maoist Insurgency in India, 1982-2011

	(5A)		(5B)		(6A)		(6B)	
	All India	Hindu	Tribal	p($\beta H = \beta T$)	All India	Hindu	Tribal	p($\beta H = \beta T$)
All minerals	3.470*** (.968)	2.294* (.771)	7.310*** (3.303)	.023				
Bauxite, iron ore and coal					3.774*** (1.048)	2.587** (.854)	7.479*** (3.374)	.036
Total population (log)	1.674* (.424)	2.132* (.659)	1.081 (.432)	.170	1.674* (.428)	2.131* (.668)	1.087 (.433)	.175
Literacy %	.972* (.011)	.979 (.013)	.961* (.018)	.382	.972* (.011)	.978 (.013)	.961* (.018)	.404
Rural population %	1.022 (.016)	1.033 (.023)	1.004 (.018)	.312	1.022 (.016)	1.033 (.023)	1.004 (.018)	.318
Previous conflict	3.178*** (1.065)	3.011* (1.269)	3.409* (1.617)	.833	3.155*** (1.069)	2.990* (1.272)	3.389* (1.608)	.831
Year	1.036 (.018)	1.027 (.025)	1.048 (.030)	.553	1.036 (.021)	1.029 (.026)	1.048 (.030)	.583
R ²	.124	.118			.130	.122		
N	1111	1111	1111		1111	1111	1111	

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). Constants are calculated but not reported. The first column or 'A' model is a binomial regression with all insurgent affected districts as the dependent variable. The second and third columns or 'B' model is a multinomial regression in which the dependent variable is bifurcated into insurgent affected districts in areas where the social structure is typical, respectively, of Hindu and Tribal society. The fourth column in the multinomial regression models gives the probability that the variable estimates for the two alternative outcomes are statistically different.

The results for both operationalizations of minerals are similar and they are in line with our prediction that mining will increase the likelihood of insurgency in both Hindu and tribal areas but that the effect size will be greater in the latter. In the binomial regressions (models 5A and 6A) districts in which there is a commercially viable quantity of minerals are about three and a half times more likely to be affected by insurgent activity than those districts in which there are no commercially viable minerals ($p < .001$). In the multinomial regressions the presence of minerals increasing the likelihood of insurgency by approximately two and half in Hindu areas ($p = .004$ and $.014$ in models 5B and 6B respectively). In tribal areas the presence of minerals increases the likelihood of insurgency by a factor of seven and a half (in both $p < .001$). The variable estimated for the alternative outcomes are statistically different in both models ($p = .023$ and $.036$ respectively).

CONCLUSIONS

Understanding the Maoist insurgency in India purely in terms of the master cleavage or conceptualizing the distribution of affected districts as a red corridor leads us to overlook a great deal of its complexity. We demonstrate that Maoism provides an organizational structure through which two distinct conflicts manifest themselves. In areas where the social structure is typical of Hindu society, the main supporters of the insurgents are untouchable agricultural laborers who are aggrieved by poor wages and lack of land, as well as caste abuse at the hands of semi-feudal upper landowners within the village. This is largely consistent with neo-Marxist class analyses, which see exploited proletarianized sharecroppers and agricultural laborers as the most likely supporters of insurgent activity. On the other hand, in areas where the social structure is tribal, the supporters tend to be tribal landholding cultivators whose main grievances are not surplus extracted through land or labor, but the direct expropriation of natural resources, such as timber and minerals, by neo-colonial power constellations from outside the community. Theoretically, this supports the accounts of Durkheimian moral economists, who argue that insurgency is most likely where landowning 'middle peasants' predominate and where there is no distinct landowning class.

These sociostructural characteristics do not, however, spontaneously manifest themselves in insurgent activity. Rather, as Weber puts it, they load the historical dice

in favor of certain outcomes. Maoist insurgents, who are often upper caste, educated and from urban areas, have successfully presented themselves as the defenders of untouchable landless laborers on the plains of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, and landholding tribals in rugged, forested areas of central India. In the case of the former, they coerce upper caste landowners into paying higher wages, often in line with the statutory minimum, while in the case of the latter they intimidate state officials and improve access to the forests and forest resources. This analysis is corroborated by several recent government reports. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs (2009: 15-16) stated that: ‘Naxalites operate in the vacuum created by functional inadequacies of field level governance structures, espouse local demands and take advantage of the prevalent disaffection and perceived neglect and injustice among the under privileged and remote segments of population.’

Nevertheless, the insurgents’ influence is not a wholly positive one. Maoist rhetoric drowns out the subaltern voices of untouchables and tribals, and therefore draws observers’ focus to the conflict’s master cleavage rather than micro level actors’ legitimate grievances. This has important practical implications. If we conceptualize the insurgency as a simple dyadic conflict between the state and the Maoists, there is seemingly no peaceful resolution as the goals of the two parties are mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, many of the insurgents supporters’ demands at the micro level – land distribution, the payment of a living wage, the abolition of caste abuse, bonded labor and forced labor, some amount of autonomy for tribal communities, better access to the forests, the power to veto mining projects on tribal land – are all *de jure* policies set out in the Indian Constitution or later legislation.

7. The micro level continued: adivasis, Maoists and insurgency in the central Indian tribal belt

INTRODUCTION

Our analysis in the previous chapter used quantitative data to demonstrate two points regarding the tribal communities and Maoist insurgency in India. First, it confirms the assertion that insurgent activity has expanded most markedly in the central Indian tribal belt over the past three decades (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2006; Planning Commission 2008; Banerjee 2008; Guha 2007a; Sundar 2007). For example, Guha (2007a: 3308) states, 'In recent decades, as the Maoist insurgency has spread, its major gains have been in tribal districts – in Maharashtra, in Orissa, in Jharkhand, but above all in Chhattisgarh'. Nevertheless, no one has really studied why other parts of the tribal belt, such as Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, have large adivasi populations but have experienced little or no insurgent activity (see figures 7.1 and 7.2). It seems apparent that understanding the characteristics of tribal communities that take part in insurgency is crucial to understanding the expansion of insurgent activity since the early 1980s. The second point demonstrated in the previous chapter is that insurgency is not, as commonly argued, most likely to occur in areas where the adivasis have lost their land to non-tribal immigrants. Rather, it is most likely to occur where there are a higher proportion of landowning tribal cultivators. The statistical analysis reveals several interesting points but leaves crucial questions unanswered. If dispossession and exploitation cannot explain adivasis' involvement in the Maoist insurgency, what does? If adivasis do not share a common consciousness with Maoist insurgents, how and why do they form a lasting alliance?

This chapter aims to understand the involvement of parts of India's tribal population in the insurgency in more detail. To this end there are 2 sections. The first considers the origins of the term 'adivasi' and its utility as a concept in social science research. The second section involves a case study of one district, Dantewara, which has been a crucial case for understanding the relationship between adivasis and Hindu civilization for the past hundred years and is currently the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency in India (see figures 7.1 and 7.2). This demonstrates that many adivasis support the insurgents because they provide them with a powerful ally in their conflict with the neo-colonial state. Nevertheless, not all adivasis support the insurgents.

Those whose interests have been harmed by the presence of the insurgents, as well as others who are motivated by a variety of endogenous mechanisms, support the counterinsurgent militia.

Figure 7.1: Areas affected by Maoist insurgency, 1982-2011

Figure 7.2: The Indian tribal belt

ADIVASIS AS A CATEGORY FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The political origins of tribal identity

Before the arrival of British, there was no term equivalent to ‘tribe’ in the South Asian lexicon (Pathy 2000). It was used by the colonial administration to categorize numerous disparate communities that did not fit into their Brahmin-informed understanding of caste-based South Asian society. Thus, as a result of the colonial encounter, communities that were previously considered to be nations, kingdoms or peoples came to be referred to as tribes (ibid). The process of designating or scheduling tribes acquired a systematic character in the 1931 census (Béteille 1986). Following the Government of India Act (1935) – which established a federal structure, introduced direct elections, and granted Indian Provinces greater self-rule – a list or ‘schedule’ of depressed castes and tribes for whom parliamentary seats were to be reserved was created. The Constitution of India (1950) extended affirmative action to higher education and public sector jobs.

In contemporary India Scheduled Tribes are recognized as a distinct group and are routinely enumerated in national surveys and censuses. Nevertheless, a definition of what constitutes a tribe has been ‘neither clearly formulated nor systematically applied’ (Xaxa 1999: 3589). There are over 84 million people, belonging to separate 698 communities identified as Scheduled Tribes, and encompassing a wide range of communities that vary enormously in terms of population size, geographic spread, mode of livelihood, social organization, language and customs (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2006). Traditional theories of postcolonial violence tend to define factional identities – and explain armed conflict – in terms of class or ethnicity. A number of influential scholars, perturbed by the fact that adivasis cannot be reduced to economic or cultural identities, have criticized the conceptual utility of the term precisely because it is an administrative construct that includes communities with a variety of cultural characteristics and modes of production (Galanter 1984; Cohn 1990; Appadurai 1993). Notwithstanding, as pointed out in the previous chapter, the concept of Scheduled Tribe is what Mamdani (2002) refers to as a ‘political identity’ – a legally enforced group that can only be understood with reference to state formation during colonialism and its historical legacy (also see Scott 1998). But, while the term was originally imposed from above, it has been appropriated by the communities and forms the basis of political claims made at the national and international level (Xaxa

1999). In Murray Li's (2000) formulation, adivasis claim the tribal or indigenous 'slot' (Karlsson 2003).

Tribal communities and Hindu civilization

Béteille (1986: 316) points out, despite their differences, historically tribal communities have one thing in common: 'they all stood more or less outside Hindu civilization'. Or as Xaxa (1999: 3593) clarifies, tribes 'continued to be distinct because they escaped colonisation and subjugation'. This is not to say that they were isolated from Hindu civilization. They existed within, but on the geographical and social margins, of dominant polities of South Asia (Xaxa 1999; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). Thus, adivasis are similar to Scott's (2009) concept of people who inhabited 'shatter zones' or 'zones of refuge' – relatively inaccessible spaces that were, until the past century, more or less ungoverned by the state. As mentioned in the previous chapter, tribal communities in India were historically 'heterogeneous, differentiated and stratified' (Béteille 1986: 311). Sundar (2007) points out, there was some stratification at village level, with the headmen, whose power stems from their supposed ability to mediate with the local gods, tending to have more or better land. Acknowledging this does not, however, undermine the crucial point that, in contrast to the rest of India, there was no landowning class distinct from a landless laboring class (Béteille 1986; Xaxa 1999; Padel 2009). Thus, in Weberian terms, while there were differences in status within adivasi communities, there was not class differentiation.

The relationship between Hindu civilization and tribal communities is dynamic and in many cases the socioeconomic status of tribal communities is now far removed from the historical empirical generalization. In the past, it was widely argued that over the *longue durée* of South Asian history tribes have been slowly but continuously absorbed into Hindu civilization. Kosambi (1975: 25), wrote that the 'entire course of Indian History shows tribal elements being fused into general society'; Bose (1941) referred to the 'Hindu method of tribal absorption'; and Ghuyre (1963) believed that adivasis were 'backward Hindus' who underwent a process of 'Hinduisation'. A fundamental aspect of this process is adivasis being dispossessed of their land and compelled to work as landless laborers on other people's land. In the past, tribes would cease to exist as independent entities when they lost their distinctiveness, but,

since the boundaries between tribals and non-tribals were sealed by the creation on the Schedule, this is no longer the case (Xaxa 1999; Bêteille 1986). Thus, the category adivasi encompasses communities with a variety of different characteristics, ranging from those who have been absorbed into Hindu civilization as landless laborers to adivasis who continue to cultivate the same land as their ancestors.

Adivasis and insurgency

In order to understand why adivasis support the Maoist insurgency, we must answer two questions. First, what are the specific characteristics of the adivasis that provide support for Maoist insurgents? Or, more specifically, is it adivasis who have been dispossessed of their land and compelled to labor on other's land, or those who remain in control of their land, who are most likely to be involved in insurgent activity? And second, how and why do adivasis form lasting and meaningful alliances with non-adivasis insurgent organizations?

Rationalist theories have heavily influenced qualitative studies of the insurgency undertaken by scholars based outside India. They see the adivasis' support as largely irrelevant and instead explain the expansion of insurgent activity in terms of the weak state (Shah 2006; Suykens 2010; Miklian 2011). Although such studies raise some important points, they ignore a vast amount of scholarship emanating from India that shows how aggrieved local actors play a crucial role in the insurgency – to this we can add my own analysis in the previous chapter.

In order to understand the specific characteristics of adivasis that take part in insurgency, we must revisit the structural theories. Paige (1976, 1983) argues that a combination of proletarianized rural inhabitants – landless laborers or sharecroppers – and 'backward capitalists' who have nothing but their ownership of the land as the basis of their domination, is most likely to lead to insurgency. Further, in the context of the Maya of Guatemala, Paige (1983) claims that indigenous peoples supported left wing insurgents because they were exploited landless laborers rather than because of any distinctive indigenous identity. The dominant accounts of Maoist insurgency from India, which argue that adivasis support the insurgents because they have been dispossessed of their land and forced to become landless laborers, fit in with this class conflict analysis. Guha (2007a: 3305) relates adivasi involvement in the insurgency

with the process of ‘dispossession and exploitation’ and Banerjee (2008: 27) argues that ‘adivasis’ who ‘were ousted from their lands by colonizers’ form the Maoist’s support base. The Government of India (Planning Commission 2008: 9) also sees ‘land alienation, forced evictions from land and displacement’ as causes of adivasi unrest, and the CPI (Maoist) (2004) argue that the ‘vast majority of the adivasis have long been deprived of their land’ and argue that the revolutionary solution to this problem is ‘land to the tiller’.

The moral economy approach argues that sharecroppers and landless laborers are unlikely initiators of rebellion because they are vulnerable to repression from a distinct landowning class (Wolf 1969; Scott 1976). Landowning cultivators living in communal villages outside direct landlord control are more likely to be involved in insurgent activity. Wolf (1969), again referring to the Maya of Guatemala, argues that the distinctive closed corporate nature of indigenous communities provides organizational and material advantages for collective resistance against outside oppressors. Few academics in India advocate this approach, although the CPI (Maoist) (2004) and the Government of India (Planning Commission 2008) do acknowledge that adivasis are distinctive from other sections of Indian society.

It should be noted, however, that neither the rationalist nor the structuralist frameworks acknowledge the complex and dynamic manner in which social structure and political context interact in the development of social movements (Tilly 1964; Kalyvas 2006; Walder 2006).

CASE STUDY OF DANTEWARA

Case selection

The statistical analysis in the previous chapter demonstrated that insurgency is not, as commonly argued, most likely to occur in areas where the adivasis have lost their land to non-tribal immigrants. Rather, it is most likely to occur where there are a higher proportion of landowning tribal cultivators. This raises some interesting questions. If dispossession and exploitation cannot explain adivasis’ involvement in the Maoist insurgency, what does? If adivasis do not share a common consciousness with Maoist insurgents, how and why do they form a lasting alliance? This section aims to address these questions by using a case study of one district – Dantewara, the southernmost

part of the former ‘Jungle Kingdom’ of Bastar that now forms part of the state of Chhattisgarh – which is informed by fieldwork carried out in 2008 and archival data such as government and insurgent documents and newspaper articles, in addition to secondary ethnographic data.

Dantewara is a crucial case in the context of this study for several reasons. First, it is widely seen as the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency (see for example Guha 2007a; Roy 2010; Pandita 2012). It has been a haven for insurgents since the early 1980s and their presence has undermined the sovereignty of the Indian state as there are areas of the district where neither the police nor elected politicians dare to venture (CPI [Maoist] 2005; also see chapter six of this thesis). An Indian Administrative Service report from 1990 stated that the insurgents were running a ‘parallel government’ in the area (Sharma 1990). Dantewara includes the 4,000 square kilometres Abujmad forest that was recently described by an Indian Brigadier as ‘a liberated zone and under the total influence of Naxalites’ and was where Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister for Rural Development, was thinking of when, in 2011, he admitted that there were ‘liberated zones’ in Southern Chhattisgarh where ‘the state’s writ doesn’t run’ (Hindustan Times 2009; Ojha 2011). What is more, since 2005 Dantewara has been the scene of a brutal war between the insurgents and a counterinsurgent militia, Salwa Judum, which displaced over a quarter of a million people and led to a sharp increase in violence. As the counterinsurgency polarized society it provides a fascinating opportunity to better understand the relationship between adivasis, the state and non-adivasi insurgents.

Second, for several centuries Dantewara has been an important battleground for understanding India’s tribal population and its relationship with Hindu civilization. In mid-nineteenth century, the Deputy Commissioner of Bastar described the tribal population of the region as ‘the most perfect specimens of the aboriginal race’ (Lyall 1868: 25). British ‘anthropologist administrators’, such as Elwin (1936) and Grigson [1991 (1949)], lived with and studied the tribal communities of Bastar in the first half of the twentieth century. This has been continued by, *inter alios*, Sundar (2007) and Gell (1986, 1997), both of whom have carried out insightful ethnographic studies in the region.

In 2001 78.5% of the population were Scheduled Tribes, the third highest proportion in the whole of India (Census of India 2001). The characteristics of Scheduled Tribes in Dantewara are representative of those in insurgent affected districts, as identified by our statistical analysis: 89% of the adivasi workers are landholding cultivators, whereas only 5% are landless laborers. The insurgency in Dantewara is often explained in terms of the deprivation and exploitation of adivasis (CPI (Maoist) 2004; Guha 2007a; Banerjee 2008; Planning Commission 2008). Nevertheless, it has been noted that the tribal population in the region were, in many ways, relatively well off. The size of the average tribal landholding for in Dantewara is 4.8 hectares compared to the national mean of 1.6 hectare for the sample (Ministry of Agriculture 2001).¹ Gell (1986: 124) notes that landholdings held by adivasis in the district are ‘enormous’ by India standards: ‘Despite being a notoriously “backward” area, supposedly occupied by miserable, poverty-stricken tribals’... ‘the local economy is in a flourishing condition, prosperous in good years and well able to withstand the rigors of bad ones’ (ibid).² Writing in the mid 1980s, BD Sharma, Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987: 68), described how in southern Bastar ‘The luxuriant forest on the hills and the mighty river Indravati below provide plentiful sustenance to all and even the landless, the old and the infirm’. Similarly, in the 1940s, Verrier Elwin (1964: 155) describes how the local population ‘were poor but they were free and happy. There was a quality of enthusiasm and zest in their lives’.

Tribal history of Bastar

It seems apparent that Bastar historically resembled what Scott (2009) refers to as a ‘shatter zones’ or ‘zones of refuge’ – relatively inaccessible spaces that were, until the past century, more or less ungoverned by the state. For example, the Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of India (Government of India 1870; xlviii) described the region as follows:

¹ It is interesting to note that while the tribal landholdings are on average 0.4 hectare larger than those of non-adivasis in Dantewara, in the general sample tribal landholdings are marginally smaller than non-adivasis.

² Padel (2009) also describes the life as adivasis over the state border in Orissa as rich, even though in western terms of development indicators they are poor.

While equally to the north and to the south of it lay wide plains, over which invading armies, unchecked by natural obstacles, found rich cities to plunder and fertile lands to annex, these highlands were occupied by a race of whose object was protection rather than production, and by whom the natural ramparts of their adopted country were more prized than its corn-bearing valleys... Even the far-reaching power of Akbar and the fanatic zeal of Aurangzeb made themselves but faintly felt at so great a distance from the seat of empire, and it was not until one of the most powerful of the Maratha dynasties enthroned itself at Nagpur in AD 1743 that the history of Gondwana merges in that of the rest of India.

As Sundar (2007) points out, the isolation of the region should not be exaggerated. There was interaction of various sorts between the Bastar and the plains, most notably trade. Indeed, this point is made by the Gazetteer: ‘the chief exports are lac, resins, galls, horns, rice, sendri (a reddish dye), tikhur or wild arrowroot, gur (molasses or coarse sugar), teakwood, and cocoons of the tasar worms’, while imports consist of ‘salt, piece goods, brazen utensils, coconuts, pepper, spices, opium, tumeric, &c. from the coast; grain, wheat, and paper (Government of India 1870: 32). Notwithstanding, Bastar was until relatively recently a region in which the state had little ability to project infrastructural power.

In the precolonial period, adivasis in Bastar, as well as the tribal belt more generally, had strong symbolic and material links to the forests (Elwin 1936; Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009). They practised shifting cultivation, hunted and collected forest produce. Minor forest produce was vital for *adivasi* subsistence and trade. It was used for food, fuel, medicines, buildings materials and alcohol, as well as to exchange with traders for salt, cloth and cash (Government of India 1861, 1870). Surplus extraction from the tribal areas of Bastar did not occur through taxation of land or the exploitation of a class of landless laborers (Gell 1997; Sundar 2007). The 1861 *Report on Bustar and Kharonde dependencies* stated that ‘savage hill tribes’ ‘pay no tax whatsoever’ (Government of India 1861: 44). Instead, the abundant natural resources that lay above and below the forest – timber, non-timber forest produce and minerals – were the chief source of state income, although commercial

exploitation of the forest was not systematic and there was no forest department or policy (Guha and Gadgil 1989; Sundar 2007).

This changed with the arrival of the East India Company, which systematically set about acquiring control over India's natural resources, using bureaucratic and legal means to recast patterns of ownership and rights to common resources in a manner that was detrimental to the indigenous population. The main institution in charge of this process is the Forest Department, which at the zenith of its power was in charge of more than one fifth of the landmass in British India, amounting to almost 650,000 square kilometers – an area greater France (Government of India 1917). The aim of the Forest Department was 'to strive to continually attain the maximum output in materials or revenue or both' from the resources within the forest (Government of India 1925: i). In Bastar, this process was facilitated by two pieces of legislation, which British encouraged the King and *Diwan* (Prime Minister) to introduce. First, the Forest Act of 1878 gave the state the right to 'reserve' – expropriate, administer, and keep *adivasis* out of – all forests in colonial India. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that the Forest Act was applied to Bastar, but between 1891 and 1910 one third of all forest was reserved (Sundar 2007). Second, from 1889 the state began to regulate the collection of forest produce by granting monopsonies to non-adivasi traders and imposing duties on *adivasis* (ibid). This legislation led to an influx of non-adivasis into tribal communities in the form of forest guards who kept the *adivasis* out of the forests and charged them to collect forest produce, contractors who dominated the market for forest produce, and officials and police to administer and enforce the system. The 1881 Census of the Central Provinces noted that 'fortune seekers' from elsewhere in India were coming to tribal areas 'seeking service under the Government, or on the Railways, or under private persons' (Government of India 1881: 175).³

The changing terms of interaction between *adivasi* communities and Hindu civilization resulted in several 'tribal rebellions' in Bastar from 1774 onwards (Gell

³ The manner in which these reforms changed the lives of *adivasis* is neatly new summed up by a tribal who described to Elwin (1936: 22) his vision of heaven as 'miles and miles of forest without any forest guards'.

1997; Sundar 2007). All of these appear to be related in some way to the intrusion of outside forces into the region; first the Marathas, then the British and finally the Indian state (Bhatt and Bhargava 2005: 18-28). The 1910 rebellion, which was the most violent and widespread, was a response to the state's attempt to increase surplus extraction from, and control over, the forests. Five years previously the state had revealed plans to reserve two thirds of Bastar's forest and the rebellion drew its supporters from precisely those areas in which the reservation had taken place. It is interesting to note that the 1910 rebellion was popularly referred to as the Bhumkal, the social solidarity that binds members of a clan to each other and to their specific *bhum* (earth), as well as the political authority of the council of elders. Sundar (2007: 133) suggests that 'one might read the Bhumkal as a mode of protest juridically sanctioned by local authority, that of the elders in the name of the earth, a pitting of indigenous law against colonial law'. The last outbreak before the arrival of the Naxalites was led by the ex-Maharaja in the 1960s and called for land, access to the forests and cheaper rice (Guha 2007a; Sundar 2007).

From British colonialism to internal colonialism

On paper, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and later legislation protect adivasis' rights to their land and permit them a certain degree of political autonomy. But in practice, the postcolonial Indian state exercises neo-colonial forms of control over adivasi areas (Guha 2007a; Sundar 2007; Padel 2009; Scott 2009; Kennedy and King 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2013). Immigrants are pushed by demographic pressures in other parts of India, and attracted by the prospects of making money in this 'land of opportunities' (Bhatt and Bhargava 2005: 33). Most of them either fill the bureaucracy or coexist with it in domination over the *adivasis* and low castes, as 'merchants, moneylenders, mining project staff, forest officials, bus conductors, teachers, clerks, bankers, etc' (Sundar 2007: 15). The state remains an important actor: the Indian Constitution (1950) reinstituted the colonial policy that made the state the custodian of tribal areas. Sundar (2001: 2018) notes that in reality the state is 'run in the interests of the rich and powerful' and 'the administration... are largely from outside, originate from the upper caste, and look down upon the adivasis as backward and in need of civilization'. 'Where adivasis have managed to gain some power and influence ... they are dependent on the financial backing of trading or capitalist interests, and have started exploiting the adivasis themselves'.

The Forest Act (1927), which put forest land in the hands of the Forest Department, remains the foundation of forest administration in India. In Dantewara 52% of forest is reserved and another 31% is protected (Government of Chhattisgarh 2005). The state, currently in the form of the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce, dominates the market for non-timber forest produce and aims to keep the prices low and pass on the benefits to non-*adivasi* traders and industrialists (Saxena 2003; Sundar 2007). The state government nationalized the most commercially important forest produce in the 1960s and 1970s. *Adivasis* could freely collect these products, but had to sell them to the state marketing board at prices decided by the latter. On paper nationalization had multiple objectives: to collect revenue, to protect the interests of *adivasi* sellers, and to satisfy the demands of industry and other end-users. In practice, however, as a former secretary of the Indian Planning Commission has acknowledged, it served a hierarchy of objectives: ‘Industry and other large end-users had the first charge on the product at low and subsidised rates; revenue was maximised subject to the first objective which implied that there was no consistent policy to encourage value addition at lower levels; tribal and the interest of the poor was relegated to the third level’ (Saxena 2003:6). Thus the state acted as a monopsonist, keeping prices for unprocessed natural resources at lower than market rate, in the process exploiting *adivasi* labor, preventing the development of ‘spin-off’ industries and passing the benefits on to industrialists outside the *adivasi* areas (Sundar 2007: 7). Un-nationalized forest produce – such as tamarind, and mahua (*Madhuca longfolia*) flowers and seeds – are also an important source of income for poor *adivasis*. They are sold directly to private traders – who are generally non-*adivasi* immigrants from other parts of India. Traders sell on the produce at large profits; Sundar (2001: 2017) found the mark up on tamarind was more than 300%. In the past decade the government monopsonies have been relaxed and the state has tried to introduce programs to protect *adivasi* gatherers, but these efforts have ‘have failed in the face of local corruption and trader cunning’ (ibid).

In addition, the extraction of mineral resources has become an increasingly important issue. There are sizable reserves of minerals – most notably iron ore – in Dantewara. The presence of ‘immense quantities [of iron ore] on the Bela Dila’ was noted by British administrators in the 1870s, but it did not become a major political issue until

the last few decades (Government of India 1870: 31). The increasing pressure on these resources is often related to the economic liberalization that began in the early 1990s. Large mining and steel companies with strong links to the Indian political elite – most notably ESSAR and Tata – have increasingly coveted Dantewara's sizable reserves of iron ore (Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006; Sundar 2007; Padel and Das 2009). The state plays a central role in facilitating the process of 'predatory industrialisation' (Sundar 2007: 289). The Government of Chhattisgarh's (2004: 8) *Industrial Policy 2004-2009* emphasizes that private businesses are to be offered incentives for establishing 'mega projects in the most backward scheduled tribes predominant areas'. This is presented by the state as a means of developing 'backward areas', increasing revenue and creating employment. But it has led CPI (Maoist) General Secretary Ganapathy (2007) to argue that the intention of the current Indian state, in alliance with 'corporate comprador big business houses', is 'to drain the rich mineral and forest wealth' of Chhattisgarh's tribal areas. The state uses the Land Acquisition Act (1894) to expropriate adivasis' land for 'development' projects. The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (1996) should, in theory, allow the local community to veto such projects, but in practice villagers are threatened by 'gangs of goons' who coerce voters into agreeing to their demands, the minutes of *Gram Sabha* (village meetings) are rewritten, or fake *Gram Sabha* are used to approve a project (Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006).

On the ground, forest guards, contractors and policemen continue to have a massive and overwhelmingly negative influence of the life of adivasis. In the early 1980s a Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly minister who had recently completed a *padayatra* (journey by foot) through Bastar argued that 'An unresponsive administration and exploitation of the tribals by a section of officials of the revenue and forest departments and contractors has prompted the people in Bastar to seek help from Naxalite elements' (Times of India 1983d: 6). What is more, the adivasis' situation worsened as increasing numbers of paramilitary police were stationed in Bastar in response to the insurgency. A report by the People's Union for Civil Liberties from 1989 stated that 'the presence of the large contingent of armed police in the interior adivasi villagers has changed the environment completely' (Times of India 1989). The report documents police raiding villages, stealing property and grain, sexually abusing women, brutally killing some adivasis and detaining and torturing

others. It is apparent that, in Dantewara, as well as elsewhere in the tribal belt, such incidents have continued up to the present day (Concerned Citizens' Initiative 2006; Nagarajan 2010). This underlines the importance of endogenous mechanism; in the face of increased state repression of micro level actors as a result of the presence of macro level insurgents, the former seek protection from the later

The role of the insurgent organization

Maoist insurgents entered Bastar from Andhra Pradesh in 1980 (Times of India 1980b; CPI [Maoist] 2005). The first insurgents were non-tribe students from Warangal University and the leaders of *dalams* (guerilla squads) and *sangham* (committees) continue to be non-tribes from Andhra Pradesh (Times of India 1983d, 1987a; Balakrishnan 1993). The upper echelons of the insurgent organization in the region are, overwhelmingly, ideologically enthused upper and dominant castes from Telengana. As In the past Azad, Kishenji and Ganapathy have all been active in the area. The Dandakaranya Special Zone is now commanded by Katakam Sudarshan who comes from Adilabad, northern Telengana and is a member of the Padmasali community, a Telugu weavers caste that is seen as a dominant caste at the local level (Janyala 2010; Radhakrishna, 2010). He studied at the Government Polytechnic College in Warangal and then joined the People's War Group in the late 1970s or early 1980s (CPI [Maoist] 2009b).

Nevertheless, the insurgents are supported by tribes, who provide them with resources needed to undertake insurgency, such as intelligence and foot soldiers. The insurgents frame the insurgency in terms that are meaningful to the tribes. Non-tribe insurgents learned tribal languages and adopted their customs in order to gain the trust of tribes. In order to appeal to the local population, Kishenji is said to have taken the name 'Ramji Gond' – an tribe who died fighting the Nizam in the 1940s – while operating in tribal areas of what is now Chhattisgarh in the 1980s (CPI [Maoist] 2012c). In the Dandakaranya area of the tribal belt the insurgents support the creation of a separate Gond kingdom or 'tribal state', which had been a demand of tribal rebellions before independence (Times of India 1981a, 1992b; Surendran 1992, 1993; Kennedy and Purushotham 2012). The insurgents frame the movement as a continuation of earlier tribal rebellion in the region and, most notably, they understand the symbolic importance of the Bhumkal rebellion among tribal

communities in the region. The CPI (Maoist) (2005: i) refers to the Bhumkal rebellion as an earlier step on 'the path of liberation' and see 'the present generations [of adivasi insurgents] as their heirs'. In 2009, the insurgents issued a pamphlet warning of widespread violence to mark the centenary of the Bhumkal rebellion (Bose 2009) and the insurgents claimed that the ambush that killed 76 paramilitary policemen in April 2010 was timed with this in mind (Times of India 2010f).

The insurgents provide sections of the adivasi society with collective incentives. In the early 1980s insurgents would visit adivasi villages at night and enquire about which forest officials, contractors, police and government officials were intimidating, demanding bribes or paying low wages. The accused would be brought before a People's Court and the insurgents would 'settle the accounts' with them (Times of India 1984a: 12). Often they would be humiliated and warned to behave themselves in future (Times of India 1984b). An Indian Administrative Service Report describes who 'an errant constable or forest guard is made to crawl before a village assembly and seek pardon. A forester is forced to hold his ears, and in schoolboy fashion asked to do 100 situps' (Sharma 1990: 9). At other times, the insurgents would be more violent; they would threaten to cut off the limbs of contractors or to burn their trucks – and sometimes they would carry out these threats (Times of India 1984c, 1987a, 1988c and d; Kher 1991).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is apparent that the insurgents provided adivasis with a powerful ally against their enemies and this brought concrete benefits. They chased away Forest Department Guards, improving adivasis' access to the forests, and bullied traders into paying better prices for forest produce. In addition, insurgent literature claims that they engaged in considerable development work over the last twenty years, constructing schools, clinics and ponds (CPI [Maoist] 2005). A Congress MP pointed out in 1988 that 'The local population had links with Naxalites because the latter provided them with better protection and help than the state administration' (Times of India 1988d; 17). This analysis is corroborated by several recent government reports, which admit that adivasis see the insurgency as 'basically a fight for social justice, equality, protection and local development' (Planning Commission 2008: 60).

The insurgents also provide selective incentives to those people that take an active role in the insurgency. The Ministry of Home Affairs recently claimed that insurgents paid their foot soldiers a salary of 3,000 rupees per month and a cut of extortion money (Times of India 2010d). While these reports might not be true, they raise an interesting point. For young adivasis – both male and female – joining the insurgents is an opportunity to enter an organization that commands respect and fear with the community. Think back to what Misir Besra, the only tribal politburo member, said about carrying a gun in chapter five: ‘It was a feeling of great pride, when I first held the gun in the field, as a part of our army... I realised soon — as Mao had also said — that political power is born out of the barrel of a gun’ (Misra 2008). On the other hand, the insurgents also use targeted violence – sanctions or selective disincentives – against perceived and real opponents within adivasi communities. As pointed out in chapter five, this is often done through People’s Courts, in front of the whole village and the punishments are brutal; suspected police informers’ limbs are amputated, their eyes are gouged out, and sometimes they are killed (Times of India 1982c, 1983c, 1998b; Sharma 2011b). Such displays serve a double role; to punish suspected opponents and to send out a warning to other members of the community.

Insurgents versus counterinsurgents

Since 2005, Dantewara’s population have been able to choose between *two* competing political organizations, the insurgents and Salwa Judum, a counter insurgent militia. Salwa Judum aimed to clear the forests of inhabitants in order to deprive the insurgents of their support base. With the help of regular security forces, the counterinsurgents forcibly remove adivasis from their villages and herd them into fortified roadside camps, which act as ‘strategic hamlets’. The Government of Chhattisgarh appointed 5,000 Salwa Judum members as Special Police Officers (SPOs), who were given a gun and paid 1,500 Rupees a month to protect the camps and hunt insurgents (Balagopal 2006a, 2008).

The Ministry of Home Affairs (2007: 24) refers to Salwa Judum as ‘a voluntary and peaceful initiative by local people against Naxalites in Dantewara district’. The Dantewara District Collector dutifully repeated these sentiments, describing it as a ‘spontaneous movement of villagers started with the sole objective of countering the atrocities... against the community at large by Naxalite extremists’ (High Court of

Chhattisgarh 2007). The weight of evidence, however, points to it being an organized, state-managed enterprise (People's Union of Civil Liberties 2006; Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006). Indeed, the year before the Salwa Judum was formed the Ministry of Home Affairs (2004: 44) had, for the first and last time, advocated the formation of counterinsurgent militia's in its *Annual Review*:

There is a need to encourage and promote these local resistance groups. The States have been requested to explore the feasibility of appointing Special Police Officers (SPOs), Nagrik Suraksha Samitis (NSSs) and Village Defence Committees (VDCs) in the villages affected by Naxalism. These local groups are required to be encouraged to come out against Jan Adalats [People's Courts] and also to expose other misdeeds of the Naxal outfits and their leaders. This will help reduce the over ground support for the Naxalites.

The formation of Salwa Judum brought about a profound change in political context. The state's counterinsurgent strategy changed from containment to pro-active forest clearance and had two important consequences. First, it resulted in the militarization of society and a marked escalation in violence as the district was transformed from a guerrilla base into a war zone. On the one side, Salwa Judum cadre burnt houses, killed suspected Maoists sympathizers and sexually assaulted women (Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006; Guha 2007a; Sundar 2007). On the other, insurgents increased their level of retaliatory violence to attack the counterinsurgents, punish those they believed were sympathizers and spread fear in the broader population (Ministry of Home Affairs 2007: 24).

Second, the formation of Salwa Judum polarized society. Before the formation of Salwa Judum, the range of options available to inhabitants of insurgent controlled areas was to either support the insurgents or remain indifferent. After the introduction of a second political organization they were compelled to actively support and seek the protection of either the insurgents or the counterinsurgents. As the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh declared, 'those in the camps are with the government and those in the forests are with the Maoists' (quoted in Balagopal 2006a: 2184). 644 out of 1,220 villages in Dantewara were forcibly evacuated and between 40,000 and 50,000 people lived in roadside camps at the height of the counterinsurgency (ibid; Independent

Citizens' Initiative 2006). The total district population was almost 720,000 in 2001, indicating that approximately a quarter of a million people chose to remain in insurgent controlled territory or flee to neighboring areas (Census of India 2001). In such a situation it is enlightening to ask why some people decided to move to Salwa Judum camps while others refused.

Many Salwa Judum leaders are non-*adivasi* traders and contractors from the Hindi heartland of northern India. Some were adversely affected by the insurgents' attempts to provide collective benefits to *adivasis* and others previously profited from trading with the insurgents but came to realize that there was money and influence to be gained from supporting the counterinsurgency. The Independent Citizens' Initiative (2006), which included Ramachandra Guha and Nandini Sundar, point out that there was no oversight and accountability for the huge funds that were poured into Dantewara for the counterinsurgency. But the counterinsurgency cannot simply be presented as a non-*adivasi* movement. Significant numbers of Scheduled Tribes are also involved with Salwa Judum at various levels and there are large numbers of *adivasis* living in their camps. This indicates that the portrayal of a homogenous *adivasi* community that are the helpless victims of a rapacious dominant society is inaccurate. It is, therefore, interesting to ask who supports the insurgency and why.

It was apparent from talking to *adivasis* in Salwa Judum camps that they all had reason to resist or fear the insurgents. In many cases they previously held privileged statuses as a result of descending from a particular lineage or collaborating with dominant society. But in the process of establishing control the insurgents challenged and undermined their authority. They include *kotwars*, the traditional administrators in the village who have a reputation for demanding brides for services such as registering births, and *sarpanches*, the elected community leaders who are reputed to embezzle a proportion of money from government projects. Interestingly *patels* – the traditional village leader and usually the head of the founding lineage – tend to side with the insurgents rather than Salwa Judum in areas where their role does not overlap with that of *sarpanch*. This is corroborated by Sundar's (2007) observation that *majhis* (revenue collectors) who were appointed by the government in judicial reforms in the 1930s were more prone to side with the counterinsurgents than those whose position evolved out of clan formation. It indicates that traditional power

relations are not a source of conflict. Rather, it is changes in the nature of social relations brought about by the increased penetration of the state and market into tribal areas that is problematic. This allows some villagers to gain new powers, that are alien to, and in many ways conflict with, the adivasi worldview and belief system. Adivasi teachers and forest guards, who are seen by the insurgents as agents of the state and are often involved in local corruption, also form a sizeable proportion of Salwa Judum sympathizers.

It is not, however, possible to depict all adivasis opposing the insurgents as vested interests harmed by an otherwise popular insurgency. There are cases where factional identities result from factors that are endogenous to the insurgency and counterinsurgency rather than adivasis' relationship to the structure of power and privilege (see Desai 2002; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006). First, a large proportion of Special Police Officers were adivasi youth motivated by the promise of a government job, meager salary and the status of carrying a gun. They did not realize that they were taking sides in the conflict and, in fact, became SPOs for the same reason that others had become insurgents before 2005. In both cases they were 'seduced by their new-found – and essentially unearned – authority' (Guha 2007a: 3311). Once they have made this choice, however, they were unable to leave Salwa Judum for fear of reprisals by the insurgents.

Second, some Scheduled Tribes who joined the counterinsurgency were previously insurgent sympathisers who were captured and forced under pain of death to join Salwa Judum. The fear of reprisals for their treachery, as well as shame for what they had done, kept them on the side of the counterinsurgents and prevented them from returning to the insurgents. Third, because the decisions on who to target are taken in stressful situations and based on imperfect information, insurgent violence is frequently misplaced. Consequently, some victims and their family and friends do not resent the insurgents and seek the protection of Salwa Judum because of their position in adivasi society, but due to fear or the desire of revenge as a consequence of being the unintended victims of insurgent violence.

Fourth, adivasi society is not easily dichotomized into exploiters and exploited. While the extremes at either end of the spectrum are reasonably well defined, there is an

amorphous collection of people in the middle who do not fit neatly into either category. The actions of the insurgents and counterinsurgents have an enormous impact on which side of the fault line these people decide to choose. The Kallar, a 'backward caste' who live alongside Gonds in rural Dantewara, are a good example of this phenomenon. As a result of being marginally better off than the Gonds, the insurgents pressurized them to give away land, produce and animals to poorer members of the community. When the counterinsurgents arrived, they exploited the Kallar's resentment: while the Gonds fled into the forest, they sided with Salwa Judum and moved to the roadside camps. Now, the Kallar cannot leave the camps for fear of reprisals from the insurgents (see Independent Citizens' Initiative 2006). This demonstrates how what was once a marginal difference in wealth has become, after interference from insurgents and counterinsurgents, an impenetrable divide.

It is apparent that, in certain situations, irregular war increases the distance between preferences based on one's social position and one's actions, which are influenced by factors endogenous to the conflict. Moreover, mechanisms endogenous to the conflict solidify and, in some cases, alter people's preferences, and even their position in the structure of power and privilege. This indicates that structural and rational actor theories, which assume individuals who occupy the same positions in the structure of power and privilege will make similar choices regardless of where and when they make them, are flawed (Walder 2006; Tilly 1964; Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006). Walder (2006), in the context of China's Cultural Revolution, demonstrates that where political context is ambiguous or rapidly shifting, people in identical social positions may make different choices and end up on different sides of a conflict. Thus, he argues that factional identities are emergent properties that change with political context, which implies that the class configuration of insurgency is blurred.

Our analysis demonstrates that this is only partially true in the context of Dantewara. Either side of the fault line is a group with a reasonably well-formed and distinct identity. On the one hand are non-*adivasi* traders and contractors, and *adivasis* whose power was undermined by the insurgents; on the other are tribal communities who benefited from the collective benefits provided by the insurgents. These factional identities were overwhelmingly influenced by social identities that predate the conflict and the dynamics of the insurgency tended to solidify these identities. There are,

however, particular cases where preferences emanating from these identities were overridden by factors endogenous to the conflict. In between these distinct factional identities is an amorphous collection of people whose identities were undecided, ambiguous, fluid and contingent; that is, they were influenced more by political context than preexisting preferences emanating from the social structure. It is apparent, therefore, that the insurgency and counterinsurgency in Dantewara are not simply a manifestation of existing class divisions, but also a process of class formation.

Whereas classes are ‘empty slots’, class formation is the activation of these positions by political organizations (Esping-Andersen 1985; Przeworski 1985; Desai 2002). Our analysis indicates that the process of class formation was strongly influenced by the insurgents and counterinsurgents, who affected its timing and the shape. It is apparent, therefore, that the political organizations did not merely reflect a preexisting fault line in Indian society. To a certain extent, they causally preceded the fault line; therefore their actions and the cleavages formed were to some degree autonomous from the underlying social structure.⁴

CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter demonstrated that it is not, as widely argued by academics, the insurgents and the state, those adivasis who have been dispossessed of their land and been forced to work as landless laborers that are most likely to be involved in insurgent activity. Rather, it is those adivasis who still remain in control of their land that form the insurgents’ support base in the tribal belt. This chapter used fieldwork data, archival resources and secondary ethnography to undertake a case study of Dantewara district. This shows that adivasis’ grievances are intimately related to the colonial encounter and, in particular, the neo-colonial state’s desire to reserve forests, control the market for forest produce, and the consequent influx of forest guards, traders, police and officials. But adivasis participation in the insurgency is not merely a reaction to these stimuli. The largely non-adivasi insurgents were successful at presenting themselves as a viable and preferable alternative to the neo-colonial state. They framed the insurgency in terms that were meaningful to adivasis, most notably by emphasizing the continuities between previous tribal rebellions and the present

⁴ Desai (2002) makes a similar point regarding Keralite communists in the 1930s and 40s. For detailed accounts see Kennedy and King 2009 and Kennedy and King 2013.

insurgency. They provided adivasis with collective incentives: for example by chasing away forest guards and increasing the access to the forest or by coercing traders into paying higher prices for forest produce. The insurgents also provided selective incentives to those who joined their organization, as well as the threat of sanctions to potential police informers. Nevertheless, not all adivasis in Dantewara supported the insurgents. Some supported the counterinsurgents because they had previously collaborated with the state and were threatened by the insurgents, while others did so because of endogenous mechanisms related to the presence of the insurgents and counterinsurgents.

This chapter demonstrated that it is too simplistic to portray adivasis as the helpless victims of rapacious dominant societies that expand into areas they traditionally occupied. Our research found that sections of the adivasi community collaborated with the outside interests that were exploiting the areas' natural resources and that intra-community conflict is a crucial aspect of the insurgency. The insurgency should be understood as an insurgency against a 'bridgehead', which represents the interests of sections of the dominant state in adivasi areas (Galtung 1971: 81). The bridgehead is an informal bloc consisting of non-adivasis, as well as adivasi collaborators who benefit from their association at the expense of their broader community.

How do these empirical findings relate to theory? The structural explanations fail to accurately identify a mechanism by which structural potential leads to insurgent activity, but nor do those based on rationalist theory. Although selective incentives do motivate the decisions of some to join or support the insurgents, Dantewara's adivasis were not 'rational peasants'. While they supported the insurgents or counterinsurgents for a variety of reasons, these choices were limited and strongly influenced by social, political and economic context. What is more, as the insurgency and counterinsurgency progressed, the options available to adivasis were increasingly restricted, made under severe pressure, with imperfect information. In order to fully understand the relationship between non-adivasi insurgents and their adivasi support, the insurgency should be conceptualized as a process of competitive statebuilding. The insurgents set out to establish authority over the adivasi population by providing a combination of selective and collective incentives and disincentives. Adivasis' socioeconomic characteristics affected their receptivity to these benefits.

Nevertheless, in some cases factional identities result from endogenous mechanisms rather than adivasis' relationship to the structure of power and privilege, which underlines that perceptions of legitimacy are not an internalized constant.

Theories that assume a static political context and social structure and cannot cope with the dynamic and complex way in which the group configurations were influenced by factors endogenous to the conflict. They, therefore, fail to take into account the manner in which the political organizations affected the structure of society and how in turn this influenced the dynamics of the insurgency. Our analysis indicates that while the insurgency was in part a manifestation of class struggle it was also a process of class formation. Most factional identities were well formed and well defined before the insurgency began and were solidified by the dynamics of the conflict. There were, however, many seeming anomalies as a result of factors endogenous to the insurgency and counterinsurgency. Moreover, there was a mass of people that did not fit into this simple exploiter-exploited dichotomy; their factional identities were undecided, ambiguous, fluid and contingent on the changing political context and the actions of political organizations. Thus, this analysis demonstrates that endogenous processes are important but are not the only influences on people's behaviour. Actors and their preferences are not frozen in their pre-conflict manifestations as theories of peasant revolution from the 1970s assume, but nor are they irrelevant as suggested by recent research in the fields of economics and political science. Very few analyses acknowledge the complex and dynamic manner in which social structure and political context interact in the development of social movements – Walder (2006) being the notable exception.

8. The global level: indigenous peoples and civil war

INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to understand the involvement of tribal or indigenous peoples in civil war in the global context. Since the end of the Cold War there has been proliferation in comparative analyses that use quantitative data to explain the conditions that favor civil war onset (see Sambanis and Hegre 2006; Tarrow 2007). One of the most heated debates in this research tradition is whether or not ethnic grievances are a cause of civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Cederman and Girardin 2007; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). A more recent issue is the relationship between horizontal inequalities – systematic inequalities between culturally formed groups – and civil war (Østby 2008). Until now, however, indigenous peoples – who are amongst the most aggrieved ethnic minorities or deprived culturally formed groups¹ – have been ignored by this research tradition. Indeed, no article in either the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* or *Journal of Peace Research* has ever investigated the role that indigenous communities have played in civil wars.² This oversight is perhaps not surprising. The traditional academic division of labor sees the study of indigenous

¹ For example, the first United Nations (2010) *The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* states: 'Most indicators of well-being show that indigenous peoples suffer disproportionately compared to non-indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples face systemic discrimination and exclusion from political and economic power; they continue to be over-represented among the poorest, the illiterate, the destitute; they are displaced by wars and environmental disasters; indigenous peoples are dispossessed of their ancestral lands and deprived of their resources for survival, both physical and cultural; they are even robbed of their very right to life.' (Also see Maybury-Lewis 1997; Levi and Dean 2003; Eriksen 2002)

² The closest there is to a cross-national analysis of indigenous peoples and civil war is Fearon and Laitin's 2009 study of 'sons of the soil' conflicts. This study concentrates on the macro level and codes the conflicts by their master narratives. The Maoist insurgency in India is coded as a conflict between the Maoists and the state over state power, and the role of adivasis is totally overlooked.

peoples as the preserve of anthropologists who use localized ethnographic research strategies (Betuelle 1998). On the other hand, political scientists and economists who dominate the comparative study of civil wars tend to overlook communities who exist on the margins of the economy, the state and even the western academic understanding of history (Scott 2009; Wolf 1997).

To our knowledge only Gurr (1993a, b) – as part of the *Minorities at Risk* project – has undertaken a global quantitative comparative analysis of indigenous communities' participation in violent conflict. He finds that the strongest predictors of rebellion among indigenous peoples are grievances about loss of political autonomy and previous mobilization for rebellion. But whereas Gurr's research is based on cross-sectional data that is limited to the 1980s, this paper analyses time series data that covers the period 1946 to 2010 and, therefore, represents a marked substantive and methodological improvement.

Historically, the interaction between indigenous communities and dominant sections of society has been marked by bloody violence. This process is typically associated with the European colonization, which resulted in the deaths of many millions of indigenous peoples from disease, displacement, massacres and warfare (Maybury-Lewis 1997; Mann 2006).³ The extent of the devastation was so great that some scholars have claimed that indigenous peoples were the victims of genocide (Shaw 2007). But indigenous communities were not simply passive victims of colonization as some scholars have suggested (Bodly 1975). Nor has indigenous communities' resistance been limited to what Scott (1986) calls 'weapons of the weak', which lack formal organization and avoid direct conflict with authority. Indigenous communities frequently resorted to armed conflict in order to defend their autonomy, but because of huge disparities in the technology of warfare they were largely unsuccessful (Mann 2006).

³ For example, the aboriginal population of Australia dropped 80%, from three hundred thousand before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, to a low point of seventy two in 1921, and in the Americas the indigenous population fell by about 90% from a pre-Columbian total of between sixty and one hundred million (Mann 2006).

The majority of the comparative literature on indigenous peoples' political activity concentrates on arenas such as the World Social Forum and United Nations (Niezen 2003). Indeed, Ted Gurr (1994) argued in the mid-1990s that the interaction between indigenous communities and the state was becoming increasingly peaceful. This seems to hold true in North America, Australia and New Zealand, where indigenous populations are now largely acquiescent. Generally speaking, as Latin American states have become increasingly democratic, indigenous communities have pursued their interests through peaceful channels (Yashar 1998). The only examples of indigenous involvement in intra-state armed conflict in the last two decades are from Mexico, where the Zapatistas (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*) received support from Mayan population (Churchill 1995; Harvey 1998; Collier 2008) and the EPR (*Ejército Popular Revolucionario*) from the Zapotecs (Paz 2011).

Notwithstanding, it is apparent that many indigenous communities in Africa and Asia, where the process of state formation and encapsulation of communities living on the margins of the state occurred later, have been involved in intra-state conflict in recent times. Indeed, indigenous peoples amount to less than 5% of the world's population, but 12 out of 21 (57%) intra-state conflicts that were ongoing in 2010 according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo (UCDP/PRIO) *Armed Conflict Database* (ACD), involved communities that are classified as indigenous by the University of Maryland's *Minorities at Risk* project (MAR). As mentioned in the previous chapters, adivasis provide the Communist Party of India (Maoist) with mass support. Elsewhere, the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines (Ferrer 2005); the Karen National Union and Shan State Army (South) in Myanmar (Cline 2009); the United Liberation Front of Asom and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland in India (Cline 2006); and the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) in Turkey (Natali 2005). In Iran *Jundullah* (Soldiers of God) is supported by the Baluchis (UCDP 2011); in Russia the forces of the *Imarat Kavkaz* (Caucasus Emirates) are supported by Chechen, Ingush and Karachay (Roschin 2009); and Somalis in Ethiopia support the Ogaden National Liberation Front (Mburu 2009). In Sudan the Nuba are fighting alongside the Sudan People's Liberation Army (Suliman 1999); and the vast majority of *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (Student

Movement of Pakistan) insurgents are Pashtun (Christia and Semple 2009).⁴ It should also be noted that, although media attention concentrates on the better-armed Islamist groups who aim to impose sharia law, the Tuareg *Tankra n Tumast d Aslalu n Azawd* (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) is an important faction in the current civil war in Mali (Al Jazeera 2012).

This paper aims to understand the role that indigenous communities have played in intra-state armed conflict throughout the world between 1946 and 2010. To this end there are two sections. The first combines MAR and ACD data to quantify the extent to which indigenous communities have been involved in internal armed conflict since the end of the Second World War. The second uses logistic regression to understand why some indigenous communities pursue their interests through armed conflict, while others use more peaceful means. This research strategy clearly cannot match localized ethnographic accounts for thick description. But taking a broad geographical and temporal perspective allows us to investigate the subject of indigenous peoples and intra-state conflict from a unique perspective.

QUANTIFYING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ROLE IN ARMED CONFLICT

Indigenous peoples as a category for comparative analysis

‘Indigenous peoples’ is well established as a category of practice – that is, ‘categories of everyday experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:4). A striking but often overlooked feature global of politics since the end of World War Two is the rise of ‘indigenism’, the international movement of indigenous peoples (Niezen 2003; Therborn 2008). Groups claiming what Murray Li (2000) refers to as the ‘indigenous slot’ have come together to discuss their collective interests in various arenas, such as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, United

⁴ A further two ongoing intra-state conflicts were supported by indigenous communities at some point in the past: the Communist Party of Philippines insurgency was supported by the Igorots between the late 1970s and 1986 (Ferrer 2005); and the indigenous *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* was involved in the Colombian Civil War between 1984 and 1991 (Romero 2003).

Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations and World Social Forum. This has given rise to a common vocabulary of grievances and demands among these disparate communities (Gurr 1994). The term ‘indigenous peoples’ has become increasingly common in international organizations, such as United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the World Bank, over the past couple of decades. For example, in 1995 the UN declared the international decade of the world’s indigenous peoples and in 2007 the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Nevertheless, there remains a fair amount of skepticism regarding the utility of indigenous peoples as a category of analysis, that is, ‘experience-distant categories used by social scientists’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:4). Niezen (2003:19) argues that a rigorous definition of indigenous peoples would be ‘premature and, ultimately, futile’.⁵ The most widespread criticism is that it is impossible to find a universally acceptable objective definition of indigenous peoples because history and present-day situations vary so greatly between communities (Betelle 1998; Ingold 2000). Indeed, there are vast differences among the world’s indigenous peoples in terms of culture, political-economic organization, and their relationship with dominant society. Nevertheless, there are several characteristics that are widely associated with indigenous communities (Gurr 1994; Levi and Dean 2003; Niezen 2003; Alfred and Corntassel 2005). Most indigenous peoples live in relatively inaccessible areas, such as mountain, tropical rainforests, steppes, or deserts. Until relatively recently they tend to have had preindustrial modes of production, such as subsistence cultivation, herding and hunter gathering. Generally speaking they lack modern political organization, such as a state and their political actions tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

But as Murray Li (2000:174) points out, indigenous identities are ‘not predetermined by objective structures and positions, but emerge through processes of action and imagination shaped by the “continuous play of history, culture and power”.’ The defining feature of indigenous peoples is that they are indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have

⁵ The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations avoids the problem by defining indigenous peoples as those who claim to be indigenous.

spread out from Europe and other centers of Empire (Alfred and Cornthassel 2005). In the name of ‘progress’, ‘economic development’, and ‘nation building’, dominant societies have restricted indigenous communities political autonomy, expropriated their homelands for settled agriculture, mining and logging, and forced them to drop their traditional cultures and distinctive ways of live (Levi and Dean 2003). Scott refers to this process of ‘administrative, economic, and cultural standardization’ as ‘internal colonialism’ (Scott 2009:4).

According to Alfred and Cornthassel’s (2005) widely cited article, indigenous communities are communities that struggle against the state and dominant society to survive as distinct peoples. They are conscious of their separate identity, struggle to maintain it, and envision alternative models of development to those promoted by the state (Murray Li 2000). Generally speaking, indigenous communities desire a secure land base, control over their natural resources, political autonomy, and freedom of religious and cultural expression (Levi and Dean 2003). Thus, their interests bring them into direct conflict with the state and dominant society in which they are situated. The central questions that this paper addresses are how often and why this conflict manifests itself in civil war?

Coding indigenous communities and armed conflict⁶

We construct our list of indigenous communities from *Minorities as Risk* project data, which is to our knowledge the only such list.⁷ The MAR definition of indigenous peoples encompasses the characteristics set out above: they are ‘conquered descendants of earlier inhabitants of a region who live mainly in conformity with traditional social, economic, and cultural customs that are sharply distinct from those of dominant groups’ (MAR 2009). The communities are at the highest within-country level of aggregation. For example, the MAR refers to Native Americans rather than

⁶ See appendix C for more information about coding.

⁷ We use the list of indigenous communities set out on the Minorities at Risk (2011) website. To this we add communities that are listed by Gurr’s (1993a,b) earlier research as being both indigenous and ethnonationalist. This reflects the fact that these two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Alfred and Cornthassel 2005).

specific groups, such as Navajo, Apache, etc, and the Nuba rather than Dilling, Heiban, and so on. This aggregation might be problematic, as we cannot assume that these groups act in a unitary manner.

We use the UCDP/PRIO ACD definition of internal armed conflict. That is, conflict between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) without intervention from other states, that results in 25 or more annual battle deaths (Gleditsch 2002). This definition excludes both ‘extrasystemic armed conflict’ between a colonies and colonizing states and ‘internationalized armed conflict’ in which external states intervene on one or both sides. The threshold is lower than Fearon and Laitin’s (2003) dataset, which uses a threshold of 100 deaths. We use the ACD definition because we suspect that – like ethnic conflicts more generally (Sambanis and Hegre 2006) – intra-state conflicts involving indigenous communities will often be peripheral and relatively small scale.

While most analyses of civil war begin with the state as the unit of analysis (see footnote 2), we begin with indigenous groups. In this sense our strategy is similar to that of Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009) and Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010), whose unit of analysis is ‘politically relevant ethnic groups’. Our criterion for assessing the involvement of indigenous peoples in civil war is whether an insurgent organization is supported by an indigenous community. This approach differs from Wimmer, Min and Cederman (2009) and Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010), whose criterion for inclusion is whether or not the insurgent group claim to represent the interests of a particular group. It seems to us that such an approach privileges the rhetoric of insurgent leaders and ideologues, while overlooking the role of the support base that provides insurgents with resources crucial to fighting guerrilla warfare, such as food, shelter, intelligence, and recruits.⁸ As Kalyvas (2006:384) points out: ‘civil wars are concatenations of multiple and often disparate local cleavages, more or less loosely arrayed around the master cleavage’. We therefore look beyond the master cleavage and analyse whether an indigenous community forms part of the insurgents’

⁸ There are insurgent organizations – such as *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and *Movimento Revolucionário Túpac Amaru* (MRTA) in Peru – that claim to be represent indigenous interests but in fact forcibly recruit indigenous peoples and victimize members of the indigenous movements (MAR 2011).

support base. We consulted a variety of secondary sources in order to determine which civil wars involved indigenous peoples.

Broadly speaking, indigenous people take part in civil wars in two different ways. First, in a conflict in which issues of profound concern to the indigenous community define its master cleavage, and members of the indigenous community form both the leadership and support base of the insurgent organization. In short, there is one insurgent organization and one support base. This makes up 80 out of 94 (85%) of conflict onsets and 623 out of 747 (83%) of indigenous conflict years. Examples include the Kachin Independence Organization in Myanmar (Cline 2009), the Afar Liberation Front in Ethiopia (Yasin 2008) and *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* in Indonesia/East Timor (Hill 2002), which respectively pursue the interests of Assamese, Afar and Timorese indigenous communities through intra-state armed conflict.

There are more complicated examples that broadly fit into this category. While Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatista spokesman, is not Mayan and *Zapatismo* combines traditional Mayan practices with elements of libertarian socialism, anarchism and Marxism, the vast majority of the movement's leadership and support base comes from the Mayan community in eastern Chiapas and the issues that they are concerned with reflect this (Churchill 1995; Harvey 1998; Collier 2008). Other insurgent organizations represent one indigenous community, but the conflict's master cleavage is overlaid with religious ideology; Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines fight for Moro autonomy (Ferrer 2005); *Jundullah* is an insurgent organization that fights for the rights of the Buluchi in Iran (UCDP 2011); and *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* is predominately supported by Pashtun (Christia and Semple 2009).

The second way that indigenous peoples pursue their interests through armed conflict is wars in which the master cleavage does not directly relate to indigenous issues, the leaders are non-indigenous, and a significant proportion of the support base are not indigenous. In such a situation the insurgent's political program makes specific concessions to indigenous issues and indigenous communities form part of the insurgent's support base. Put simply, there is one insurgent organization but several support bases – including indigenous peoples.

There are several examples of indigenous peoples taking part in civil wars as a part of left wing insurgent organizations.⁹ First, the leaders of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) are non-*adivasis* and the insurgents are strong in areas of India where there are no indigenous peoples, as well as the central tribal belt where *adivasis* form the main support base (Kennedy and Purushotham forthcoming). Second, in the Philippines, Igorot who opposed encroachment of dominant communities into their homelands joined the Communist Party of the Philippines' military wing in the late 1970s, the New People's Army (NPA) (Ferrer 2005). When Ferdinand Marcos was defeated in 1986, the NPA continued fighting but the Igorot members broke away and signed a peace agreement with the government that included greater autonomy. Third, while the Communist Party of Thailand was multiethnic in nature, from the mid-1970s onwards it drew a considerable support from northern hill tribes that were disgruntled with the expansion of state power into their homelands (Race 1984). Fourth, Montagnards in South Vietnam who were aggrieved with the encroachment of the Vietnamese and French were an important source of support for communist insurgents in the 1950s and 1960s (McLeod 1999). Fifth, as Mayan communities became increasingly politicized in the 1960's Guatemala's left wing guerillas rooted their struggle in the deep historical grievances of the Maya. From that point on *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) became the primary representatives of indigenous issues and the Mayan population formed an important support base for the insurgents (Churchill 1995).

There are also cases where indigenous communities have fought alongside another community – sometimes indigenous, sometimes not – that defines the conflict's master cleavage. From 1989 onwards, the Nuba allied themselves with the non-indigenous Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (Suliman 1999); before

⁹ But it is interesting to note that there are also examples of indigenous peoples fighting in civil wars against left wing organizations: the Hmong rebelled against the incumbent communist regime in Laos (Hamilton-Merritt 1993), MISURATA fought the *Sandinista* state in Nicaragua (Ortiz 1987; Sollis 1989), and *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* was formed to defend indigenous communities against the violent excesses of *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) in Colombia (Romero 2003).

Namibia gained independence the South African military recruited and trained San to track and kill the SWAPO (South West African Peoples' Organization) rebels (Lee and Hurlich 1982); the Massai fought alongside the indigenous Kalenjin in the Rift Valley violence after democratic reforms in the early 1990s (Kahl 1998; Ndung'u and Kimenyi 2002); and militant Ingush organizations, such as the *Ingush Jamaat* (Ingush Assembly), fought the Russian state as part of the Second Chechen War (Vachagaev 2007). From 2007 onwards three separate indigenous communities – Ingush, Karachay and Chechens – have fought together for the forces of the Caucasus Emirates against the Russian Federation (ibid; Roshchin 2009).¹⁰

Indigenous intrastate conflicts not included in ACD

We cross checked the ACD list of conflicts with those compiled by Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Sambanis (2004) and found three conflicts involving indigenous communities that appeared to meet the ACD criteria but were not coded.¹¹

First, is the uprising by the Kenyan Somali community, known as the 'Shifta War', that began in 1963 and is included in Sambanis' (2004) list of civil wars.¹² The newly independent Kenyan state would not allow the Somali population residing in the Northern Frontier District to secede from Kenya and unite with Somalia. In response the Somalis secessionists boycotted the election and carried out a series of attacks on military and police posts in the territory. While there are no have definite figures, the best estimate is that there were five thousand Somali deaths (ibid).

The second conflict also occurred in Kenya soon after the implementation of

¹⁰ It is, therefore, possible for one civil war to involve more than one indigenous community. This occurred in three cases: the Rift Valley violence involved the Massai as well as the Kalenjin, the second Chechen war involved the Ingush as well as the Chechens, and the Forces of the Caucasus Emirates are made up of Ingush, Chechens and Karachay.

¹¹ Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Sambanis (2004) have higher thresholds for what is included as a civil war. Therefore, if a conflict is included on these lists it should also meet the ACD's criteria.

¹² 'Shifta' means bandit in Somali.

democratization reforms in the early 1990s. The Rift Valley violence that killed several thousand people is often classified as communal violence rather than civil war (Ndung'u and Kimenyi 2002). But Sambanis (2004) argues that it was a 'civil war by proxy'. It pitted members of President Moi's own community, the Kalenjin, as well as members of groups such as the Massai who were aligned with the regime, against communities that were associated with the opposition (Kahl 1998). The army itself was not directly involved, but the violence was supported and mobilized by the government. Evidence of state involvement includes state-owned vehicles being used to transport the militias, combatants wearing military uniform and operating in military formations, and helicopters carrying administrative and security officers landing in the midst of a group of warriors (Ndung'u and Kimenyi 2002).

Third, the Uyghur's have been involved in a long term struggle for an independent 'East Turkestan' in Xinjiang region of western China (Millward 2004). Rebellions against the central government occurred in 1936, 1937, 1944, and 1954 – although in the case of the latter there is too little data regarding the number of deaths to code a civil war (Sambanis 2004). A number of separatist armed organizations operate in the region and violence has increased since 1990s, with assassinations of pro-Chinese clerics, bombings and brief armed skirmishes, as well widespread protests (Millward 2004). This is only classified as a civil war by Fearon and Laitin (2003), who code the onset as 1991. Sambanis (2004) does not code the conflict as a civil war because he is uncertain that the cumulative total of deaths has been reached one thousand, although he concedes it is possible that it has.

In addition, there is no mention of the Burmese Chin (Zomis) in any of the three lists of civil wars, but there is evidence to suggest that they have been involved in internal conflict (Minorities at Risk Project 2011; Minority Rights Group International 2011). While the Chin demanded separate independence from the British after World War Two, their armed conflict against the Burmese state only dates to the mid-1980s. The Chin are one of the few ethnic groups that have not reached a ceasefire agreement with the junta in recent years.

Indigenous peoples and armed conflict

An analysis of the data demonstrates that indigenous communities have been involved

in a large number of civil wars since 1946. If we include the four additional conflicts we have identified, 61% (51 out of 84) of indigenous communities were involved in internal armed conflict between 1946 and 2010. There were 94 onsets in this period, and average of more than one per community. Indigenous communities were involved in civil war in 747 out of 5,075 indigenous community years. On average, therefore, each indigenous community has been at war with the state for 15% of the time – or 10 years – since the end of World War Two.

Figure 8.1: Indigenous peoples and civil war, 1946-2010

In absolute terms, indigenous peoples have played a disproportionate role in internal conflict since 1946. While the total number of indigenous peoples covered by MAR was 326 million people – or 4.8% of the world’s population – indigenous communities were involved in 43% (677 out of 1,580) of the civil war years and 34% on (92 out of 273) of civil war onsets included in the ACD data set.¹³ Figure 1

¹³ It is possible that these figures underestimate the role of indigenous communities in civil war. The calculation does not include the four conflicts that were not identified by the ACD and MAR does not include all indigenous communities that have been involved in civil war. For example the Saharawis fought the Mauritania state from

demonstrates that between 1946 and 1975 both general civil war activity and civil war activity involving indigenous peoples increased gradually, with the latter making up over half of the former. After 1975 there was a spike in general civil war activity, driven first by Cold War sponsored conflicts and then those that followed the break up of the Cold War power system. At its peak in the early 1990s there were over 50 civil wars per year. During the same period indigenous civil war activity remained relatively stable, at somewhere between 10 and 20 conflicts per year. Since the beginning of the last century, as the level of general civil war activity has fallen, indigenous civil war activity has once again made up somewhere over half of all civil wars.

EXPLAINING INDIGENOUS CIVIL WAR

Generating hypotheses

Over half of indigenous communities were involved in civil war between 1946 and 2010. This raises the question: why do some indigenous communities pursue their interests through armed conflict against the state while others do not? Theories of civil war and social movements provide two broad answers to this question.

The first concentrates on the characteristics of the specific indigenous community and its relationship with dominant society and the state. It has been suggested that *greater difference in culture between indigenous and dominant society increases the risk of civil war*. Some scholars argue that the cultural nature of ethnic differences make societies prone to conflict and violence (Huntington 1996; Horowitz 1985).

It has also been argued that *indigenous communities that are more economically disadvantaged in relation to dominant communities are a greater risk of being involved in civil war*. The notion that economic grievance leads to violent conflict dates back at least as far as Aristotle and the idea that the ‘rage of the poor’ leads to civil war remains popular (Muller 1985). Influential versions of this line of argument include the notion that relative deprivation (Gurr 1970) and economic inequality (Muller 1985) lead to violent conflict.

1975 to 1978 and the Janajāti were an important source of support for the Maoists in Nepal from 1996 to 2006.

It has also been suggested that *political discrimination against indigenous communities increases the risk of them participating in civil war*. Where the state observes civil rights, such as freedom of association, expression and due process, indigenous communities are able to pursue their political interests through peaceful channels. But where such channels are closed, they are more likely to resort to violent means (McAdam 1982). This account is congruent with the constructivist theories, which argue that minority groups turn to violence when the state or society hinders their upward mobility (Wimmer 2002; Wimmer, Min and Cederman 2009).

Gurr (1993a,b) argues that indigenous communities' chief grievance relates to the loss of autonomy to the state. As indigenous peoples are by definition communities concerned about the loss of their autonomy (Alfred and Corntassel 2005), this suggestion would appear to be tautological. We would expect that *those communities who lost their autonomy more recently to be at higher risk of being involved in civil war*. It seems likely that communities that lost their autonomy a long time in the past would have also fought and lost their violent battles against the process well before 1946. On the other hand, those communities that have only recently lost their autonomy or remain autonomous are likely to be less integrated into dominant society and have the 'organizational autonomy' and 'communal solidarity' to undertake armed conflict against the state (Scott 1976).

We would expect *indigenous groups with larger populations to be at greater risk of participating in civil war*. A larger population provides organizational opportunities for insurgents, in particular access to a greater pool of resources needed to fight irregular warfare, such as recruits, information, shelter, and food. Moreover, because of the way in which civil war is operationalized, as a threshold of battle debts, civil wars are more likely to occur when they involve populous indigenous groups (Sambanis and Hegre 2006).

The second explanation concentrates on characteristics of the state. Grievances are not seen as irrelevant; the assumption is that grievances are far more widespread than civil war and that they only lead to civil war when it is feasible (Tilly 1978; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

The relationship between political institutions and civil war is heavily debated. Some studies suggest that *increasing levels of democracy reduce the risk of civil war* (Gurr 2000), although most find the level of democracy to be insignificant (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003). There is more evidence that the risk of civil war is higher under conditions of intermediate regime repressiveness compared to very repressive or very open regimes (Sambanis and Hegre 2006). ‘Anocracies’ are weak regimes, which lack the resources to be successful autocrats who can repress dissent and thus avoid civil violence despite high levels of popular grievance. It is argued that *anocracy increases the risk of civil war*. It is also suggested that *recent regime change increases the risk of civil war* because it temporarily weakens the government vis-à-vis the insurgents (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

In addition we add several control variables in our regression equation.

We would expect *countries with lower per capita GDP to be at higher risk of civil war*. GDP per capita is a proxy for a state’s overall financial, administrative, police, and military capabilities (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Collier and Hoeffler (2004) suggest that income levels are a measure of the economic opportunity cost of the war. But this does not seem to hold for indigenous peoples, who live in grinding poverty even in countries, such as Australia and the United States, which have very high per capita incomes (United Nations 2010).

It is commonly held that *more rural countries are at greater risk of civil war*. The state tends to be strong in cities and towns, on plains and along lines of communication but weaker in more rural areas. Insurgents are therefore able to build up base areas in the countryside without interference from the state (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Kalyvas 2006).

Because of the manner in which civil war is defined, i.e. when the number of deaths reaches a certain threshold, *civil wars are more likely to occur in populous countries* (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). We therefore include a variable that measures country population.

Beck, Katz and Tucker (1998) have demonstrated that regressions using time-series cross-section data will underestimate standard errors unless temporal dependence is

controlled for. In the context of internal armed conflict we would expect that the longer a country is at peace, the lower the risk of war should be (Gurr 1993a,b; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Sambanis and Hegre 2006). This is because conflict related resources – such as the opportunity to utilize existing stocks of arms and ammunition, leadership structures, soldiers, resentment to the state and preparedness for violence – depreciates with time. We therefore include variable that measures the number of years that the indigenous community has been at peace since the last civil war, as well as a natural or restricted cubic spline function on peace years as suggested by Beck, Katz and Tucker (1998).

We also add a calendar year variable to capture possible changes in the geopolitical climate over time (Wimmer, Min and Cederman 2009). This allows us to empirically test Gurr’s (1994) assertion that the risk of violent conflict involving indigenous peoples has decreased with time. Descriptive statistics are set out in table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Descriptive statistics for key variables

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Conflict onset	4424	.02	.14	0	1
Cultural difference	5073	3.50	.82	1	4
Economic discrimination	5073	2.46	1.12	0	4
Political discrimination	5073	2.49	1.28	0	4
Group population (,000)	5028	2417.22	6807.63	16.89	90101.07
Lost autonomy	5073	1840.60	169.03	1447	2011
Country polity2 score	5068	-.01	7.03	-10	10
Anocracy	5068	.27	.44	0	1
Instability	5068	.16	.37	0	1
Country GDP (,000)	5073	3.09	3.56	.199	28.11
Country population (,000)	5073	125176.20	236892.70	270	1331346
Country mountains (%)	5073	26.27	16.87	0	71.3
Peace years	5075	20.53	18.27	0	65
Year	5075	1979.58	18.22	1946	2010

Regressions

The dependent variable is civil war onset, meaning that it is coded as ‘1’ for indigenous community country years with a conflict onset, and zero for other country

years.¹⁴ There are two ways of coding civil war onset that are common in the literature. The first version, which we use in this analysis, drops ongoing war years by coding them as missing. This coding of the dependent variable results in the loss of 13% of observations. The second includes all observations and adds a dummy control for ongoing war. In the sensitivity analysis we demonstrate that both operationalizations of conflict onset generate very similar results.

As the dependent variable is binary we use logistic regression to test the hypotheses. The unit of analysis is indigenous community years. All independent variables are lagged one year to reduce possible endogeneity. The results are set out in table II. We report odds ratio, the exponentiated regression coefficient. In parentheses we specify robust standard errors clustered by country to account for the nonindependence of observations from the same state.¹⁵

¹⁴ This is preferable to civil war incidence – meaning that the dependent variable is coded as ‘1’ for every country year with civil war occurring and zero otherwise – where the estimated coefficients are complicated averages of the ‘effect’ of a covariate on both the onset and the duration of civil conflicts (Fearon 2010). We apply the ‘two-year rule’: when a conflict falls below the battle deaths threshold for at least two consecutive calendar years, the next observation is coded as a separate onset (Buhaug and Gates 2006).

¹⁵ For correlation matrix and coding information see appendices D and E respectively.

Table 8.2: The determinants of indigenous communities' participation in intra-state conflict

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Cultural difference		.833 (.093)					
Economic discrimination			1.147 (.105)				
Political discrimination				1.255* (.118)			
Lost autonomy					1.004* (.001)		
Log group pop.						1.080 (.116)	1.220* (.094)
Polity IV							
Anocracy							
Instability							
Sq. Root Mountains	.939 (.048)	.949 (.050)	.940 (.047)	.932 (.046)	.915 (.049)	.931 (.048)	.919 (.045)
Log. per capita GDP	.373*** (.064)	.379*** (.066)	.377*** (.065)	.383*** (.065)	.407*** (.069)	.386*** (.073)	.407*** (.071)
Log population	1.224*** (.076)	1.230*** (.078)	1.231*** (.076)	1.241*** (.077)	1.164* (.076)	1.184* (.097)	
Year	1.032*** (.006)	1.031*** (.006)	1.033*** (.006)	1.035*** (.007)	1.028*** (.006)	1.030*** (.007)	1.028*** (.006)
Peace years	.864* (.063)	.865* (.064)	.875 (.066)	.887 (.066)	.872 (.063)	.862* (.063)	.855* (.063)
Peace spline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of obs.	4394	4394	4394	4394	4394	4394	4394
Pseudo R ²	.102	.105	.105	.110	.116	.103	.098

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). We report odds ratios. Standard errors are in brackets. Constants are calculated but not reported.

Table 8.2 (continued): The determinants of indigenous communities' participation in intra-state conflict

	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Cultural difference				.864 (.103)
Economic discrimination				.992 (.141)
Political discrimination				1.336* (.181)
Lost autonomy				1.004** (.001)
Log group pop.				1.046 (.142)
Polity IV	.990 (.018)			1.001 (.018)
Anocracy		1.123 (.297)		1.106 (.319)
Instability			1.907* (.474)	1.997* (.521)
Sq. Root Mountains	.929 (.050)	.937 (.048)	.948 (.048)	.925 (.056)
Log. per capita GDP	.374*** (.065)	.373*** (.064)	.381*** (.066)	.454*** (.088)
Log population	1.234*** (.078)	1.229*** (.077)	1.258*** (.083)	1.191 (.117)
Year	1.032*** (.006)	1.032*** (.006)	1.034*** (.006)	1.032*** (.007)
Peace years	.867 (.064)	.864* (.064)	.884 (.065)	.924 (.073)
Peace splines	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of obs.	4387	4387	4387	4387
Pseudo R ²	.103	.102	.109	.136

Notes:- * p <=.05 (5%), ** p <=.01 (1%), *** p <=.001 (0.1%). We report odds ratios. Robust standard errors are in brackets. Constants are calculated but not reported.

Our analysis indicates that neither cultural difference between indigenous and dominant groups nor economic discrimination are significantly related to indigenous participation in intra-state conflict. These findings contradict theoretical approaches that stress, respectively, the cultural and economic nature of conflict in modern society (Huntington 1996; Horowitz 1985; Muller 1985; Gurr 1970). But, that cultural difference and economic grievance do not increase the probability of indigenous participation in intra-state conflict is not surprising in the context of recent comparative quantitative analyses of civil war (see Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Sambanis and Hegre 2006).

Political discrimination against indigenous communities by dominant ones is significant in model 11. As predicted, those communities that are afforded political rights are less likely to be involved in armed conflict. But communities pursue their interests through violent means when they are not able to pursue them through peaceful channels. When all other variables are held at their mean the probability of being involved in intra-state conflict is over three times higher for an indigenous community that is subjected to repressive policies that substantially restrict its political opportunities compared to one that faces no discrimination. This is congruent with constructivist accounts of ethnic conflict, which argue that minority groups turn to violence when the state or society hinders their upward mobility (Wimmer 2002; Wimmer, Min and Cederman 2009). It also supports Yashar's (1998) suggestion that the increased inclusion of indigenous groups in democratic politics reduced violent conflict between them and the state in Latin America.

Models 5 and 12 demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between the year in which an indigenous group lost autonomy and the risk of them being involved in civil war. As predicted, the more recently an indigenous community lost its autonomy, the higher the risk that an indigenous community will be involved in armed conflict against the state. When all other variables are held at their mean, the probability of an indigenous community that lost its autonomy in 2010 being involved in intra-state conflict is ten times higher than one that lost its autonomy in 1447 (the first year in which an indigenous community lost its autonomy). Those communities who lost their autonomy a long time in the past also fought their violent battles with dominant society well before 1946. It is likely that these communities are decimated

to such an extent that they are in no position to mount an armed conflict against the state. On the other hand, those communities that have only recently lost their autonomy – or are still in the process of losing their autonomy – are likely to be less integrated into dominant society and therefore have the ‘organizational autonomy’ and ‘communal solidarity’ needed to launch a civil war (Scott 1976).

Models 6 and 12 demonstrate that group population is not significant when we control for total country population. But the correlation between these two variables is quite high (.505). In model 7, when we drop total country population from the regression equation, the significance of group population increases from $p = .473$ to $p = .010$, and when model 11 is repeated without total country population the significance of group population increases from $p = .741$ to $p = .063$. This is because both group population and country population variables reflect the fact that due to the way in which intra-state conflict is operationalized – as a threshold of battle deaths – it is more likely to occur among larger population groups.

We found that the form of politics in a country does not have an effect on indigenous involvement in armed conflict. Democracy (models 8) and anocracy (model 9) are unrelated to civil war involvement – even when we remove political difference from the regression equation. This is most likely because indigenous communities’ interests conflict with those of dominant society regardless of whether the state is democratic, anocratic or autocratic. Moreover, because indigenous communities are geographically, politically and economically marginal, they can be discriminated in democracies as well as anocracies and autocracies. Nevertheless, models 10 and 11 indicate that the risk of indigenous communities being involved in civil war increases in the wake of regime change. When all other variables are held at their mean, the probability of being involved in intra-state conflict is twice as high for those communities that have experienced regime change in the past three years compared to those that have not. This is perhaps because political instability is often accompanied by a reduction in the state’s repressive capacity and an increase in the relative strength of the insurgent organization.

Low per capita gross domestic product increases the risk of intra-state conflict in all

models. Indigenous peoples are more likely to be involved in armed conflict against the state in poorer countries than richer ones. When all other variables are held at their mean an indigenous community in a country whose per capita income is in the 10th percentile is three times more likely to be involved in indigenous conflict than one in the 90th percentile. It is apparent that indigenous peoples in the wealthiest countries in the sample – in North America and the Antipodes – have not been involved in civil war since 1946. We considered the possibility that this might be because these wealthiest states in the datasets are settler colonies where indigenous communities lost autonomy earlier than those in other areas. But the effect size and significance of GDP per capita do not change markedly when we add a variable for the year in which autonomy was lost. This is not to say that indigenous communities are necessarily better off in wealthier countries. Indeed, the horrific social problems experienced by Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals in two of the world's wealthiest countries are well documented (see for example United Nations 2010). Rather low income is a proxy for various factors – such as the state's overall financial, administrative, police and military capabilities – that make it very easier for an indigenous community to launch an armed conflict against the state.

There is a positive significant relationship between the calendar year and indigenous involvement in armed conflict in all models. When all other variables are held at the mean, the probability of an indigenous community being involved in intra-state conflict is seven times higher in 2010 compared to 1946 when our sample began. This demonstrates that, contrary to Gurr's (1994) suggestion that indigenous communities are increasingly pursuing their interests through peaceful channels, the risk of an indigenous community participating in intra-state conflict increased over time.

Sensitivity analysis

We ran a number of robustness checks based on model 11 in table 8.2.

We started by running the regression equations with alternative operationalizations of the dependent variable. First, we dropped the four additional conflicts we identified and only include those listed by the ACD. Second, the operationalization of conflict

onset in model 11 drops ongoing war years by coding them as missing, resulting in the loss of 13% of cases. We used an alternative definition that includes all observations and adds a dummy control for ongoing war. Third, we included only those onsets where the master cleavages is solely concerned with indigenous issues. We therefore dropped 14 out of 94 onsets where, although indigenous peoples take part, the insurgent organization's leadership was not primarily indigenous and its program was not primarily representing indigenous issues. This brought our definition of indigenous conflict in line with the dominant definition of ethnic conflict (see for example Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). All these statistical models were very similar to model 11.

Next, we tested to see if our results were robust to changes in the definition of internal armed conflict. In this paper we used the ACD dataset, which includes all armed intra-state conflicts with at least 25 annual casualties. We replace this with Fearon and Laitin's (2003) civil war dataset, which uses a threshold of 100 deaths a year. When we used Fearon and Laitin's threshold the number of conflict onsets fell from 94 to 61 because intra-state conflicts involving indigenous communities are often peripheral and relatively small-scale insurgencies that do not escalate into fully blown civil war.¹⁶ When we increase the threshold of battle deaths, political discrimination loses significance. Apart from that the model remains largely similar: the year in which autonomy was lost, political instability, per capita income, and calendar year all remain significant. In addition anocracy is positively and significantly related to indigenous conflict in this model. This indicates that the strength of the state and relative strength of the indigenous community are crucial in determining whether the relatively small-scale insurgencies captured by the ACD develop into fully blown civil wars included in Fearon and Laitin's dataset.

We then ran the regression equations with alternative operationalizations of the independent variables. We replaced MAR's economic and political discrimination indexes with MAR's indexes of economic and political difference, the polity 2 score with a dummy variable measuring whether the state was a democracy or not, group population with the group population as a proportion of the total country population,

¹⁶ Hegre and Sambanis (2006) report a similar pattern with ethnic conflicts.

and the mountainous terrain variable with one that measures the proportion of forest cover. The results did not differ markedly from those in the core model.

We then ran the regressions without time controls. That is, we removed the calendar year, peace years and peace spline variables. Again the results were very similar to model 11. Finally, we added regional dummies to test if our variables were merely a proxy for a region's shared historical, cultural, and economic traits. This did not materially alter the significance of the main explanatory variables or the models' pseudo R^2 .

CONCLUSIONS

It is widely acknowledged that indigenous communities are among the world's most discriminated and deprived social groups. In the name of progress, economic development, and nation building, dominant societies have undertaken a process of 'internal colonialism' that has restricted indigenous communities' political autonomy, expropriated their homelands and forced them to abandon their distinctive ways of life. Indigenous communities are conscious of their separate identity, struggle to maintain it, and envision alternative models of development to those promoted by the state. The interests of indigenous communities, therefore, bring them into direct conflict with the state and dominant society in which they are situated. The central questions that this paper sought to answer are how often and why this conflict manifests itself in civil war?

The majority of the comparative literature on indigenous people's political activity concentrates on peaceful exploits in arenas such as the World Social Forum and United Nations (Niezen 2003). Until now, however, indigenous communities have been ignored by comparative analyses of civil war. This paper is, to our knowledge, the first attempt to use time series data to understand the involvement of indigenous peoples in internal armed conflict. We combined data from the *Minorities at Risk* project and PRIO/UCDP *Armed Conflict Database* to investigate the role indigenous communities have played in civil war. Our analysis demonstrates that, while indigenous peoples exist on the peripheries of the state, they have played a central role in intra-state armed conflict between 1946 and 2010. Despite being less than 5%

of the world's population, they were involved in 43% of all civil war activity in this period.

61% of indigenous communities have been involved in internal armed conflict since World War Two and on average each community has been involved in conflict for 15% of the period (10 years). This raises the question: why do some indigenous communities pursue their interests through violent channels while others do not? Communities that suffer more political discrimination and lost their autonomy most recently are more likely to be involved in internal armed conflict. The probability of indigenous peoples being involved in civil war is higher in states that are politically unstable and have low per capita income.

Three of these variables are related to feasibility or opportunity: those communities that lost their autonomy recently are more likely to have the organizational resources to launch an armed offensive against the state; state's with low per capita income tend to have a lower military capacity; and political instability reduces the strength of the state vis-à-vis the insurgents. The implication is that indigenous communities pursue their interests through armed conflict where it is possible to do so. But political discrimination is also an important explanatory variable, which indicates that indigenous communities pursue their interests through violent means when peaceful channels are closed to them. This finding has important policy implications: if dominant states and societies allow indigenous communities to pursue their interests through democratic politics they are very much less likely to take part in violent conflict.

Finally, our analysis demonstrates that, contrary to Gurr's (1994) suggestion that indigenous communities are increasingly pursuing their interests through peaceful channels, the risk of indigenous involvement in civil war has actually increased over time. In fact, an indigenous community is over seven times more likely to be involved in intra-state conflict in 2010 compared to 1946 when our sample began. In 2010 indigenous communities were involved in 12 out of 21 (57%) of the world's ongoing intra-state conflicts and a further two conflicts had been supported by indigenous communities at some point in the past. Therefore indigenous communities' involvement in intra-state conflict is not only a matter of historical importance. It is an

issue that requires attention in order to resolve ongoing conflicts, avert future ones, and ultimately make the world a more peaceful place.

I must say that I am underwhelmed by the explanatory capacity of this kind of large n study. Writing this chapter has done very little to change the view that I expressed in literature review regarding this method. Nevertheless, these findings broadly speaking fit with what we know about the involvement of adivasis in the Maoist insurgency in India. In both cases, it is apparent that insurgency occurred due to a favorable structure of political opportunities and a lack of possibilities to pursue political interests through more peaceful channels. In addition, the finding that indigenous communities that have lost their autonomy most recently are more likely to be involved in civil war is consistent with the fact that in India insurgency occurred in areas where there is still a high proportion of landowning cultivators and not where tribal communities have been absorbed into the lowest echelons of dominant society as landless laborers.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to understand the political sociology of Maoist insurgency in India. It began by pointing out that a major problem with the vast majority of existing studies of Maoist insurgency in India is that they more or less ignore theory – resulting in politicized and parochial explanations. Further, the vast majority of empirical studies of Maoism in India consist of intense ethnographic research concentrated on a very limited area. These provide fascinating data on the micro-dynamics of insurgency, but there are obvious limitations in generalising the findings of these case studies to India, let alone further afield. On the other hand, the vast majority of studies of insurgency more generally use a rationalist theoretical framework that is based on an implausible ontology which, among other things, overlooks the social context in which insurgency takes place. What is more, the most influential studies of this type use national level data to identify variables that co-vary with the onset of conflict, therefore overlooking the fact that insurgency usually only occurs in certain parts of a country and is best understood in terms of local factors.

Following Kalyvas (2006), I put forward an alternative framework for studying insurgency that attempts to understand what is going on at three levels of analysis. These are: the macro level, the realm of elites, ideologies and grand politics; the meso level, the interface between political actors and the populations they rule; and the micro level, where small groups and individuals interact (also see Walder 2006).

In order to understand the social backgrounds of the macro level insurgents I used insurgent documents and newspaper reports to construct biographies of the 16 members of the CPI (Maoist) politburo. They tend to have caste and class backgrounds that are far removed from the constituencies that they claim to represent. The insurgent leaders are, on the whole, from upper or dominant castes. Out of the sixteen, there are no untouchables, and only one tribal. A large proportion were university educated or had professional careers, and only one had a job – as a factory worker – that could be deemed as working class. This indicates that neither socio-structural nor rationalist explanations help us understand the participation of politburo members. The insurgent leaders attempted to mobilize untouchables and tribals

against their own dominant and upper caste communities in a process that involves enormous self-sacrifices over a period of several decades.

This indicates that Maoist ideology is crucial to understanding the participation of the politburo members in the insurgency. Ideology cannot merely be written off as an excuse to justify the pursuit of personal interests. The conflict at the macro level is largely driven by a Schmittian attachment to the Maoist ideology expressed in the master cleavage. So how did the CPI (Maoist) leaders become ideologically enthused? Theoretically, the most compelling framework is one that concentrates on the specific political context in which actors' decisions are made rather than unchanging social structural or rationalist assumptions (Tilly 1964; Walder 2006). It has been noted that the members of the politburo are, overwhelmingly, from areas such as northern Telengana and West Bengal where Marxist ideology has historically played an important role in forming the ideas of the political elite. Many of the future insurgent leaders became interested in radical politics in their youth – often while studying – and decided to join the insurgency in the context of severe state repression, which demonstrated the brutality of the state and the apparent powerlessness of peaceful protest. These conclusions are supported by quantitative analysis, which demonstrates that, when we control for favourable socio-structural factors and variables that operationalize greed, a district being affected by insurgent activity in the period 1967 to 1972 is one of the strongest predictors of a district being affected by insurgency in the period 1982 to present date.

In order to understand who supports the insurgents at the micro level I used a combination of statistical and qualitative data. Maoist insurgents provide a unified organizational structure for two separate sections of society to pursue their interests. It is widely acknowledged that, historically speaking, the greatest social cleavage in South Asia was between communities living on the plains, and those that lived in hilly, forested tribal belt. As Bêteille (1986: 311) points out that the former was 'heterogeneous, differentiated and stratified' Hindu society and the latter was 'homogenous, undifferentiated and unstratified' tribal communities. In areas with a Hindu social structure the probability of insurgency is highest where there are large numbers of untouchable landless laborers who suffer economic exploitation at the hands of higher caste landowners. This occurred overwhelmingly on the plains of

Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The insurgents used front organizations, backed up by the guns of armed squads, to fight feudal domination and economic exploitation, and secure collective benefits, most notably better wages for agricultural labor. This explanation is broadly in line with what class analysts such as Paige (1975) would predict. On the other hand, in areas where the social structure is tribal the likelihood of insurgency is greatest where there is a high proportion of tribal landowning cultivators whose relative autonomy has come under increasing pressure over the past two centuries as the state has established control over natural resources in their area. This is broadly in line with where moral economists such as Scott (1976) would expect insurgent activity to be strongest. Before independence there were a large number of smaller scale ‘tribal rebellions’ against the intrusion of the neo-colonial state into the central tribal belt. The insurgents provide the tribal communities with powerful allies in their conflict on the ground with forest officials, traders, police and government officials. Again, the insurgents provide the tribal communities with collective incentives, most notably better access to forests and better prices for forest produce – which is 60% higher in areas where the insurgents have control.

It is apparent that the untouchable and tribal communities’ discontent does not spontaneously manifest itself in insurgency in the manner that structural theories envision. Rather, the insurgents provide these communities with powerful allies in their conflicts with, on the one hand, upper caste landowners from within the community and, on the other, non-tribals – forest guards, police and mining companies – from outside tribal areas. In return these untouchable and tribal communities provide the insurgents with resources that are crucial vital for their war against the state, such as food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. Thus, the insurgency is not a binary conflicts neatly organized around a single issue. Rather, as Kalyvas (2006) points out, it provides a medium for a variety of grievances to be realized within the space of a greater conflict – although contra Kalyvas I show that at the local level social structure and not just individual self-interested actions play an important role.

The actors at the macro and micro levels have very different reasons for participating in the insurgency. The insurgent leaders aim to capture power through people’s war and replace the current ‘semi-feudal semi-colonial’ state with a ‘New Democratic’

one. On the other hand the objectives of micro level actors tend to be more concerned with local and short-term issues. The interests of macro level insurgents and micro level supporters coincide at the meso level, where the guerilla squads (*dalams*) and legal front organizations (*sanghams*) attempt to build up base areas. For macro level actors the seizure of local power is an important step towards their ultimate goal of seizing state power. On the other hand, the local seizure of power undermines the power of upper caste landowners or the agents of the neo-colonial state in a manner that allows untouchable and tribal communities to improve their economic, political, and social circumstances. This has important practical implications. If we conceptualize the insurgency as a simple dyadic conflict between the state and the Maoists, there is seemingly no peaceful resolution as the goals of the two parties are mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, many of the insurgents supporters' demands at the micro level – land distribution, the payment of a living wage, the abolition of caste abuse, bonded labor and forced labor, some amount of autonomy for tribal communities, better access to the forests, the power to veto mining projects on tribal land – are all de jure policies set out in the Indian Constitution or later legislation. Thus, the major challenge facing the Indian state is to look beyond the conflict's master cleavage and to ensure that these laws are properly implemented at the local level.

Further, it is apparent that the insurgents are neither gangsters, as argued by their retractors, or Gandhians, as suggested by their supporters. Rather, the insurgency can best be conceptualised as a state building enterprise. I used a combination of insurgent documents and newspaper articles to demonstrate that the insurgents' fundraising activities and violence – which are often cited by critics as evidence that the insurgents are bandits or cold-blooded murderers – fit into the logic of state building. That is, these activities are designed to serve the insurgents' collective interests of asserting control over base areas rather than the private interests of individual insurgents. The base areas undermine the sovereignty of the Indian state, resulting in a situation of 'dual sovereignty' (Tilly 1978). According to Weber's definition, the most important aspect of sovereignty relates to a state's exclusive ability to actually govern its territory. It is apparent, however, that in certain parts of India where the insurgents operate the state is totally absent, while in other areas it does not have a monopoly of the means of violence or the means of administration. Rather, India's

claims to sovereignty in these areas derive from its internationally recognised rights. In this sense, India, at least in the areas affected by insurgency, resembles what Robert Jackson (1991) refers to as a 'quasi state'.

An important theme running through this analysis is the role played by tribals or adivasis, who are broadly speaking India's indigenous peoples. The dominant narrative of Maoist insurgency in India views the role of tribal communities in the insurgency as peripheral until the past decade or so. This thesis demonstrates however, that the insurgents have played an important role in the insurgency over the past six decades. As such, the commonly accepted 'Naxalbari-centric' narrative of Maoist insurgency in India obscures our understanding of the phenomenon. The statistical analysis demonstrating that, over the past thirty years, insurgent activity expanded far more rapidly in areas inhabited by tribal communities than elsewhere in India. What is more, this expansion did not happen in areas where the tribal population were landless and exploited, as is commonly argued. Rather, it occurred in areas where the levels of landownership are highest. In order to understand this in more detail I undertook a case study of Dantewara district, which has been a crucial case for understanding the relationship between adivasis and Hindu civilization for the past hundred years and is currently the epicenter of the Maoist insurgency in India. This showed that, although the majority of adivasis support the insurgents because they provide them with a powerful ally in their conflict with the neo-colonial state, not all adivasis support the insurgents. Those whose interests have been harmed by the presence of the insurgents, as well as others who are motivated by a variety of endogenous mechanisms, support the counterinsurgent militia.

The case study of Dantewara made two important points. First, it is too simplistic to portray adivasis as the helpless victims of rapacious dominant societies that expand into areas they traditionally occupied. Our research found that sections of the adivasi community collaborated with the outside interests that were exploiting the areas' natural resources and that intra-community conflict is a crucial aspect of the insurgency. Second, rationalist and structural theories are inadequate to cope with the dynamic and complex way in which the group configurations were influenced by factors endogenous to the conflict. They fail to take into account the manner in which the political organizations affected the structure of society and how in turn this

influenced the dynamics of the insurgency. The analysis indicates that while the insurgency was in part a manifestation of class struggle it was also a process of class formation.

The final part of the thesis attempted to put the subject of indigenous peoples and insurgency in the global context. The majority of the comparative literature on indigenous peoples' political activity concentrates on arenas such as the World Social Forum and United Nations (Niezen 2003). Indigenous peoples have been overlooked by comparative analyses of civil war. I demonstrate that, while indigenous communities listed by the Minorities at Risk project amount to 4.8% of the world's population, they were involved in 43% of the intra-state conflict years listed by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Armed Conflict Dataset between 1946 and 2010. The risk of indigenous involvement in civil war has increased over time and in 2010 indigenous communities were involved in 57% of the world's ongoing intra-state conflicts. Therefore indigenous communities' involvement in intra-state conflict is an issue that requires attention in order to resolve ongoing conflicts, avert future ones, and ultimately make the world a more peaceful place.

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Appendix A: Correlation Matrix of Main Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Insurgent activity	1.000								
2. Untouchable landless laborers %	.199	1.000							
3. Untouchable landholders %	-.124	-.536	1.000						
4. Tribal landholders %	.111	-.270	.385	1.000					
5. Tribal landless laborers %	.044	.549	-.435	-.150	1.000				
6. Total population (log)	.083	.327	-.379	-.269	.227	1.000			
7. Literacy %	-.091	-.174	-.380	-.319	-.004	.073	1.000		
8. Rural population %	.084	.182	.365	.239	.032	-.315	-.420	1.000	
9. Previous conflict	.507	.169	-.136	.059	.048	.075	-.024	.037	1.000

Appendix B: Predicted probabilities of key independent variables

Model and variable	All India (binominal)			Hindu areas (multinomial)			Tribal areas (multinomial)		
	25th %ile	75th %ile	Δ %ile	25th %ile	75th %ile	Δ %ile	25th %ile	75th %ile	Δ %ile
1. Untouchable landless laborers	.056	.087	1.554	.018	.056	3.111	.035	.025	.714
2. Untouchable landholders	.101	.049	.485	.066	.017	0.258	.032	.029	.906
3. Tribal landholders	.058	.098	1.690	.055	.037	0.673	.006	.045	7.500
4. Tribal landless laborers	.079	.081	1.025	.041	.049	1.195	.038	.030	.789

Notes:- this table shows the predicted probabilities at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentile on the given variable when all other covariates held at their mean. Δ percentile is calculated by dividing the 75th percentile by the 25th. Thus, a value greater than one indicates a positive relationship between the variable and insurgent activity, while a value below one shows a negative relationship. Those variables that are significantly related to the onset of insurgency are in **bold**. Calculations are based on both binomial and multinomial models in Tables 3 and 4.

Appendix C: Coding indigenous communities and internal armed conflict

Community	Country	Conflict Years	Main Insurgent Organisation(s)
Berbers	Algeria		
Argentinian Indigenous Peoples	Argentina		
Aborigines	Australia		
Lezgins	Azerbaijan		
Chittagong Hill Tribes	Bangladesh	1975-92	Chittagong Hill Tribal People's Coordination Association
Bolivian Indigenous Highland Peoples	Bolivia		
Bolivian Lowland Indigenous Peoples	Bolivia		
San Bushmen	Botswana		
Amazonian Indians	Brazil		
Kirdi	Cameroon		
Canadian Indigenous Peoples	Canada		
Chilean Indigenous Peoples	Chile		
Turkmen	China	1991-ongoing	Anti-Chinese forces
Tibetans	China	1950, 1956, 1959	Anti-Chinese forces
Colombian Indigenous Peoples	Colombia	1984-91	Quintín Lame Armed Movement
Afars	Djibouti	1991-94, 1999	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy
Ecuadorian Indigenous Highland Peoples	Ecuador		
Ecuadorian Lowland Indigenous Peoples	Ecuador		
El Salvadorian Indigenous Peoples	El Salvador		
Afars	Ethiopia	1975-76, 1996	Afar Liberation Front, Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front
Somalis	Ethiopia	1964, 1976-79, 1993-94, 1996, 1998-ongoing	Ogaden National Liberation Front
Guatemalan Indigenous Peoples	Guatemala	1963, 1965-95	Rebel Armed Forces, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
Honduran Indigenous Peoples	Honduras		
Assamese	India	1990-91, 1994-ongoing	United Liberation Front of Asom
Bodos	India	1989-90, 1993-2004, 2008-ongoing	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
Mizos	India	1966-68, 1997	Mizo National Front, Kuki National Front
Nagars	India	1956-59, 1961-68, 1992-97, 2000	Naga National Council, Faction of Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland

Scheduled Tribes	India	1948-51, 1969-71, 1990-94, 1996-ongoing	Communist Party of India (CPI), CPI (Marxist-Leninist), CPI (Maoist)
Tripuras	India	1979-88, 1992-93, 1995, 1997-2004, 2006	Tripura National Volunteers, All Tripura Tribal Force
Papuans	Indonesia	1965, 1967-69, 1976-78, 1981, 1984	Free Papua Organization
Timorese	Indonesia	1975-89, 1992, 1997-98	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
Bakhtiari	Iran		Jondullah
Baluchis	Iran	2006-ongoing	Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, Party of Free Life of Kurdistan
Kurds	Iran	1966-67, 1979-88, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2005-09	
Turkomens	Iran		
Kurds	Iraq	1961-70, 1973-92, 1995-96	Kurdistan Democratic Party
Kalenjin	Kenya	1991-93	Forces of President Moi
Maasai	Kenya	1991-93	Forces of President Moi
Somalis	Kenya	1963-67	Anti-Kenyan forces
Hmong	Laos	1989-90	Anti-Pathet Lao forces
Dayaks	Malaysia		
Kadazans	Malaysia		
Tuareg	Mali	1990, 1994, 2007-09	Northern Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change
Mayans	Mexico	1994	Zapatista National Liberation Army
Mexican Other Indigenous Peoples	Mexico		
Zapotecs	Mexico	1996	Popular Revolutionary Army
Berbers	Morocco		
Saharwis	Morocco	1975, 1977-89	POLISARIO
Kachins	Myanmar	1949-50, 1961-92	Kachin Independence Organization
Mons (Wa)	Myanmar	1949-63, 1990, 1996, 1997	New Mon State Party, Mon Peoples' Front, Mon Freedom League, Mon United Front, United Wa State Army
Rohingya (Arakanese)	Myanmar	1948-88, 1991-92, 1994	Arakan Rohingya National Organisation, Communist Party of Arakan, Mujahid Party, Arakan People's Liberation Party
Zomis (Chins)	Myanmar	1985-ongoing	Chin National Front
Hill Tribes	Myanmar	1973-81	Lahu National Unity Party
Shans	Myanmar	1959-70, 1972-73, 1976-88, 1993-2002, 2005-10	Shan State Army, Shan State Army-South, Muang Tai Army, Shan United Revolutionary Army
Karens	Myanmar	1949-92, 1995-2003, 2005-ongoing	Karen National Union, Karen National United Party
San Bushmen	Namibia (earlier South Africa)	1974-90	Anti-SWAPO forces
Maori	New Zealand		

Nicaraguan Indigenous Peoples	Nicaragua	1981-84	MISURATA
Tuareg	Niger	1991-92, 1994, 1997, 2007-08	Liberation Front of Air and Azawad, Niger Justice Movement
Ijaw	Nigeria	2004	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
Bourgainvilleans	Papua New Guinea	1989-90, 1992-96	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
Baluchis	Pakistan	1974-77, 2004-09	Baloch Liberation Army
Pashtuns	Pakistan	2007-ongoing	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
Panamanian Indigenous Peoples	Panama		
Paraguayan Indigenous Peoples	Paraguay		
Peruvian Indigenous Highland Peoples	Peru		
Peruvian Lowland Indigenous Peoples	Peru		
Igorots	Philippines	1978-86	Communist Party of the Philippines
Moros	Philippines	1970-90, 1993-ongoing	Moro National Liberation Front, Moro Islamic Liberation Front
Buryat	Russia		
Chechens	Russia	1994-96, 1999-ongoing, 2007-ongoing	Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Caucasian Emirate
Ingush	Russia	1999-ongoing, 2007-ongoing	Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Caucasian Emirate
Karachay	Russia	2007-ongoing	Caucasian Emirate
Lezgins	Russia		
Tuvinians	Russia		
Yakut	Russia		
Nuba	Sudan	1989-2002, 2004-ongoing	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
Aboriginal Taiwanese	Taiwan (earlier China)	1947	Anti Kuomintang forces
Northern Hill Tribes	Thailand	1974-82	Communist Party of Thailand
Kurds	Turkey	1984-2010	Kurdistan Workers' Party
Native Americans	USA		
Native Hawaiians	USA		
Venezuelan Indigenous Peoples	Venezuela		
Montagnards	Vietnam	1955-61	National Liberation Front

Appendix D: Correlation matrix of key variables for global dataset

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Conflict onset	1.000												
2 Cultural difference	-.042	1.000											
3 Economic discrimination	.006	.007	1.000										
4 Political discrimination	.028	.026	.648	1.000									
5 Group population	.064	-.133	-.127	-.172	1.000								
6 Lost autonomy	.082	-.088	-.299	-.200	.220	1.000							
7 Country polity2 score	-.008	.044	-.026	-.153	-.020	-.060	1.000						
8 Anocracy	.001	-.010	-.005	-.032	-.083	-.079	.033	1.000					
9 Instability	.051	-.015	.005	.003	.007	-.022	.019	.234	1.000				
10 Country GDP	-.101	.131	-.076	-.172	-.144	-.229	.267	-.040	-.106	1.000			
11 Country population	.048	.026	-.233	-.181	.505	.252	.048	-.183	-.066	.058	1.000		
12 Country mountains	-.003	.041	.027	.108	.260	-.023	-.133	.092	.039	-.101	-.015	1.000	
13 Year	.026	-.007	-.160	-.265	.170	.018	.213	-.092	-.051	.358	.094	-.063	1.000

Appendix E: Coding information for global dataset

Variable	Coding details	Source
Conflict onset	The first year in which there were over 25 deaths is coded as 1, subsequent conflict years are dropped, and years in which there is no conflict coded as 0.	UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset
Cultural difference	CULDIFXX index ranges from 0 (no differences) to +4 (extreme differences).	Minorities at Risk
Economic discrimination	ECDIS index ranges from 0 (no discrimination) to 4 (exclusion or repressive policy that substantially restrict the group's economic opportunities compared with other groups).	Minorities at Risk
Political discrimination	POLDIS index ranges from 0 (no discrimination) to 4 (exclusion or repressive policy that substantially restrict the group's political opportunities compared with other groups).	Minorities at Risk
Group population	Figures are calculated using MAR estimates of the group's population as a proportion of total population and Fearon and Laitin/World Bank figures for total population.	Minorities at Risk, Fearon and Laitin, World Bank
Lost autonomy	The year in which autonomy from the state was lost.	Minorities at Risk
Country polity2	The index ranges from -10 (strong autocracy) to +10 (strong democracy) based on an evaluation of that state's elections for competitiveness, openness and level of participation, to operation democracy.	Polity IV
Anocracy	States with Polity 2 score of greater than -5 or less than 5 are coded as anocracies.	Polity IV
Instability	Regime change is defined as any change in the Polity 2 score of 3 points or more over the previous three years.	Polity IV
Country GDP	Per capita Gross Domestic Product.	Fearon and Laitin, World Bank
Country population	Total country population.	Fearon and Laitin, World Bank
Country mountains	The proportion of a state covered by mountains.	Fearon and Laitin
Peace years	Years since the indigenous community was last involved in intra-state conflict.	NA
Year	Calendar year	NA